VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT *progress* REPORT

January 13, 2021

#vmprogress2021

2021: Six Years of New Insights

Today's challenges call on us to be more courageous than ever. They also call on us to be vulnerable, even when we don't feel particularly strong.

Each year, as we develop the VMPR survey, we take a leap of faith. A leap that our distribution partners will help us spread the word and a leap that leaders of volunteers will answer the call. Even in this challenging year, they did. We thank you.

This year, for our sixth edition of the survey, we decided to focus in on a few areas that we believe will be helpful to you. It's been a rough year for many, and we felt the survey could bear a pare down. In addition, some of the trends that we have been exploring (i.e., volunteer managers' salary levels) simply haven't changed much, regrettably.

The research topics also reflect our own values and priorities as professionals in this field and what we feel is most pressing to track over time. For example, promoting inclusive volunteering and equity is something we both care deeply about. So, we offer some data that might illuminate this area and give us pause.

We also know that this survey does not and will not represent all there is to know. It is snapshot in time, aimed at helping you make informed decisions.

We humbly hope you find it helpful,

Tobi Johnson, MA, CVA
Founder, Tobi Johnson & Associates | VolunteerPro

Dr. Pam Kappelides, PhD
Senior Lecturer, La Trobe University

Special thanks to Valerie Mercadante for helping with the report, and Jason Frenzel, CVA and Alana Knoppow, MSW for their thoughtful input.

January 2021

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About the Research

The survey questionnaire was developed with input from two practitioners and a scholar. It included 22 closed and open-ended questions; most questions were optional. It was administered online only using the Zoho Surveys platform.

A link to the questionnaire was distributed through a broad range of volunteer networks. Responses were collected from October 15– November 25, 2020. A total of 1,666 volunteer administrators (paid & volunteer) from 22 countries responded; 58 were disqualified because they did not work directly with volunteers, and 1,315 completed most of the questionnaire. 79% completed the questionnaire top to bottom.

Limitations of the Data
For its sixth year, the survey was available globally and promoted widely to previous respondents as well as through distribution partners. Most respondents to this survey are still working in volunteerism, so the data does not include the experiences and perceptions of those who have left the field (e.g., for tenure, number of jobs, etc.) or are currently on furlough due to COVID-19.

This year, respondents were asked to assess their agency's levels of maturity of technology use. While these data do not represent an objective assessment, they nonetheless offer subjective insights and show trends in development.

While respondents do represent a random sample for the field, many of those who participated in our Early Results webinar (only survey participants and distribution partners were invited) reported anecdotally this was their first time participating. So, there is strong evidence that our samples vary from year to year, thus offering more representative data.

Based on a conservative estimated total population of 1.65 million nonprofits in the United States, our US-based responses (924 or 70% of respondents) represent a confidence level of 95% with a +/- 3% margin of error.

A Note on Terminology
While no globally-accepted standards for job titles or terminology currently exist in the voluntary sector, we are doing our part to understand some of the current alignments and uses at work in our field.

In lieu of standards, we use the job titles of volunteer coordinator, manager, director, administrator, and leader of volunteers interchangeably throughout this report. No offense is intended nor should be taken.

Project Champions

Many Thanks to Our Distribution Partners & Reviewers!

The following organizations supported the survey by promoting it to their networks. Thank you for helping us raise awareness about this work.

- Alana Knoppow, MSW
- Amal Emam
- All Caring Hospice
- AL!VE (Association of Leaders in Volunteer Engagement)
- Austin Health
- Better Impact
- Children's Wisconsin
- Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration
- DOVIA Colorado
- DOVIA-LA
- DRAVA - Durham Region Association for Volunteer Administration
- Erin Spink
- First Advantage
- Forum for Volunteer Administrators
- Helen Burgoyne
- Hospice of Michigan and Arbor Hospice
- Huron River Watershed Council
- I Have a Dream Foundation of Boulder County
- Gina Hansen
- Jason Frenzel, CVA

- Leukeamia Foundation Australia
- Make-A-Wish America
- Metro Detroit Volunteer Coordinators
- Nancy E. Wells
- National Council of Social Service
- Nicole R. Smith
- Nonprofit Connect
- PAHVRP
- Professional Association of Volunteer Leaders - Ontario
- Sue Carter Kahl Consulting
- SWIDOVS (Southwest Idaho Directors of Vol Services)
- Rob Jackson Consulting Ltd
- Tracey O'Neill, CVA
- Volunteer Ireland
- Volunteer Management Professionals of Canada (VMPC)
- Volunteering Victoria
- VolunteerMatch
- VQ Volunteer Strategies
- Washtenaw Association of Volunteer Coordinators

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What We Hoped to Learn

Inside You'll Find ...

- How COVID-19 has impacted volunteer management jobs and nonprofit organizations (see **pages 20-22**)

- How COVID-19 has changed the number of people who volunteer, how many hours they volunteer, and the kind of volunteer roles available (see **pages 24-26**)

- The top challenges for today's volunteer administrators (see **page 27**)

- What digital tools and methods are most commonly used to communicate with, train, and lead volunteers (see **pages 30-33**)

What Intrigued Us

- **Gains in Digital Maturity** – The self-reported rating on digital maturity and uptake of new technology tools. The field has shown demonstrated progress in its use of digital tools to engage and support volunteers, and volunteer managers have adapted to the "new normal." This may be the "silver lining" of the COVID pandemic.

- **Intergenerational Users of Technology** – Our analysis shows both the adoption of new tech tools and increasing levels of digital maturity across all age groups of volunteer managers. We wonder if assumptions about who is able or willing to use online tools, based on age of volunteer, too, may be biased. And that perhaps more volunteers are willing to engage online than first assumed by nonprofits.

- **Volunteer Manager Workforce Still Strong In Spite of COVID** – Despite a challenging year and an uncertain economic climate, most volunteer coordinators are still working and contributing to the progress of their organization.

Why conduct a survey like this?
We all need to become better, more informed advocates.

① **Volunteer resource managers** can benefit from seeing how their colleagues rate their own priorities, challenges, and opportunities and advocate for themselves, both within their organizations and outside them.

② **Volunteer-led organizations** need clear benchmarks to help them make meaningful comparisons and informed decisions about their volunteer engagement.

③ **Nonprofit consultants, trainers, and capacity builders** need to know the greatest needs for our field.

④ **Our sector** needs to know how the COVID-19 impacted us in order to better advocate for our needs.

General Impressions

- The characteristics of respondents have been consistent over six years, even with expanded participation from countries outside the US and an evolving data set.

  We have continued confidence that these data represent leaders of volunteers in the United States, but still need additional data outside the US to generalize further.

- Respondents continue to be white (84%) women (88%). This trend has continued for six years. This represents less diversity than in the nonprofit sector as a whole. As a point of comparison, recent data (https://independentsector.org/nonprofithealth/) shows that 66% of sector employees are women, and 68% are white. Volunteer managers are a more homogenous group than nonprofit staff, in general. While the field continues to be multi-generational, the field is becoming younger over time as professionals age out.

  While we have noted this trend in earlier years, in this year racial injustice can no longer be ignored. It's more important than ever to examine the implicit bias that may be inherent in our field and take steps to address it so that we can be better equipped to realize access to volunteering for all.

- Not surprisingly, COVID has had a devasting impact on volunteer participation, as reported by leaders of volunteers. Average volunteer hours contributed per month are down by roughly two thirds, and active volunteers are down, as well. In past surveys, the average number of active volunteers reported by organizations was 101-250. Since COVID, it has dropped to 51-100 on average, with over one-third (36%) reporting 25 or less active volunteers currently engaged.

  The question now remains – What long-term impact will COVID have on volunteer participation around the world? And are volunteer organizations equipped and ready to conduct the massive outreach efforts needed to recoup these losses?

- Finally, we see a general erosion in time devoted to volunteer management as a part of the leader of volunteer's workload. Less than half (47%) devote 75% or more of their time to volunteer engagement. While this year may be an anomaly, with volunteer managers assisting with other tasks, as needed, this represents a troubling trend.

  Volunteer managers continue to "wear many hats," despite the complex array of duties and tasks needed to support a robust volunteer effort. This leads us to question whether volunteer organizations are currently making the most of volunteer potential latent in their communities.

WHO DID WE SURVEY?

Geographic Representation
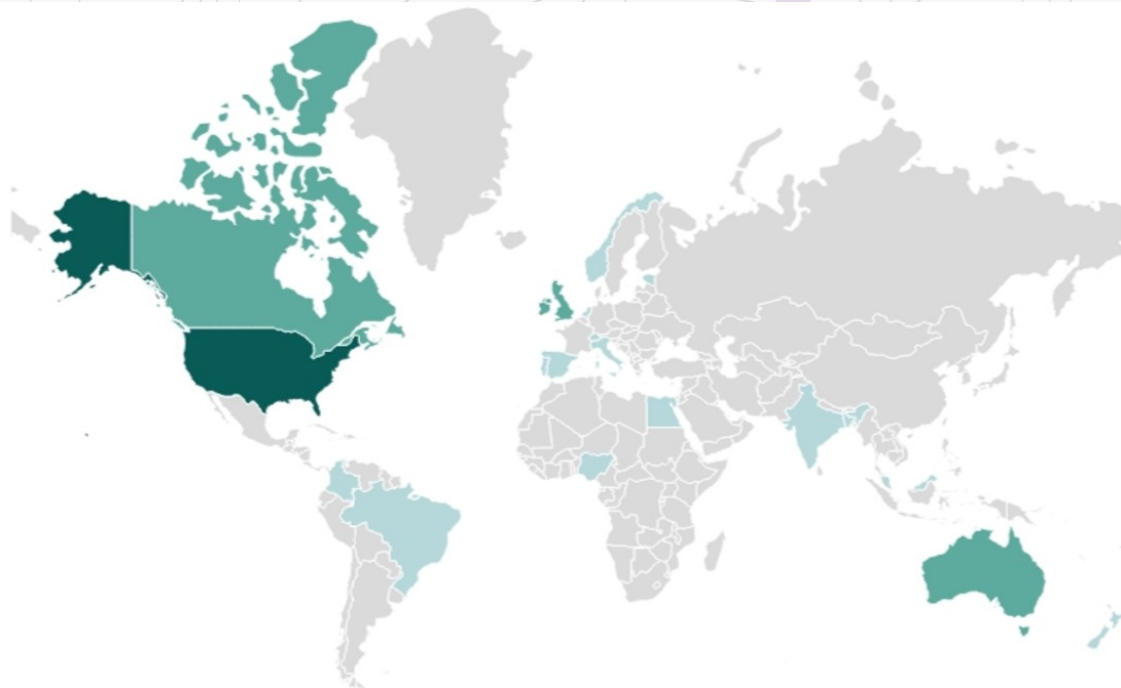
Where Were Respondents Located?

The respondeent base represents 22 countries and was about as globally diverse as the year before (Other 6%).

- **Other countries included:** Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Estonia, India, Italy, Malaysia, New Zealand, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Singapore, Spain, and Switzerland.

Headquarters Location	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
United States	924	70%
Canada	135	10%
United Kingdom	86	6%
Australia	85	6%
Ireland	34	2%
Other	55	6%

Organization Types

What Types of Organizations Were Represented?

Most categorized themselves as nonprofit organizations (77.2%), followed by government agency's (13.4%).

This break down has been relatively consistent throughout the history of the survey.

In our 2020 survey,

- One-third (33.9%) with 6-50 employees
- 3.2% are all volunteer
- Most (66.6%) serve their local area (city/county/region within state)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Nonprofit	73.4%	66.2%	70.1%	77.7%	**78.8%**	**77.2%**
Government Agency	17.7%	13.7%	12.6%	15.6%	**13.9%**	**13.4%**
Ed. Institution/ School District	N/A	3.0%	2.4%	3.5%	**2.6%**	**2.9%**
Corp/Small Business	1.0%	1.0%	0.7%	2.9%	**1.9%**	**2.3%**
Church or Congregation	1.0%	0.9%	0.5%	.2%	**0.5%**	**0.8%**

'The various forms on virtual leadership support groups has been so important during these uncertain times. Information shared has been invaluable in making adjustments and sharing new/best practices in the industry.'

'2020 is turning out to be the longest five years of my life! Still, I'm coping, learning, adapting, and planning. There is a future ahead.'

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Cause Impact Areas

What Types of Organizations Were Represented?

In order to to keep the survey short, and because impact areas have not shifted significantly in the past few years, we did not ask respondents about their cause impact area.

However, we provided our five-year data trends below for reference. Last year, a wide range of causes participated in the survey, with health care dominating at 16%.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Health Care/Medical Research/Support Services	**73.4%**	**17.4%**	**15.4%**	**15.3%**	**16.1%**	N/A
Senior & Disability Services	**N/A**	**7.9%**	**9.8%**	**10.0%**	**7.9%**	N/A
Arts, Culture, & Humanities/History/Museums	**10.9%**	**7.5%**	**7.3%**	**6.7%**	**7.3%**	N/A
Multi-Service	**N/A**	**5.9%**	**6.6%**	**5.9%**	**6.5%**	N/A
Hospice	**2.9%**	**5.2%**	**6.7%**	**6.0%**	**4.7%**	N/A
Environment/Parks/Wildlife	3.4%	5.7%	6.3%	7.1%	6.4%	N/A
Child Welfare/Family Services/Social Services	1.0%	8.2%	6.2%	5.8%	5.9%	N/A
Education/Libraries	1.0%	7.3%	5.9%	6.7%	5.5%	N/A
Community Improvement & Capacity Building	N/A	4.3%	4.2%	3.0%	4.2%	N/A

'I work for a children's hospital where all patients have compromised immune systems. We are beginning to use telehealth rooms for play activities using volunteers. We also are using our therapy dogs to live stream to patients.'

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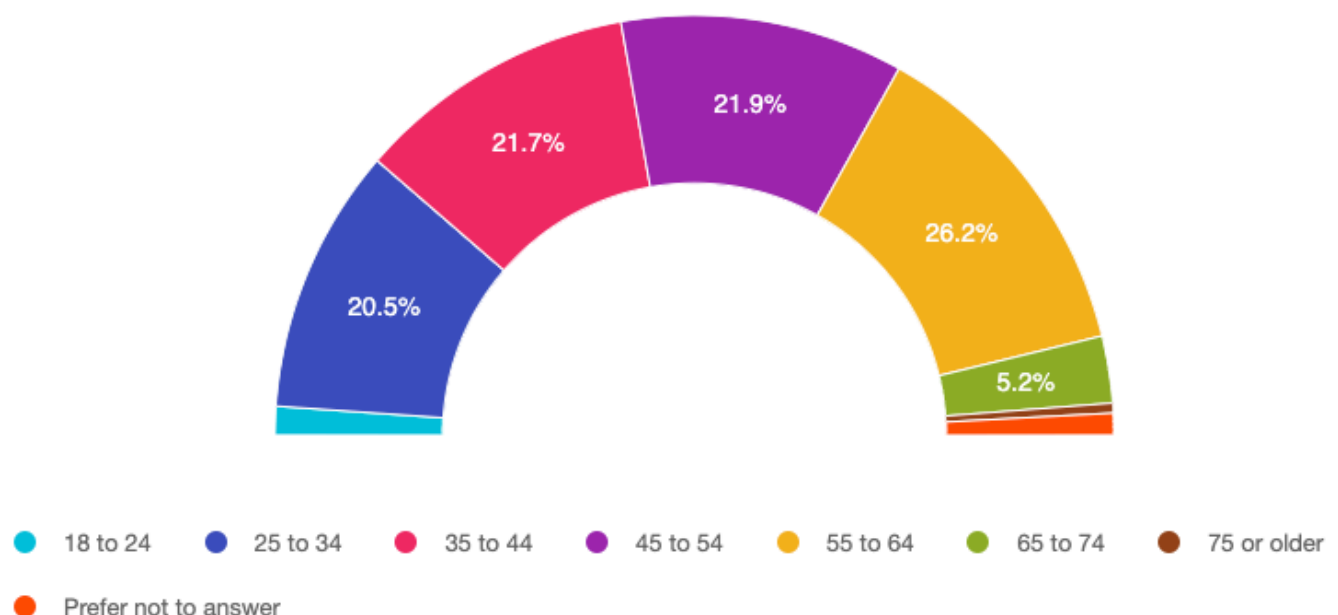
Respondent Demographics

Demographics Remain Consistent Over Six Years

Volunteer managers continue to represent multiple generations, consistent for six years of the survey.

Most significantly, we saw a decrease in volunteer managers age 45-54 (down 1.6% from last year) and an increase in 55- to 64-year-olds (up 3.3% from last year). Nearly one-third (32.2%) are age 55 or older compared to 28.9% in 2020. This represents a 3.3% increase in older volunteer managers over last year's survey.

Both the Mean (or average age of all respondents) and the Median (the middle value with half of respondents above and half below) was 45 to 54 years old.

- **Ages of Respondents for 2021** (2020 data is in parentheses)

    - 18 to 24 - 3.1% (2.2%)
    - 25 to 34 - 20.5% (23.4%/)
    - 35 to 44 - 21.7% (21.0%)
    - 45 to 54 - 21.9% (23.5%/)
    - 55 to 64 - 26.2% (22.9%)
    - 65 to 74 - 5.2% (5.5%)
    - 75+ -   0.8% (0.5%)

- **Both Mean (Average) & Median (Middle Value):** 45 to 54 years old

Legend: 18 to 24 · 25 to 34 · 35 to 44 · 45 to 54 · 55 to 64 · 65 to 74 · 75 or older · Prefer not to answer

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Respondent Tenure

Professional Characteristics Remain Consistent

As far as the years of experience with volunteer management (on a paid or unpaid basis), in this year's survey one third (33.3%) had 5 years or less experience. Nearly half (44.5%) had over 10 years experience, and 21.4% over 20 years.

Last year, 36% had 5 years or less experience (same in 2019). 42% had over 10 years of experience (40% in 2019) and 16% over 20 years (same in 2019). We expected these numbers to skew toward greater years of experience, as those who learn about the survey are gaining greater years experience in the field.

College Educated (was not asked in 2020 or 2021 survey)
- BA Degree - (49% in 2019, same in 2017/16, 52% in 2016)
- MA/Pro/PhD Degree - (27% in 2019, 29% in 2018,28% in 2016/17)

Work Type
- Full Time - 80% (83% in 2019, 84% in 2018, 79% in 2017, 85% in 2016)
- Paid Employee - 93% (90% in 2019, 92% in 2016/17/18)

Years of Volunteer Administration/Management Experience
- Less than 2 years 8.4%
- 2-5 years 24.9%
- 6-10 years 22.1%
- 11-15 years 15.5%
- 16-20 years 7.6%
- Over 20 years 21.4%

In General ...

- College Educated
- Full-Time (80%)
- Paid Employee (93%)
- Professional Certification (38%, from 2020 Survey)

Legend: Less than 2 years · 2-5 years · 6-10 years · 11-15 years · 16-20 years · Over 20 years
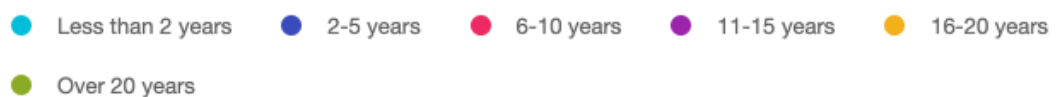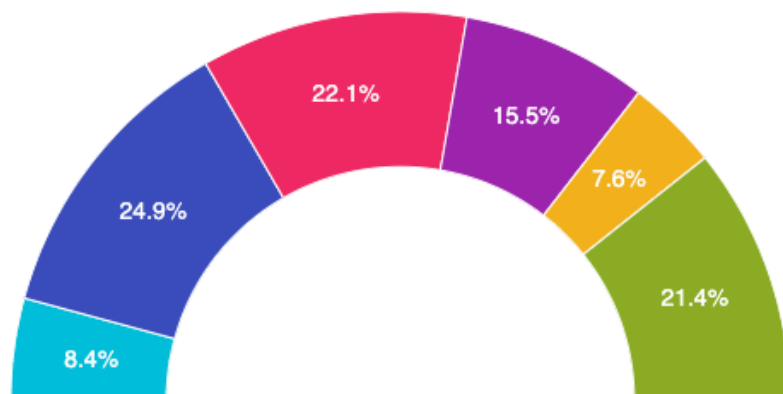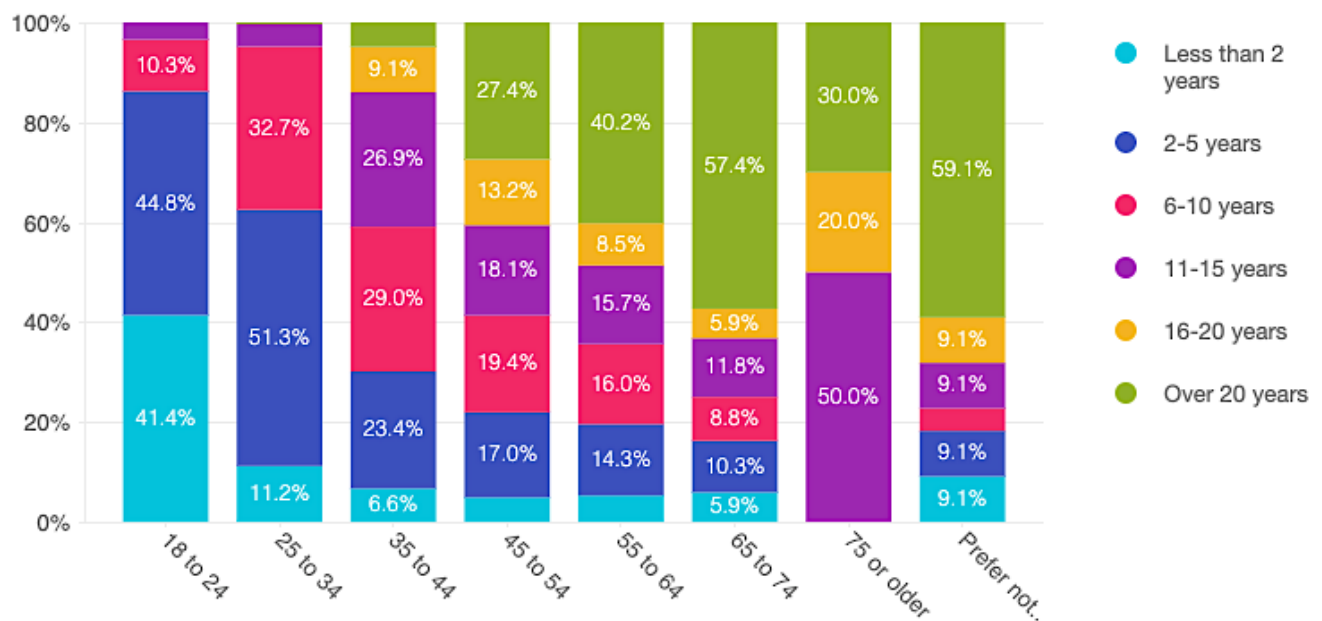
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Respondent Age & Tenure

More Experienced Volunteer Directors Are Also Older

Not surprising, there is also a correlations between age and tenure, with older leaders reporting greater years experience in the field of volunteer administration (Note: because there were so few respondents age 75 or older, those data may be skewed).

So, faced with the possibility of an aging demographic in the field, the question becomes - How can we best conserve and pass on valuable professional experience and wisdom to newcomers as older leaders age out of the field?

'Feeling responsible for my volunteers' mental health on top of my mental health during COVID has been the most exhausting thing ever. Volunteers always require a lot of energy, I've really felt like they've needed almost double this year.'

'The silver lining to COVID is that we have discovered some new ways of doing things that have actually improved our procedures and we will continue to build on those. Necessity IS the mother of invention.'

'A trying year for us all - increased demand for services, fewer volunteers to do it ... but our agency which has been tech resistant ... is starting to adapt and so I hope my use of digital technology will become ever easier to integrate, now others have started! No one could see why I wanted it before ...'

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Respondent Demographics

Demographics Remain Consistent Over Six Years

For six years, we have documented a field of professionals that continues to be dominated by white (84%) college-educated (76%) women (87%).

- Female - 88.1% (87% in 2020, 88% in 2019, 91% in 2018, 88% in 2016/17)
- White/European Descent - 83.8% (84% in 2020, 91% in 2019/2018, 89% in 2016/17)

- she/her
- he/his
- they/their
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (Please specify)

7.8%

88.1%
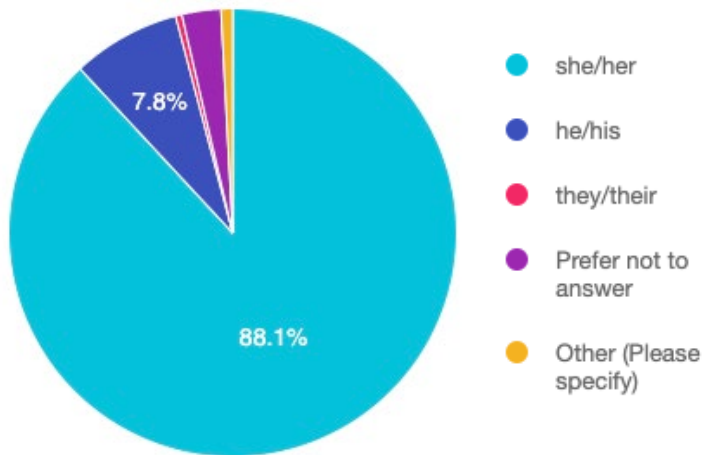
Gender Pronoun
- She/her- 88.1%
- He/his- 7.8%
- They/their - 0.5%
- Prefer not to answer - 2.8%
- Other - 0.8%

Race/Ethnicity (choose as many as apply)
- American Indian, Alaska Native or Aleut - 0.7%
- Black/African American/African - 5.0%
- Hispanic/Latinx - 4.0%
- Asian/South Asian - 3.7%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander - 0.2%
- White/European –83.8%
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander - 0.0%
- Middle Eastern/North African - 0.8%
- Prefer not to answer - 3.1%
- Other - 2.5%

83.8%

5.0%

10%

0%

- American Indian, Alaska Native or Aleut
- Black/African American/African
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Asian/South Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White/European
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Middle Eastern/North African
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (Please specify)

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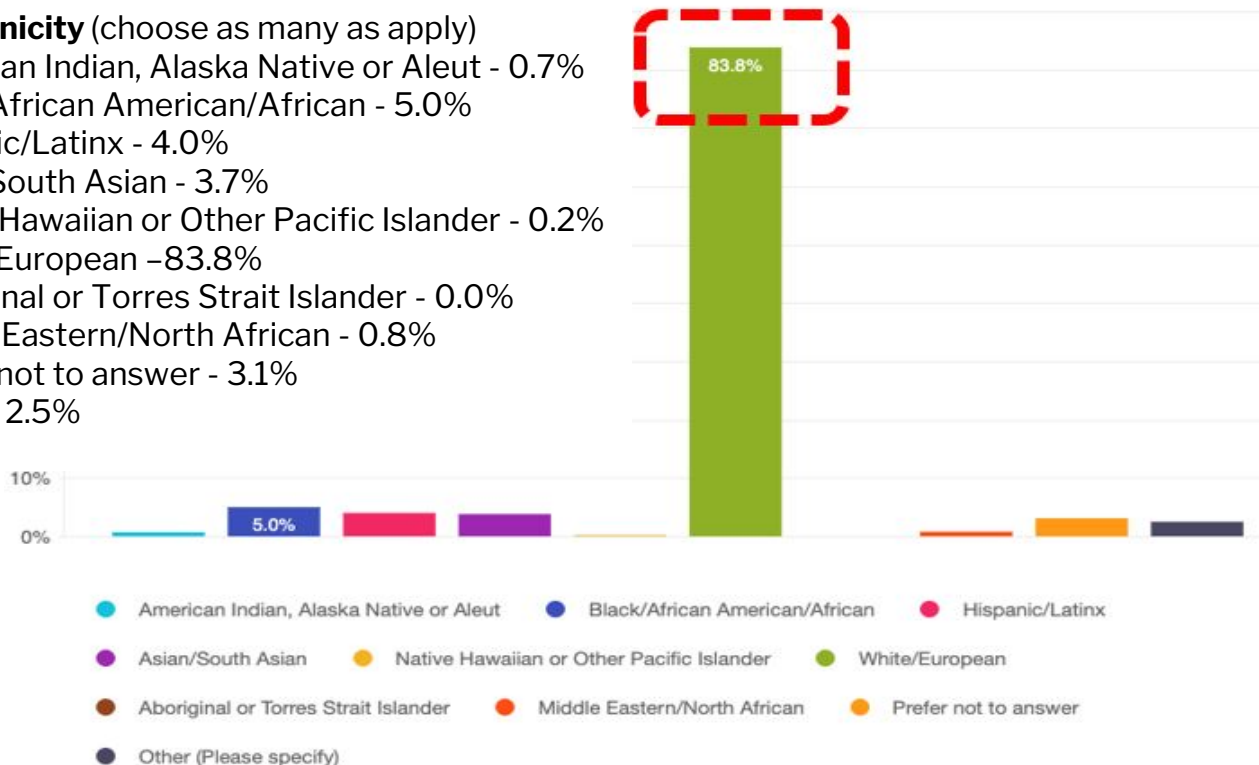
Respondent Demographics

Lack of Diversity in the Field

Research shows that 66% of US nonprofit employees are women. While people of color are roughly 40 % of the population, 32% of nonprofit employees are people of color, which is double the number of those who work in volunteerism (16%).

Volunteering data in the US shows that volunteers also look like those who engage them – White (26.4% versus 19.3% of Blacks, 17.9% of Asians, and 5.5% of Latinos/as), educated (65.3% with at least some college education), and women (27.8% versus 21.8% men).

Our big questions continue to be - Does a lack of diversity affect who becomes a volunteer? Does this impact which volunteers discover opportunities, and which volunteers invite their friends, thus reinforcing a cycle of sameness?

General Population
- Female 51%
- White 60%

Nonprofit Employees
- Female 66%
- White 68%

Volunteer Managers
- Female 91%
- White 88%

US Volunteering Rates

Race/Ethnicity
- White 26%
- Black 19%
- Asian 18%
- Latinx 6%

Gender
- Female 28%
- Men 22%

See: Independent Sector, *2020 Health of the Nonprofit Sector* - https://independentsector.org/nonprofithealth, US Census Bureau, The Empowerment Project, *Race to Lead: Obstacles and Opportunities in Addressing the Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap* (2019) - https://racetolead.org/

'I'd like to know how other organizations are responding to current national reckoning with racial injustice, as it pertains to our volunteer recruitment, relationship-building and training.'

'Biggest challenge is all of the work that lies ahead to make our volunteer program more inclusive for all!'

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More Research & Resources

Ethical Practice in Volunteer Administration – CCVA

RESPECT: The Administrator of Volunteers acknowledges the inherent value, skills and abilities of all individuals and affirms the mutual benefit gained by the volunteer and the organization.

- **Dignity:** Act in a compassionate manner that upholds the right of all volunteers to be valued and involved in decisions that affect them.
- **Inclusivity:** Encourage and facilitate the participation of individuals from diverse backgrounds, perspectives and abilities.
- **Privacy:** Protect the privacy of individuals and information considered confidential.

FAIRNESS: The Administrator of Volunteers commits to individual and collective efforts that build and support a fair and just organizational culture.

- **Impartiality:** Remain unbiased and objective when working with stakeholders.
- **Equity:** Ensure access to opportunities, resources and support which enable volunteers to be successful.
- **Justice:** Implement open and consistent processes that inform decision-making and address discriminatory or prejudicial behaviors.

See: CCVA, *Professional Ethics in Volunteer Management* - https://cvacert.org/resources-and-media/professional-ethics/

Ethical Practice in Volunteer Management – IAVE

The International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) Universal Declaration on Volunteering calls equity and inclusion out in two domains of their five-part Professional Ethics in Volunteer Management.

This Declaration supports the right of every woman, man and child to associate freely and to volunteer regardless of their cultural and ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, and physical, social or economic condition. All people in the world should have the right to freely offer their time, talent, and energy to others and to their communities through individual and collective action, without expectation of financial reward.

We seek the development of volunteering that:

- elicits the involvement of the entire community in identifying and addressing its problems;
- encourages and enables youth to make leadership through service a continuing part of their lives;
- provides a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves;
- enables others to participate as volunteers;
- complements but does not substitute for responsible action by other sectors and the efforts of paid workers;
- enables people to acquire new knowledge and skills and to fully develop their personal potential, self-reliance and creativity;
- promotes family, community, national and global solidarity.

See: IAVE, *Universal Declaration on Volunteering* - https://www.iave.org/advocacy/the-universal-declaration-on-volunteering/

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ABOUT THEIR WORK

Time Spent On Volunteer Management

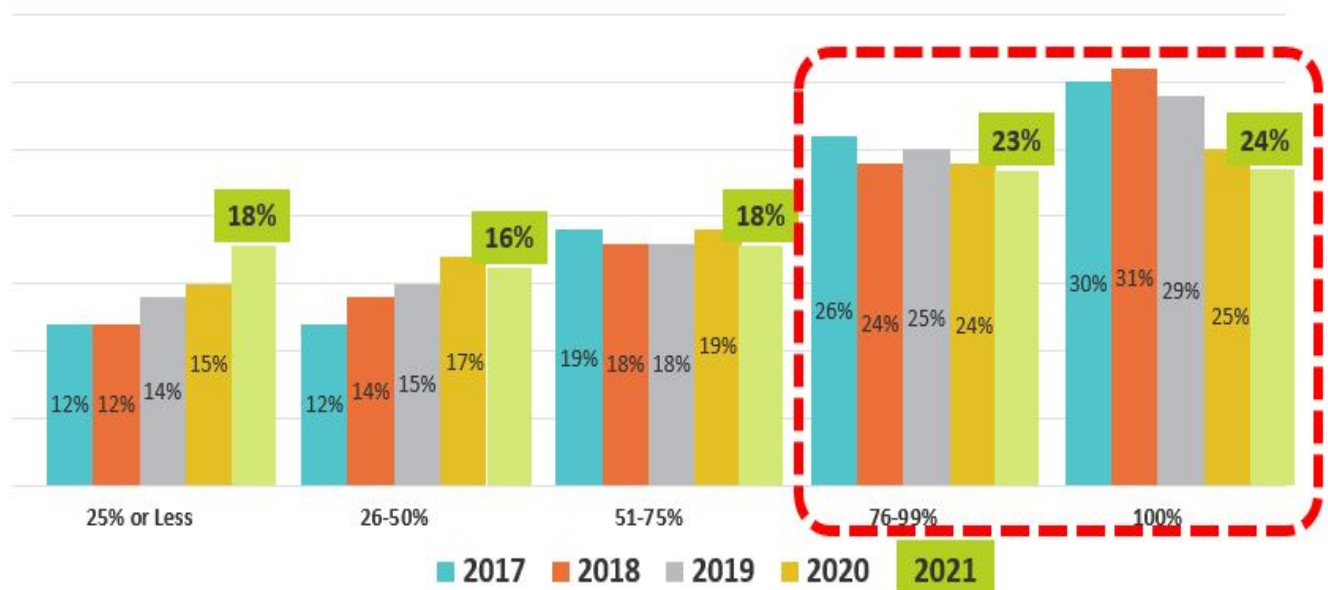## Volunteer Managers Continue to Split Their Time

Leaders of volunteers continue to juggle more than one task area. This has continued to be a trend over six years of our survey.

The data shows a troubling and persistent trend of leaders of volunteers with multiple job priorities, with 18% who spend one-quarter of their time or less on volunteer administration tasks.

This year, only 47% of staff spent three quarters of their time or more on volunteer management, the lowest in six years, down 7% from a four year high of 56% in 2017. And only 24% focus entirely on volunteer coordination, down 6% from four years ago.

The effective engagement and management of volunteer talent involves a complex array of activities. It's unclear how effective organizations can be with so little time dedicated to engaging and supporting volunteers.

% of Time Spent on Volunteer Management

Legend: ■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019 ■ 2020 ■ 2021

Data values:
- 25% or Less: 12% (2017), 12% (2018), 14% (2019), 15% (2020), 18% (2021)
- 26-50%: 12% (2017), 14% (2018), 15% (2019), 17% (2020), 16% (2021)
- 51-75%: 19% (2017), 18% (2018), 18% (2019), 19% (2020), 18% (2021)
- 76-99%: 26% (2017), 24% (2018), 25% (2019), 24% (2020), 23% (2021)
- 100%: 30% (2017), 31% (2018), 29% (2019), 25% (2020), 24% (2021)

2021 Percentage of Time Spent on Volunteer Management

- 25% or Less - 17.5%
- 26-50% - 15.5%
- 51-75% - 18.2%
- 76-99% - 23.0%
- 100% - 24.0%
- N/A - 2.0%

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Employment Changes

How Has COVID-19 Affected Volunteer Management Jobs?

We asked - **How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your pre-pandemic employment status over the past 10 months?**

The good news is that it appears most leaders of volunteers are still active, even if their roles have been adjusted to meet emerging agency needs. (Note: These data may be skewed as those who are not working may not have been monitoring work emails (or have a work email) and may have been unaware the survey was taking place.)

Current Status
- Full-time (79.8%), Part-time (13.5%), Volunteer (3.8%), Stipended (1.1%)
- Unemployed (1.5%), On Leave (.4%)

Impact on Volunteer Manager Jobs

- **Unchanged** – I am still employed as a leader of volunteers with same hours - 54.5%
- **Unchanged** – I still serve as a volunteer leader of volunteers - 6.2%
- **Changed** – I am still employed, but my job role and/or tasks have changed - 23.1%
- **Changed** – My scheduled work hours have been increased - 3.0%
- **Changed** – My scheduled work hours have been decreased - 4.0%
- **Changed** – I was furloughed (on temporary leave) - 2.8%
- **Changed** – I took a voluntary leave of absence, 0.3%
- **Changed** – I lost my job - 2.0%
- **Changed** – I was hired by a new employer - 4.0%
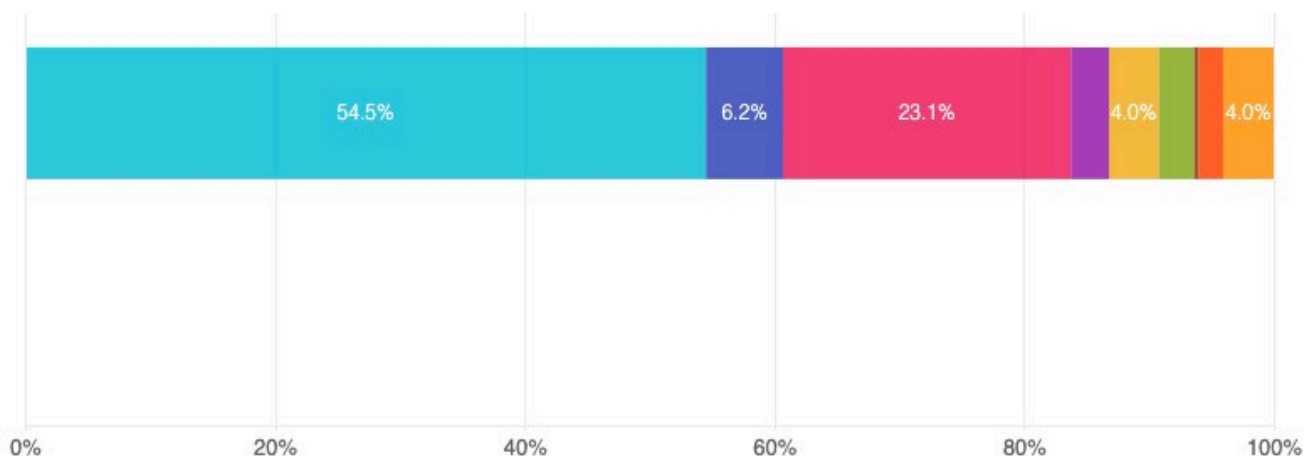
'I was laid off permanently in May from a full-time volunteer management job. Have been recently hired into a combined role of volunteer and community engagement (full- time permanent).'

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Impact of COVID-19

How Has COVID-19 Affected Organizations?

We asked - **How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your organization?**

Fortunately, few organizations reported being permanently closed due to the COVID-9 pandemic. More commonly, organizations adjusted their service provision.

- **Unchanged** – We are still open and providing the same level of service - 19.8%
- **Changed** – We are still open and are providing increased services - 22.0%
- **Changed** – We are still open but are providing partial services - 52.7%
- **Changed** – We are temporarily closed - 5.3%
- **Changed** – We have permanently closed our doors - 0.2%
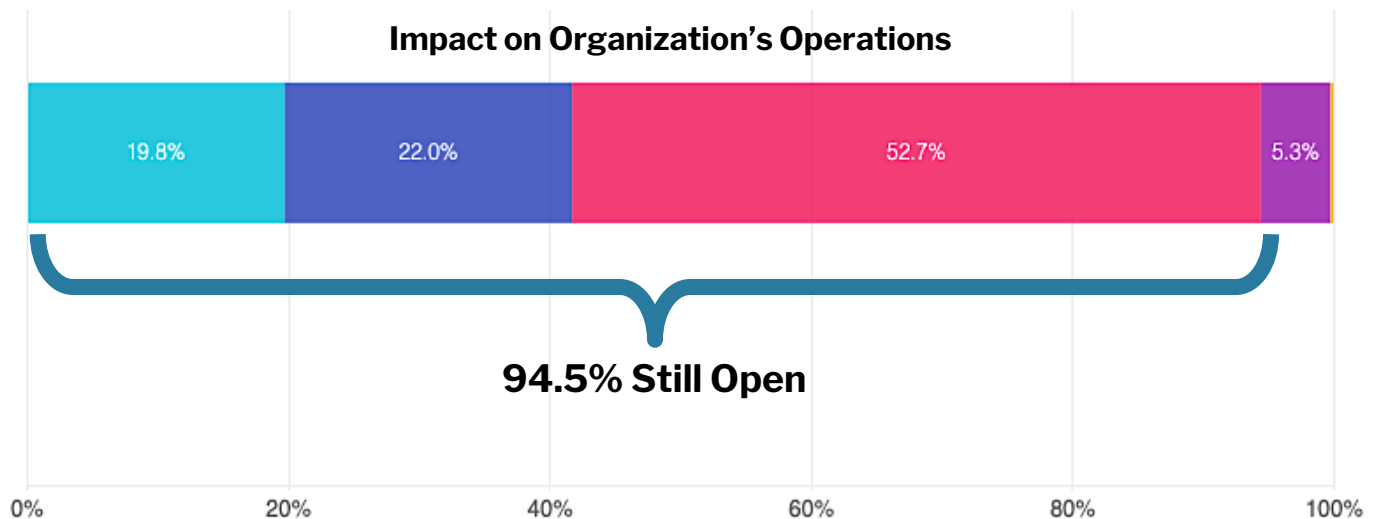
Impact on Organization's Operations

94.5% Still Open

- Unchanged – We are still open and providing the same level of services
- Changed – We are still open and are providing increased services
- Changed – We are still open but are providing partial services
- Changed – We are temporarily closed
- Changed – We have permanently closed our doors

'*My organization, a museum, has been closed since mid-March 2020. My main challenge has been developing ways to keep our volunteer corps engaged with our mission. We have developed several virtual projects, but not at a scope where more than a handful of volunteers can work on them. My organization ... does not have an option for virtual meetings that volunteers can use, so I have not been able to appropriately engage them in virtual meetings, either.*'
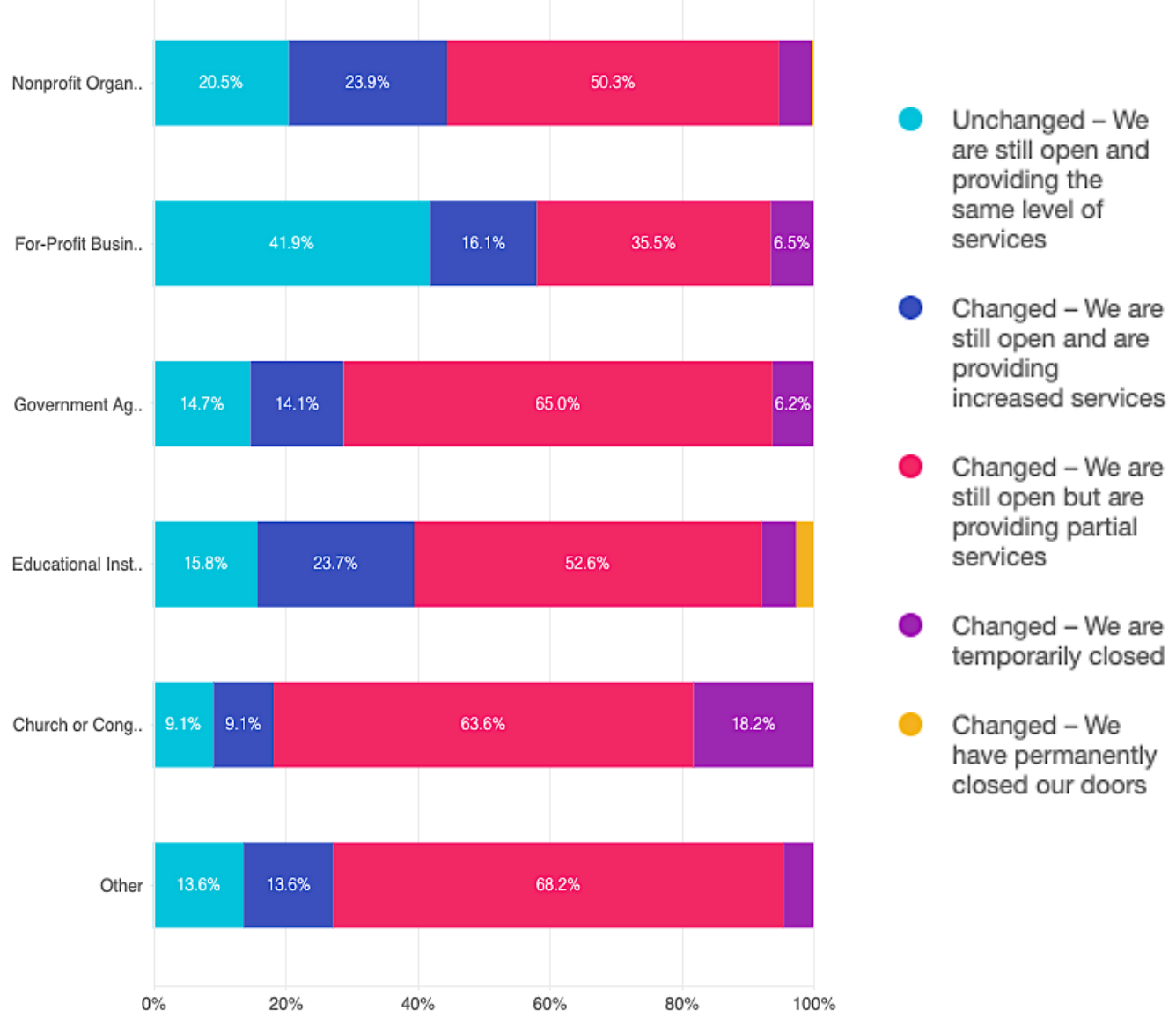
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Impact of COVID-19

How Has COVID-19 Affected Organizations?

Our evidence shows that organizations have been impacted differently by the pandemic, however this may be skewed due to the predominant number of nonprofits who participated. 77.2% of volunteer managers represented nonprofits, with 13.4% from government agencies and the remainder (9.4%) from other types of organizations.

Due to COVID, half (50.3%) of nonprofit organization were still open but were providing partial services at the time of the Survey (November – December 2020). Nearly two thirds (65.0%) of government agencies, the second largest group of respondents, were still open but were providing partial services.

Impact on Organization's Operations x Type of Organization

Organization	Unchanged	Changed – Increased	Changed – Partial	Changed – Temp. Closed	Changed – Perm. Closed
Nonprofit Organ..	20.5%	23.9%	50.3%		
For-Profit Busin..	41.9%	16.1%	35.5%	6.5%	
Government Ag..	14.7%	14.1%	65.0%	6.2%	
Educational Inst..	15.8%	23.7%	52.6%		
Church or Cong..	9.1%	9.1%	63.6%	18.2%	
Other	13.6%	13.6%	68.2%		

Legend:
- **Unchanged** – We are still open and providing the same level of services
- **Changed** – We are still open and are providing increased services
- **Changed** – We are still open but are providing partial services
- **Changed** – We are temporarily closed
- **Changed** – We have permanently closed our doors

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CAPACITY & IMPACT

Volunteer Capacity

How Many People are Volunteering?

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on volunteer participation in the respondent organizations. Before COVID, only 12.2% reported 1-25 active volunteers. Last Fall, as the pandemic continued to surge, 29.6% reported 1-25 volunteers and 6.8% with no volunteers.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, 12.2% reported 251-500 active volunteers. Last Fall, as the pandemic continued to surge, 7.1% reported 251-500 volunteers

In this year's survey:

- **Before COVID Mean:** 3.88 (101-250)
- **After COVID Mean:** 3.88 (51-100)

'We struggle with finding opportunities for our volunteers, both virtually and in-person. Our attendance is not at normal levels due to Covid restrictions, and we haven't been successful in finding virtual opportunities for the volunteers.'

'Volunteers are keen to remain involved, but concerned for their own health, or those with whom they live. Some work in education or healthcare and already have a lot of contacts so their employers/unions have asked them to limit their out of work activities. Many live in rural areas with poor internet connectivity so online engagement is not possible."

How Many Hours are People are Volunteering?

Respondents reported the average number of hours contributed per volunteer per month, across all roles. In this metric the depth of volunteer participation has significantly declined during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well. Not only are fewer volunteers serving, in addition, those that are active are contributing less time.

**2021 Average Number of Hours Per Volunteer Per Month**

- 0 – 10 - 65.4%
- 10 – 20 - 19.1%
- 20 – 30 - 5.1%
- 30 – 40 - 2.8%
- 40 – 50 - 2.2%
- 50 – 60 - 1.1%
- 60 – 70 - .6%
- 70 – 80 - 0.7%
- 80 – 90 - 0.2%
- 90 – 100 - 2.8%

In the 2020 survey, the average number of hours contributed per volunteer per month was 30 hours, with the maximum average monthly hours per volunteer reported as 160, (with a median of 15, a mean of 30, and a standard deviation of 42.2). In other words, the average hours varied widely.

Note: In the 2020 survey we collected exact numbers of hours. In 2021, we requested that respondents select a specific range of hours.

2021 Mean: 1.87 (10-20 hours)
2020 Mean: 30 hours

Legend: 0 - 10 · 10 - 20 · 20 - 30 · 30 - 40 · 40 - 50 · 50 - 60 · 60 - 70 · 70 - 80 · 80 - 90 · 90 - 100
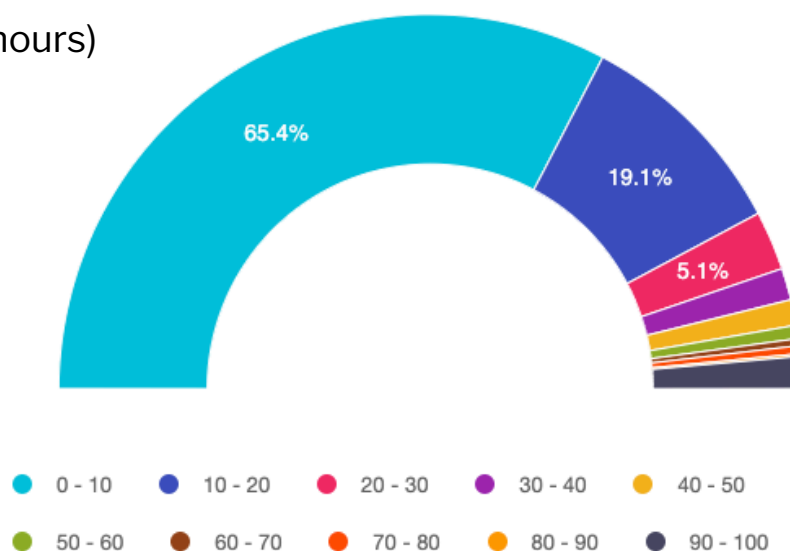
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Volunteer Roles

Has COVID-19 Impacted the Diversity of Volunteer Roles?

Volunteering is likely to have been impacted by both the availability and diversity of volunteer roles offered by organizations.

We asked - **How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the availability of roles?**

- Increased 8.2%
- Decreased 82.7%
- Stayed the same 8.2%

We also asked - **How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the diversity of roles?**

- Increased 14.8%
- Decreased 56.2%
- Stayed the same 28.9%

We did not ask what types of volunteer roles were active. However, based on the numerous remarks volunteer managers made related to virtual volunteerism in open-ended comments – combined with the fact that over half (51.9%) offered more volunteer opportunities – we can assume that, for those organizations that increased the diversity of roles, virtual volunteer roles represent some of that change.

Availability

9.1%   8.2%

82.7%

Diversity

28.9%   14.8%

56.2%

● Increased   ● Decreased   ● Stayed the same
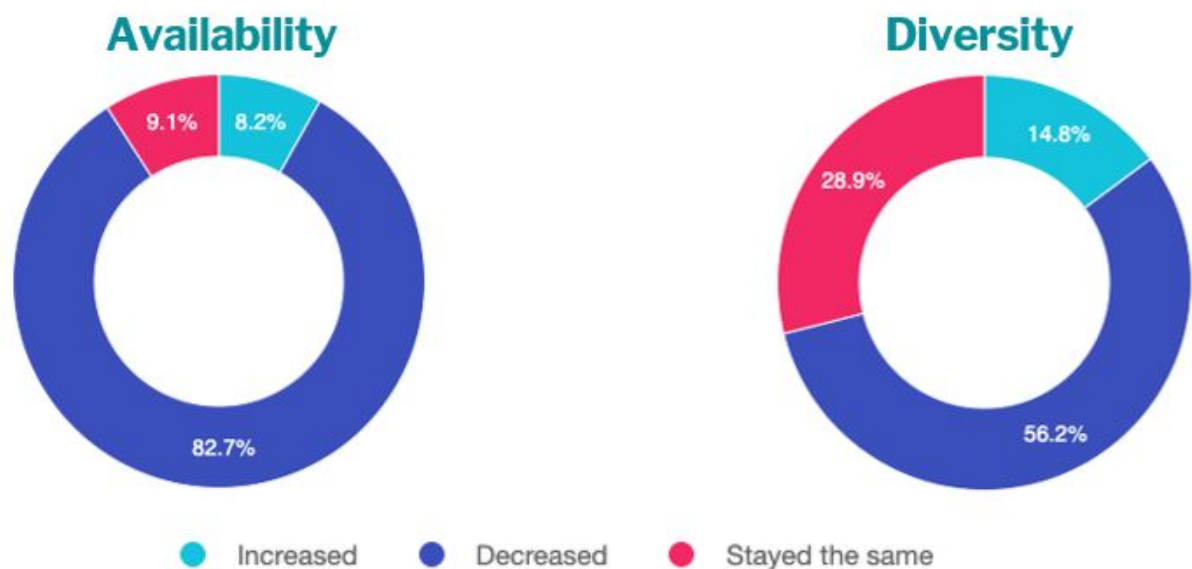
'My biggest challenge is trying to find virtual volunteer opportunities which will interest the volunteers. I work with senior citizen volunteers and nearly all of their usual volunteer jobs have been put on hold due to the pandemic, which has meant they're all at home with little or nothing to do. They're bored, discouraged and frustrated. I hear them, I feel the same way.'

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2021 Biggest Challenges

Top Challenges in Open-Ended Comments

Respondents were asked to share their "#1 biggest challenge" in their own words. "What's your #1 single biggest volunteer management challenge right now? Please be as detailed as possible. (Please go beyond a few words. The more specific you are, the more clearly we can understand your obstacles.)"

The most frequently cited challenges shifted radically in the past year, shaking up five years of previously consistent results. Supporting existing volunteers took precedence over engaging new volunteers in this year's list of top challenges faced by leaders of volunteers.

- **Supervision** – Effectively leading & acknowledging the work of volunteers appeared for the first time as a top issue (18%); in particular, keeping vols engaged & connected during COVID
- **Retention** – Longer time volunteers and fulfilling commitments to service (increase by 7%), fueled by the reality that volunteers could not be engaged onsite due to COVID restrictions
- **Recruitment** – Finding the right volunteers for specific roles and needs (dropped 14%); finding volunteers in general continued to be an issue, but equally challenging was re-engaging lapsed volunteers due to COVID
- **Roles & Matching** – Designing roles & matching volunteer and organization's needs (gained 2%), mostly driven by the challenge of creating new virtual roles for volunteers
- **Change Management** – Keeping up with trends & managing resistance (9%); in particular, the uncertainty of COVID, how it will impact organizations, & the inability to plan effectively during uncertain times
- **Respect and Buy-In** – From co-workers and leadership (dropped off the top five entirely)
- **Time** – Managing competing and multiple priorities (dropped off the top five entirely)

We received 1,372 total valid responses this year (1,495 in 2020).

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Recruitment (25%)	Recruitment (24%)	Recruitment (31%)	Recruitment (33%)	Recruitment (30%)	Supervision (18%)
Support & Buy-In (9%)	Respect & Reliability (16%)	Respect & Buy-In (14%)	Respect & Buy-In (13%)	Respect & Buy-In (13%)	Retention (16%)
Time (9%)	Roles & Matching (9%)	Retention (13%)	Retention (9%)	Time (11%)	Recruitment (16%)
Financial Investment (7%)	Retention (8%)	Roles & Matching (10%)	Roles & Matching (9%)	Roles & Matching (10%)	Roles & Matching (12%)
Retention (6%)	Time (8%)	Time (8%)	Time (7%)	Retention (9%)	Change Management (9%)

TECH USE & DIGITAL MATURITY

Digital Tools

Pivots in Response to COVID

To better understand the pivots volunteer organizations have made in response to COVID, we asked - **In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, how has your organization changed how it interacts with volunteers? Choose all that apply.**

- Offered more virtual volunteer opportunities - 51.9%
- Increased the number of virtual meetups - 50.5%
- Increased the number of virtual trainings - 47.3%
- Made significant changes to volunteer policies and procedures - 46.2%
- Increased presence on social media - 36.3%
- Leveraged volunteer feedback to make changes - 31.3%
- Significantly altered online portal or hub to better meet volunteer needs - 22.2%
- Started up or re-energized a private online community or social media group - 16.4%
- Conducted outreach to new communities - 16.3%
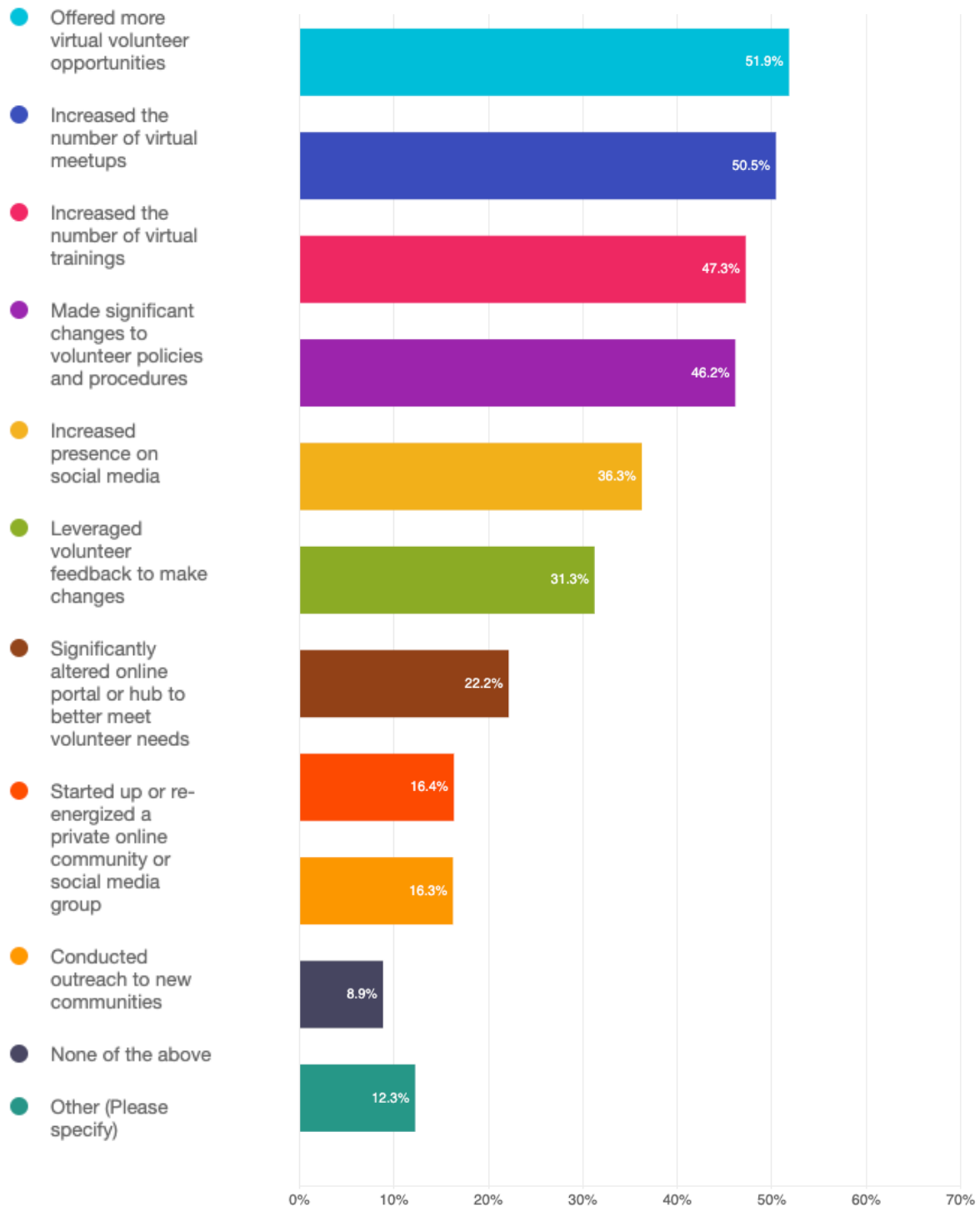- None of the above - 8.9%
- Other - 12.3%

Other strategies noted in open-ended comments include:

- Increased frequency of telephone calls and emails
- Sent handwritten notes, cards, and other postal mailings
- Started a pen pal program
- Create new offsite projects, home tasks, and "no-contact" roles
- Switched to paid staff roles
- Suspended or decreased volunteer involvement
- Increased safety measures and personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Increased volunteer leadership development and roles
- Formed new partnerships for volunteer roles
- Referred volunteers to other agencies for opportunities
- Decreased number of event attendees or volunteers in shift
- Converted volunteer applications and onboarding forms to online
- Acquired grant funding to make program improvements
- Used time to re-evaluate volunteer program and strategy

Almost all of our volunteer opportunities are in person at events or our offices. That isn't possible right now and we've struggled to find virtual service opportunities to keep them engaged. Additionally, our organization has very strict policies around access to technology and data, so it limits the work our volunteers can do remotely.

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Digital Tools

How Organizations Changed How They Interact With Volunteers Due to COVID

- ● Offered more virtual volunteer opportunities — **51.9%**
- ● Increased the number of virtual meetups — **50.5%**
- ● Increased the number of virtual trainings — **47.3%**
- ● Made significant changes to volunteer policies and procedures — **46.2%**
- ● Increased presence on social media — **36.3%**
- ● Leveraged volunteer feedback to make changes — **31.3%**
- ● Significantly altered online portal or hub to better meet volunteer needs — **22.2%**
- ● Started up or re-energized a private online community or social media group — **16.4%**
- ● Conducted outreach to new communities — **16.3%**
- ● None of the above — **8.9%**
- ● Other (Please specify) — **12.3%**

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%

'Not everyone is comfortable with or able to use technology, such as the telephone, Zoom, or email.'

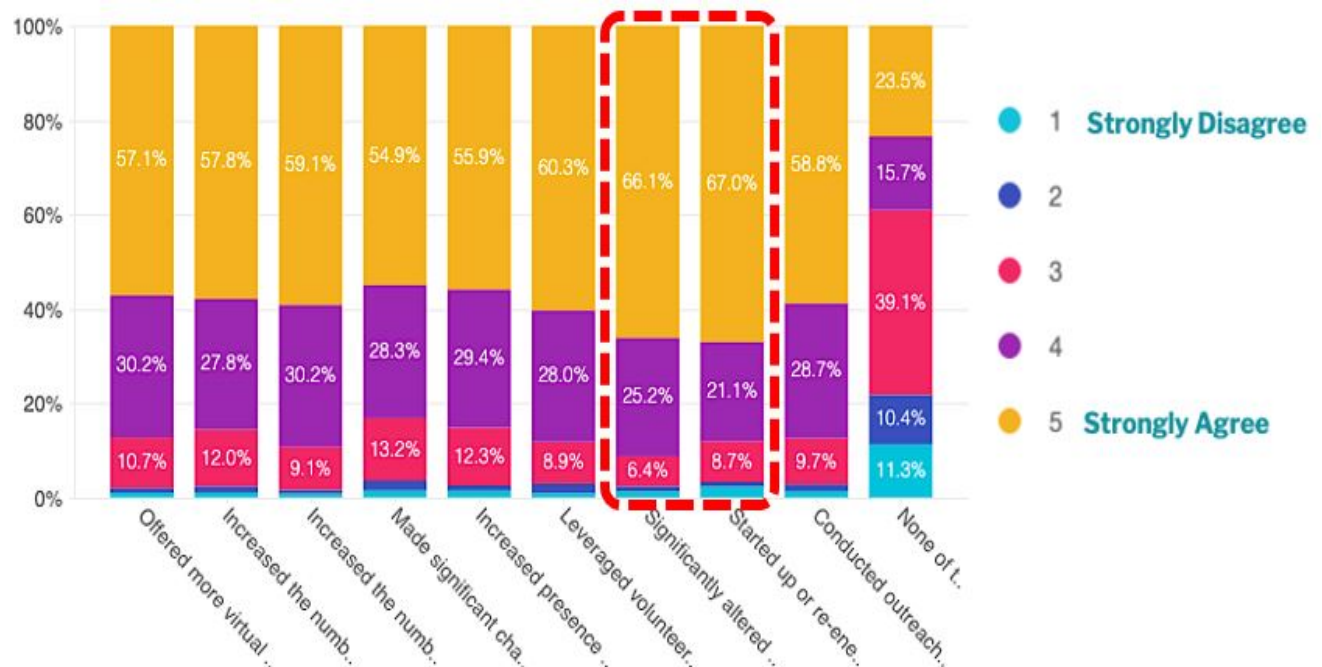**Volunteer Pro**®

Technology Tools

How Organization's Tech Use Has Changed

When we compare agency's plans to continue to use technology with the adoption of different strategies in response to the pandemic, we find broad agreement that technology use will continue in a post COVID world.

Of those who noted that they a) significantly altered online portal or hub to better meet volunteer needs and/or b) started up or re-energized a private online community or social media group, (91.3% and 88.1% respectively) strongly agreed or agreed they plan to continue technology use.

Complete labels for the chart below are:

- Offered more virtual volunteer opportunities
- Increased the number of virtual meetups
- Increased the number of virtual trainings
- Made significant changes to volunteer policies and procedures
- Increased presence on social media
- Leveraged volunteer feedback to make changes
- Conducted outreach to new communities
- None of the above

Technology Tools

Tools of the Trade

For a second consecutive year, we asked - **For which of these activities does your agency use digital tools for volunteer management on a regular basis?**

For the most part, volunteer organizations use technology for traditional uses – to post volunteer opportunities online (59.9%), to process online applications (62.1%), to communicate via broadcast emails (60.0%), and to track volunteer time (46.5%)

But we are also seeing shifts in tools and use over the past year. Below is a comparison of the 2020 and 2021 survey results for this question. Notably, the use of broadcast emails increased by 5.9% and online meetings and conferencing by 39%.

In addition, the tech tools used became more diverse. The use of automated drip email campaigns increased by 16.1%; the use of discussion forums or chats increased by 4.5%; and the use of broadcast group texts increased by 3.7%.

Digital Tool	2020	2021
Online Application Forms	**63.4%**	**62.1%**
Broadcast Emails/Newsletters	**54.1%**	**60.0%**
Volunteer Opportunity Listings	**73.4%**	**59.9%**
Video Meetings/Conferencing	15.7%	**54.7%**
Online Volunteer Training	31.7%	**53.4%**
Time Tracking	**50.5%**	**46.5%**
Background Screening	45.3%	41.4%
Shift Scheduling/Check-In	40.9%	40.5%
Online Document Sharing	34.3%	36.8%
Automated Drip Email Campaigns	6.0%	22.1%
Broadcast Group Texts	13.6%	17.3%
Discussion Forum/Chat	11.1%	15.6%
Online Collaboration/Editing	13.6%	15.3%

Technology Tools

More Tools of the Trade

We also added additional tools to list in this year's survey and found significant adoption in the use of volunteer contact databases (54.8%), social media platforms (50.7%), and feedback surveys (47.2%).

Digital Tool	2020	2021
Volunteer Contact Database	N/A	**54.8%**
Social Media Engagement	N/A	**50.7%**
Feedback Surveys	N/A	**47.2%**
Online Community/FB Group	N/A	32.2%
Interview/Appt. Scheduling	N/A	28.6%
Online Resources Hub	N/A	21.7%
Automated Phone Calls	N/A	2.8%

'I work in healthcare have been here for 30 years. We have strong volunteer systems, technology and a large base of volunteers that we communicate with on an ongoing basis. We just can't have them with us safely.'

'The agency and the volunteer program turned on a dime. Offering the same services and volunteer opportunities but were presented in a different format. It was a fairly seamless transition.'

'Feeling responsible for my volunteers' mental health on top of my mental health during COVID has been the most exhausting thing ever. Volunteers always require a lot of energy, I've really felt like they've needed almost double this year.'
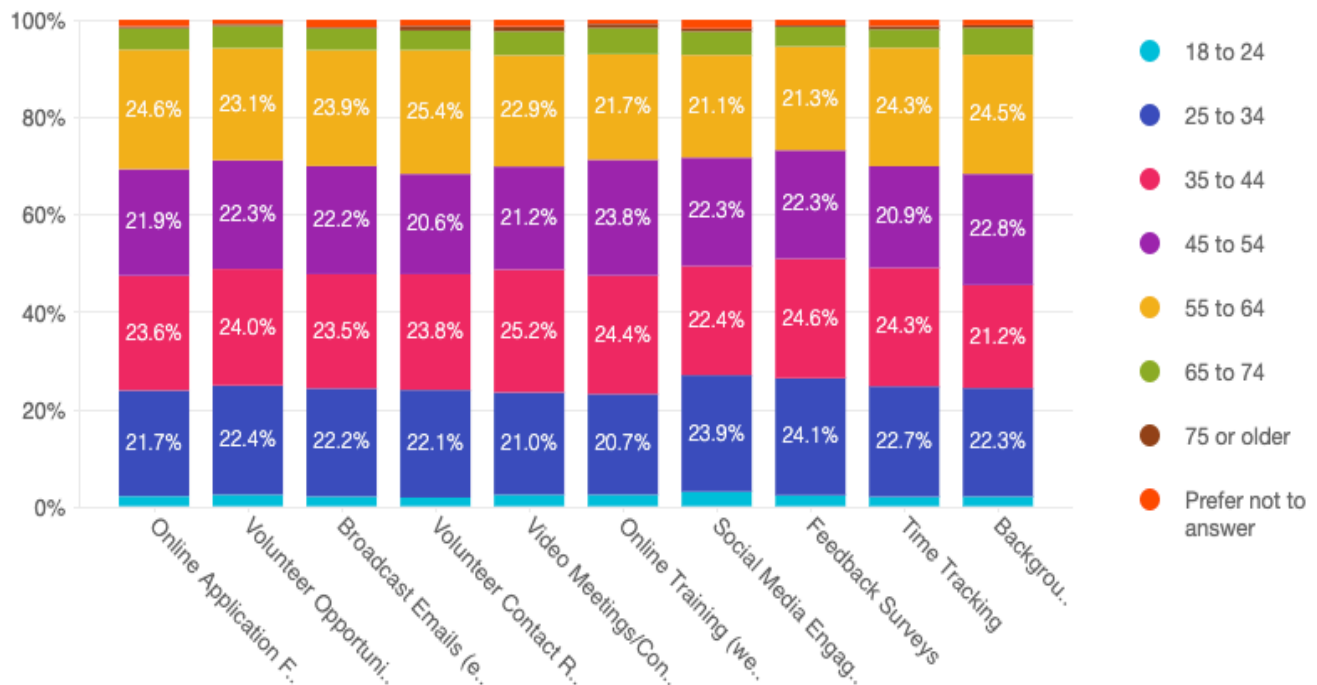
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Digital Tools x Age

Does Age Impact Adoption of Digital Tools?

We did not find any broad differences in the use of specific digital tools use by volunteer manager age group. In fact, the types of tools used were fairly consistent across all age bands.

Complete labels for the most often reported are:

- Online Application Forms
- Volunteer Opportunity Listings
- Broadcast Emails (e.g. newsletters)
- Volunteer Contact Record Database
- Video Meetings/Conferencing
- Online Training (webinars, courses)
- Social Media Engagement
- Feedback Surveys
- Time Tracking
- Background Screening

'The organisation I'm involved with is managed by older people with older people as volunteers. They are stuck in their ways and hesitant about the use of technology, changes in volunteer engagement, development of volunteer management . This is resulting in a stagnated service.'

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Plan to Continue Using Technology

How Will Tech Use Change for Volunteer Managers?

We asked - **Rate your agreement with the following – After the pandemic, my organization plans to continue to use technology we have recently adopted to engage and communicate with volunteers.**

Over two-thirds (77.6%) reported that they would continue their new uses of technology to manage volunteers.
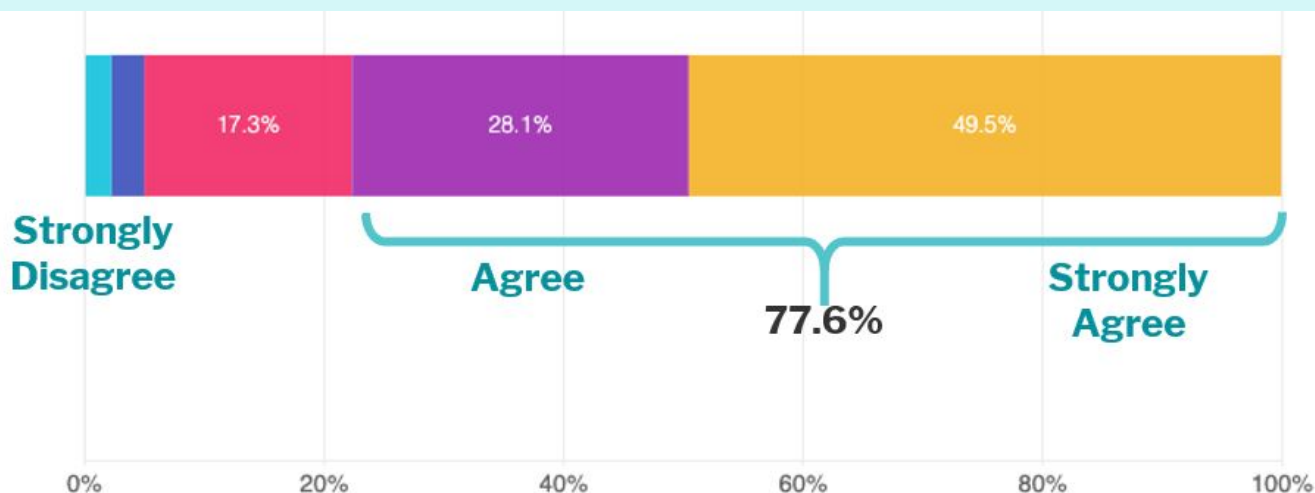
'While I would not have wanted a pandemic for UK, it has given charities an opportunity to brace technology in relation to volunteer management. We have been able to recruit many new people that would been impossible as they are housebound. I intend to use this lesson learned in the years ahead, as digital volunteering is here to stay.'

'Biggest challenge: having a large volunteer pool of individuals who are not comfortable, do not feel competent enough, or are resistant to learning how to utilize the various tech platforms for virtual tutoring, along with the many challenges our students and families are presented with due to the digital divide."

'Managing the volunteers in heightened stress and constant change is the biggest challenge. Some days difficult to keep up and communicate out the new information fast enough. Then it changes again and more communications. Volunteers who have returned during the pandemic need to be quick and flexible. In addition to the volunteer coordination, often pulled to do other operational/site based tasks affects the day and plans.

Plan to Continue Using Tech x Age

Does Age Impact Future Use of Digital Tools?

The correlation between those whose organizations plan to continue to use new technology after the pandemic does not follow what might be expected. Volunteer coordinators often struggle with resistance to technology use in older volunteers.

However, this does not appear to correlate with the confidence of older volunteer coordinators. 58.5% of those age 35 to 44 strongly agreed that they plan to continue technology innovations; 45.5%, 50.2% and 42.1% for those age 45 to 54 and 65 to 74 respectively. For those age 19 to 24, only 32.1% plan to continue using new technology.

(Note: Because we did not ask about organization size or budget in this year's survey, we do not know how this might correlate with the demographic characteristics of volunteer managers and the planned use of technology.)
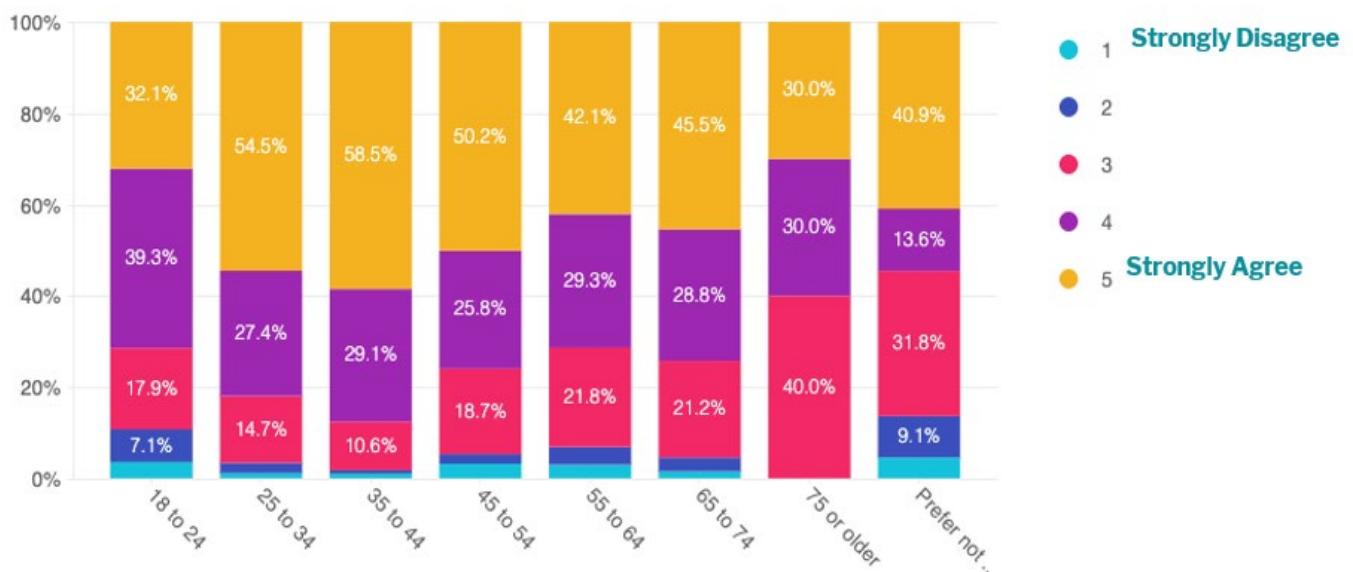
'Our largest group of volunteers are from the older generation - It seems unethical to continue allowing them to volunteer in-person because they're a more vulnerable population. It's also difficult to involve them virtually because they're not all comfortable with technology and aren't really willing to change from their traditional volunteer role. It's also a challenge to schedule new volunteers/volunteer groups especially since COVID regulations are now getting more strict again. It feels wrong to ask people to gather in person to come build on a construction site while states are asking to limit in-person activities."

Digital Maturity

Digital Maturity of Volunteer Organizations

We asked - **Rate your agency's current level of DIGITAL MATURITY in the following areas, as it relates to volunteers. Choose N/A if you don't feel qualified to rate an aspect.**

Ratings were as follows: 1- LAGGING - Little or no use of technology to meet goals, 2 - ADAPTING - Moderate use of technology to meet goals, 3 - MATURING - Extensive use of technology to meet goals.

About one in four (24.0%) rated their agency overall as Mature in terms of technology use and volunteers. A little over half (55.9%) reported that their overall digital strategy was in the Adapting stage with moderate technology use to meet goals. About one-third (15.1%) reported that they were lagging, and another 7% did not feel qualified enough to rate their tech strategy. These ratings show marked improvement from 2020 to 2021, with gains in every area.

The areas where volunteer managers felt strongest were -- communications (weighted average 2.22), data collection & reporting (weighted average 2.10), recruitment (weighted average 2.09), and scheduling (weighted average 1.98), with Lagging = 1, Adapting = 2, and Maturing = 3. These also align with most frequently used by agencies as reported elsewhere in the survey.

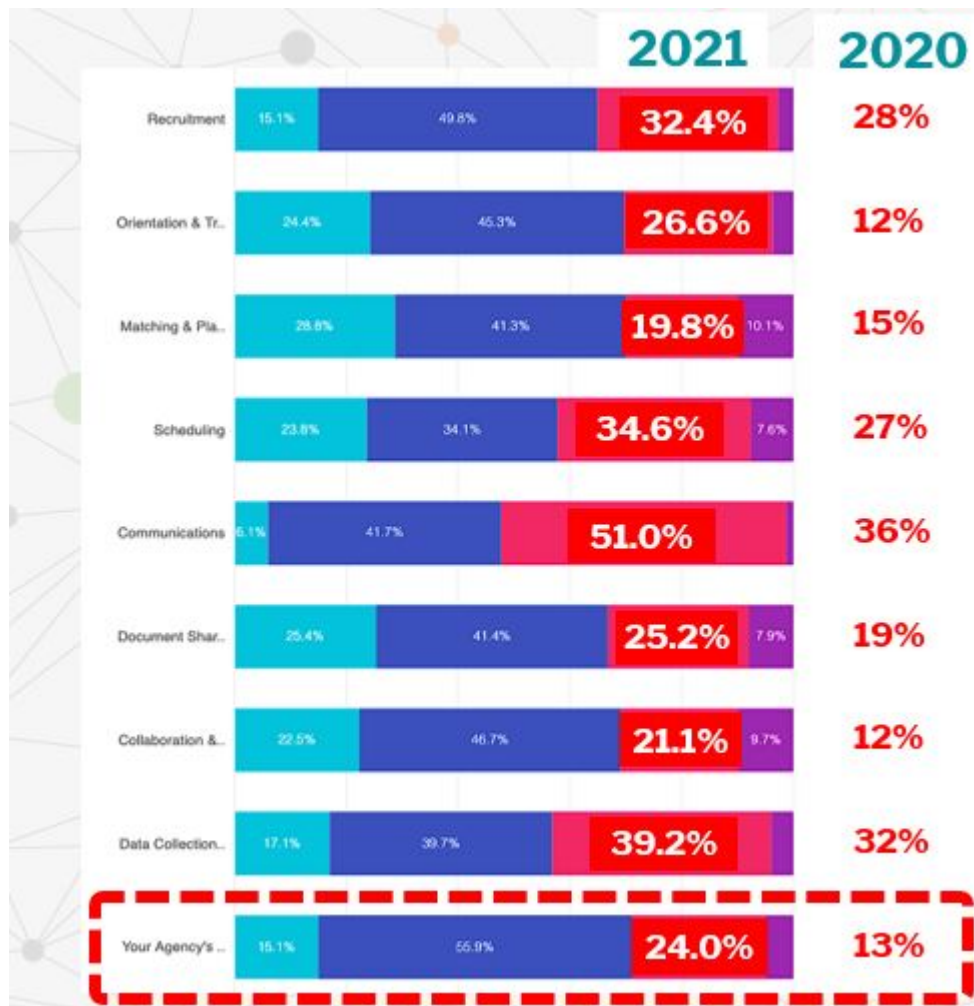**2021 Percent Who Rated Maturing** (rating for previous year in parenthesis)

- Recruitment - 32.4% (28% 2020)
- Orientation & Training - 26.6% (12% 2020)
- Matching & Placement - 19.8% (15% 2020)
- Scheduling - 34.6% (27% 2020)
- Communications - 51.0% (36% 2020)
- Document Sharing - 25.2% (19% 2020)
- Collaboration & Leadership - 21.1% (12% 2020)
- Data Collection & Reporting - 39.2% (32% 2020)
- Your Agency's Overall Digital Strategy - 24.0% (13% 2020)

See chart on the next page.

'The various forms on virtual leadership support groups has been so important during these uncertain times. Information shared has been invaluable in making adjustments and sharing new/best practices in the industry.'

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Digital Maturity

- 1- LAGGING - Little or no use of technology to meet goals

- 2 - ADAPTING - Moderate use of technology to meet goals

- 3 - MATURING - Extensive use of technology to meet goals

- N/A (or Don't Know)

	2021				2020
Recruitment	15.1%	49.8%	32.4%		28%
Orientation & Tr..	24.4%	45.3%	26.6%		12%
Matching & Pla..	28.8%	41.3%	19.8%	10.1%	15%
Scheduling	23.8%	34.1%	34.6%	7.6%	27%
Communications	6.1%	41.7%	51.0%		36%
Document Shar..	25.4%	41.4%	25.2%	7.9%	19%
Collaboration & ..	22.5%	46.7%	21.1%	9.7%	12%
Data Collection..	17.1%	39.7%	39.2%		32%
Your Agency's ..	15.1%	55.9%	24.0%		13%

'I have been placing ads for volunteer recruitment, but potential volunteers are unsure of how to use technology to make virtual visits. Retention of Volunteers is a problem too. Due to the disconnect with meeting up with volunteers they have been reluctant to continue to volunteer. Most is due to having a young family and dealing with remote learning for them.'

'[O]ur volunteers mostly assist with mock interviews and resume reviews. While possible to do these virtually, our staff had to do some deep process changes to make them work... I'm hopeful that this will change as we get more tech savvy in all areas, but for now it's frustrating to have lots of new and returning volunteers wanting to help and very few opportunities.'

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Age x Digital Maturity

Does Age Impact Digital Maturity?

Similar to other findings in the survey, the self-assessed digital maturity of their agency also does not fall along expected age trends. In fact, volunteer managers age 65 and older were more likely to report their digital use as Maturing (32.4%) when compared to their younger counterpart (age 18-24), of whom 27.6% rated their agency as Maturing.

Although the response set for older volunteer managers is smaller, these data may show that older people can become, and indeed are, comfortable with using technology to further their volunteer goals. This may well uncover an "age bias" in our field when it comes to technology capacity and could impact assumptions on whether older volunteers, too, can be supported to become tech-ready.

Because creating new virtual roles for volunteers was a top challenge noted by volunteer managers, assumptions about the barriers to technology adoption, including age and experience of both volunteer manager and volunteer, should be examined further.
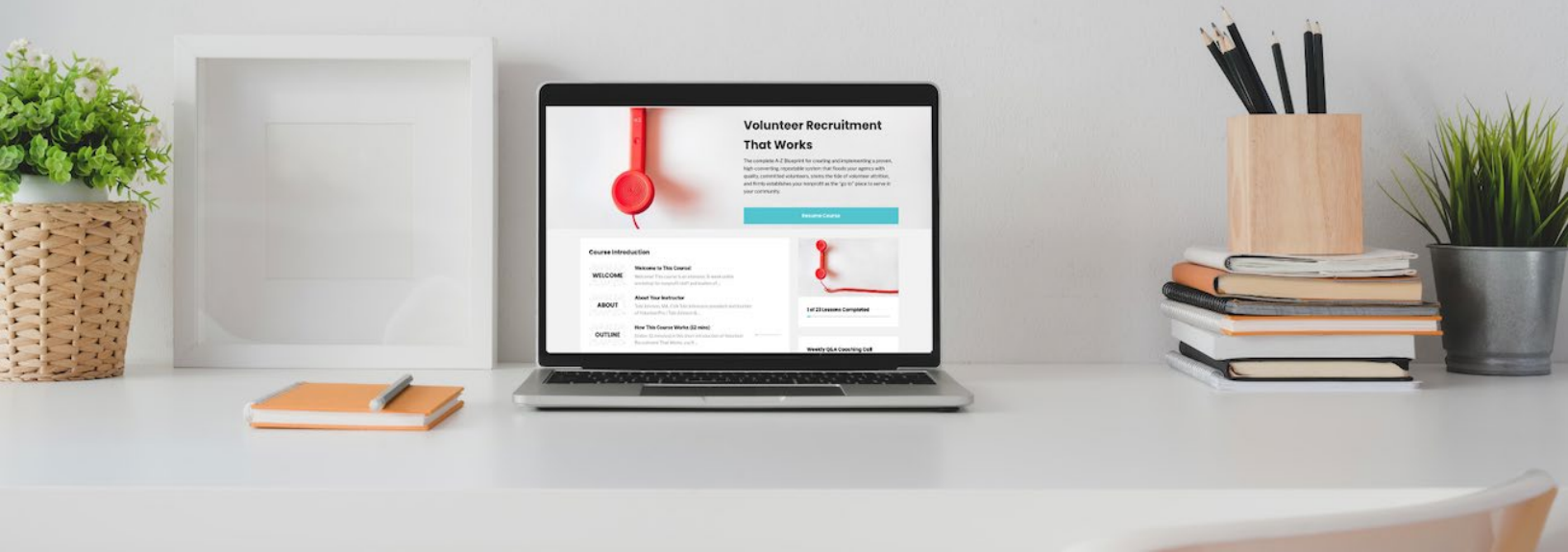
	Your Agency's Overall Digital Strategy			
	(1) 1-LAGGING - Little or no use of technology to meet goals	(2) 2 - ADAPTING - Moderate use of technology to meet goals	(3) 3 - MATURING - Extensive use of technology to meet goals	(4)
18 to 24	13.8% (4)	51.7% (15)	27.6% (8)	6.9% (2)
25 to 34	15.4% (41)	56.9% (152)	24.3% (65)	3.0% (8)
35 to 44	13.0% (37)	61.0% (174)	19.6% (56)	5.3% (15)
45 to 54	18.1% (52)	52.3% (150)	23.7% (68)	4.9% (14)
55 to 64	14.5% (50)	52.9% (182)	23.6% (81)	6.1% (21)
65 to 74	13.2% (9)	51.5% (35)	32.4% (22)	2.9% (2)
75 or older	30.0% (3)	30.0% (3)	40.0% (4)	0.0% (0)

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