



VOLUNTEER WASHINGTON

A CASE FOR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERISM

2016-2020

About Us:



501 Commons is a management support organization providing contracted HR, IT, and financial services, tech and management consulting, and information and referral services. It also supports effective volunteer programs by managing Volunteer Program Improvement Plans (VPIP), the Volunteer Manager Corps, training, and online resources for volunteer programs. Learn more at 501Commons.org.



Serve Washington advances national service, volunteerism, and civic engagement to improve lives; expands opportunity to meet the local critical needs of residents of Washington; and strengthens community capacity while creating healthy and resilient communities. Washington is one of 17 states that gets Volunteer Generation Fund support from the Corporation for National and Community Service to promote volunteerism for those of all ages. Learn more at ofm.wa.gov/servewa.



Volunteer Centers of Washington is Washington State's association of Volunteer Connectors. It supports individual volunteer connectors and sponsors volunteer management trainings and manages funding. Learn more at volunteerwashington.org.



Besides expanding and enhancing services, volunteerism strengthens communities, engaging those of various cultures and backgrounds and bringing fresh ideas.

Who has the time and talent to improve communities?

Volunteers!

From the beginning of our country, “voluntary associations” have been a hallmark of America. By coming together, ordinary people engage in problem-solving and collaborate with government and business to address issues that no single sector can solve. Volunteers:

- Deliver critical services—from volunteer fire fighters and search and rescue, to delivering meals to seniors and manning phone lines at sexual assault centers
- Tutor, teach, mentor, and coach young people
- Contribute medical, legal, marketing, design, technology, and planning advice and other skills
- Build houses and schools, dig wells, and clean up the environment
- Serve as companions to those with disabilities and mental illness, care for abandoned animals, raise funds, and much more.

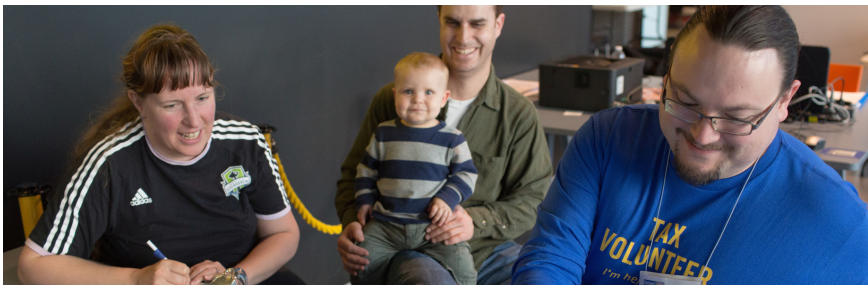
The Corporation for National and Community Services (CNCS) reported that in 2014 33% of Washington residents volunteered, placing the state 11th in the nation in terms of volunteer rates. This amounts to 1.61 million volunteers contributing 155.3 million hours of service, valued conservatively at \$3.6 billion.

National volunteer rate

25%

Washington volunteer rate

33%



Free tax prep volunteers return cash to community members' pockets.

Volunteer Impact: VITA

The national Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides free tax preparation services for those with lower incomes. It delivers an average of \$2,000 in additional refunds back to working taxpayers, by tapping into the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). It has been called the greatest anti-poverty program in the nation.¹

In King County, the United Way has run the program for 13+ years, now with 825 trained and IRS-certified volunteers, who organize volunteers from Microsoft, Boeing, Washington Federal, University of Washington, Seattle University, Green River Community College, and more. In 2015, they prepared 19,900 tax returns, securing \$27 million in refunds.

Volunteers helped more than 5,000 Spokane County residents claim over \$1.7 million in Earned Income Tax Credits in 2015. The partnership responsible for the program in Spokane County includes the Spokane County United Way, AARP Foundation, the IRS, the Spokane CASH Coalition, and Gonzaga and Eastern Washington Universities. The VITA program in Pierce County is run by Associated Ministries, South Sound 2-1-1, Sound Outreach, and the Pierce County Library System.

Volunteerism increases civic engagement and citizenship

It helps build more cohesive, safer, stronger communities by bringing together people of all means and backgrounds. In places with high levels of volunteerism, community health is better and economic inequality lower.

And volunteerism helps the volunteer. Research has shown that volunteerism offsets health risks such as depression, drug use, and isolation and helps students, interns, and mid-career professionals gain valuable job skills and experience. Studies show that people who volunteer are happier and that unemployed volunteers find jobs faster.

Volunteer impact does not just happen

Effective volunteer engagement is planned, managed, and supported. Trained staff in nonprofit, government, and community-based organizations must have the time and training to recruit the right volunteers, match them to the best opportunities, screen, train, supervise, and evaluate. The volunteers need to have access to information about where and how to volunteer. All of that takes supporting organizations that offer assistance with matching, volunteer manager training, professional associations, and other professional resources.

It also takes technical infrastructure such as databases and database support staff, social media capabilities, space, insurance, and additional equipment.



More than 200 attorneys and paralegals give their time and talents to those in need through Snohomish County Legal Services. The Bar Associations in King and Pierce Counties are also active in facilitating volunteerism, including hosting special programs to help military personnel with their legal needs.

Volunteer Impact: Emergency Response

When the Oso mudslide hit in 2014, volunteers poured in. The Volunteer Center at the United Way of Snohomish County was ready with plans and trained volunteers to open two “pop up” Volunteer Mobilization Centers (VMCs). Trained volunteers managed sign-up processes, liability release forms, and supplies, freeing up the emergency responders to focus on the rescue work at hand.

This was possible because the United Way had used part of their previous year’s federal grant to recruit and train volunteers and prepare needed documents. Similar VMCs are being planned by the Volunteer Center of Whatcom County, with students volunteers from Western Washington University.

The volunteer center also convened an “orientation on disasters” where almost 600 residents learned about what to expect if a subduction zone earthquake were to hit the region. This included the policy, mitigation, and preparedness actions available to the community to reduce damages and protect vulnerable members.



An effective volunteer ecosystem

We leave some of the most important work a person can do in the hands of volunteers. Volunteer managers, others in nonprofit organizations, volunteer centers, and the capacity-builders that assist them all need support and need their voices heard in the dialogue about communities. We see this as coming together in a volunteer ecosystem. It is critical that we invest attention and resources in the ecosystem that support that work.²



Federal funds supported 1,474 AmeriCorps national service members in Washington State in 2016. These volunteers receive living and education stipends, and add extra capacity to disaster response teams, tutoring, housing construction, environmental repair, and much more.

Volunteer Impact: Employment

Lori Valentine from **Grays Harbor** moved from fast-food service employment to a WorkSource placement at the local volunteer center. This single mom was then hired part-time, added a second part-time job, then finally moved to full-time professional employment.

A 2013 study from the Corporation for National and Community Service found that:

- Volunteers have a 27% higher likelihood of finding a job after being out of work than non-volunteers.
- Volunteers without a high school diploma have a 51% higher likelihood of finding employment.
- Volunteers living in rural areas have a 55% higher likelihood of finding employment.³

In addition, the Center for Economic and Policy Research reported that unemployed people who volunteered between 20 and 99 hours during the year were roughly 7% more likely to have found employment a year later.

While these results are important for all job seekers, they're especially welcome news for the nation's 4.4 million long-term unemployed (those out of work for at least six months).

What can you do?

You are part of the volunteer ecosystem. Join volunteer champions across Washington State to keep volunteer engagement growing and to provide the systems needed to increase the impact volunteers can have on our communities.

What follows are suggestions for actions to help the volunteer ecosystem. Please contact your local volunteer center for more advice and collaboration.

Funders

- Add your support for active volunteer engagement into your grant-making criteria, guidelines, and communications.
- Invest in infrastructure for volunteer management such as access to training, databases to track volunteers, and support for other volunteer program costs.
- Educate other funders that program delivery costs includes volunteer management.

Elected Officials and Tribes

- Allocate to support volunteer connector organizations and capacity-builders that sustain and improve the volunteer infrastructure.
- Be a voice for service and volunteerism.



501 Commons' Executive Service Corps members offer skilled consulting around the state. Service Corps members come from a wide range of professional backgrounds in government, business, health care, education, and the nonprofit sector. Most have experience in senior leadership roles and are currently in the workforce. Only about 20% of their more than 500 members are retired.

Volunteer Impact: Education

Washington-Idaho Volunteer Center's "America Reads" program, including Asotin and Garfield Counties, recruits, screens, and places tutors—who are often retirees—in schools. In the 2014/2015 school year, all of the students tutored improved their reading scores. Almost 9 in 10 (86%) of the students whom teachers determined had the ability to reach grade level reading, did so.

Reading programs are widespread volunteer roles, with similar programs in Pierce, Thurston, Chelan, Kittitas, Benton, and Franklin Counties.

Washington's Volunteer Reading Corps was created in 1998 as a collaboration between the Governor's office, Serve Washington, the Office of Public Instruction, and the Washington Service Corps. In 2014-2015, WRC placed 128 AmeriCorps national service volunteers at 73 sites across 47 school districts in 23 counties of Washington State.



America Reads' volunteer tutors in Garfield County improved 100% of students' reading scores in 2014/15.

Government Agency Representatives

- Promote the value of volunteers as the foundation for caring communities and a thriving Washington.
- Incorporate volunteerism as a core strategy for addressing critical needs such as emergency response, public safety, and school achievement.
- Include volunteer centers in discussions about volunteerism as an effective strategy to create healthy and resilient communities.

Employers

- Promote employee volunteerism by giving released time, providing flexibility for volunteer activities, and matching contributions.
- Offer employee volunteer programs, strengthening both company culture and the community.
- Pay for the costs incurred by nonprofits and volunteer connectors when they engage your employees.
- Become knowledgeable about resources available to find volunteer opportunities and help make those resources accessible to employees.
- Advocate for more recognition of the impact of volunteers in your community with the local, state, and federal government.

Schools and Colleges

- Recognize and promote the value of service in a person's education and career preparation.
- Partner with volunteer centers and volunteer connectors to find varied roles and volunteer experiences for students.
- Celebrate the impact of students' volunteering.



Volunteers are critical to food services and food banks, used by one in five Washingtonians.

Volunteer Impact: Food Banks

Volunteers provide much of the staffing for food banks and feeding programs across the state. With dedicated volunteer management, infrastructure, and support their impact is multiplied.

The Volunteer Impact Partnership (VIP) 360 Program, started by the United Way of King County and 501 Commons in 2009, provides nonprofits with extended support for assessing and improving volunteer programs.

In the first year, VIP 360 focused on food banks, including the Rainier Valley Food Bank (RVFB) in South Seattle. When RVFB enrolled in VIP 360, their volunteer program consisted of a telephone, some scraps of paper, several disparate spreadsheets stored on different off-site computers, a draft volunteer handbook, a sign-in sheet, and a whiteboard calendar. Volunteer recruitment consisted of one tabling event each year, which they struggled to staff.

After taking part in the VIP program, the number of volunteer hours at RVFB quickly doubled from 900 to 1,800 hours per month. By the end of 2010, the total contribution of volunteers was the equivalent of eight full-time employees.

Volunteer Centers and Capacity Builders

- Serve as an active broker for volunteer services, matching volunteers with appropriate opportunities.
- Provide leadership in expanding the diversity of volunteers and volunteer opportunities.
- Ensure professional education for your staff and facilitate training and mentoring around volunteer management.
- Assume a leadership role in measuring the impact of volunteers.
- Advocate for greater support for volunteer infrastructure by reaching out to government officials, businesses, and funders in your community.

Nonprofits and faith-based agencies

- Designate a staff person or lead volunteer, who has received professional training, to be accountable for volunteer management.
- Ensure that training and advancement are available to volunteer managers.
- Include the opinions and insights of volunteers into program planning.
- Strengthen the professional associations of volunteer managers so they can provide more support and education for volunteer managers.

If you would like to get involved in your community, contact your closest volunteer center. If you would like to support effective volunteerism in your organization, company or community and would like to know how to get started, contact vcwcoordinator@gmail.com.



Washington is known for its programs for youth volunteering, most of which offer a Varsity Letter in Volunteerism. House Bill 1412, signed in 2013, requires Washington high schools to encourage students to volunteer.

What is a Volunteer Center?

A volunteer center provides a “match-making” service for volunteers and agencies. Many maintain websites for online searches; some provide one-on-one screening and matching. Some but not all have a “storefront” for volunteer assistance.

Sometimes termed “Volunteer Connectors,” Volunteer Centers also help guide and train volunteer managers in best practices and provide the “voice of volunteerism” in their communities.

There are dozens of volunteer centers in the state, some of which specialize in certain age groups, such as the RSVP programs for those 55 or older.

Many are run by part-time staff and are subsidized by parent organizations such as United Ways, Community Action Programs, and a few other institutions. They are all “under the gun” every year to maintain their budgets, and only dream of increasing capacity.

See the next page for a county-by-county list of volunteer centers and programs in Washington State.

Volunteer Centers in Washington State, by County

Note: RSVP centers serve only those ages 55 or older.

County	All ages volunteer connector	RSVP- Age 55+ volunteer connector
Adams		RSVP of North Central Washington www.rsvpncw.org
Asotin	Washington-Idaho Volunteer Center www.waidvolunteercenter.org	Washington-Idaho Volunteer Center www.waidvolunteercenter.org
Benton		RSVP/Catholic Family & Child Services www.ccyakima.org
Chelan	United Way of Chelan & Douglas Counties www.uwcdc.galaxydigital.com	RSVP of North Central Washington www.rsvpncw.org
Clallam	Olympic Community Action Programs www.olycap.org	Olympic Community Action Programs www.olycap.org
Clark	Volunteer Connections/RSVP Human Services Council, www.hsc-wa.org/volunteer-center	Volunteer Connections/RSVP Human Services Council, www.hsc-wa.org/volunteer-center
Columbia	RSVP/Volunteer Center of Cowlitz-Wahkiakum lowercolumbiacap.org/give-help/volunteer	RSVP/Volunteer Center of Cowlitz-Wahkiakum lowercolumbiacap.org/give-help/volunteer
Douglas	United Way of Chelan & Douglas Counties www.uwcdc.galaxydigital.com	RSVP of North Central Washington www.rsvpncw.org
Franklin		RSVP/Catholic Family & Child Services www.ccyakima.org
Garfield	Washington-Idaho Volunteer Center www.waidvolunteercenter.org	Washington-Idaho Volunteer Center www.waidvolunteercenter.org
Grant		RSVP of North Central Washington www.rsvpncw.org
Grays Harbor	United Way of Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties www.unitedwaygraysharbor.org/volunteer-1	Coastal Community Action Program coastalcap.org/rsvp
Jefferson	United Good Neighbors of Jefferson County www.wearugn.org/volunteer/volunteer-in-jefferson-county	Olympic Community Action Programs www.olycap.org
King	United Way of King County Volunteer Center www.uwkc.org/volunteer Seattle Works, www.seattleworks.org	RSVP- Solid Ground www.solid-ground.org/get-involved/retired-senior-volunteer-program

Kitsap	United Way of Kitsap County www.volunteerkitsap.org	Lutheran Community Services NW www.lcsnw.org/bremerton/rsvp.html
Kittitas	RSVP and Volunteer Center of Kittitas County www.rsvp-wa.org/ellensburg	RSVP and Volunteer Center of Kittitas County, www.rsvp-wa.org/ellensburg
Lewis	United Way of Lewis County www.volunteerlewis.org	United Way of Thurston County www.unitedway-thurston.org/RSVP
Lincoln		RSVP of North Central Washington www.rsvpnw.org
Mason	United Way of Mason County www.unitedwaymasonco.org	United Way of Thurston County www.unitedway-thurston.org/RSVP
Okanogan		RSVP of North Central Washington www.rsvpnw.org
Pacific	United Way of Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties www.unitedwaygraysharbor.org/volunteer-1	Coastal Community Action Program www.coastalcap.org
Pierce	United Way of Pierce County www.uwpc.org/volunteer	United Way of Pierce County www.uwpc.org/rsvp
Skagit	Skagit Volunteer Center www.skagitvolunteercenter.org	
Snohomish	United Way of Snohomish County getconnected.uwsc.org	Catholic Community Services WW www.ccsww.org
Spokane	Spokane County United Way unitedwayspokane.org	YMCA of the Inland Northwest ymcaspokane.org/programs/rsvp
Thurston	United Way of Thurston County www.getconnected.unitedway-thurston.org	United Way of Thurston County www.unitedway-thurston.org/RSVP
Wahkiakum	RSVP/Volunteer Center of Cowlitz-Wahkiakum lowercolumbiacap.org/give-help/volunteer	RSVP/Volunteer Center of Cowlitz-Wahkiakum lowercolumbiacap.org/give-help/volunteer
Walla Walla	United Way of Walla Walla County getconnected.unitedwayww.org	
Whatcom	Volunteer Center of Whatcom County www.whatcomvolunteer.org	Volunteer Center of Whatcom County whatcomvolunteer.org/content/programs/rsvp.asp
Yakima		RSVP of Yakima County volunteermatch.org/search/org73789.jsp

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1 <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/the-avenue/posts/2013/01/11-eitc-anti-poverty-kneebone-williams>

2 <https://philanthropy.org/resources/assessment-capacity-building-washington-state>

3 <http://www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/research-and-reports/volunteering-pathway-employment-report>