

NATION  
SWELL

# Guide to **engaging employees** in corporate volunteerism

Strategies shared by and for NationSwell members

November 2023



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# Overview: corporate employee volunteerism

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A majority of employees (69%) report that “having societal impact is a high expectation or deal breaker when considering a job” (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2023). By facilitating volunteerism, companies can help to meet growing employee interest in purpose-driven work environments while harnessing the power of individual and collective contributions to drive impact.

Generally, employees are eager to have access to volunteer opportunities through work. Seventy-one percent of employees say it’s imperative or very important to work at a company that is supportive of giving and volunteering (America’s Charities, 2022), and they attribute volunteerism to well-being (77%), boosted morale (70%), and strengthened camaraderie (64%) (Bright Funds, 2021). Additionally, 92% of corporate human resources executives feel that leadership and professional skills are strengthened by contributing expertise to nonprofits (Deloitte, 2017).

However, volunteer participation is decreasing. In 2022, 86% of companies offered domestic virtual volunteerism programs but only 19.8% of employees volunteered one hour or more of their time – lower than the pre-pandemic average of 29% (CECP, 2023). Nonprofit organizations are noticing this downward trend. In a recent survey, 47% of nonprofit CEOs said that recruiting sufficient volunteers is a notable problem for their organization (Do Good Institute, 2023).

Given the increased value that employees place on working within purpose-driven environments, what explains the decline in volunteerism? Workers cite the following major detractors from volunteering: pressure from employers and colleagues, no availability during work hours, undefined projects, limited information about NGOs, and lack of a platform to register, participate, and track hours (America’s Charities, 2022). Moreover, few feel that volunteering can enhance their career opportunities (18%) or help to develop new skills (36%) (Deloitte, 2017).

This resource explores a range of solutions to these challenges, sourced primarily from the experiences of NationSwell Institutional Members.

**How can companies engage more employees through volunteerism? →**

## About this resource

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Volunteerism has the potential to synchronize the values and priorities of employees with other corporate investments in social impact. But, given decreased participation rates and known barriers to engagement, there is significant interest among companies in designing more effective approaches to activating their employees in volunteer programs. Gathered from NationSwell Leader Roundtables, consultations with NationSwell members, and independent research, this resource **provides strategic guidance for companies to strengthen and advance their volunteerism efforts, with a specific focus on mitigating barriers and increasing incentives for employees.**

In this report you will find:

- **Four key areas of guidance surfaced by NationSwell members**
- **Case examples of strategies in action**
- **Implementation checklists**

This guidance is not representative of all aspects of volunteerism strategy. We encourage you to spend time with **NationSwell's case study on Verizon's employee volunteerism strategy** for an in-depth view of a successful program (pages 27-29) and review other relevant resources on this topic (page 33).



# Guidance

# Guidance: An overview

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## Center individual employee interests and skills in volunteer programming

1. Build a menu of skills-based volunteer opportunities to spark employee enthusiasm and channel their capabilities.
2. Provide volunteers with tools and resources to support their efforts.
3. Consider partnering with third-party organizations to support skills-based project identification, matchmaking, and scoping.
4. But, be careful not to outsource too much of your volunteer program design and management at the expense of employee ownership.

## Foster awareness through diversified calls to action

1. Leverage the onboarding process to initiate involvement in community engagement and volunteerism.
2. Lean on senior leaders to motivate employee engagement, but do so by humanizing their commitments and passion.
3. Reach beyond C-suite to engage middle managers to model volunteerism and engagement.
4. Use internal community infrastructure to raise awareness and enable decentralized engagement.
5. Invite social impact partners to connect with employees directly.
6. Have plans for reactive and proactive calls to action in your “most-read” internal communications channels.

# Guidance: An overview

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## Increase accessibility to volunteer opportunities for all employees

1. Lean on digital platforms to drive scale and track data from employee volunteerism and giving programs.
2. Hire vendors experienced in virtual volunteering.
3. Create company-wide signature experiences.
4. Leverage local partnerships to support proximate volunteering.
5. Host on-site volunteer opportunities and create generous paid time off policies for frontline and/or hourly workers.

## Reward engagement using incentives and meaningful recognition

1. Offer employees leadership opportunities on volunteer projects.
2. Use gamification to play into good-natured competitive instincts.
3. Connect volunteer participation with corporate philanthropy.
4. Create an annual appreciation month to recognize employees who commit to volunteerism.
5. Work with HR to ladder up volunteer engagement into employees' professional development plans

# 1

## Center individual employee interests and skills in volunteer programming

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Employee volunteer programs must balance the goals of advancing organizational impact and activating employees' passions and skills. While many companies provide planned volunteer opportunities aligned with their core community priorities, effective programs also provide employees with the structure and resources needed to pursue their own impact goals. Here are several leading ideas surfaced by NationSwell members around skills-based and employee-led volunteerism:

- 1. Build a menu of skills-based volunteer opportunities to spark employee enthusiasm and channel their capabilities.** There are a number of volunteer modalities that allow employees to express their unique skills, impact their communities, and experience professional growth. These include **project-based volunteering** initiatives (individuals or small teams assigned to solving a particular problem or challenge in their community); **pro bono work** (employees deliver their company's services for free to nonprofits and community organizations); **mentoring** (employees provide guidance to high school students, college students, and individuals entering the workforce); **secondments** (employees are dispatched for a period of time to serve at a strategically aligned organization in a different sector or location); and **board placements** (employees provide board service to a nonprofit on a voluntary basis). Policies around these types of volunteerism opportunities should clearly describe eligibility criteria (tenure, seniority, etc.), allowances for paid time off and other work impacts, and relationship to professional growth (e.g., how skills-based volunteerism factors into performance management).
- 2. Provide volunteers with tools and resources to support their efforts.** Successful skills-based and employee-led volunteering initiatives provide employees with tools and structure for their engagement, including support around partner outreach, program design, and implementation. Consider creating a toolkit on how to get started. A toolkit can include resources on how to create a team, how to write an outreach letter, and how to measure success.



- 3. Consider partnering with third-party organizations to support skills-based project identification, matchmaking, and scoping.** Skills-based volunteering programs can serve the dual benefit of supporting non-profit partners while deepening the commitment of employees through direct application of individual expertise. However, large organizations are often removed from the realities of the individuals and communities they seek to serve. Third-party organizations like [Taproot](#) can support employers in connecting the unique talents of their teams with the needs of nonprofit organizations through pro bono and other skills-based volunteerism.
  
- 4. But, be careful not to outsource too much of your volunteer program design and management at the expense of employee ownership.** While external partners can help to support and expand volunteering efforts, strong internal commitment is necessary to ensure a more successful long-term skills-based and employee-led volunteering program. Over-reliance on external partners can make it more difficult to empower staff to want to be a part of the process.

# From the field

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## Mastercard

Mastercard employees participate in a number of skills-based and pro bono volunteer opportunities, including data assistance, disaster relief, and mentoring.

### **Data for Good**

An employee volunteerism program that leverages analytical and technical skills to help nonprofit, government, and social enterprise partners with specialized social impact solutions. In 2022, Mastercard provided 940 hours of pro bono data assistance by employees for developing the Mastercard Inclusive Growth Score.

### **Disaster relief**

Mastercard employees are given opportunities to be trained as Red Cross disaster responders. Employees served in three 10 day deployments in 2022; disaster volunteers assisted with aid distribution, clinic support, and on the ground operations.

### **Veteran mentoring**

Employees partner with American Corporate Partners in a year-long mentorship to provide career readiness and advice for veterans transitioning into the civilian workforce. In 2022, there were more than 50 active veteran mentorships.

## PwC

As part of PwC's 2020 commitment to take a stand against racism, bias, and discrimination, the company facilitates a skills-based volunteering program focused on social injustice.

### **Skills for Society**

This program is committed to solving social injustice by offering employee expertise to nonprofits. Employees use paid time to execute pro bono projects, half-day workshops, and nonprofit board service to organizations focused on equity and access in education, healthcare, economic empowerment, public safety, civic engagement, and climate.

# From the field

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## LinkedIn

LinkedIn's employee volunteerism programs includes mentoring and pro bono initiatives:

### **LinkedIn Coaches**

LinkedIn employees offer training and career exploration opportunities to job seekers who face barriers to accessing the resources, networks, and skills needed for their career advancement. Employees partner with people, nonprofits, and companies to provide job seekers with profile feedback, networking practice, and career advice.

### **Recruiting for Good**

This pro bono initiative supports nonprofits with their talent search for critical executive and highly strategic roles. Support includes talent sourcing, initial recruiter phone screens, editing job descriptions, and LinkedIn Recruiter training. Their primary focus areas are economic opportunity, racial and gender equity, and sustainability.

## Starbucks

Starbucks employees who wish to engage in community impact receive tools and resources through the open source [Community Champion curriculum on Starbucks' Global Academy](#). The program offers courses to help employees understand the needs of their communities, and learn how to create an actionable plan to make a difference.

## Nike

Through the [Nike Community Ambassador Program \(NCA\)](#), Nike store athletes are trained to serve as volunteer youth coaches in their local communities and share their love of sport. NCAs provide positive sport experiences to kids, inspiring them to stay active and reach their potential both on and off the field. The program also serves as a pathway for leadership development and career growth. The leadership skills NCAs acquire through the program help to prepare them for elevated roles within Nike stores and offices. More than 14,500 store athletes have volunteered to coach kids in their communities through the NCA program, resulting in more than 270,000 volunteer hours.

## How we're doing: employee interests and skills

	YES	NO	NO, BUT WE HAVE A PLAN	ACTION ITEMS
We offer a variety of volunteerism options (pro bono, board placements, secondments, and more) that ladder into professional development opportunities for employees				
We equip employees with tools (e.g., templates and checklists) that allow them to effectively lead volunteering efforts				
We partner with third-party organizations to identify and scope skills-based volunteering opportunities				
We carefully balance outsourcing of program design and management with employee ownership and investment				

# 2

## Foster awareness through diversified calls to action

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Regardless of how meaningful and individualized a company's volunteer opportunities are, participation will suffer if employees are not aware of the opportunities' existence. Awareness requires consistent, clear messaging about available initiatives. It also requires calls to action coming from a range of voices – with authenticity, credibility, and behavioral modeling – and across a range of settings. Here are several strategies used by NationSwell members to widen and deepen employee awareness of volunteer opportunities:

- 1. Leverage the onboarding process to initiate involvement in community engagement and volunteerism.** Companies should consider generating experiences and conversations during onboarding processes for new hires that emphasize the importance of – and company commitment to – volunteerism. During onboarding conversations, companies should provide resources on how to stay engaged with volunteer efforts, ranging from consistent skills-based opportunities to annual days of service.
- 2. Lean on senior leaders to motivate employee engagement, but do so by humanizing their commitments and passion.** Company executives and other business leaders are often tapped to invite employees to engage in volunteer or other social impact work, but those calls-to-action can feel flat if leaders don't appear to have a personal connection to the work. Instead, spend time discovering what leaders themselves are passionate about and create opportunities for them to share and model those passions. Leaders who appear authentic in their calls for employee engagement are more likely to resonate.
- 3. Reach beyond the C-suite to engage middle managers to model volunteerism and engagement.** In addition to the trickle down of executive leadership, it is important to ensure that middle managers are bought-in to employee engagement strategies. As middle managers interact consistently with their direct reports, increasing focus on engagement from these managers can close gaps between the priorities of senior leaders and the actions of employees at various levels throughout the company.

- 4. Use internal community infrastructure to raise awareness and enable decentralized engagement.** Some organizations are collaborating with existing employee resource groups (ERGs), while others are developing volunteer leadership councils as mechanisms for empowering team members across distributed workforces to design and mobilize staff engagement initiatives. These groups can encourage staff participation across specific impact areas, offer additional resources and information, and model behavior within your company.
- 5. Invite social impact partners to connect with employees directly.** Hosting social impact events (e.g., webcasts) together with mission-aligned partners can motivate and connect employees to the opportunity for impact, particularly if those partners are empowered to make a call-to-action of employees. In these circumstances, it helps to have an engagement opportunity already lined up for individuals to opt into.
- 6. Have plans for reactive and proactive calls to action in your “most-read” internal communications channels.** Volunteer program leaders should use existing internal communications channels to their advantage. A storytelling campaign reinforced over weeks ahead of a signature enterprise-wide initiative, and an urgent call-to-action in moments of unpredictable crises, represent two scenarios – among many others – that any company should have a communications plan in place for.

# From the field

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## **Dow**

### **ALL IN ERG Fund**

Dow has 10 ERGs, with a 42% employee participation rate. Given this high engagement, the company identified a potential for ERGs to advance community inclusion initiatives. In 2019, Dow founded the ALL IN ERG Fund, which allows ERGs focused on inclusion, entrepreneurship, STEM learning, and sustainability to apply for community nonprofit grants.

The fund provides up to \$200,000 in seed grants annually to support inclusion programming initiated by employee resource groups (ERGs). ERG leaders globally are eligible to apply. In its first year, the program yielded over 140 proposals, and administered grants to 12 community projects.

## **Salesforce**

Salesforce employees are oriented toward a culture of volunteerism from their first day of work. The CEO of the company requires that employees serve their communities as part of the onboarding process to demonstrate the company's dedication to both their people and their purpose.

## **Starbucks**

Starbucks' **Community Champion** program is included in the company's "First sip" onboarding conversation for each employee. The company also promotes regular opportunities to volunteer throughout the year during its promotional periods.

## **KPMG U.S.**

The KPMG U.S. Foundation ("Foundation") collaborates with employee-led Business Resource Groups (BRGs) to identify non-profit organizations whose mission and work aligns with the Foundation and their respective BRG. The Foundation provides grants to support the work of these organizations and offers employees a meaningful way to engage in the mission of the nonprofit and give back to their communities.

## How we're doing: awareness and calls to action

	YES	NO	NO, BUT WE HAVE A PLAN	ACTION ITEMS
We create opportunities for senior leadership to communicate and demonstrate their personal commitments to volunteerism causes				
We communicate regularly with middle managers and provide applicable talking points on the value of volunteer opportunities				
We work with existing ERGs and/or have created localized volunteer councils to spread awareness and surface opportunities				
We invite external partners to engage directly with employees through events or other mutually beneficial opportunities				
We use popular internal communications channels to make calls to action, provide motivational storytelling, and more				



# 3

## Increase accessibility to volunteer opportunities for all employees

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Workforces are complex in a variety of ways. They can span disparate geographies, require a wide range of role types, and include a mix of remote and in-office employees. To account for these complexities, and to ensure all employees have access to impactful and rewarding volunteer opportunities, companies need the right infrastructure, policies, and tools in place. Here are several leading ideas surfaced by NationSwell members on brokering greater reach and accessibility of volunteer programs:

- 1. Lean on digital platforms to drive scale and track data from employee volunteerism and giving programs.** A centralized employee volunteer platform can enable employee activation with initiatives and causes that are most relevant to them based on their role, interests, and location. Robust systems can also help companies explore how engaged employees compare to their peers across certain indicators and the impact of volunteerism on retention. Some companies have opted to develop their own systems in-house.
- 2. Hire vendors experienced in virtual volunteering.** New ways of working since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic have created significant challenges in adapting traditional volunteer engagement programs to virtual and hybrid environments. Vendor organizations can help broker streamlined access for remote employees to virtual volunteer opportunities while introducing logistics and facilitation support like workshop design, agenda-setting, material prep, ice-breakers, and more.
- 3. Create company-wide signature experiences.** To harness collective impact and drive cross-company cohesion around key priorities, consider designing signature volunteer moments such as a month of service. These signature moments may involve a wide range of opportunities for participation, or a longer activation centered around a more narrow goal or priority. For example, MLK Jr. Day and Climate Week are strong opportunities to recruit volunteers who are passionate about DEIB and the environment.

- 4. Leverage local partnerships to support proximate volunteering.** While company-wide signature volunteer programs can create cohesion and collective impact, companies should also develop local-level partnerships to support more focused and community-specific programming. For instance, one company has found that neighborhood cleanup projects are highly successful because the cause is meaningful for many employees and the work helps to build strong local community partnerships that serve other functions for the business.
  
- 5. Host on-site volunteer opportunities and create generous paid time off policies for frontline and/or hourly workers.** To create volunteering opportunities that are accessible to employees who are “on the floor,” consider creating on-site programs. Alternatively, offer employees unrestricted paid time off during and outside of work hours for volunteering.

## From the field

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### Coupa

Coupa facilitates two company-wide signature experiences: Global Impact Week (which coincides with Giving Tuesday) and the Annual Coupa Challenge:

#### **Global Impact Week**

In 2022, Coupa hosted 73 events, engaged 550 employees in more than 2,655 hours of volunteering, and supported 240 nonprofits across its Global Impact Week.

#### **Annual Coupa Challenge**

During this challenge, employees walk or run to raise money for nonprofit partners. In 2022, employees ran or walked 1,632 miles across 174 cities in 19 countries, raising \$16,000 for five non-profit partners.

### Dow

Through a **global Volunteer and ERG Participation policy**, Dow offers paid time off to all employees for volunteering and/or engaging with ERGs. Employees can allocate 12 work hours annually to these efforts, including volunteer with nonprofits, schools, and charitable organizations. This policy ladders up to the company's Global Citizenship priorities and investments, which aim to advance their broader commitment to social impact.

## Vendors to know

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**Benevity** brokers volunteering management, charitable donation management, and grant management to companies. Its solutions are centered around corporate purpose, employee engagement, community investment, and customer engagement.

**Catchafire** bridges partnerships between companies, nonprofits, grantmakers, and skilled-based volunteers. Its network includes over 130 grantmakers and companies.

**Common Impact** connects nonprofits and Fortune 500 companies to strengthen local communities by providing them with best in class skills-based volunteer opportunities.

**Deed** is a technology company that offers a platform for companies to centralize their workplace giving and volunteering programs. The platform streamlines work across teams that manage employee engagement, ERGs, workplace philanthropy, ESG, and DEIB.

**Global Giving** is a solution that brings together nonprofits, donors, and companies globally to broker funding, tools, training, and support for communities.

**Goodera** is a volunteering vendor that curates and tailors programs for companies. It has over 50,000 nonprofit partners globally.

**Pyxera Global** brings together government, nonprofit, and business organizations to solve global challenges. It takes a systems approach to providing counsel and advisory services.

**Taproot** services mission driven organizations by connecting them to skills-based volunteers dedicated to advancing resource equity.

**YourCause (BlackBaud)** YourCause is a CSR software by BlackBaud that helps companies manage their employee giving, volunteerism, and grants programs.

## How we're doing: accessibility for all employees

	YES	NO	NO, BUT WE HAVE A PLAN	ACTION ITEMS
We use an in-house or outsourced digital platform to centralize processes and data tracking (e.g., events and campaign communication, recruitment, engagement tracking, benchmarking, etc.)				
We partner with vendors seasoned in enabling high-value volunteerism for remote/hybrid employees				
We offer signature experiences for employees (e.g., a month of service), but equally prioritize localized community partnerships				
We offer a volunteer paid time time-off benefit and on-site opportunities that make volunteering possible for all employees regardless of their position, level, or employment contract				

# 4

## Reward engagement using incentives and meaningful recognition

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While many employers provide paid time off for employees to volunteer, this may not go far enough in encouraging and recognizing participation. Below are some examples of how NationSwell members are incentivizing and rewarding the employees making an impact in their communities:

- 1. Offer employees leadership opportunities on volunteer projects.** Creating leadership roles for volunteer projects can incentivize employees by offering professional growth and recognition. Volunteer leads may be responsible for creating engagement strategies, liaising with nonprofit partners, tracking hours and participation, and reporting impact. Consider recruiting leaders from ERGs, as they may have insight into key employee interests around social impact. A leader who is engaged and motivated around social impact can help mobilize volunteers for a project, both across ERGs and a full company. That said, it is important to be clear about expectations and responsibilities of volunteer program leaders at the outset. Creating a position description (even though it's a volunteer engagement) provides transparency on what individuals are signing up for. At certain companies, this includes a commitment to plan at least two events a year in a local area, engage at least 20 employees in a region, and take accountability for logging activities. To ensure employees don't overburden themselves, taking on a leadership role may require manager approval.
- 2. Use gamification to play into good-natured competitive instincts.** By designing volunteerism-related contests between teams or individuals, employers can add a layer of fun and spirited competition to the exercise. Public leaderboards, certifications, prizes, and matching donations rank among the ways companies can celebrate and recognize high-performing individuals or teams.
- 3. Connect volunteer participation with corporate philanthropy.** Creating opportunities for employees to participate in the grantmaking process (e.g., nominating organizations for funding) and matching volunteer efforts with corporate donations can provide employees with new leverage and incentivize them to sustain their commitments. One NationSwell member provides up to \$15,000 grants to five non-profits that their employees are involved with.

- 4. Create an annual appreciation month to recognize employees who commit to volunteerism.** Employee engagement in volunteer efforts should be meaningfully recognized. Some companies create an annual appreciation month and celebration for employees' commendable efforts. Organizing an intentional and genuine appreciation strategy can be supported by vendors that specialize in employee recognition.
  
- 5. Work with HR to ladder up volunteer engagement into employees' professional development plans.** Building volunteer efforts into company policies tied to individual growth can help employees make better informed decisions on participating and establish a way to acknowledge their involvement. For example, social impact teams can work with HR to define how volunteerism builds employees' professional skills and equip them with ways to include volunteer participation into conversations during or at the end of the performance year.

# From the field

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## MetLife Foundation

In addition to participating in an annual volunteering program and providing skills-based and pro bono services to nonprofits, MetLife employees are eligible to apply for grants for the organizations they volunteer with.

### Volunteer Project Fund

A team of at least five engaged employees who volunteer in their communities are eligible to apply for a grant for a non-profit they volunteer with. Learn more about the application process [here](#).

## Liberty Mutual

Through its **Liberty Torchbearers Program**, the company provides opportunities for employees to volunteer annually in their communities during work hours, earn nonprofit mini-grants through volunteering on their own time, give to nonprofits that mean something to them, and earn a 100% company match with no upper limit.

*“What differentiates Torchbearers is that even as we use it to drive organizational cohesion around giving back, we center it on individuality and inclusivity at its core. We’re all different, and we’re all in different seasons of our lives; we all give, volunteer, and serve differently from one another” (Melissa MacDonnell, President of Liberty Mutual Foundation, NationSwell ESG Next).*

## Medtronic

Medtronic employees are encouraged to participate in volunteering year round through a variety of initiatives and are rewarded through grants for the organizations they work with. For every 10 hours volunteered with an eligible organization, employees receive \$200 to donate to an organization of their choice.



# From the field

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## Bank of America

In addition to providing two hours of paid time off per week for employee volunteering, Bank of America actively incentivizes and rewards volunteerism through awards and grants:

### Global Volunteer Awards

During Global Service Month in April, Bank of America recognizes employee contribution through Global Volunteer Awards. Employees who volunteer at least 25 hours are recognized on a **quarterly honor roll**, and those that volunteer at least 200 hours are presented with the **President's volunteer service award**.

### Volunteer grants

To recognize employee community service, Bank of America provides grants to nonprofits where employees regularly volunteer. Specifically, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation provides up to \$500 per employee per calendar year (under the name of the employee) to eligible organizations.

## How we're doing: incentives and recognition

	YES	NO	NO, BUT WE HAVE A PLAN	ACTION ITEMS
We offer volunteer leadership positions that have clear expectations and are recognized by human resources (HR)				
We initiate good-natured volunteerism-related contests between teams and individuals				
We create opportunities for employees to participate in grantmaking processes (e.g., nominating organizations for funding) and we align corporate donations with volunteer efforts				
We program days or months of appreciation into our yearly calendar to award and reinforce employee efforts				
We collaborate with HR to provide clear guidance and tools to employees on how to connect volunteerism with their professional growth within the organization				



## **A closer look: Verizon case study**

# How Verizon engaged 89,000 employee volunteers in the middle of a global pandemic

Published April 2022

Between 2020 and 2021, Verizon mobilized 89,000 of its employees to volunteer over 1,000,000 hours. Far exceeding the industry average of 1.4 hours per employee per year and the average annual volunteer participation rate of 17%, Verizon's success demonstrates how taking a human-centered and empathetic approach can tap into employees' diverse motivations for volunteering. Download the full case study [here](#).

## SCENARIO

### EARLY 2018

- Verizon welcomed a new Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Hans Vestberg
- Adopted a new brand purpose: "We create the networks that move the world forward"
- Launched "Citizen Verizon" and "Citizen Verizon Volunteers" to mobilize its 135,000 employee workforce to complete 2.5 million volunteer hours by 2025

### LATE 2020

- Close to 66% of Verizon employees engaged in volunteer work over 2 years. By comparison, the average annual employee volunteerism rate for large companies in 2020 was just 17%

## APPROACH

- 1. Cascade volunteerism strategy from the organization's broader societal purpose**  
*Verizon linked goals to the time and talents of its employees*
- 2. Develop a volunteerism-oriented RFP that's empathetic and transparent toward applicants**  
*Verizon designed a partner selection process that mitigates legacy deficiencies*
- 3. Over-index to existing employee skills and organizational capabilities**  
*Verizon harnessed features intrinsic to the organization and its people*
- 4. Use metrics to elevate the strategic importance of volunteerism**  
*Verizon actively promoted the strategic value of volunteerism to the business, its employees, and the communities they serve*
- 5. Plan to tap diverse motivations among employees**  
*Verizon used a varied toolkit as opposed to relying on a single engagement lever to bring employees forward*
- 6. Make participation as easy as possible for employees and partners**  
*Verizon lifted barriers to entry for participants and created opportunities for engagement that were highly responsive to the current environment*

## VERIZON'S RESULTS

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**1,000,000**

total volunteer hours  
logged from December  
2019 - December 2021

**7 hours/employee**

average time spent  
volunteering during  
this period

### ***Verizon's progress on 3 pillars of social responsibility***

Citizen Verizon prioritizes three pillars directly related to the brand's core operations and capabilities. Their deep volunteer commitments have enabled significant progress on each:

#### **Digital inclusion**

178,286 beneficiaries served | 10,943 blind and low vision individuals helped | 2,461 hours spent engaging young individuals in STEM

#### **Climate protection**

107,781 beneficiaries served | 15,274 pounds of litter collected from employee neighborhoods | 150,000 trees planted across five national forests

#### **Human prosperity**

278,282 beneficiaries served | 2,132 hours spent helping individuals use technology to gain access to resources and services | 2,500 relief kits distributed for communities in the wake of a natural disaster

### **TIME MACHINE: One thing Verizon would do differently**

- Invest in a best-in-class, Verizon-specific web experience to meet the needs of the volunteer program from the outset of Citizen Verizon Volunteers



# Appendix

# Impact tracking and measurement

It is imperative that companies assess the effectiveness and impact of their volunteerism programs, including the long-term value for the business. By committing to impact measurement and reporting, companies can improve their programs through iteration.

In addition to tracking employee participation and community impact, companies may benefit from analyzing how volunteerism drives other factors of engagement and, ultimately, their bottom line. Correlating volunteer participation data with indicators around employee retention and satisfaction can satisfy this interest and support the case for continued investment in volunteer programming.

Below, we've surfaced a non-exhaustive list of metrics that companies use when reporting on their volunteerism and employee giving. These indicators are sourced from publicly available social impact reports and [measurement guidance from America's Charities](#).

## Programmatic indicators

### *Volunteer participation*

- Percentage (%) of employees that participate in volunteer programming per year
- Total number of employees who participate in volunteer programming per year
- Total number of volunteer hours recorded per year
- Total number of volunteer time-off hours provided per year

### *Donations and matching gifts*

- Percentage (%) of employees who participate per year
- Total number of employees who participate per year
- Amount (\$) in donation match per year
- Average donation per employee

### *Partners*

- Number of nonprofits served
- Number of employee-nominated nonprofits served
- Non-staff costs associated with philanthropic programs

## Business-level indicators

- Business contribution – estimated value (\$) [contributed](#) per hour of volunteering
- Retention: employee turnover rate of participants vs. non participants
- Promotion rate: participants vs. non-participants
- Development of job-related skills: participants vs. non-participants
- Employee satisfaction rate for volunteer programs
- Reputational data (e.g. media mentions, # of people affected by work, etc.)
- Exposure from media outreach, news releases, etc., managed by charity partner organizations
- New hires who cite volunteering/giving as influencing their decision to accept job offer
- Rankings on best places to work, best companies for CSR, most admired company lists

# Research limitations and future directions

We acknowledge that volunteerism is a multifaceted relationship between companies, employees, non-profit partners, and communities. Given this report's specific focus on activating employees in corporate volunteerism, this guidance does not fully address building community partnerships, closing equity gaps, or improving feedback loops between all stakeholders – communities, partners, and companies.

Consider the following to contextualize the importance of sustaining volunteerism from the perspective of communities and non-profits:

- 47 percent of nonprofit CEOs say that recruiting sufficient volunteers is a significant problem for their organization ([Do Good Institute, 2023](#)).
- In 2023, almost half of nonprofit leaders said that staff-related issues was the biggest challenge facing their organization. These issues included managing staff capacity and avoiding burnout, hiring, and retention ([CECP, 2023](#)).
- Community members report gains in dignity, self-determination, and professional skills as a result of employee participation in a long-term volunteering program ([Forbes, 2022](#)). Learn more about the pilot study [here](#), and a NationSwell member who has adopted a similar strategy using secondments: [IBM Corporate Service Corps](#).

*“When nonprofits cannot hire enough employees to provide vital services, the public suffers [...] Along with increased demands for services, there are longer waiting lists, reduced services, and sometimes elimination of services. When any of those happen, the ripple effects cannot be ignored: communities lose access to food, shelter, mental health care, and other vital services on which people depend”* ([Council on Nonprofits, 2023](#)).



# Additional reading

## NationSwell resources

1. [The state of play: DEIB in 2022](#) | NationSwell
2. [DEIB certifications and recognitions](#) | NationSwell
3. [How Verizon engaged 89,000 employee volunteers in the middle of a global pandemic](#) | NationSwell
4. [How Employees Value Social Impact](#) | NationSwell
5. [How Consumers Value Social Impact](#) | NationSwell

## Industry overviews

6. [Giving in Numbers 2022](#) | CECP
7. [Giving in the Workplace 2022](#) | Fidelity Charitable
8. [2023 CSR Industry Review](#) | Blackbaud and YourCause
9. [What U.S. Employees Think About Workplace Giving, Volunteering, and CSR](#) | America's Charities
10. [2021 Exceptional Workplace Award Winners](#) | Gallup
11. [2023 Trust Barometer](#) | Edelman
12. [2023 Gen Z and Millennial Survey](#) | Deloitte
13. [What Employees Think About Workplace Giving, Volunteerism, and CSR](#) | America's Charities
14. [Ultimate List of Workplace Giving and Volunteering Statistics](#) | Bright Funds
15. [Volunteer Impact Research](#) | Deloitte
16. [The State of Volunteer Engagement](#) | Do Good Institute

## ERG-focused

17. [2022 ERG Trends](#) | ERG Leadership Alliance
18. [State of the Employee Resource Group 2022](#) | The Rise Journey

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