

What Do We Really Know about Nonprofits' Capacity to Manage Volunteers?

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Abstract

Volunteers play an integral role within nonprofit organizations and have a unique place in the development and evolution of the nonprofit sector. Yet limited efforts have been made to study the impact on and import of their work to the overall capacity of organizations. This article summarizes current learning about volunteer resource management and organizational capacity; compares findings from two major studies of volunteer resource management and capacity building; and offers new insights about differing conceptualizations of volunteers in organizational capacity. The paper underscores the importance of the value of investments in volunteer resource management, examines the role of volunteer coordinators and executive directors in determining volunteers' impacts on organizational capacity, and discusses challenges unique to managing an unpaid workforce. In particular, the authors highlight contrasting stakeholder perceptions between volunteers and volunteer resource managers regarding organizational capacity and discuss why these differences are important.

Key Words:

capacity, volunteers, volunteer resource management

Introduction

Although volunteers make an important contribution within both public and private arenas, they play an integral role within nonprofit organizations, as evoked by frequent references to "the voluntary sector," and have a unique place in the development and evolution of the nonprofit sector. Volunteers, in fact, define the nonprofit landscape (Frumkin, 2002; Salamon, 1999) and without their

ISSN 1942-728X

involvement in leadership, programming, and operations, many nonprofits would cease to exist.

Despite the fundamental position of volunteers within nonprofits, limited efforts have been made to study the impact and importance of their work on the overall capacity of organizations. Most nonprofit capacity-building literature focuses on issues unrelated to the management and deployment of volunteers. Additionally,

documentation of organizations' abilities to engage volunteers is sparse, hailing mostly from literature by practitioners rather than empirical evaluation. Two recent exceptions to this trend in the United States include a national study by the Urban Institute (2004), and a regional study in Texas reported in this article.

This article summarizes current learning about volunteer resource management and organizational capacity, compares findings from the Urban Institute and Texas studies, and offers new insights about differing conceptualizations of volunteers in organizational capacity. The Texas study, a partial replication of the national 2004 Urban Institute study, underscores the importance of the value of investments in volunteer resource management, the role of volunteer resource managers and executive directors in determining volunteers' impact on organizational capacity, and the challenges unique to managing an unpaid workforce. Additionally, the Texas study provides new information about differing perceptions of volunteers within the nonprofit sector, what resources exist to support effective volunteer engagement, and to what extent organizations have the capacity to engage volunteers during times of emergency or crisis. Consequently, we ask new questions about the strategies nonprofits need to employ to build organizational capacity to maximize their full capitalization of volunteer resources.

Background

Volunteer resource management capacity can be defined as "resources to support volunteer involvement, including staff time and financial resources, and adoption of policies and practices that are effective in volunteer management" (Campbell, 2004, p. 4). A series of evaluations in the late 1990s and early 2000s

provided key information about volunteer resource management's role in nonprofit capacity, including the key finding that training for staff and organizational directors in volunteer resource management is critical to nonprofits' capacities to recruit, retain, and effectively utilize volunteers (Brudney & Kellough, 2000; Ellis, 1996; Rehnborg, Fallon, & Hinerfeld, 2002). Although training is critical, there is evidence that training and formal opportunities to become versed in volunteer resource management are limited (Brudney & Stringer, 1998). Few professional associations (and even fewer higher education institutions) offer adequate resources to develop the range of competencies nonprofit workers need to improve agencies' abilities to manage and engage volunteers (Dolan, 2002; Mirabella, 2007; Mirabella & Wish, 2002). Additionally, efforts to expand volunteer resource management capacity are hindered by an incomplete understanding within nonprofits of the importance of volunteer resource management, as well as by the fact that many organizations lack the financial resources or staff time to support professional development related to enhancing volunteer resource management capacity (Hager & Brudney, 2004; Hange, Seever, & Van Leeuwen, 2001). As a result, volunteers themselves report feeling underutilized in their work with nonprofit organizations (UPS Foundation, 1998).

With these findings in mind and the need to develop a deeper understanding of issues related to volunteer resource management capacity, the UPS Foundation, the Corporation for National and Community Serve, and the USA Freedom Corps partnered with the Urban Institute (UI; 2004) on a nationwide study (hereafter referred to as "the UI study") of nonprofits' volunteer resource management capacities. UI researchers used a rigorous sampling process that involved a "sample of 2,993

charities . . . drawn within expenditure and subsector strata from 214,995 charities that filed Form 990 with the IRS in 2000; sample of 1,003 congregations was drawn within denominational strata, including an oversample of non-Judeo-Christian congregations, from 382,231 entities provided by American Church Lists in August 2003” (p. 24). The final survey of some 1,750 representative charitable organizations and 500 congregations, representing “response rates of 69% for both the nonprofit and congregation samples” (p. 24) and subsector, strata and congregational weighting that resulted in samples that “reflect the characteristics of the working populations from which they were drawn” (p. 24). Further, the Urban Institute stated that because the participating organizations “reflect the characteristics of these populations of charities and congregations, the results can be used to describe current overall conditions in these organizations” (p. 6).

The UI study provided data about organizations’ challenges, investments in, and perceptions of volunteer resource management. The study concluded that most nonprofits used volunteers and reaped benefits from investments in their volunteer programs; that nonprofits felt they had the capacity to absorb more volunteers but faced serious barriers to doing so; that the amount of staff time spent on volunteer resource management correlated positively with outcomes in volunteer engagement; and that few organizations had yet adopted best practices for volunteer resource management.

Regional Study Methods

In 2006, researchers from the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A & M University replicated the national study. The Texas regional study (hereafter referred to as “the Texas study”) used a

mixed method approach to investigate capacities of local nonprofits to effectively engage volunteers in mission-critical work and to explore incentives or barriers to volunteer service within nonprofits. While the Urban Institute’s sample comprised “organizational representatives familiar with volunteer resource management” (Urban Institute, 2004, p. 24), the Texas study extended this stream of research by gathering data from both volunteer resource managers and executive directors to compare each group’s views on volunteer resource management capacity; however, the Texas study did not include congregations in its sampling parameters. Using a similar sampling frame to that of the UI study, the Texas researchers sought to define the relative universe of local nonprofits and used the records of organizations that had filed Form 990 with the IRS in 2003 or 2004, in cross-reference with data from the United Way Capital Area on organizational, executive, and volunteer resource manager contact information in the region. The researchers limited selection to those organizations with annual budgets above \$50,000, and also excluded agencies that appeared to be either primarily philanthropic or voluntary (e.g., PTAs, amateur sport leagues, etc.) in nature, those that had ceased to operate, or that had incorrect addresses. The resulting sample in the central Texas region included 1012 nonprofit organizations, with 217 nonprofit executives (a 21% response rate) and 50 volunteer resource managers completing the survey, which was modeled on the UI study survey instrument and extended to include questions relating to organizational and volunteer capacity for emergency relief.

Additionally, four focus groups with 26 nonprofit executives, three focus groups with 15 volunteer resource managers, and more than 30 interviews with funders and representatives of nonprofit support

organizations (i.e., nonprofit associations, management support organizations, private consultants, and other training organizations) were conducted. Participants in the nonprofit and volunteer resource manager groups represented a range of large and small health and human services and education organizations including food banks, elderly care facilities, literacy programs, child advocacy organizations, criminal justice programs, and faith-based agencies. The diversity of data gathered from these participants provided new insights into the complexity of perceptions, experiences, and conceptualizations of volunteer resource management within the sector.

The central Texas environment from which the sample was drawn offered unique characteristics for the study. This ten-county area is among the fastest-growing regions in the country, and home to 1.5 million people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006), a diversity of industries spanning high tech firms to agriculture, and the state capital. Recent research by the Texas Association of Nonprofits (2002) indicated that most nonprofits in the region have annual expenditures of less than \$500,000, and more than 40% have annual expenditures below \$100,000. Human service organizations represent the largest share of the total, making up more than a quarter of all nonprofits, followed closely by organizations with missions focused on education (Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations, 2002). Nationally, human services organizations accounted for the greatest number (nearly one-third) of reporting public charities, followed by education organizations with 189%, and health organizations comprising 13% of reporting public charities (Blackwood, Wing, & Pollak, 2008, p. 3). In terms of annual expenditures, “the majority of public charities report less than \$500,000 in

ISSN 1942-728X

expenses, with 45 % of public charities reported less than \$100,000 in expenses and another 29% reported [*sic*] between \$100,000 and \$499,999” (p. 3).

The Texas study sample mirrored both national and regional distributions of the nonprofit sector in terms of size and mission areas. On average, Texas nonprofits are younger, with the proportion founded after 1980 being larger than in most of the nation (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2009). In terms of mission area, the Texas sample comprised human service (28%), educational (20%), and health-focused organizations (12%). Annual expenditure patterns were also similar to the state nonprofit association’s statistics on nonprofits in the region with 25% of the organizations reporting less than \$129,000 in annual expenditures, 50% less than \$348,000, and 75% less than \$1 million. Dates of organizational establishment ranged from 1857 to 2004, with the majority of organizations having formed since 1980, similar to statewide trends but younger on average than is revealed in national averages.

The Texas sample participants, however, vary from national data on nonprofits in several significant ways. In addition, when asked about perceptions of philanthropic and volunteer resources in the region, Texas study participants described corporate and foundation giving as both inadequate and too narrowly focused on programmatic expenses, yet volunteerism was seen as an asset in the region. Some 82% of the respondents reported engaging volunteers in their work, either as board members or in other capacities. The perception by study participants regarding volunteerism in Central Texas mirrors recent research that shows volunteerism in Texas is above the national average (Musick, 2005) with 62% of adult Texans reporting having volunteered in the past year, compared to

44% of adults nationwide (Independent Sector, 2001). Several local organizations have missions focused on promoting volunteerism in the region, including a number of community- and university-based volunteer centers.

Data in the Texas study underscored many findings from the national study while also providing some contrasts, elaborations on previous capacity-building research, and numerous nuances about how stakeholders' perceptions vary. Areas of convergence across the two studies are summarized in Figure 1.

Comparative Findings: Convergence and Divergence

Figure 1. Comparison of Findings: areas of convergence on volunteer resource management capacity.

Findings	Study Locations	
	Urban Institute Study (National)	Texas Study
Use of Volunteers	80% use volunteers beyond board members in day to day organizational work	90% use volunteers beyond board members in day to day organizational work
	Summary: <i>Volunteers play a critical role in nonprofit operations.</i> These volunteers were seen as bringing a host of organizational benefits (e.g. cost savings, improved community relations, and greater client responsiveness).	
Staff Time Investment	A majority of volunteer coordinators reported devoting only 30% of their time or less to supervising volunteers.	Similar levels of staff investments reported.
	Summary: <i>Investments of staff time in volunteer management improve volunteer engagement and outcomes—yet most organizations devote little time to this task.</i> Organizations that dedicated greater amounts of staff time to managing volunteers tended to place a higher value on the contributions of their volunteers and to have a greater capacity to absorb new volunteers than organizations with fewer resources allotted to managing unpaid workers.	
Use of Recommended or “Best” Practices	One in three nonprofits offer no training for their staff in how to work with volunteers.	Over 50% nonprofits offer no training for their staff in how to work with volunteers.
	Summary: <i>Recommended practices for volunteer engagement are underutilized in the field.</i> Many also fail to have professional development opportunities for volunteers, assessments of the impact of volunteers' work, or even reliable data tracking volunteer service hours.	
Recruitment & Retention	Somewhat of a challenge in comparison to other volunteer resource management challenges.	Similar experiences and perceptions reported.
	Summary: <i>Retention and recruitment of volunteers was perceived as somewhat of a challenge, especially finding enough volunteers to meet the need during working hours.</i> In both studies, most respondents reported encountering few problems with their volunteer workforce (such as conflicts between volunteers and staff or poor work habits on the part of volunteers).	

Figure 2. Comparison of Findings: areas of divergence on volunteer resource management capacity.

Findings	Study Locations	
	Urban Institute Study (National)	Texas Study
Use of Volunteers: Perceptions of Benefits to Organization	More likely to use volunteers for enhancing quality and building capacity within their agencies	More likely to use volunteers for “basic” or day-to-day needs (vs. longer term needs or linked to other areas of organizational capacity)
	Summary: In general, <i>Texas respondents more likely than their nationwide counterparts to utilize volunteers, but less likely to integrate them into longer term functions or link them to organizational capacity strategies.</i> Texas respondents identified the top benefits of working with volunteers as “providing attention to the people served” (i.e., direct service functions) and “cost savings”. Nationally, by contrast, the top benefit of volunteers was “increasing in the quality of services or programs”. Organizational size (measured by annual expenditures), a potential indicator of organizational formalization, is linked to the broader and strategic orientation, suggesting that it may be important to consider organizational and contextual dimensions when considering issues of volunteer resource management capacity.	
Investments - Existence of Dedicated Volunteer Coordinator	One in eight nonprofits identified having fulltime staff dedicated to volunteer coordination and management	Less likely to have dedicated volunteer coordinator; only one in eight had even one staff member who devoted more 70% of his/her time to the task
	Summary: <i>Texas respondents less likely to have staff time allocated to volunteer resource management.</i>	
Value/ Valuation of Volunteers	Median value of volunteer work per hour = \$20	Median value of volunteer work per hour = \$15
	Summary: <i>Texas nonprofits undervalued the contributions of volunteers compared to their counterparts in the national study.</i> The economic milieu within which nonprofits operate may a role in agencies’ allocation of staff time to volunteer resource management tasks, as well as organizations’ conceptions of volunteers work and their ability to utilize effectively.	
Foundation and Government Support	More likely to have solid foundation and government funding	Foundation and government funding fell below national average
	Summary: <i>Texas funding below national average.</i> As a result, more organizations may be running resource-strapped volunteer resource management operations.	
Training and Capacity Development for Volunteer Managers	Volunteer coordinators likely to have <i>minimal</i> volunteer resource management training	Volunteer coordinators likely to have <i>no</i> volunteer resource management training
	Summary: Nationally, two-thirds of nonprofits with paid volunteer coordinators had received at least minimal formal training in volunteer resource management, such as through college classes or professional development workshops, while the majority of the volunteer managers surveyed in Texas reported <i>no</i> formal training in volunteer resource management, only prior work as volunteers or nonprofit staff members.	

Comparative analysis also revealed several important areas of divergence relating to perceptions about the benefits and value of volunteers, the existence of dedicated volunteer resource managers, funding base stability for organizations and training for volunteer resource managers. In particular, Texas respondents identified the top benefits of working with volunteers as “providing attention to the people served” (i.e., direct service functions) and “cost savings”. Nationally, by contrast, the top benefit of working with volunteers was “increasing the quality of services or programs”. These divergences are summarized in Figure 2.

Comparative analysis also suggested that while volunteers play a critical role in nonprofit operations, most organizations, especially in Central Texas, devote little time to volunteer resource management and underutilize recommended practices for volunteer engagement. These findings are of concern since they reinforce previous research on the relationship between capacity building and volunteer resource management in the areas of best practice and barriers, including:

- Success in maximizing volunteer engagement results from training staff in best management practices and volunteer protocols (Brudney & Kellough, 2000; Ellis, 1996; Rehnborg, Fallon, & Hinerfeld, 2002).
- Internal and external barriers frequently hamper the attempts of nonprofits to offer volunteer resource management training and staff development to improve strategic work with volunteers (Hager & Brudney, 2004; Hange, Seevers, & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

The Texas study findings also suggest that the economic and institutional milieu within which nonprofits operate may play a role in agencies’ allocations of staff time to volunteer resource management tasks, as well as organizations’ conceptions

of volunteers’ work and their abilities to utilize volunteers effectively. The qualitative data bore these observations out, as highlighted in the following section.

Volunteer Resource Management Capacity Building

Focus group data from the Texas study revealed only slight appreciation for the volunteer resource management function and related training, as illustrated in one volunteer resource manager’s comment: “I didn’t even really know about volunteer management. . . I call it ‘my accidental profession.’ I just kind of fell into it, and it’s really been on-the-job training.” While it is conceivable that this lack of formal volunteer resource management training may be unique to the Central Texas environment, prior research (Brudney & Stringer, 1998; Dolan, 2002) found that it is actually far more widespread than is indicated by the UI study. It is possible that nonprofit leaders responding to the UI survey may have overestimated or misunderstood the actual level of training their staff received prior to beginning volunteer resource management work. Findings from the Texas study suggest that with few options for formal professional development or coursework in volunteer resource management, many volunteer resource managers enter the job with only informal preparation, such as personal volunteering experience.

A key and distinctive finding in the Texas study concerned organizations’ abilities to respond to unexpected crises, particularly in terms of volunteer resource management capacity. The timing and location of the replication study (following the near aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita) allowed us to ask new questions about volunteer resource management issues in times of emergency and revealed that volunteers play an essential role in

responding to emergencies. Of 109 organizations involved with the disaster relief effort, 44% reported utilizing existing volunteers as part of their response while 23% reported bringing in new volunteers. Two out of three agencies engaged volunteers on only a short-term basis (i.e., 12 weeks or less). Despite reporting some challenges in managing a large influx of volunteers in a short time span, several funders, support service providers, and nonprofit executives indicated that meeting the hurricane evacuees' short-term needs proved easier for most organizations than addressing the long-term demand for services created by the disasters. Though an estimated 12,000 evacuees remained in Central Texas at the time of the study (six months after Hurricane Katrina), more than half of nonprofit service providers had ceased to offer assistance to this population within 20 days of initial intervention. Also, while survey data primarily identified characteristics of and challenges experienced by those nonprofit organizations involved in the post-hurricane response, in individual and focus group interviews, several nonprofit executives revealed learning a great deal about volunteer resource management from the demands of the disaster relief effort and about how critical managing volunteers effectively could be for mission-critical work. This finding has implications for potentially important pre-disaster planning and also warrants further research.

Differing Views on Volunteer Resource Management

Qualitative data from the Texas study also provide insights about how nonprofit executives, funders, and volunteer resource managers differ in their views toward volunteer resource management capacity. In general, the three groups' conceptualizations of volunteers and

volunteer resource management can be characterized as cautious, idealistic, and pragmatic.

The Cautious: Nonprofit Executives.

Analysis of executive director responses highlighted their thoughts on the benefits and positive outcomes associated with working with volunteers, as well as some of their reservations. For example, although executives saw volunteers as an overall boon to their organizations, they were also the group to frame the issue in somewhat contradictory and cautious financial terms. For example, nonprofit executives most commonly framed the value of volunteers in terms of their cost savings to the organization; they were also, however, the most inclined to hesitate increasing organizational investments in volunteer resource management, particularly those relating to building organizational capacity generally as well as specific investments in volunteer resource management capacity. With few nonprofits devoting resources to staff training in volunteer resource management or professional development for volunteers, most nonprofit leaders reported that their only capacity-building investments related to volunteer work were in the single area of board development.

Looking to the bottom line, executive directors expressed worry that volunteer programs prove too demanding on staff time and resources; they desired to have volunteers' assistance but limited their organizations' resource commitment when it came to getting volunteers up to speed. One nonprofit executive director captured the sentiment by saying, "We're not really there to teach them (the volunteers)," but rather the volunteers should be able "to hit the ground running." Many executives had concerns that those resources dedicated to volunteer training may be wasted should the volunteers fail to engage in long-term commitments to the organization. Perhaps

most indicative of executive directors' comparative cautions toward volunteers was the following survey finding: while volunteer resource managers felt their agencies could absorb a median of up to 50 more volunteers, executive directors felt organizations had the capacity to involve only 12 additional volunteers effectively. These disparate perceptions existed across all organizations, whether small, medium, or large.

The Idealists: Funders. Funders tended to exalt the virtues of volunteers, noting their bread-and-butter role in the sector. Many perceived a lack of volunteer resource management capacity in the sector, however, and said they wanted to see nonprofits do a better job of engaging volunteers across the board—from better recruitment and retention strategies to more comprehensive volunteer training and effective matching of volunteer skills with given tasks. Additional concerns revolved around accountability, liability, limited risk management planning, and the need for organizations to be able to quantify volunteers' contributions in terms of performance measurement. Despite these observations, none of the funders interviewed offered or expressed potential future interest in funding capacity-building grants to assist organizations specifically with improving their management of volunteers. As one funder put it, "We don't really see it as our role to be telling nonprofits how to run their volunteer programs."

The Pragmatists: Volunteer Resource Managers. The most nuanced views on volunteers and volunteer resource management came from the people working the frontlines of volunteer engagement. Volunteer resource managers in the surveys and focus groups expressed conceptions of volunteer work that best echoed the literature's findings on best practices for

volunteer resource management. Compared to executive directors, volunteer resource managers were more likely to place a high value on regular, consistent communication with volunteers, to recommend investments in volunteer training and recognition, and to report making strategic efforts to match volunteers' skills and interests to the work available. Additionally, volunteer resource managers offered a more fully developed conceptualization of individuals' motivations for volunteering compared to executive directors or funders. Executive directors tended to see volunteers' motives paradoxically as either self-serving or driven by a compulsion to work, whilst funders mostly saw volunteers as altruistic. Volunteer resource managers instead acknowledged that volunteers commit their time for a complex range of reasons, from a desire for social relationships with other volunteers to interests in applying their talents for a good cause.

Volunteer resource managers perceived a distinct role for fellow staff in fostering healthy volunteer programs. Many expressed dismay that staff in their organizations—including the executive director—did not understand the importance of building positive relationships with volunteers. Most volunteer resource managers conveyed that funders and executive directors alike left volunteer programs under-resourced, with little or no dedicated budget, training plan, or strategic vision to ensure volunteers are able to help build organizational capacity. Several volunteer resource managers felt that because their executive directors didn't "get" volunteer resource management, volunteer recruitment and retention in their organizations suffered.

Conclusions

Both studies similarly identified the benefits volunteers can offer to

organizations, the importance of investments in best practices in volunteer resource management, and the need for more strategic thinking around the use of volunteers to build capacity. The more recent Texas study raises additional questions about how the financial environment around organizations affects the ways in which volunteers are utilized and perceived, the need for more formal volunteer resource management training, and the importance of effective volunteer resource management strategies during, and in anticipation of, times of crisis. Perhaps most critical is the issue of differing stakeholder perceptions of volunteers and volunteer resource management in organizational capacity. While some stakeholders perceive volunteers as core to an agency's capacity—helping nonprofits meet basic obligations and carry out day-to-day work—others, by contrast, see volunteers in a capacity-building role, capable of enhancing and advancing organizations' ability to fulfill their missions over time and linked to a broader range of functional areas.

These contrasting perceptions of volunteer resource management matter. Ellis (1996) and Stallings (2005) identified the same key component to effective volunteer resource management programs: visionary leadership by executive directors in volunteer programs. The Texas study, however, suggests most executive directors take a hands-off approach to volunteer resource management. The contrast between their perceptions of volunteer resource management compared with those of volunteer resource managers presents a major barrier to improving volunteer resource management capacity in organizations. Additionally, funder reluctance to fund initiatives to promote better outcomes in volunteer programs suggests neither they, nor nonprofit

executives, consider volunteer resource management a sufficiently important priority in which to stake significant resources. The effect is that those with the most responsibility to implement and improve volunteer programs, the volunteer resource managers, paradoxically possess the least power to effect change in their own organizational contexts, or influence the sector's capacity to engage and manage volunteers. The following recommendations emerge from the challenges that arise from these varying perceptions of volunteer resource management within the sector:

1. Executive directors should be open to reevaluating volunteers' role within their organizations. Service by any volunteers should be regarded with the same seriousness as board service and considered part of a continuum of valued volunteer inputs. As such, volunteers, like board members, must be seen as more than immediate warm bodies to fill a need, but rather as a community resource for networking, public relations, skilled service, and fund development. Executive directors should be encouraged to seek out and observe peer organizations with strong, thriving volunteer programs and, having identified such exemplars, explore ways to replicate these successes within their own organizations. Allocation of resources, structures for supporting volunteer programs, and staff-wide delineation of responsibilities are among the tasks that will fall to executive directors working to build stronger volunteer programs. As a result, nonprofit support service providers can play a role in offering training and tools to assist busy executive directors in adopting the necessary changes that will allow their volunteer programs to improve over time.
2. Funders must recognize the critical gap in support for building volunteer resource management capacity. While support for building management capacity is

increasingly available, few resources exist that target assistance to the needs of volunteer programs. The fact that these programs are overly idealized by funders and too often conceptualized in a way that disregards their complexity poses a challenge. Funders should acknowledge the multidimensional factors in successful volunteer programs and work to foster an environment where nonprofits can tackle the complicated work of effective volunteer resource management. By funding special training for executive directors, investing in research to ascertain the value of strong volunteer resource management, developing well-functioning systems and process for volunteer resource management, and exploring opportunities for integrating new populations into the voluntary workforce, funders can help facilitate lasting improvements in nonprofits' work with volunteers.

3. Volunteer resource managers should band together to bring greater attention to their needs and the importance of their role, including those related to training and continuing education, executive leadership support, and organizational resources. Collaborations among volunteer resource managers should be targeted to facilitate greater networking and information exchange, as well as opportunities to share strategies on key issues including, for example, how to streamline programs and involve a cross-section of organizational staff in volunteer programs. Volunteer resource managers must continue to be a voice for volunteers, highlighting their exceptional contributions, airing their common concerns, and addressing ongoing obstacles to recruitment and retention.

Finally, more research is needed to determine how widespread the perceptions identified in central Texas are in the larger, national nonprofit and voluntary sector. Questions remain about conceptualizations

of volunteer resource management by a number of key stakeholders, including non-managerial nonprofit staff, board members, and the volunteers themselves. Future research efforts should explore the range of factors that influence the effectiveness of volunteer programs and investigate the role training and education programs play in bottom-line and social outcomes.

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