

Regional Rev Up:
*Strategic
Volunteer
Engagement*

March 2024

V I R G I N I A
M I A I N

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT
OF HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Street

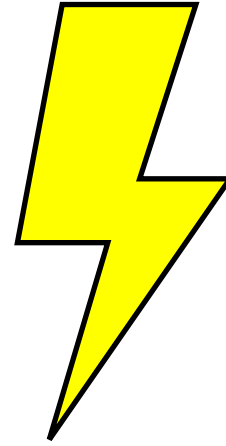
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Who's At Your Table?



Lightening speed introductions!

- ✓ Name
- ✓ Organization/Location
- ✓ How long you've been working as a leader of volunteers
- ✓ A place in the world you'd really like to visit someday (or have visited recently)

*Elements of
Effective
Volunteer
Engagement*



The Volunteer Landscape

What's DIFFERENT because of the pandemic environment?

- Restricted activities
- Tech skills more necessary
- Surges of new volunteers
- New factors affecting availability
- Shifts in organizational priorities



The Volunteer Landscape

What's NOT different now?

- Strong motivation to help others
- Strong desire to connect with others
- Expectation of meaningful roles
- Interest in skills-based opportunities
- High demand for demonstrating impact
- Appreciation for volunteer service
- Need for staff supervision
- Policies are a critical tool
- Volunteers must be held accountable



Options for Involvement

Activity:

- Direct service
- Administration
- Governance
- Advocacy

Timespan:

- Done in a Day
- Seasonal
- Short-term/Episodic
- Ongoing/Regular

Degree of voluntary-ness:

- Court-ordered
- School or class requirement
- Employer-driven
- Connected to group, medical reason, etc.

Planning Questions:

Start Where You Are



- *Why do we want volunteers?
What value do they/could they add?*
- *Who are our current volunteers?*
- *Who do we NOT accept or recruit...and why?*
- *Where/how are current volunteers involved?*
- *Are there obvious gaps in our vol. corps, or what they are doing?*

The Traditional (Legacy) Mindset :



**What can
volunteers do?**

“Volunteers can only perform specific jobs”

“Volunteers are not as competent as paid staff”

“Volunteers can’t meet high expectations”

“Volunteers are not accountable”

“Volunteers are not reliable”

The Talent Management approach:

Talent Management involves deliberate and integrated processes for recruiting, developing, and retaining people with the best skills to increase business performance.

How can we achieve our big goals by engaging all the right people?

WHO

Individuals

Families/mixed ages

“Generalists” & “Specialists”

Self-managed teams

WHAT

Periodic or “On Call” assignments

On-site or Remote or Virtual

Tasks focused on people, things, ideas

Thinking...planning...research

Questions to Spark Ideas

- *What part of your job takes most of your time? Why?*
- *What would you rather not do?*
- *What part of your job is most difficult for you to get done? Why?*
- *What keeps you awake at night about your responsibilities? What are the things you never get done? Why?*
- *What is your wish list? Challenges/needs you wish could get resolved in order to better address our mission?*
- *If you had the resources to hire some part-time help, who would you hire? What skills would you want him/her to have? Why?*






Volunteer Role/Position Descriptions

Benefits and uses:

- ✓ alignment with mission priorities
- ✓ recruitment
- ✓ training
- ✓ accountability

Types:

- ✓ pre-determined
 - ✓ co-created
 - ✓ one-time projects
 - ✓ committees or teams
- 



Volunteer Role/Position Descriptions

Essential Elements

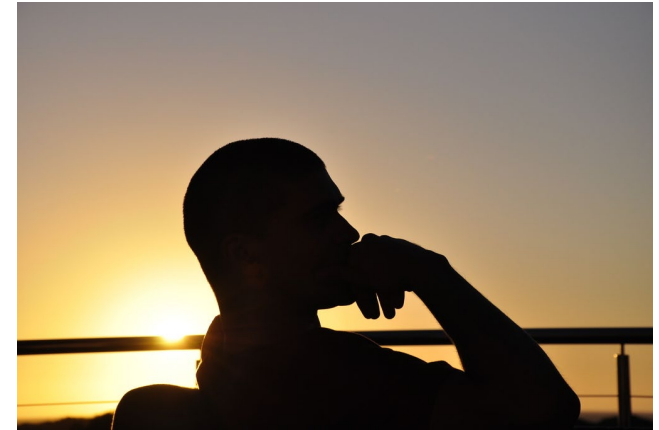
- ✓ Title
- ✓ Goal/Purpose
- ✓ Responsibilities
- ✓ Desired Results
- ✓ Expectations
- ✓ Qualifications/Expertise/Skills
- ✓ Time Commitment
- ✓ Location/Site
- ✓ Supervision and Support
- ✓ Benefits

- Position Descriptions
- Application Form
- Screening
- Orientation & Training
- Supervision
- Policies and Procedures



Getting Ready for Volunteers: Wrap Up

- *Toolkit Resources*
- *Questions? Comments?*
- *Any Ah-Ha moments?*



Stretch
Break



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2020 Civic Life Survey: Incentives for Volunteering

- Being invited by a friend (64%)
- Volunteering with family (56%)
- Single site to find opportunities (53%)
- Benefits: learning, physical, mental health (52%)
- Communication about impact (51%)
- Monthly reminders of vol. opportunities (50%)



Other Factors Affecting the “YES”:

- Degree of trust
- Degree of safety or risk
- Perceived cost
- The cause/mission/need
- Scheduling constraints
- Duration of commitment
- Geography
- Screening required
- Role clarity
- Perceived status or power
- Degree of supervision vs. independence
- Opportunity to learn



General Recruitment Tips



GIVE A
PERSONALIZED,
PASSIONATE PITCH



LISTEN TO THE
RESPONSE



BE ORGANIZED



TELL IT LIKE IT IS



PAY ATTENTION TO
ORGANIZATIONAL
CLIMATE

Types of Recruitment

Warm Body

Little or no skills or training needed

Lots of vols. needed

Short-term, simple activities

Aimed at very broad audience

Concentric Circles

Relies on existing current vols., staff, former clients, organizational relationships

Taps into their connections: friends, families, neighbors, work colleagues, faith communities

Uses the power of “Who Asks”!

Targeted

Requires specialized skills

Longer commitment of time

Role is difficult/risky or hard to fill

A new role you want to pilot test

Aimed at a specific audience

Ambient

Aimed at a “closed system” – employer, membership group, profession, neighborhood

Requires a “lead contact” who will motivate others to get involved

Maximizing the Recruitment Message



Key Questions to Answer:

What do you want from me? How much?

Why should I care about this? Why should I trust you and your organization?

What do I get in return? How is it unique, different?

How might this opportunity provide something I want or need?

So what? How will this really make a difference and have a positive impact?

Moving from “What” to “So What”

Connect “what” volunteers are doing to desired results:

- ✓ *solving problems*
- ✓ *alleviating pain*
- ✓ *meeting needs*
- ✓ *influencing policies*
- ✓ *enhancing efficiency*
- ✓ *leveraging resources*
- ✓ *changing behavior or attitudes*

“As a result of volunteers doing this specific task/work/activity, _____.”

Table Discussion: Recruitment Messages for 2 Scenarios

- Read the scenario assigned to your table
- Identify 3-5 recruitment messages you think would be effective to use in a situation like your scenario
- Designate someone to take notes & be ready to report out
- You have about 5 minutes

LUNCH Break

Food

Downtown
Walk-About

Networking

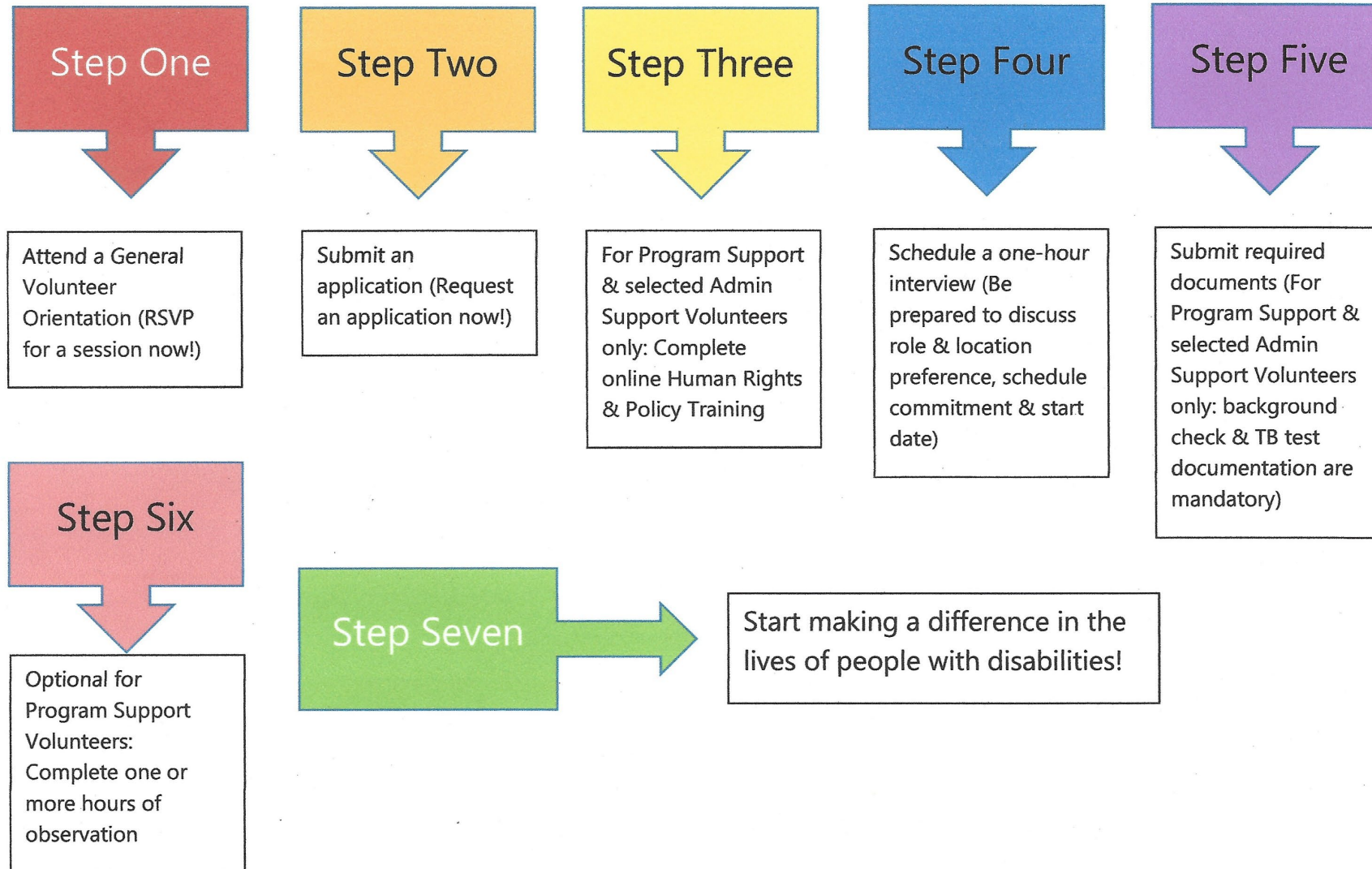
Onboarding New Volunteers



- ✓ Application
- ✓ Screening
- ✓ Matching to specific role
- ✓ Orientation
- ✓ Initial training



SOAR365 Volunteer Onboarding – Steps in the Application Process



Volunteer Application / Interest Form

- Multiple benefits
- Submission options
- Accessible on website
- Option: multiple versions for different types of roles



Screening For the “Fit”

- ✓ What kind of volunteer experiences have you had in the past? Were they positive...or not? Why?
- ✓ If we could design the perfect volunteer assignment for you, what would it look like?
- ✓ What makes you feel appreciated and motivated when you are volunteering your time and skills?
- ✓ How did you hear about our organization?
- ✓ How long do you hope to volunteer with us? What kind of schedule constraints do you have?



Orientation for New Volunteers

Goal: *Preparing for a clear relationship*

Variations:

Location (on site, virtual)

Age (teens vs. adults)

Group or Individual

Frequency (as needed vs. regular schedule)

Combined with training or separate

Timing in the onboarding process (pre-application or part of job training)



Orientation Content

Organization Focus:

- *mission, history, values*
- *programs, people served*
- *structure*
- *funding, partners*
- *strategic priorities, values*

System Focus:

- *policies, procedures*
- *facilities, parking*
- *safety, emergency procedures*
- *jargon, terminology*

People Focus:

- *introductions*
- *dress code, ID badges*
- *food & fun*



Initial Training

Goal: Preparing volunteers to successfully perform specific work.

Content: Information, Skills, Attitudes, Do's and Don'ts

Delivery Options:

- Written materials
- Demonstration
- Buddy system or shadowing
- Video
- Role playing
- Discussion

“Nobody volunteers to fail.”

Based on your volunteer
recruitment and onboarding
experience...

Other advice or tips you can offer?

What has worked well...or not?

*A strategy or example that was surprisingly
successful?*



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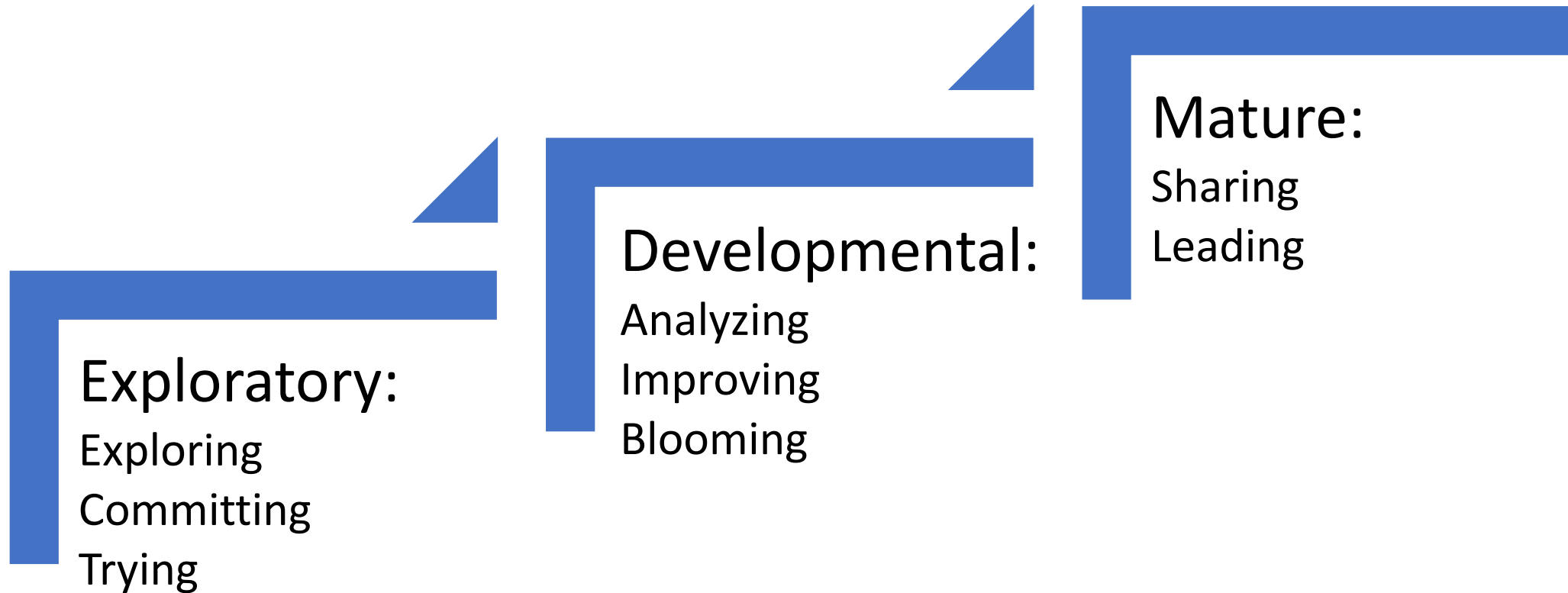


Supervision + or Coaching?

What's the difference?
Who's job is it?



Supporting the Volunteer Life Cycle



“We don’t create motivation...We identify it, accept it, and connect it creatively to organizational and community needs.” – *Ivan Scheier*

Volunteer Motivation is fueled by:

Common goals & values

Mutual respect & trust

Sense of uniqueness

Real work

Feeling successful

Closely Linked to Individual Expectations



The Power of Connection

Promoting a Sense of Connection:

Mutual validation

Communicate contributions

Address by name

Invitations

Share information

Encourage creativity

Set high standards

Allow ownership in the mission

Offer interaction opportunities

Listen and learn



Effective Communication



- ✓ both general and customized/personalized
- ✓ mix of content
- ✓ mix of voices & formats
- ✓ periodic “touch base” chats or “office hours”
- ✓ training in how to use tech tools
- ✓ share what you are hearing from volunteers

Accountability, Discipline & Dismissal: A few wise words...

“Volunteers have a right to expect that fair practices are implemented and that decisions are made on the basis of objective and substantiated information.”

“When you approach the recruitment of volunteers in a professional manner, then you can approach termination in the same way.”

“It is far better to reject a volunteer in the initial interview stage, than to have to fire them later on.”

“If the work is worth doing, then it is worthy of holding people accountable to do it well.”

Volunteer Recognition

Why?

To foster a positive organizational climate
To celebrate success and results
To honor stages in the “life cycle”
To reinforce behavior and motivations
To express gratitude
To acknowledge individual & team contributions to mission & strategic priorities



Key Questions to Ask:

- Whose “job” is it?
- Do we have a written process and plan?
- Is everyone involved? Why or why not? How?
- Does paid staff feel adequately recognized and valued? Why or why not?
- Do we know enough about our volunteers to know what they want?
- **WHAT** should we recognize?

Effective Recognition & Acknowledgement

General Tips:

- Use personal validation
- Link praise to results
- Use varied “voices”
- Ask them!
- Consider full range of options
- Make a coordinated plan

IDEAS

Mini-videos..... Handwritten notes...
Photos... Call/email from Board...
Virtual social hours... Education

What have you done?

Challenges? Questions?

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Documenting and Communicating Volunteer Activity and Impact

- Identifying what our stakeholders want to know
- Deciding what information to track...and how
- Assessing volunteer performance to ensure quality
- Managing the “feedback loop”

What Do Our Stakeholders Want to Know...and Why?

Funders and Institutions which supply volunteers:

- ✓ Are mutual goals being met?
- ✓ Are the results what we expected?
- ✓ Should we continue our relationship?

Organization Leaders (Executives and Board):

- ✓ Is it worth what it costs us to have volunteers involved?
- ✓ What are the implications for future resource allocation decisions?
- ✓ Is our community image affected positively or negatively?

What Do Our Stakeholders Want to Know...and Why?

- Program Managers and Staff:

- ✓ Is it worth my time to supervise & support volunteers?
- ✓ Has our productivity increased?
- ✓ Is quality work getting done?

- Volunteers:

- ✓ Is it worth my precious time and effort?
- ✓ Am I really making a difference?
- ✓ Does the organization value my contributions?



Volunteers

Hours

\$ Value of Vol. Time



Hours

Volunteers

\$ Value of Vol. Time

Individual Accomplishments

Group Results/Outcomes

Community Education

Positive Changes

Public Visibility

GoochlandCares: The Complete “Iceberg”

What we measure:

- ✓ Hours
- ✓ # of volunteers
- ✓ Rate of people who attend orientation who actually volunteer
- ✓ # of volunteers who make financial contributions

What we collect:

- ✓ Stories about individual volunteer accomplishments
- ✓ Overall impact made by volunteers in a program
- ✓ Stories volunteers tell about the impact volunteering has on them
- ✓ Reasons why people volunteer/Do we meet these needs?

Feedback To – and From -- Volunteers

✓ **Volunteer Satisfaction Survey**

- Whatever frequency makes sense
- Electronic – quick & easy
- Share the results

✓ **Individual Performance Evaluation** (“Check In”)

- No surprises
- Make it a 2-way exchange
- Involve direct supervisor

✓ **Exit Survey**

- Interview or electronic
- Valuable for episodic & regular vols.
- Signals interest in continuous improvement

Basic Information to Track and Maintain

Individual volunteers:

- Application, interests, skills, languages, emerg. contact, demographics
- Hours donated
- Assignments & accomplishments
- Comments re performance / disciplinary action
- Training completed

Planning documents

Policies and procedures

Role descriptions

Recruitment plans and promotions

Orientation materials

Training content & process

Summaries of feedback from stakeholders, survey results



Data Management

Strategic Questions:

- *What data are you collecting that might not be necessary?*
- *What data are you not collecting that could be useful to you?*
- *How is the volunteer-related information connected to other data in the organization?*
- *What technology/software are you currently using? Is it sufficient to meet your needs?*

Reflection Activity



Thinking about what you've heard here today, what are 2-3 ideas you'd like to explore further or implement back at your organization?

Wrap Up

- Final comments, questions?
- Evaluation

