



VolunteerMatch

How We Connect

Hopeful and Helpful Data
From Today's Volunteers

2023



For 25 years, VolunteerMatch has been a leading platform for connecting volunteers with causes they care about, and it is connection that lies at the heart of our mission. Forging strong relationships with our communities is vital—not only to our society—but to our well-being. It is a powerful way to combat loneliness, gain fresh perspectives, and discover our passions and purposes.

Recent years have brought unprecedented challenges to our communities and transformed the landscape of volunteering. As we look to the future, we recognize that some traditional methods of recruiting and engaging volunteers no longer suffice. **People crave more than just the satisfaction of lending a hand; they want to experience personal growth, make meaningful connections, and enact real change.**

"How We Connect: Hopeful and Helpful Data From Today's Volunteers" equips nonprofit leaders with the data they need to understand where volunteers are now and what they hope for from the future.



Jude O'Reilley, CEO

This eBook

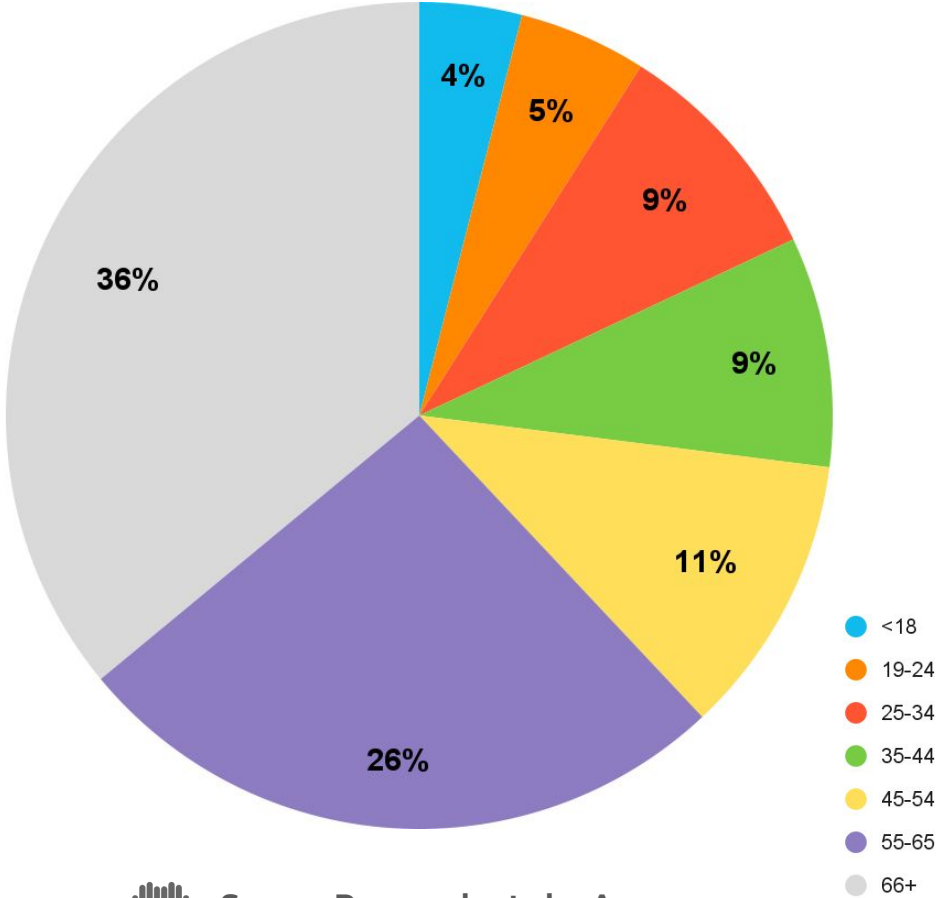
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Behind the Data

This survey was distributed in January 2023 to VolunteerMatch users through our volunteer e-newsletter, gaining **nearly 1,400 responses from active and lapsed volunteers**. It stands as a reliable representation of the site's user base.

Of note, the majority of respondents were 55 and older (62%), indicating the importance of engaging and supporting older adults who continue to be very active in the volunteer community.



Survey Respondents by Age



A Look Back at 2022

Volunteers are out in their communities making a difference! Last year, individuals reported spending significant hours volunteering—about half with multiple organizations.

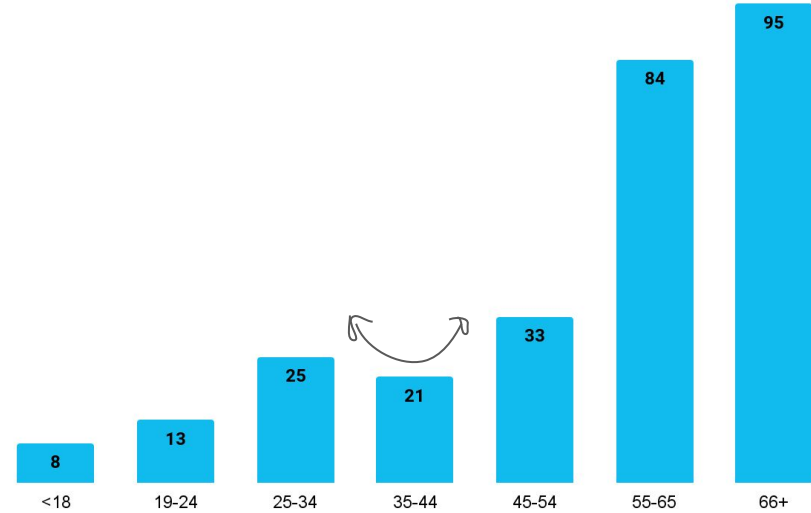
How Service Hours Add Up

Overall, active volunteers are giving nearly a full-time work week's worth of hours per year (40 hours). **The data shows the average number of total hours spent volunteering in 2022 generally increased with the age of the volunteer.**

Older volunteers tend to have a greater capacity to contribute their time due to decreased child care responsibilities, increased financial security, reduced work hours or retirement.

About 50% of respondents were retired while another 15% said they were not working or in school. 35% were active in work and/or school.

We see a dip in hours for those aged 35-44 as there tends to be a focus on building families and/or careers at this age.



Average Hours Volunteered in 2022 by Age Group

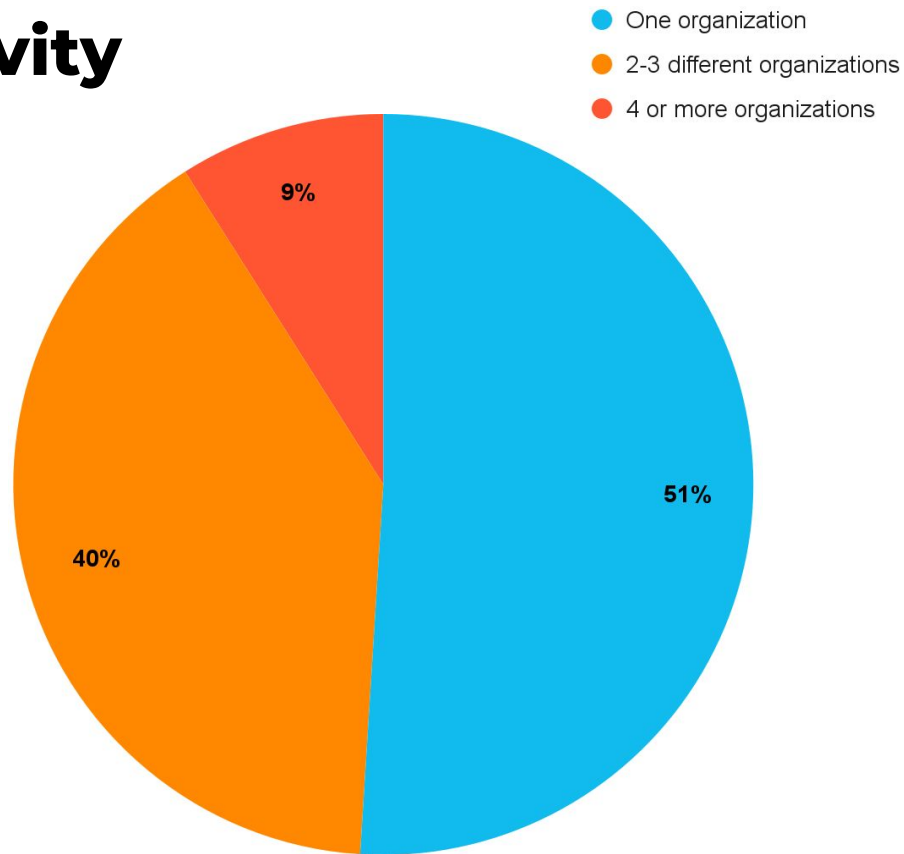
Engagement, not Exclusivity

The split is nearly 50/50 on those who like to volunteer with one organization and those who connect with multiple nonprofits.

We found that **older volunteers gave more hours to fewer organizations while younger generations volunteered less hours with more organizations.**

This could give leaders of volunteers an impression that younger volunteers may not be as committed, but it is important to keep in mind they may be balancing schedules, commutes and exploring a variety of interests to find what suits them best.

Consider an approach that embraces this behavior by allowing volunteers to try out different types of volunteering within your organization or making it easy for them to re-engage at anytime.

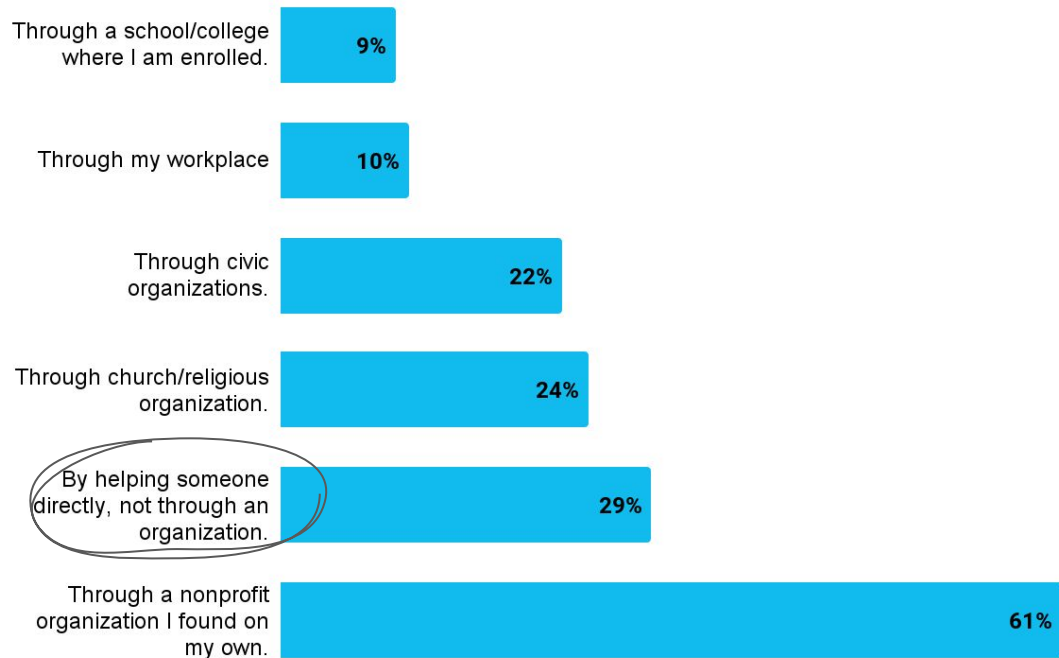


There is No One Size Fits All

The majority of respondents volunteer through nonprofit organizations. During the Covid-19 pandemic **we saw increased awareness about mutual aid or informal volunteering** which is often characterized as people helping people or neighbor to neighbor networks.

Understanding the importance of informal volunteering can open a door for people to see *themselves as a volunteer* and expand on their capability to give back to others. **How can nonprofits learn from and adapt to this trend?**

People who reported the most volunteer activity tended to volunteer through multiple avenues —a good reminder for leaders of volunteers that our star helpers have a variety of interests and commitments.





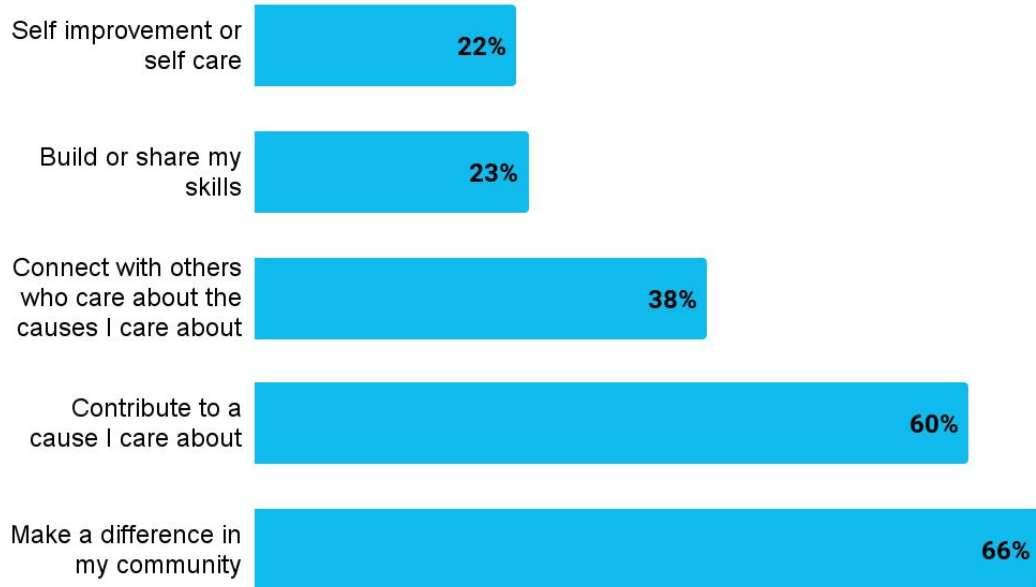
Volunteer Motivations

Volunteers want to connect —with your mission, the community, and with each other! When recruiting volunteers, share why their work matters and how they're making an impact.

The *Why* is More Important Than the *What*

Understanding the driving force behind volunteerism is key to engaging and retaining volunteers. According to our data, the top two reasons to volunteer include giving back to one's community and contributing to a meaningful cause.

Volunteering is about emotional connection—to the cause, the community, and to others, and this is consistent across generations. Understanding and harnessing this emotional connection is integral to creating a fulfilling and impactful volunteer experience that keeps your volunteers coming back.



Top 2 Reasons to Volunteer

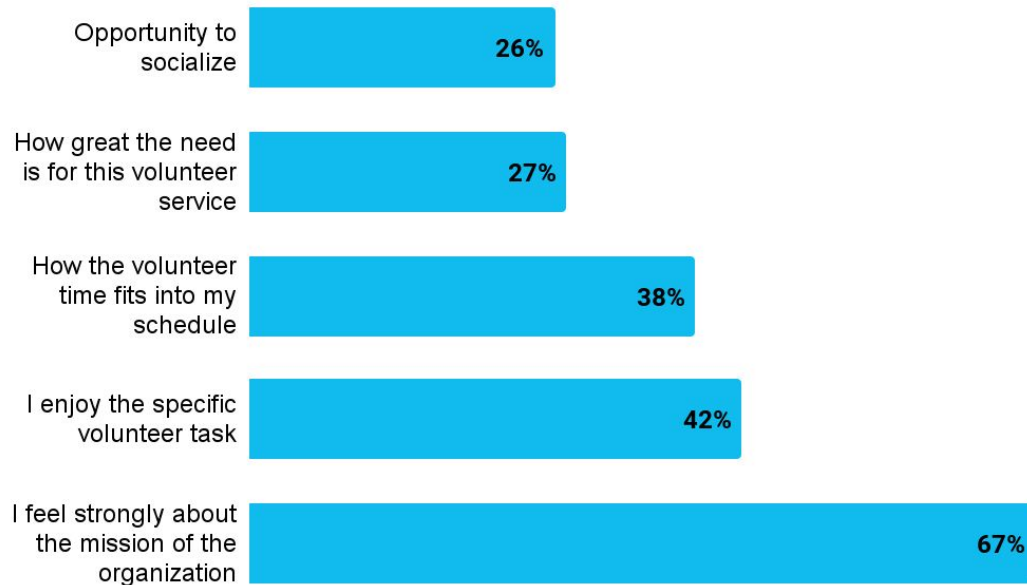


Mission is Critical, Scheduling is Significant

The deciding factor for many volunteers is a **strong belief in the organization's mission and purpose**. These rates were consistent across all age groups.

Nonprofit professionals are passionate about the mission and impact of their organizations, and it's important to communicate to volunteers how they are making a difference. Answer the question: what is different or better because someone gave their time?

Give yourself permission to know you can never talk about the mission and impact too much!



Top 2 Factors For Deciding Where to Volunteer



Volunteer Preferences

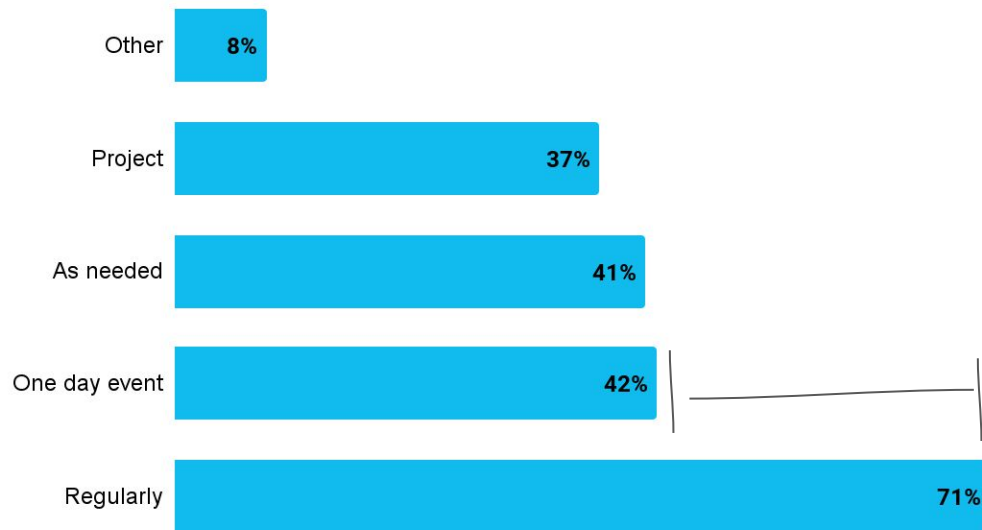
While every volunteer is different, we saw some strong trends around *how* people want to give their time.



Ongoing Volunteering Still Leads the Pack

Nearly two-thirds of volunteers continue to dedicate their time on a regular basis; however, it is important to remember that “regular” does not necessarily mean weekly or monthly. **Volunteers want to build a relationship and make a commitment to an organization** but it’s important to work with people on what that means for them.

41% are open to “as-needed” volunteering where a nonprofit reaches out to them for a specific skilled service. This presents a great opportunity for volunteer leaders to **explore innovative approaches to flexible schedules such as job sharing, team-based volunteering**, and segmented projects.



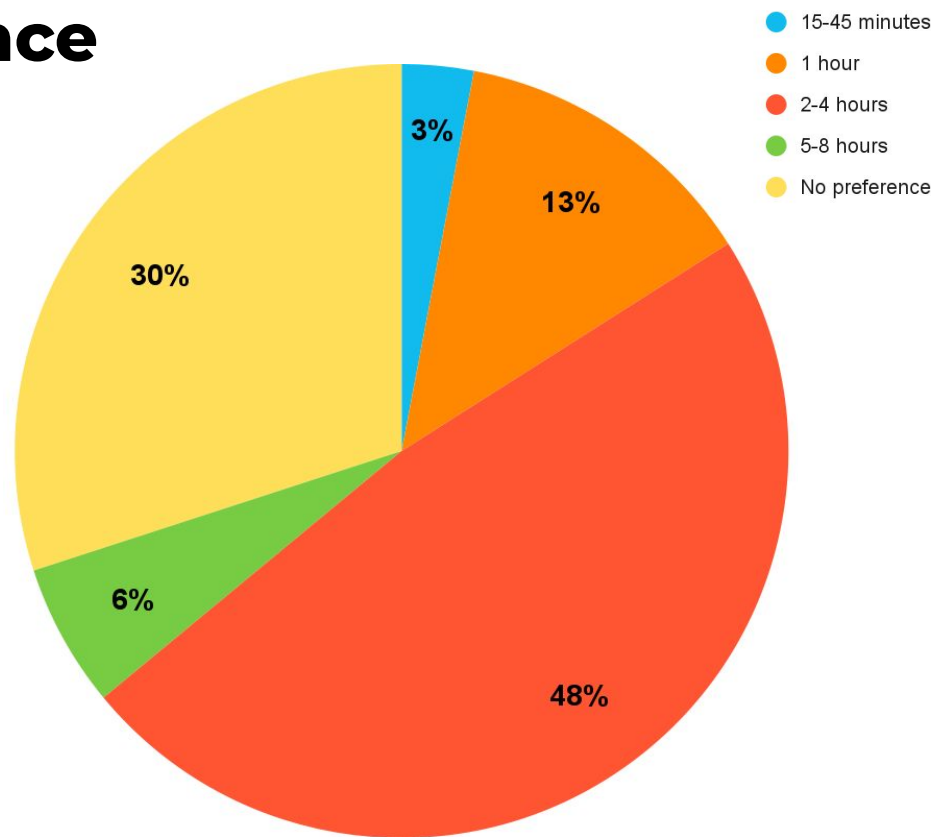
Preferences on Volunteer Commitment

Time to Make a Difference

Nearly half of respondents felt that **2-4 hours was the perfect amount of time to volunteer for a given session** and about one-third didn't have a preference at all. These preferences were consistent among all ages.

Note that a 15-45 minute session was the least popular option, indicating that the micro-volunteering trend might not grant volunteers enough time to feel engaged with their work.

Ultimately, it's up to each individual to determine what works best for them in terms of time commitment.



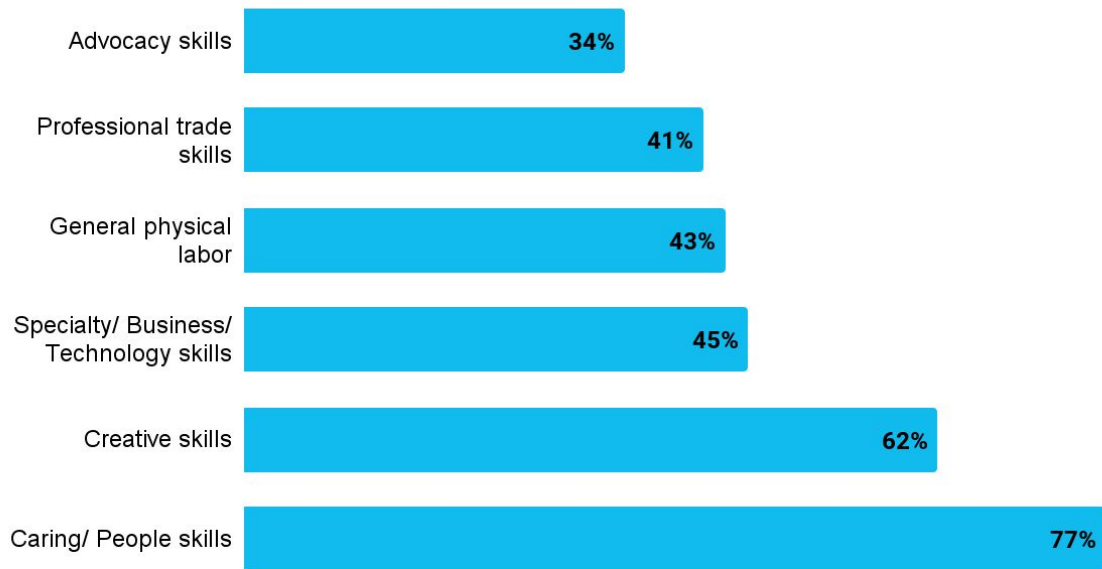
Duration Preferences for Volunteer Sessions

Where There's a Skill There's a Way

More than three-quarters of volunteers would prefer to utilize their Caring/ people skills when giving their time to a cause. As an organization, **it's essential to keep this human element front and center when designing your volunteer program.**

Despite Caring/ People skills being the most popular option, all of these categories were well represented. We found that the **younger generations are especially interested in utilizing their creative skills.**

Volunteers are interested in supporting your organization in many different ways so make sure you're offering a variety of volunteer opportunities!



Skills People Want to Use When Volunteering

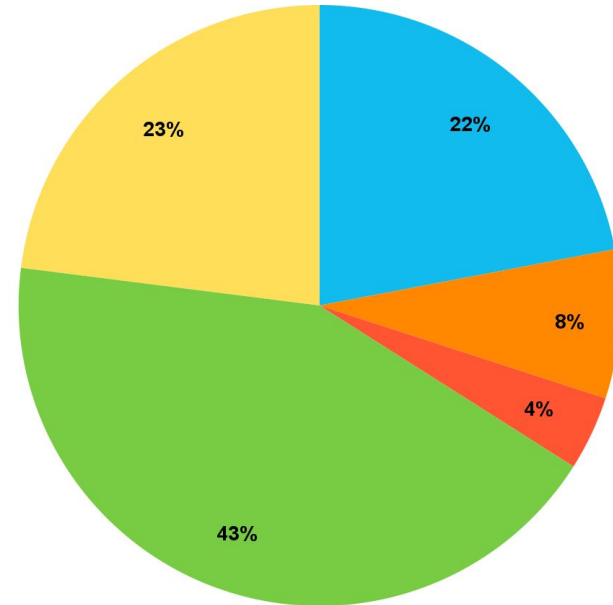
Virtual is Here to Stay

If you created virtual or remote volunteer opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic, the good news is that volunteers are still interested!

22% of respondents have volunteered remotely, and will continue to do so. This group was more likely to be under 45. **43% haven't volunteered remotely yet, but are open to trying.** This group was more likely to be over the age of 55.

Virtual volunteering is a trend that is here to stay and should be a part of your volunteer program strategy. It can be a great way to overcome scheduling challenges and engage new populations.

- I have and will continue to volunteer remotely
- I participated during the pandemic but not anymore
- I participated but will not continue based on my own preferences
- I have not participated but would consider it
- I have not participated and do not plan on it





2023 and Beyond

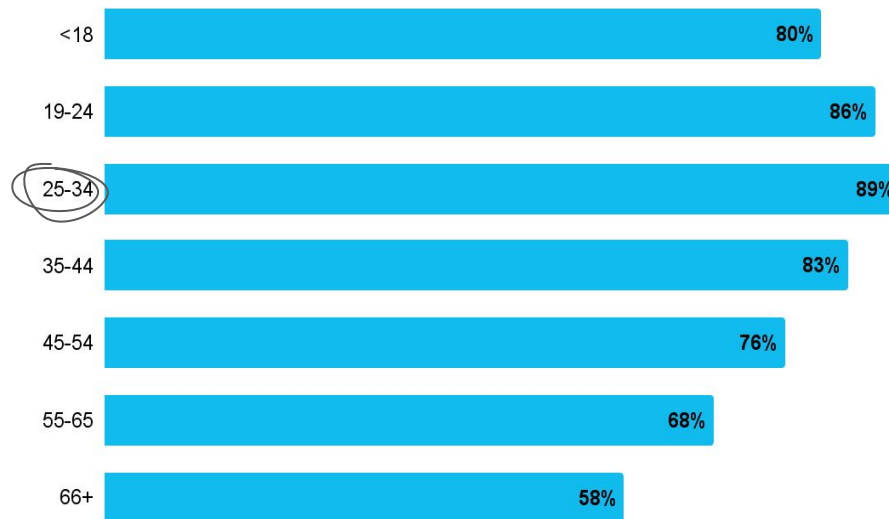
We can see that volunteers are hopeful about giving more time, and nonprofit organizations can be as well!

Aspirations for 2023

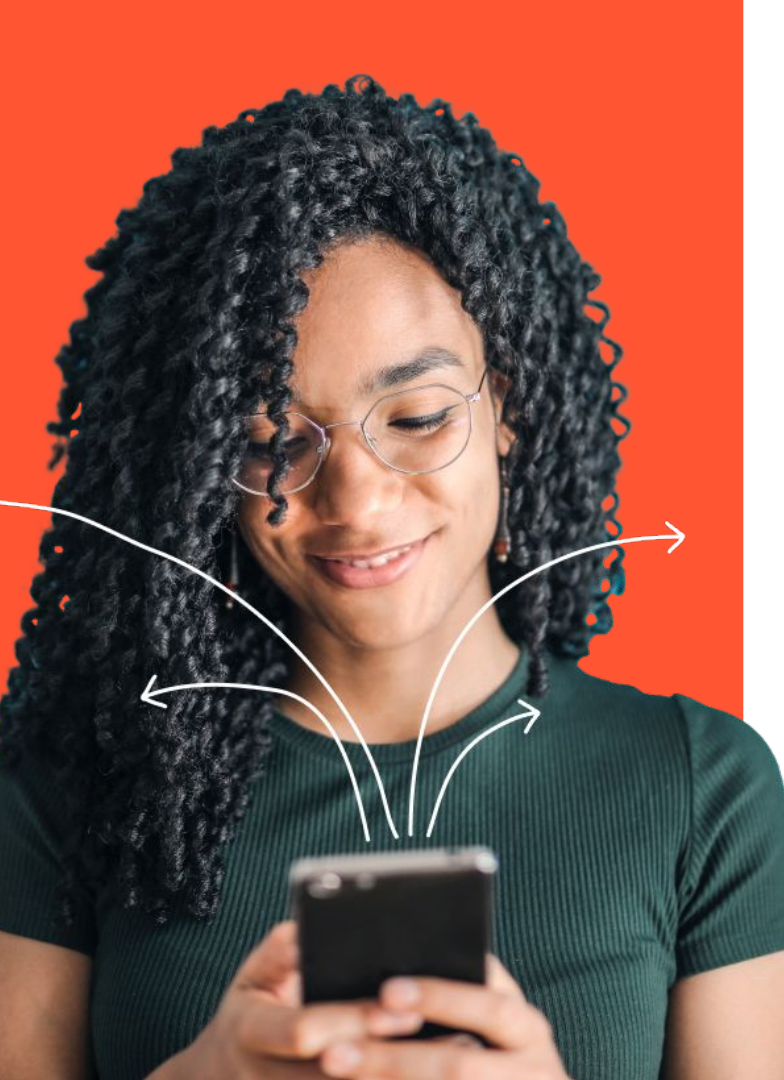
On average **69% of individuals who volunteered in 2022 want to volunteer more hours, or with more organizations** (or both) in 2023. This is a heartening trend for leaders of volunteers and communities alike.

Despite the 25-34 age group having volunteered for the least amount of hours in 2022, they have the greatest desire to give more time in 2023. When comparing this data to the chart, 'Average Hours Volunteered in 2022 by Age Group,' (pg, 6) it forecasts an increase in volunteerism as a whole this year.

We are excited to see what this means for nonprofit organizations in 2023!



Planning to Volunteer More Hours/With More Organizations or Both in 2023



Pass it On

If you found this data insightful and informative, share it with your colleagues on social media and spark a discussion on the topics that matter most to your team. Be sure to tag us (@VolunteerMatch) on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

Looking for a speaker on today's trends in volunteerism?

Our experts are available to present on topics such as:

- Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement
- Corporate Volunteering
- Volunteering as Wellness and Self Care