



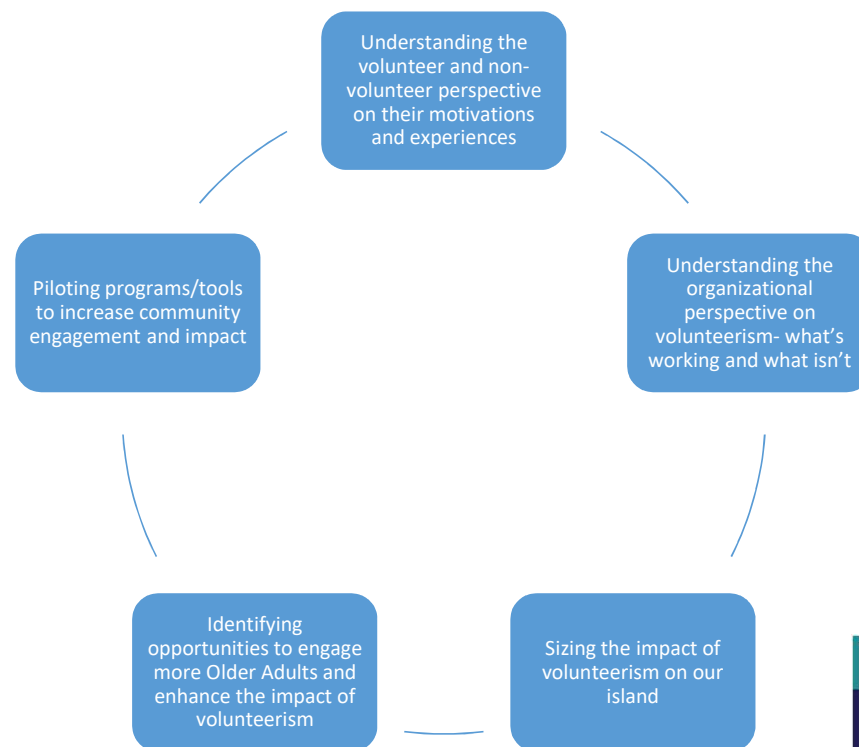
Community Engagement and Volunteer Initiative

Phase 1 Report: November 2024



The building blocks of our investigation

- Our Vineyard Vision fellowship provides us with the opportunity to explore ways to increase community engagement, especially for Older Adults
- Our investigative approach will provide the context necessary to explore and test tools, programs, and best-practice solutions to expand community engagement
- Our collaboration with island non-profits will create an opportunity for all to experience and benefit from this effort



Slide 2

- 1 What do you think of this as a set up slide, Karen? I'm thinking this will be a deck we will be sharing with lots of folks so we want them to understand why we are doing what we are doing,
Cindy Trish, 9/19/2024



Collecting research from multiple sources

1

Individual Interviews with 27 nonprofit organizations.

2

Review of volunteers on town committees in Aquinnah, Chilmark, West Tisbury, Oak Bluffs

3

Focus group soliciting input from dedicated volunteers

4

Review of recruitment and retention strategies currently used locally



What is volunteerism?



Volunteerism is the act of contributing free labor to conduct community service or support a nonprofit organization.

- There are approximately 150 nonprofit organizations on MV that benefit from volunteers who serve on their Boards, help out regularly with tasks or support special events.
- In each of the 6 Island communities, local citizens donate their time to dozens of town committees.
- There are also informal volunteers who help out their neighbors with child care, elder care or household tasks.



Volunteerism is a Cultural Value

- One in four U.S. citizens ages 16 and up volunteer annually*
- 51% of U.S. population helped neighbors during the pandemic*
- Massachusetts now ranks 25th in the country for percentage of volunteers/population = 32.6%* (*AmeriCorps 2023)
- U.S. volunteer rate for 60-80 year olds is 23.6% (Census 2023)
- Martha's Vineyard volunteer rate for residents 60 years of age and older is significantly higher: 54% (HAMV Survey 2020).



Reasons to Volunteer

ALIGNMENT WITH MISSION OF THE ORGANIZATION

Have had personal experience with organization and want to be on giving end (Hospice)

“Driven by passion and commitment to children” (Red Stocking Fund)

DESIRE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY

“want to give back to community; want to know the community and its people” (SCORE)

“I can’t just receive things and not help the community”; “I like to know what to do to help people (Harbor Homes and Red Cross)

SOCIAL CONTACT

“Chicken Alley social club” – 4 volunteer social events/year (MVCS)

“Chance to build friendships with clients” (Vineyard Village at Home)

HEALTHY ACTIVITY

“love wildlife; interested in nature, chance to be outdoors” (Biodiversity Works)



Martha's Vineyard is often described as a "caring and compassionate community."

The data we've gathered on volunteerism validates this portrait.

SAMPLE	# OF REGULAR VOLUNTEERS	% <u>></u> 60 YEARS OF AGE
25 NONPROFITS	737	78%
12 NONPROFIT BOARDS	72	75%
4 TOWN COMMITTEES (AQ, WT, OB, CH)	229	67%

Recruiting Volunteers

- “Word of Mouth”- community connections
- MV Gazette – free weekly ads for volunteers
- MV Times- listing of 72 organizations that solicit volunteers
- Facebook Group: Martha’s Vineyard Volunteers
- MV Nonprofit Collaborative - monthly update of volunteer openings
- capeforgood.org -United Way website that links volunteers to opportunities
- Volunteer Match - online site of volunteer positions with filtering tool
- AmeriCorps - federal volunteer program





Volunteer Opportunities

task	skilled	unskilled
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	PHOTOGRAPHY PLANT CARE ANIMAL GROOMING EXERCISE PROGRAM CARPENTRY BUILDING TRADES ANIMAL/PLANT INVENTORY	MEAL PREPARATION GARDENING/GLEANING ORGANIZE MATERIALS SETUP / CLEANUP FOR EVENTS ANIMAL CARE SHELVING BOOKS BEACH MAINTENANCE
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	HOSPICE VISITOR	CAREGIVER CRISIS SUPPORT RECREATION AIDE MUSIC MINISTRY
PROFESSIONAL	SCORE CONSULTANT HOSPITAL LAB TECHNICIAN INTERN MUSEUM DOCENT MEDIATOR TAX ASSISTANCE	
TRANSPORTATION	SHUTTLE CLIENTS	PICK UP SUPPLIES/DELIVER MEALS
ADMINISTRATIVE	ADVISORY BOARD WEB DESIGN FUND RAISING GRANT WRITING MARKETING	TOWN COMMITTEE BOARD MEMBER OFFICE SUPPORT PHONE CALLS

The Volunteer Landscape based on Staffing Need*

* **REQUIRED** by mandate; **ESSENTIAL** to supplement staffing; **EXTRA** help that is not critical

0 – 10 VOLUNTEERS	# VOLUNTEERS	60+ AGE	NEED
OAK BLUFFS COUNCIL ON AGING	7	7	EXTRA
OAK BLUFFS LIBRARY	7	5	EXTRA
MV CENTER FOR LIVING	3	3	EXTRA
ACE MV	1	1	EXTRA
MV MUSEUM	2	1	EXTRA
RED CROSS	3	0	EXTRA
MV HOSPITAL	5	1	EXTRA
HABITAT FOR HUMANITY	8	7	ESSENTIAL
11-30 VOLUNTEERS			
WEST TISBURY COUNCIL ON AGING	18	17	EXTRA
SCORE	13	10	REQUIRED
BIODIVERSITY WORKS	20	5	ESSENTIAL
HOSPICE	18	17	REQUIRED
MV MEDIATION	16	6	REQUIRED
RED STOCKING FUND	12	10	ESSENTIAL
MISTY MEADOWS	20 -30		ESSENTIAL
31+ VOLUNTEERS			
MV GREENHOUSE	35	33	ESSENTIAL
ELDER SERVICES/MEALS ON WHEELS	50	50	REQUIRED
EDGARTOWN COUNCIL ON AGING	50	45	EXTRA
CHICKEN ALLEY- MVCS	50	45	ESSENTIAL
VINEYARD VILLAGE AT HOME	45	43	ESSENTIAL
IGI	300	225	ESSENTIAL
MV AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY	300 (OCCASIONAL)	200	ESSENTIAL

Slide 10

- 4 Is Elder Services here really meals on wheels - if so, can you add that in after Elder Services?
Cindy Trish, 9/19/2024
- 3 I love the way you thought about this;
Cindy Trish, 9/19/2024

Recruiting Challenges



- Younger residents have less time and flexibility to volunteer because of work and family responsibilities
- Individuals who don't speak English have a language barrier that inhibits volunteering or being aware of volunteer opportunities
- Competition among nonprofits for volunteer drivers
- There is a % of volunteers who are seasonal or snowbirds
- Some volunteer opportunities are emotionally challenging situations (i.e. dementia clients)

Older adult volunteer contribution is economically significant

Volunteer contributions of older adults on MV:

- Are equivalent to a workforce of 500+ full-time employees. (HAMV SURVEY 2020)
- Have an economic value of \$42M* annually.
- Engage Older Adults of all age ranges, genders, income levels, veteran status, and ethnicities

**The Independent Sector - a nationally recognized source of information and data relative to nonprofits provides a metric of \$40.97 per hour to determine the monetary value of a volunteer in 2023 in Massachusetts.*



Older adult volunteer contribution is a critical resource*

- **The population of the Island is aging. 33% of residents are over the age of 60**
- **Many of our neighbors retire to the Vineyard, but do not stop working on the Vineyard.**
- **They volunteer their time, talents, compassion, energy and expertise to community organizations.**

Volunteer Hours/Week	2015	2020
<5 hours/week	27%	36%
6 – 10 hours/week	8%	12%
>10 hours/week	4%	6%
Total % of Older Adults volunteering	39%	54%

*HAMV Survey 2020

Some critical services rely on volunteers

Fire Department	Nonprofit Boards
Town Committees	Advisory Boards
MV Mediation	Friends of the Libraries
Meals on Wheels	Hospice
Community Suppers	SCORE
Winter Shelter	Camp Jabberwocky
Food Pantry	Red Stocking Fund
Vineyard Village at Home	



Challenges to Using Volunteers

- Orientation and Training of new volunteers takes time
- Scheduling volunteers to provide critical services (i.e. Meals on Wheels) or to staff events (i.e. Ag Fair) to ensure coverage



- Supervision of volunteers to ensure they reflect mission of the organization
- Matching volunteers to tasks at their interest or skill level
- Maintaining ongoing and effective communication



Challenges in Retaining Volunteers

VOLUNTEERS MAY CHOOSE TO END THEIR ASSIGNMENT FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS

- Health issues
- Lack of time
- Not feeling productive or valued
- Not feeling a good “fit”
- Only available for a seasonal commitment (students or “snowbirds”)

VOLUNTEERS MAY JEOPARDIZE THEIR VOLUNTEER POSITION IN THESE WAYS

- Being unreliable
- Overstepping personal boundaries with clients
- Not maintaining confidentiality about program or client information

Best Practices for Retaining Volunteers

- Volunteer Recognition: Social Clubs; annual awards; news articles; T shirts or swag; “thank you”
- Volunteer training and professional development: handbooks, workshops, informal meetings, volunteer group discussions
- Volunteer screening and opportunity matching: application process that identifies interests and skill levels of volunteer; periodically assess the “fit” of the volunteer with the requested task.



Using Technology to Manage Volunteerism

CURRENT USES OF TECHNOLOGY:

- *myseniorcenter* - software to monitor activities and collect data
- SLACK – share real time information on organization with volunteers
- MGH uses LOGISTICS - manage all volunteer information
- Constant Contact and Signup Genius to communicate with volunteers

CHALLENGES TO USING TECHNOLOGY:

- "relationships are important; the more you try to centralize - you lose something in connection" to applicants
- Online application and documentation is tedious

Slide 18

- 10** Feels like lack of technology expertise on the part of the volunteers is a real con - so if you have to be able to go online or fill out a spreadsheet to schedule your volunteer hours it will limit who can volunteer- your thoughts?

Cindy Trish, 9/19/2024

Lessons learned to date

- **VOLUNTEERISM IS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF OUR ISLAND'S WELL BEING – SUPPLEMENTING THE WORKFORCE AND CONTRIBUTING TO ECONOMIC STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT**
- **VOLUNTEERS PROVIDE BANDWIDTH, EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE THAT ENHANCE THE IMPACT OF NON-PROFITS AND TOWN GOVERNMENTS**
- **OLDER ADULTS OVERLY REPRESENT THE VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY WITH LESS ROBUST PARTICIPATION FROM OTHER AGE GROUPS**
- **TECHNOLOGY ENABLED SOLUTIONS TO AID IN THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION OF VOLUNTEERS IS VERY LIMITED**
- **VOLUNTEERING IS BENEFICIAL TO OLDER ADULTS' PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH**
- **THERE IS AN INCREASING NEED FOR ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS, PARTICULARLY FOR PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION**



Next Steps



- Proposal to Mass Service Alliance for volunteer website for Vineyard: MVforgood.org
- Assess interest in and need for volunteers in the Brazilian community
- Explore AmeriCorps grant opportunities for Foster Grandparent and AmeriCorps Senior Companion Programs and Seniors RSVP
- Increase public awareness of volunteer activities and impact by submitting articles to local media outlets.