Going Virtual with Skills-Based Volunteering

AN ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL IN-PERSON EVENTS

The need for creative alternatives for employees to engage with their communities has increased along with an increase in technology and remote work capabilities. And during times of natural disaster of crisis, volunteers naturally want to help, all which make **virtual, skills-based volunteering a great way to engage when traditional, in-person volunteering is less viable.**

What is Skills-Based Volunteering?

Skills-based volunteering means leveraging the specialized skills and talents of individuals to strengthen the infrastructure of nonprofits, helping them sustain their capacity to successfully achieve their missions.

With most skilled volunteer projects, individuals can share their expertise from their home or office, needing little more than a laptop, WiFi and phone connection. Opportunities include:

Teaching/Facilitating	Sharing Professional Skills
• Financial education	• Project management
• Online mentoring	• Social media support
• Reading	• Software/technology support
• Career coaching	• Writing/editing content

Particularly in moments of disruption (such as the current public health situation), nonprofits need to divert their resources to the rising needs of the community, and skills-based volunteerism can provide those organizations with support to keep their projects moving forward and addressing the immediate needs of those who need it most.

Ready to Volunteer Virtually?

Below is a resource list of virtual volunteer opportunities categorized by activity type.

Caeer Coaching

Career Village - https://www.careervillage.org/join/for-professionals/ - An online platform where students ask career questions that are answered by people working, or that have worked, in that field. All you need is a LinkedIn account to start helping students become better informed about the career decisions they are facing.

American Corporate Partners - https://www.acp-usa.org/mentoring-program/program-overview - Provides veterans with mentoring through ACP AdvisorNet – an online network of volunteers who commit to sharing their business expertise and advice with military veterans and their immediate family.

Hire Heroes USA - https://www.hireheroesusa.org/volunteer/ - Works to create job opportunities for military veterans and their spouses. Most volunteers participate remotely helping with mock interviews, career counseling, guidance on job searches, preparing resumes, and filling out applications.

Mentoring

Service Corp of Retired Executives (SCORE) - https://www.score.org/volunteer - Mentors provide free business advice and education to aspiring entrepreneurs and existing business owners. Volunteers help clients solve problems, make businesses more efficient, and assist with developing long-term business plans.

Dream Girls - https://letsdreamgirls.org/become-a-mentor/ - Young ladies (ages 11-19) are connected with female mentors. This program creates dynamic and empowering relationships that helps young ladies increase self - esteem, develop social connections, improve academic performance, and explore various careers.

iMentor - https://imentor.org/ - Matches high schools with a committed college-educated mentor, equipped to guide that young person on their journey to college graduation.

MentorNet - https://mentornet.org/ - Strategically matches STEM students and professionals in compatible online mentoring relationships. MentorNet is a division of Great Minds in STEM (GMiS).

MicroMentor - https://www.micromentor.org/ - Matches small business owners with business mentors. Volunteer mentors should have three years of business ownership experience, or five years of management experience, or several years of professional experience in a specialized skill. The program is part of MercyCorps.

Literacy

Bookshare - https://www.bookshare.org/cms/get-involved/volunteer - Contribute your skills and passions to help people with print disabilities read. From scanning and proofreading, to describing images, to providing support for Bookshare teachers and families.

Be My Eyes - https://www.bemyeyes.com/ - Connect with blind and low-vision people to provide visual assistance through a live video call or app. Activities include every day assistance (what color is this shirt? Is this jug of milk expired?) to reading mail and bank statements.

Writing/Editing

By the People - https://crowd.loc.gov/ - Volunteers make documents more searchable by transcribing, reviewing and tagging digitized images of manuscripts and typed materials from the Library of Congress.

Smithsonian Institute - https://www.si.edu/volunteer/DigitalVolunteers SI digital volunteers - - Volunteers help make historical documents and biodiversity data more accessible by transcribing field notes, diaries, ledgers, photo albums, manuscripts, biodiversity specimen labels and more.

Software/platform Knowledge

TechSoup - https://www.techsoup.org/joining-techsoup/become-a-volunteer - You can log into the community at any time and try to help nonprofits and volunteers with questions about software, databases and more. TechSoup also needs volunteers to transcribe its most popular archived webinars.

National Partnerships

American Red Cross ARC digital volunteers - https://redcrosschat.org/digitalvolunteer/ - Volunteers monitor online conversations and social media and direct to ARC resources.

United Way - https://www.unitedway.org/our-impact/work/volunteering - For more than 125 years, the United Way has helped make communities stronger through various programs that support education, financial stability and health. Find a local United Way chapter to learn how you can get involved.

Disclosure: U.S. Bank may not be a direct supporter of partner of the listed nonprofits/programs.