



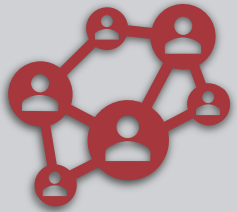
VOLUNTEER  
BÉNÉVOLES  
CANADA

# **VOLUNTEER (RE) ENGAGEMENT** **in continuing pandemic times**

United Way Perth-Huron

May 2022

# Volunteer Canada



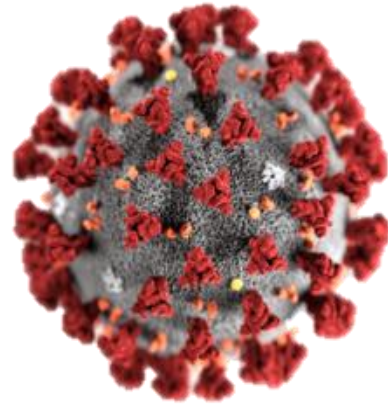
**Vision** – Involved Canadians. Resilient Communities.  
A Vibrant Canada



**Mission** – Volunteer Canada provides national leadership and expertise on volunteerism to enhance the participation, quality and diversity of volunteer experiences.

# What's on the agenda

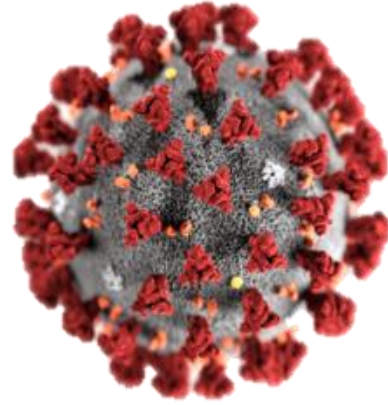
- COVID-19's impact on nonprofit organizations: stats and trends
- Resulting challenges and issues
- The particular challenge of engaging and re-engaging volunteers in the new reality
  - Some general ideas about engaging volunteers
  - How some organizations are responding
  - How you **are** responding, how **can** you respond in your organizations?



In the first months of the pandemic:

- **96 %** of organizations closed completely or suspended some or all of their programs
- **78 %** transformed some or all of their activities from in-person to virtual
- **More than 80 %** of volunteers expected to return

Volunteer Canada, [\*The Volunteering Lens of COVID-19\*](#)



## High level of uncertainty:

- Health risks and measures
- Funding and fundraising
- Staff layoffs
- Volunteer engagement
- Whether there would be a **second wave!**

# Key trends and challenges faced during the first year

- Major shift to virtual volunteering
- Significantly fewer volunteers engaged
- Concerns about the return of volunteers
  - would they want to return after so long?
  - would their roles have changed? If so, would they have the interest/skills?
  - how to remain in contact with those who choose to/have to stay away?
- Increased interest in volunteering, **but**
  - not enough opportunities, organizations unable to respond to all requests
  - increase in **informal volunteering**

# A significant drop in the number of volunteers engaged

- As the pandemic continued, some new volunteers
  - returned to work or school, or
  - had increased family responsibilities
  - unable to continue
- Many older volunteers still not comfortable to return in person
- In 2021, a good quarter (26 %) of nonprofits reported they had lost **more than 75% of their volunteers** over the past year

*Charity Village, [Human Resources Impact of COVID-9 on Canadian Charities and Nonprofits](#)*

One of the most obvious impacts of COVID is a **significant reduction in the number of volunteers engaged**

# Four important observations

Behind the  
numbers and  
the statistics

- Shortage of volunteers, mismatch between opportunities and roles available
- Virtual and hybrid programs here to stay
- After enormous efforts and much creativity COVID fatigue and burnout amongst staff and volunteers
- Lack of capacity and/or expertise in volunteer management



# Some hopeful signs



All is not doom and gloom!

- Organizations and nonprofits are resilient and resourceful
- New volunteers have been inspired to get involved
- Lack of opportunities for in person group volunteering has allowed companies to look for alternative ways they can contribute to their communities

# POLL

- Your perspective on these trends
- How do these trends and observations jive with your experience?

# Reflection questions

- Why are you asking for volunteers? What are you trying to accomplish with their contribution?
  - Roles, skills, personal qualities
  - Time commitment required
  - Virtual, in person
- What would you say about the impact of their involvement – to attract and to recognize volunteers?
- These details need to go into a job description
- Recruitment message should echo the job description
- What about motivation? Current and prospective volunteers



# Benefits of volunteering

- Social inclusion : connections and a sense of purpose
- Youth empowerment
- Experience for job-seekers
- Skills development in work transition
- Social integration of newcomers
- Employee engagement
- Improved brain health, particularly in older adults



# Warm and inclusive welcome

- Being inclusive begins with your recruitment message and your initial responses to requests for information and registrations
- Adapt your welcome:
  - new volunteers
  - returning volunteers
  - volunteers from minority groups
  - youth and students
  - employee volunteers
- Show warmth, listen to their questions
- Are they comfortable and confident in their roles?
- Are current volunteers welcoming to the new volunteers?
- Welcoming never stops!



# What we are hearing from organizations?

- Collaboration and partnerships
- Combining off-site and in-person volunteering opportunities
- programs combining off-site or virtual and in-person
  - Retaining the strengths of both
- Simplify the paperwork
- If possible, hire a volunteer management professional

# Questions for you

Reflect on your own and then share/discuss in small groups

1. What has been working for you, what strategies and ideas are proving successful?
2. Has any of the information or the ideas shared today inspired you to try something different?



# Information and Resources

Excellent blog by Rob Jackson:

[Five important questions to ask if you want to effectively engage volunteers after the pandemic](#)

Visit us @ [volunteer.ca](https://volunteer.ca)

- [The Volunteering Lens of COVID-19](#)
- [Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement](#)
- [Virtual Volunteering \(about\)](#)
- [The Volunteering Lens of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)

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Next Volunteer Canada webinar on June 14<sup>th</sup>: [Google Advertising for Not-For-Profit Organizations](#)

