

WHAT IS REIMAGINING SERVICE?

Building on the work of the champions of effective volunteer engagement, Reimagining Service is a national coalition of multi-sector representatives from nonprofit organizations, government, education, faith-based, funders and corporations. We seek to increase the impact of volunteers through:

- PRACTICE:** Inspiring organizations to leverage volunteers more fully and strategically, and engage volunteers as part of their core operations.
- RESEARCH:** Supporting and disseminating research aimed at highlighting effective volunteer engagement practices and policies and their impact on the core mission of the organization.
- FUNDING:** Engaging funders in recognizing that volunteerism and civic engagement are cost effective strategies that help community organizations accomplish their missions, and therefore merit their financial support.

REIMAGINING SERVICE PRINCIPLES

The Reimagining Service coalition has established four principles to guide its work:

- PRINCIPLE 1:** The volunteer ecosystem is more effective when all sectors participate in its evolution. Volunteerism doesn't exist in a single sector and the responsibility of successful volunteer engagement resides beyond nonprofits alone. We are interdependent when it comes to this work and together we can increase the impact of volunteerism by working to improve the system across all sectors (i.e., nonprofit, private, faith-based, education, government).
- PRINCIPLE 2:** Make volunteering a core strategic function, not an add-on. Volunteers fundamentally increase our ability to achieve our objectives and advance the social mission of our organizations. Engaging volunteers effectively can help an organization serve more people in the community as well as change the core economics of an organization, which can allow it to scale more quickly in a cost effective way.
- PRINCIPLE 3:** Focus volunteer engagement on true community needs. Rather than responding to the supply of volunteers, identify key priorities in the community then purposefully seek out volunteers with the core skills needed to address those priorities. We should also strive to communicate the value of volunteers to the community by measuring their impact, not just the hours they serve.
- PRINCIPLE 4:** In order to get a return, you have to invest. Organizations that make volunteers central to their work and manage them well are able to generate as much as three to six times the community value from volunteers as the cost to manage them. This is a smart way to maximize impact, but it requires up-front and ongoing financial investment in volunteer engagement in all sectors. And we need funders, who believe that funding volunteer engagement helps organizations achieve their broader social missions, to raise their voices so that the funding community can learn from their stories.

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