

**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER RESOURCE CENTER  
FOR ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS IN THE AGING NETWORK**

**CAPITALIZING ON THE LEADERSHIP TALENTS  
OF A NEW GENERATION OF 55+ ADULTS**

**NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS SURVEY**

Introduction

- The purpose of this survey is to help you determine whether your staff, managers, and board members see adult 55+ volunteers as a potential resource for building the capacity of your organization, and whether you are ready to recruit and use such volunteers in meaningful leadership and professional roles.
- This survey includes questions about your individual attitudes toward using professional and leadership volunteers, as well as your perceptions about the attitudes of staff and board members in general.
- For this survey, we use the following definition of “leadership” and “professional” volunteers: *Professional or leadership volunteers are individuals who use their education, experience, and skills in specific functional roles or for projects that help achieve organization-wide goals and/or increase the capacity of the organization to achieve its mission.*

Survey questions

*(For each question, select the choice that best describes your and your organization’s perspectives, and provide details as indicated.)*

1. How does your organization, in general, deal with change?
  - a. Key staff and board members foster and lead change
  - b. Most staff and board members will embrace needed change
  - c. Some staff and board members resist change, while others adapt quickly
  - d. Change is not readily accepted by most staff and board members.
  
2. How willing are you to learn, think, work, and operate differently?
  - a. I encourage/take the initiative to do things differently to improve organizational performance.
  - b. I am willing to do things differently if this will benefit the organization
  - c. I might be willing to do certain things differently
  - d. I am satisfied with the way we currently do things
  
3. How willing are your staff and board members to learn, think, work, and operate differently?
  - a. Staff and board members often encourage/take the initiative to do things differently in order to improve organizational performance
  - b. Most are very willing to do things differently if this will benefit the organization

- c. Some are willing to do things differently, while others initially resist changing how we do things
  - d. Most resist doing things differently
- 4. How open are you to objective input from outsiders, e.g., volunteers?
  - a. This kind of input is an integral part of the way I operate
  - b. I seek this kind of input when appropriate.
  - c. I usually consider this kind of input when it is offered
  - d. I resist suggestions from individuals who are not part of the formal organizational structure
- 5. How open are staff and board members to objective input from outsiders, e.g., volunteers?
  - a. Key staff and board members seek out this kind of input as an integral component of their decision making
  - b. Most staff and board members accept this input and, when appropriate, use it to improve the organization
  - c. Some staff and board members accept this input but others resist suggestions from “outsiders”
  - d. Most staff and board members resist suggestions from individuals who are not part of the formal organizational structure
- 6. How do you feel about working with older professional-level volunteers?
  - a. I already work with older professional-level volunteers and am eager to do more
  - b. I am willing to work with well-qualified older professional volunteers
  - c. I would consider working with well-qualified older professional volunteers
  - d. I am not willing to work with older professional volunteers
- 7. How do staff and board members feel about working with older professional volunteers?
  - a. Several staff and board members already work with volunteers at this level and have expressed an interest in doing it more
  - b. Most are very willing to work with well-qualified older professional volunteers
  - c. Some might be willing to work with well-qualified older professional volunteers
  - d. Most staff and board members are not willing to work with older professional volunteers
- 8. How do you feel about giving volunteers with the required skills and experience the autonomy to make recommendations and/or decisions with minimal direct supervision?

- a. I want to delegate as much responsibility as possible to volunteers whose qualifications match the work that needs to be done
  - b. I am willing to delegate responsibilities and decisions, when appropriate, to well-qualified volunteers
  - c. I am willing to delegate some responsibilities and decisions to well-qualified volunteers, but only within strictly defined parameters
  - d. I am not willing to delegate responsibilities and decisions to volunteers
9. How do staff and board members feel about letting go of some of the control and allowing volunteers with the required skills and experience to make recommendations and/or decisions?
- a. Our organization encourages delegation of significant responsibility to well-qualified volunteers
  - b. Most are willing to delegate responsibilities and decisions, when appropriate, to well-qualified volunteers
  - c. Some are willing to delegate some responsibilities and decisions to well-qualified volunteers, but only within strictly defined parameters
  - d. Most staff and board members would not be willing to delegate responsibilities and decisions to volunteers
10. Do you currently use older professional and leadership volunteers in your organization? (Please use the definition given in the Introduction to this survey in answering this question.)
- Yes                       No
- If **yes**, what are some examples of the roles these volunteers fill?
- If **no**, why don't you use these kinds of volunteers?
11. Are you willing to re-arrange some of your priorities and make time for implementing new ways to accomplish the organization's mission and goals?
- Yes                       No
12. Are your staff and board members willing to re-arrange some of their priorities and make time for implementing new ways to accomplish the organization's mission and goals?

Yes  No

13. Are you willing to interact with volunteers much as you do with professional colleagues?

Yes  No

14. Are most staff and board members willing to interact with volunteers much as they do with professional colleagues?

Yes  No

15. Are there two or three characteristics or ways your organization operates that would facilitate or expedite the design and implementation of a professional-level volunteer program (or expand your current program)? If so, please list below.

16. Are there two or three characteristics or ways your organization operates that would represent barriers to utilizing 55+ volunteers in leadership or professional capacities? If so, please list below.

17. What is your role in the organization?

Staff (job title) \_\_\_\_\_

Manager (job title) \_\_\_\_\_

Board member

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## **SCORING THE ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS SURVEY**

The Survey gives the respondent both a personal assessment and his/her assessment of others in the organization. It also gives you a “readiness score” for your organization. To see what these scores are, complete the following three steps.

**Step 1: Begin by assigning a value to the answers to each question about your attitudes and your perceptions of others’ attitudes toward using professional volunteers:**

### Individual

Q 2 \_\_\_\_\_ (A=3, B=2, C=1)

Q 4 \_\_\_\_\_ (A=3, B=2, C=1)

Q 6 \_\_\_\_\_ (A=3, B=2, C=1)

Q 8 \_\_\_\_\_ (A=3, B=2, C=1)

Q10 \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes=1, No=0)

Q 12 \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes=1, No=0)

Q 14 \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes=1, No=0)

Q 16 \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes=1, No =0)\_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_**

### Other staff/board members

Q 3 \_\_\_\_\_ (A=3, B=2, C=1)

Q 5 \_\_\_\_\_ (A=3, B=2, C=1)

Q 7 \_\_\_\_\_ (A=3, B=2, C=1)

Q 9 \_\_\_\_\_ (A=3, B=2, C=1)

Q 11 \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes=1, No=0)

Q 13 \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes=1, No=0)

Q15 \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes=1, No =0)

**TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_**

The maximum score for each column is 14 points. The minimum score is 4. Compare your score with the score derived from your assessment of your colleagues’ attitudes toward using leadership volunteers.

- Are they similar? For example, your score = 12 and the others’ score = 10. In this case, you will find many supporters if you decide to design a program to use professional, leadership volunteers.
- Or are they different? For example your score = 12 and the others’ score = 6. In this case, you have a lot of work to do in order to gain support for this program.

**Step 2: Now score the questions on the Survey related to your organization:**

### Organization

Q 1 \_\_\_\_\_ (A=3, B=2, C=1)

Q 10 \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes=1, No=0)

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 3: Finally, add the Totals from the three categories:**

Individual score total	_____
Other staff/board members total	_____
Organization score total	_____
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	_____

***How ready is your organization to use professional, leadership volunteers?***

In general, the degree of readiness your organization demonstrates toward using professional volunteers can be measured by the following scale:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 38 – 326 points | What are you waiting for? Your organization is ready to capitalize on all the assets professional volunteers offer!   |
| 31 – 25 points  | With some discussion about concerns you or some of your colleagues have, your organization can quickly be ready to use professional volunteers. Use the responses to Questions 15 and 16 to help you identify the enablers and any obstacles that may be present in the organization.   |
| 24 – 18 points  | Some individuals in your organization probably have serious concerns about using professional volunteers. You'll need to plan how to identify and deal with those concerns before moving forward. Use the responses to Questions 15 and 16 to help you identify any enablers and obstacles that may be present in the organization. |
| <18 points      | This is probably not the time for your organization to consider implementing this new approach to using volunteers.   |