



## West Michigan Volunteer Manager Survey

The West Michigan Volunteer Manager survey was conducted through a partnership of the Heart of West Michigan United Way Volunteer Center and the Volunteer Management Association of Western Michigan.

### *Authors*

Joni Jessup, Volunteer Coordinator, Family Promise  
Katelyn Kovalik, Volunteer Center Manager, Heart of West Michigan United Way  
Megan Priester, House Services Director, Ronald McDonald House of Western Michigan

### **OBJECTIVES**

The goals of this survey were to gain insights on the volunteer management industry in West Michigan. The role of the Heart of West Michigan United Way Volunteer Center is to refer volunteers to local agencies, advocate for best practices in volunteerism, promote civic engagement in Kent County, and manage large-scale days of service. The Volunteer Management Association of Western Michigan promotes excellence in the field of volunteer management by providing educational opportunities, networking events, and valuable resources. By better understanding the responsibilities, challenges, needs, and processes of volunteer managers, both organizations can better serve the industry in their roles. Additionally, the survey will gather information on schedules, salaries, titles, and training; this information can support the Volunteer Center and Volunteer Management Association in advocating for volunteer management as a vital position within nonprofit organizations.

The survey team's goal was to collect at least 100 survey responses.

### **METHODS**

The survey was hosted on Survey Monkey and entirely managed online. There were 25 questions, many pulled directly from the VolunteerPro 2016 Survey, a national survey conducted through VolunteerPro.

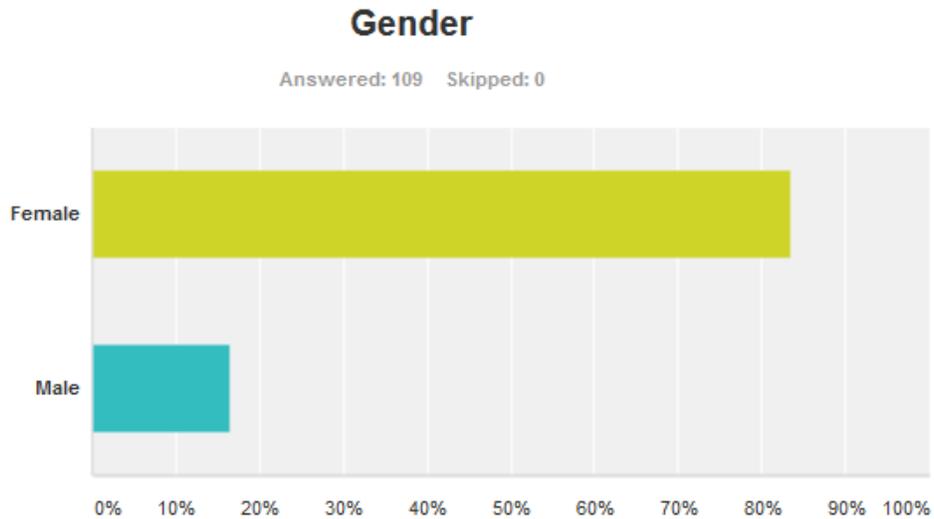
The survey was sent through email to 586 total contacts, which were made up of Volunteer Management Association of Western Michigan members and Volunteer Center partners. Volunteer Center partners include those volunteer managers that host group volunteer projects on one of Heart of West Michigan United Way's Days of Service, as well as those that utilize the Volunteer Center website to recruit volunteers ([connect.hwmuw.org](http://connect.hwmuw.org)) year-round. The email sent can be viewed in the appendix. The first wave of emails was sent on Wednesday, April 13, 2016 to 586 email addresses. The deadline to complete was Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The second wave of emails was sent to 224 contacts on Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup> with a deadline of Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. The second wave included contacts that had not opened the first wave email as well as some updated emails to reflect staff changes that were found following several bounce back emails.

## RESULTS

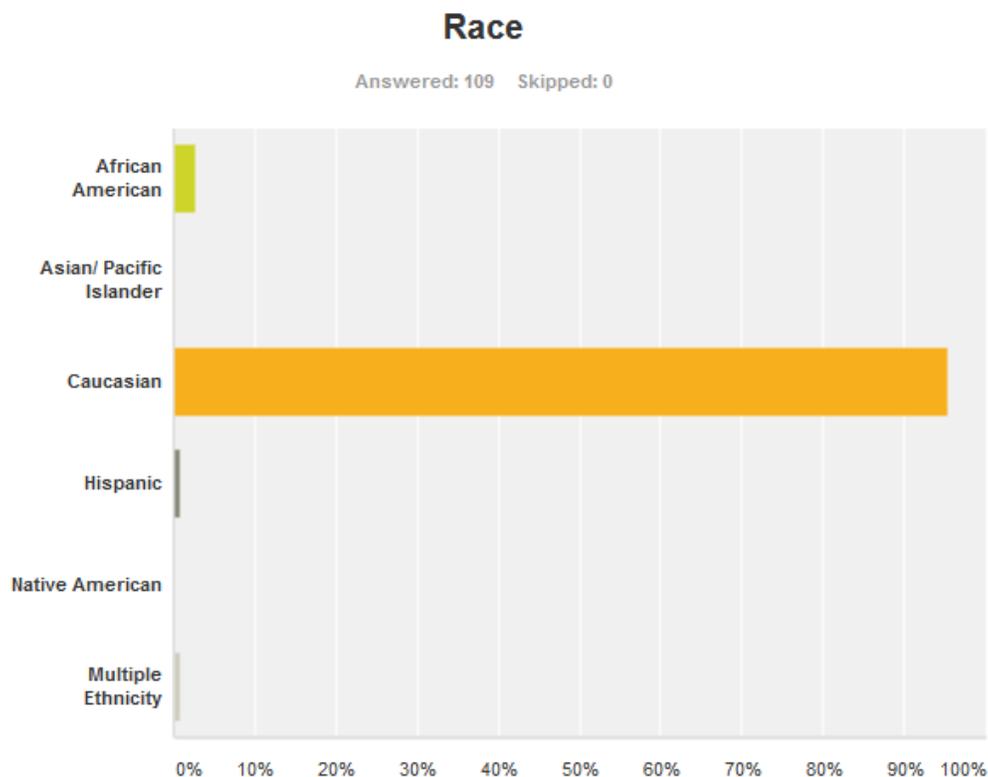
From the first wave of 586 contacts, 74 responses were gathered. From the second wave of 224 contacts, an additional 35 responses were gathered. Conclusions are reflective of 109 total respondents.

### Demographics

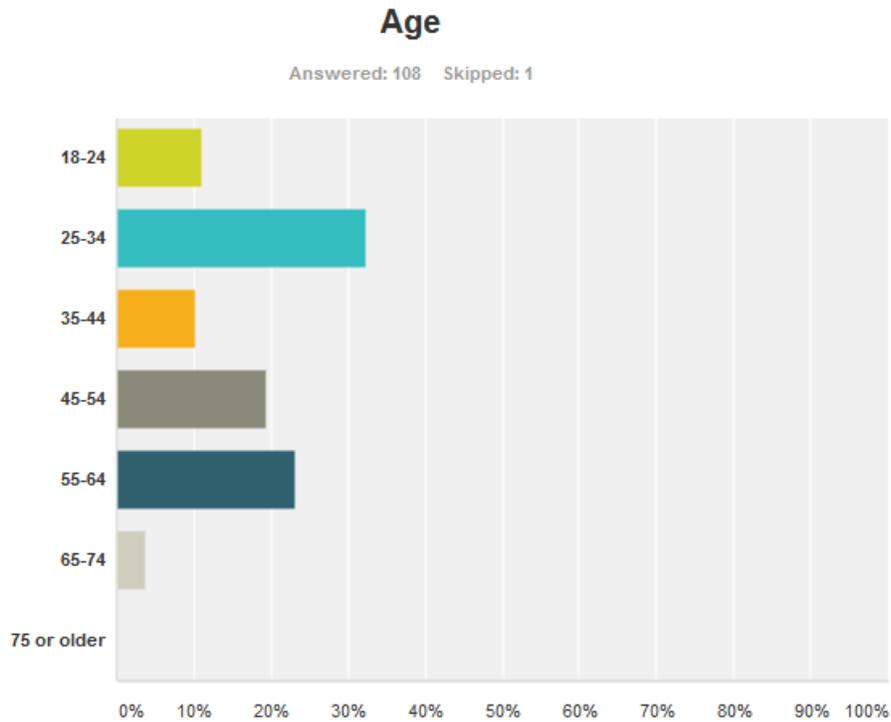
Of the West Michigan Volunteer Managers that participated in the survey, 83% are female and 17% are male; nationally, participants were 88% female and 12% male.



When asked their race, 95% responded as Caucasian, 3% as African-American, 1% Hispanic, and 1% multiple ethnicity. Nationally, those numbers were 89% Caucasian, 3% African-American, 3% Hispanic, 3% multiple ethnicity, and 1% Asian/Pacific Islander.

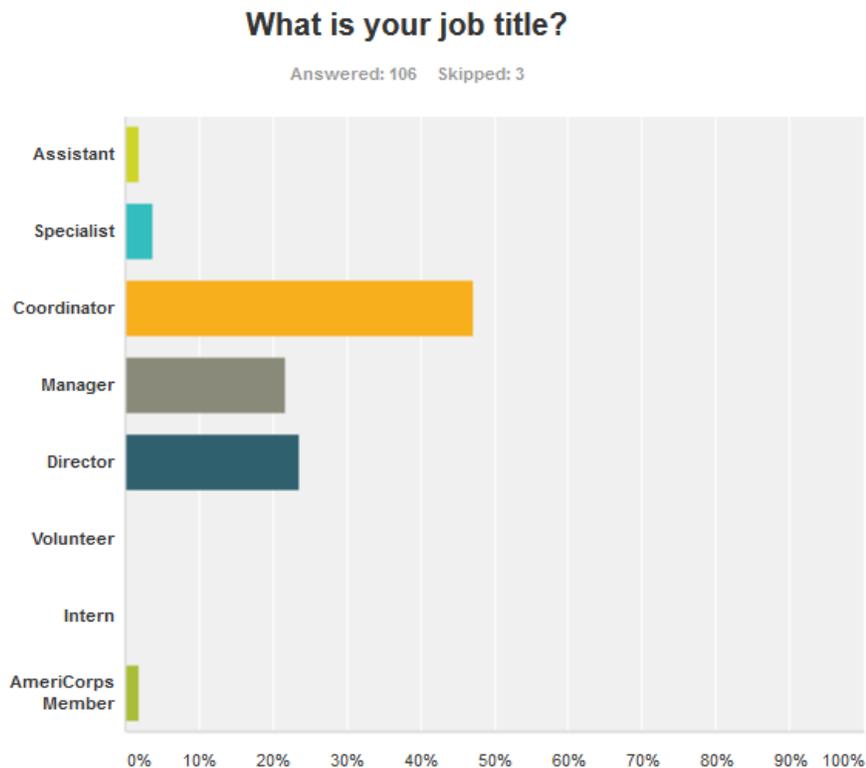


The ages of volunteer managers was more widespread, with 44% falling under age 35, 30% between the ages of 35 and 55, and 26% over the age of 55. The age groups with the most respondents was 25-34 (32%). Similarly, those numbers nationally were: 28% under the age of 35, 40% between the ages of 35 and 55, and 32% over the age of 55.



### Positions

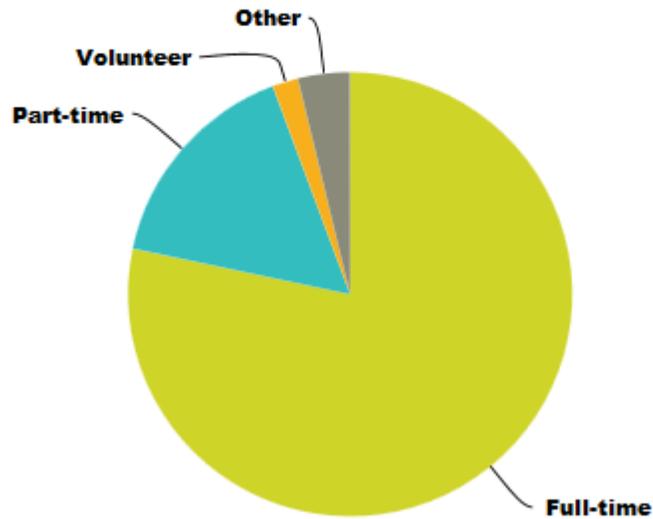
Participants were asked their job title and status. The most popular response at 47% was Coordinator, followed by Director (23%), and Manager (22%). Other titles included Specialist (4%), Assistant (2%), and AmeriCorps member (2%). No participants selected Volunteer or Intern.



The majority of participants work full-time in their positions (79%). Most of the other participants work part-time (17%), with 2% volunteering and 2% seasonal. Since no one said their title was Volunteer, the two respondents who do volunteer must have formal titles. In these positions, 78% of participants answered that their only role is volunteer management, though 27% said that their role includes client services, so there are some discrepancies in how the question was answered.

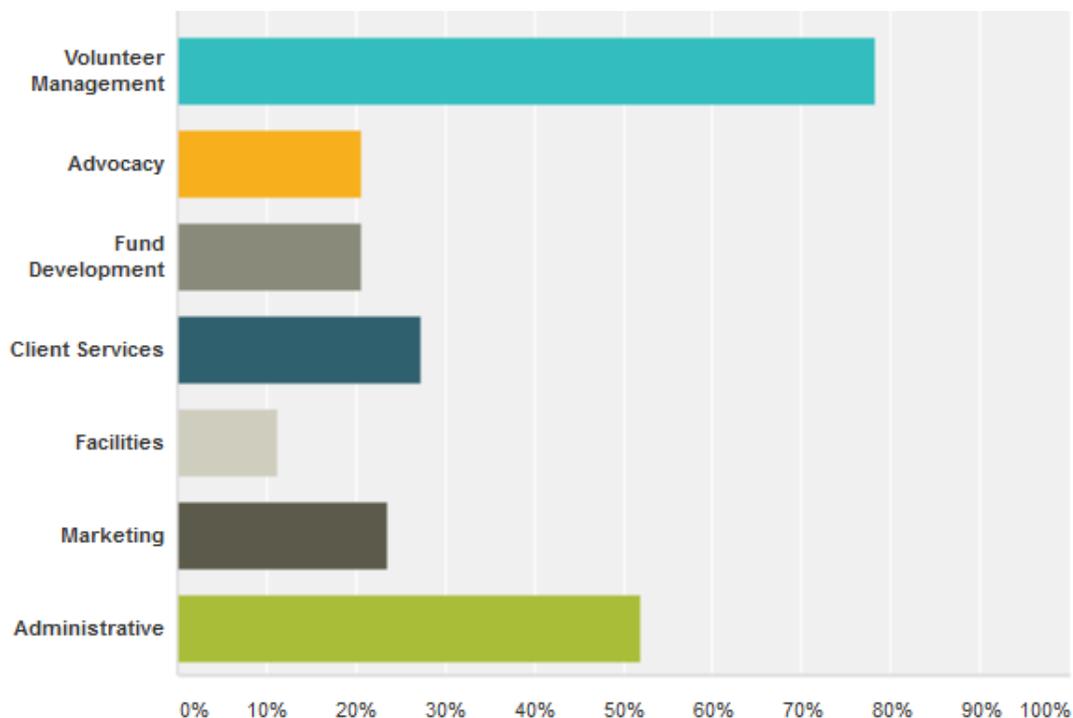
### Job Status:

Answered: 106 Skipped: 3



### Is your role dedicated to volunteer management or do you have multiple roles within your organization?

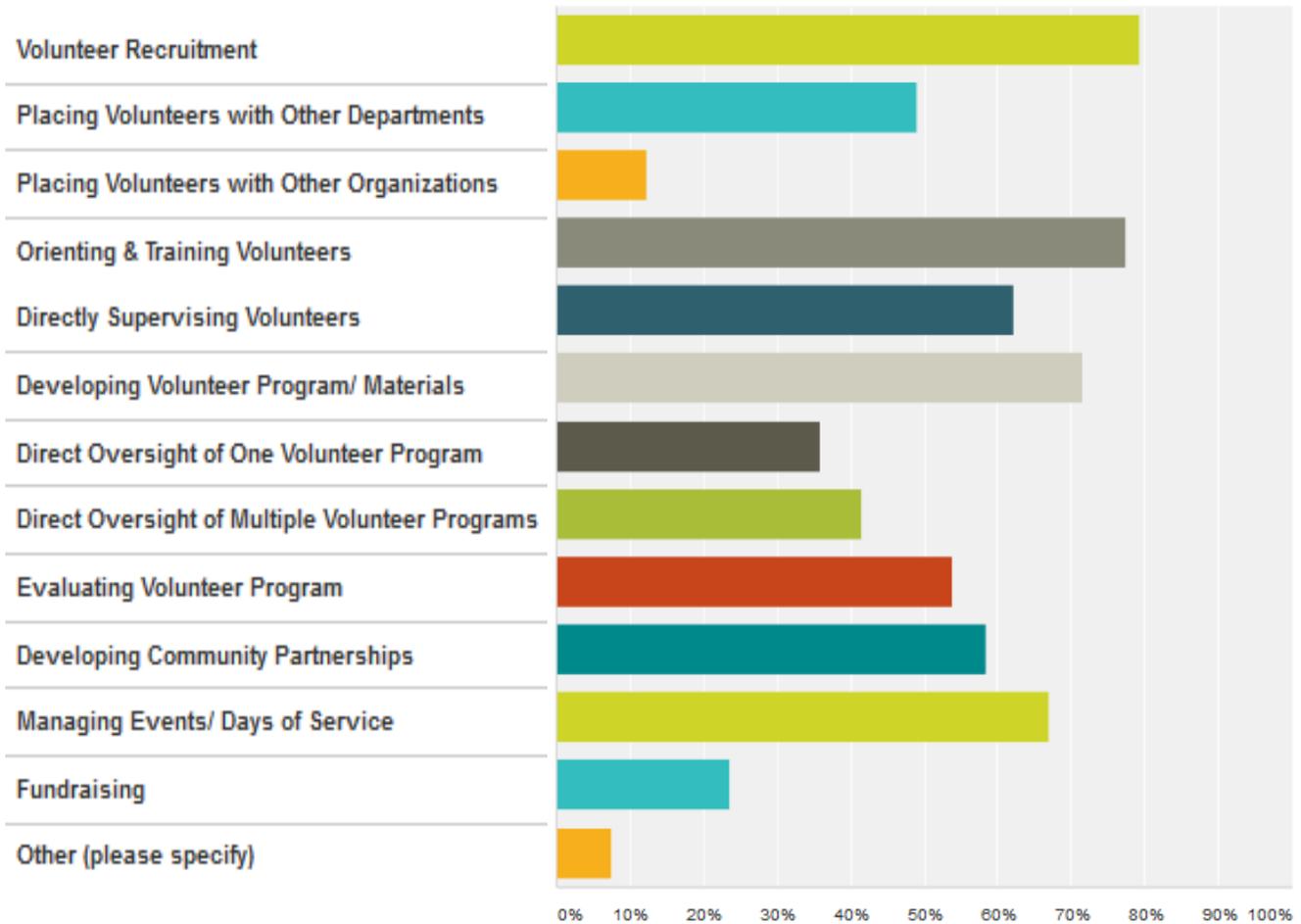
Answered: 106 Skipped: 3



Respondents asked what their primary roles are related to volunteer management. Most popular answers included: Volunteer Recruitment (79%), Orienting & Training Volunteers (77%), Directly Supervising Volunteers (62%), Developing Volunteer Program & Materials (72%), and Managing Events/ Days of Service (67%). In addition to selecting from the options provided, respondents commented with roles including: volunteer recognition and staff training.

### What are your primary role(s) related to volunteer management?

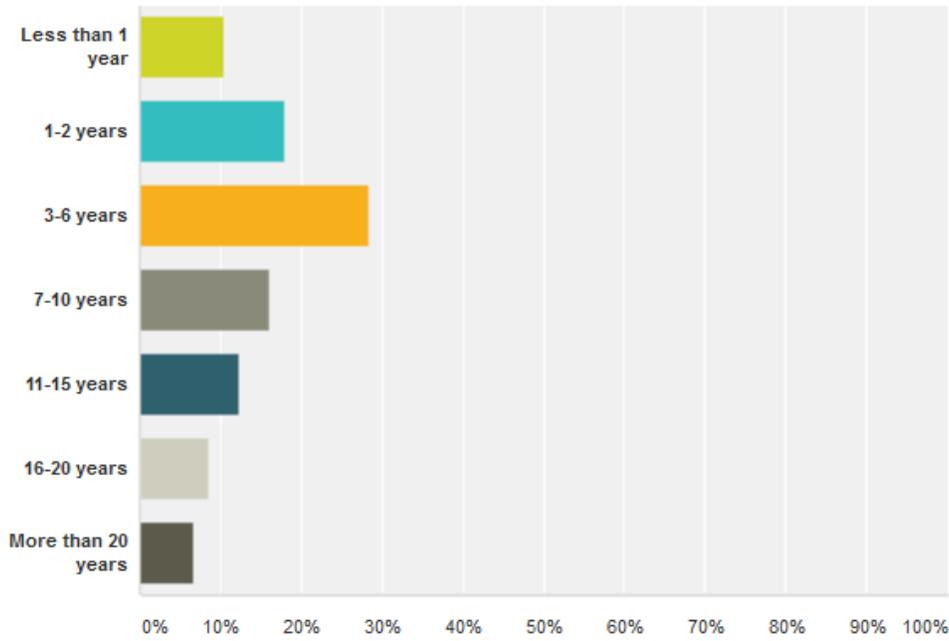
Answered: 106 Skipped: 3



Many participants have been in the volunteer management field for years, with 43% responding that they have worked in the field for more than 6 years. However, 11% have been in the field for less than 1 year. Nationally, 60% have been in the field for more than 6 years and 6% have been in the field for less than 1 year.

### How many years have you worked in volunteer management?

Answered: 106 Skipped: 3

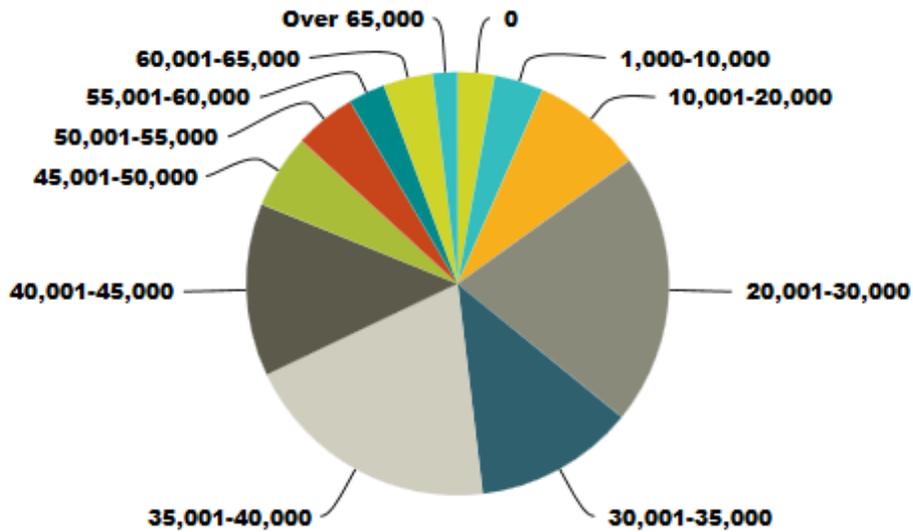


Annual salary data for West Michigan trended slightly lower than national data. The median salary for national survey respondents was \$40,000-\$45,000 per year. 45% of all salaries reported fell between \$30,000 and \$50,000 annually. 11% reported a salary exceeding \$65,000. In West Michigan, the median annual salary was \$30,001-\$35,000. 51% of all salaries reported fell between \$30,000 and \$50,000 annually. 6% reported a salary exceeding \$65,000.

Because West Michigan data was tracked on an aggregate level and individual responses were not examined, correlations cannot be made between job status, roles, titles, and salaries. It may be assumed that lower salary levels (less than \$20,000 annually) account for the respondents who reported part-time or voluntary positions.

## Annual Salary

Answered: 106 Skipped: 3



### Organization

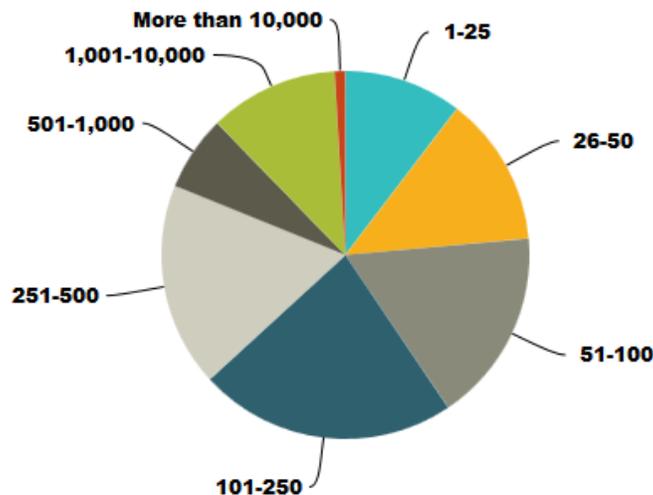
Respondents were asked how many paid employees are within the organization to get a sense of the average size of organizations utilizing volunteers in West Michigan. 35% have less than 50 paid employees, 43% have between 50 and 100, and 22% have more than 100. Nationally, 55% have less than 50 paid employees, 11% between 50 and 100, and 32% have more than 100.

### Utilizing & Managing Volunteers

40% of organizations utilize less than 100 volunteers on an annual basis, 48% utilize between 100 and 1,000 volunteers, and 12% utilize more than 1,000. Nationally, numbers skewed higher. 25% of organizations reported utilizing less than 100 volunteers annually, 49% between 100 and 1,000 volunteers, and 26% more than 1,000.

## Approximately how many volunteers do you utilize each year?

Answered: 106 Skipped: 3



When asked about volunteer needs, 59% of respondents reported that they could use more volunteers, 31% said they had just the right amount, 5% said they have too many, and 5% said they are in desperate need of volunteers. Comments included:

*“Need more skilled volunteers.”*

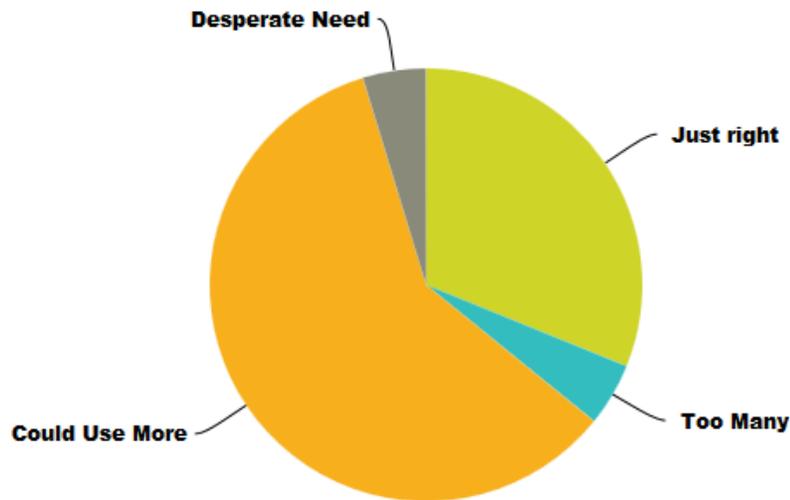
*“Need more volunteers available weekdays.”*

*“We have too many volunteers wanting to serve in areas we don’t need them, and not enough in the areas that we do.”*

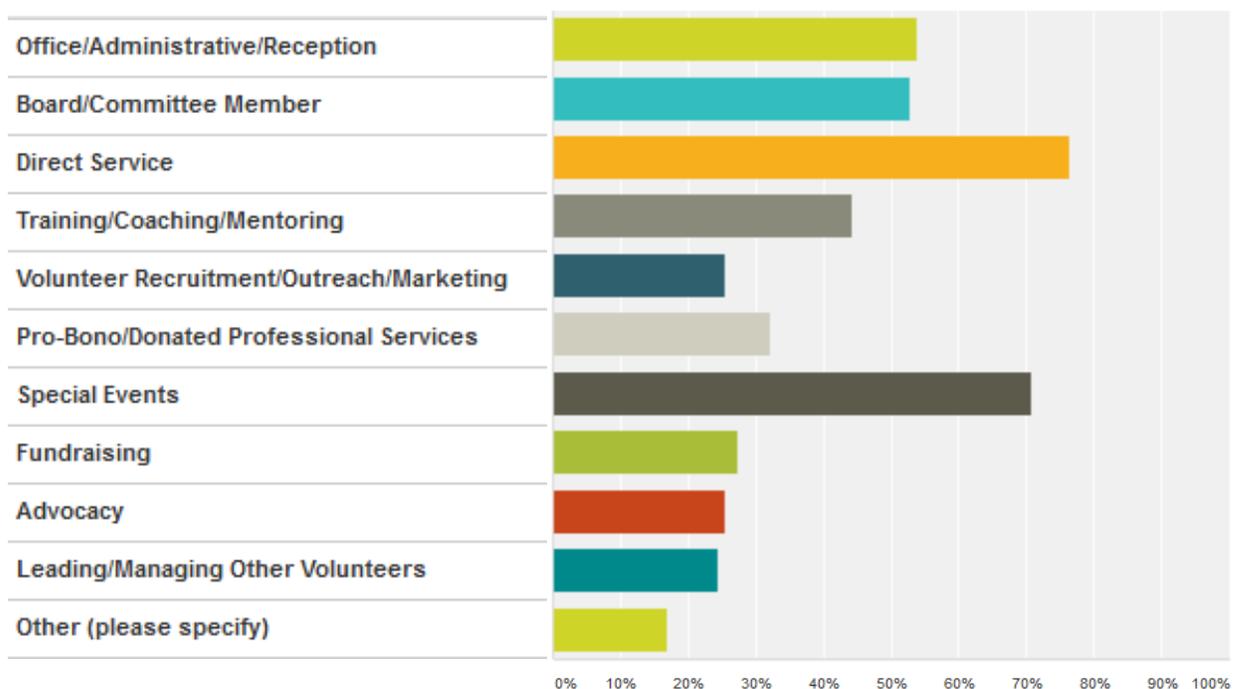
*“We could use more on-going, long term volunteers.”*

### Do you have all of the volunteers you need?

Answered: 106 Skipped: 3



The volunteers utilized across West Michigan agencies play a wide variety of roles. Most popular are Direct Service (76%) and Special Events (71%). Nationally, in addition to Direct Service (71%) and Special Events (84%), Office/Administrative/Reception roles are also very popular (73%).



West Michigan volunteer managers use a variety of tools to track volunteer data. Excel spreadsheets are most widely used (44%). The most popular software platform is Volgistics (14%). In addition to the options given, respondents added: Google Docs, Outlook, Donor Perfect, Donor Snap, Volunteer Impact, Volunteer Hub, GiftWorks, and Vsys. Volunteers were asked to follow-up on this question. When asked if the tool works for them, 81% said yes and 19% said no.

Comments included:

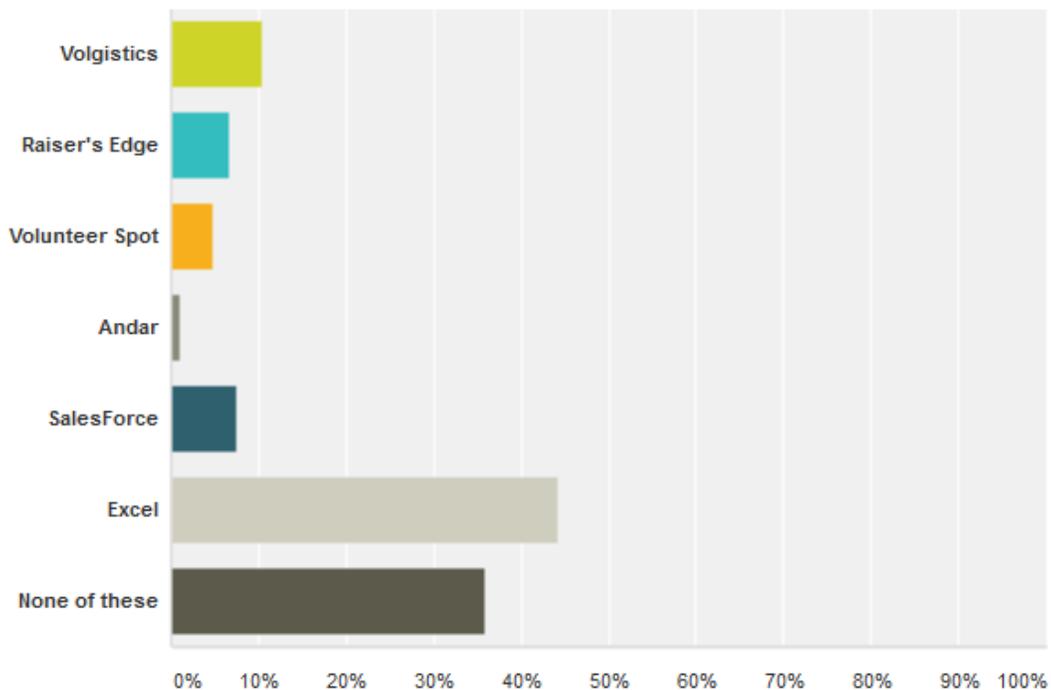
*“It would be great to have a more comprehensive system specifically for volunteers and tracking.”*

*“It’s fine, but not great.”*

*“We have not found the ‘perfect’ tool, but it is working well enough.”*

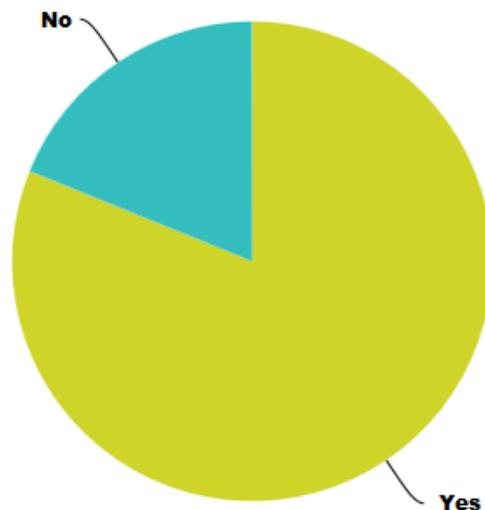
### What tools do you use to track volunteers?

Answered: 106 Skipped: 3



### Does that tool work for you?

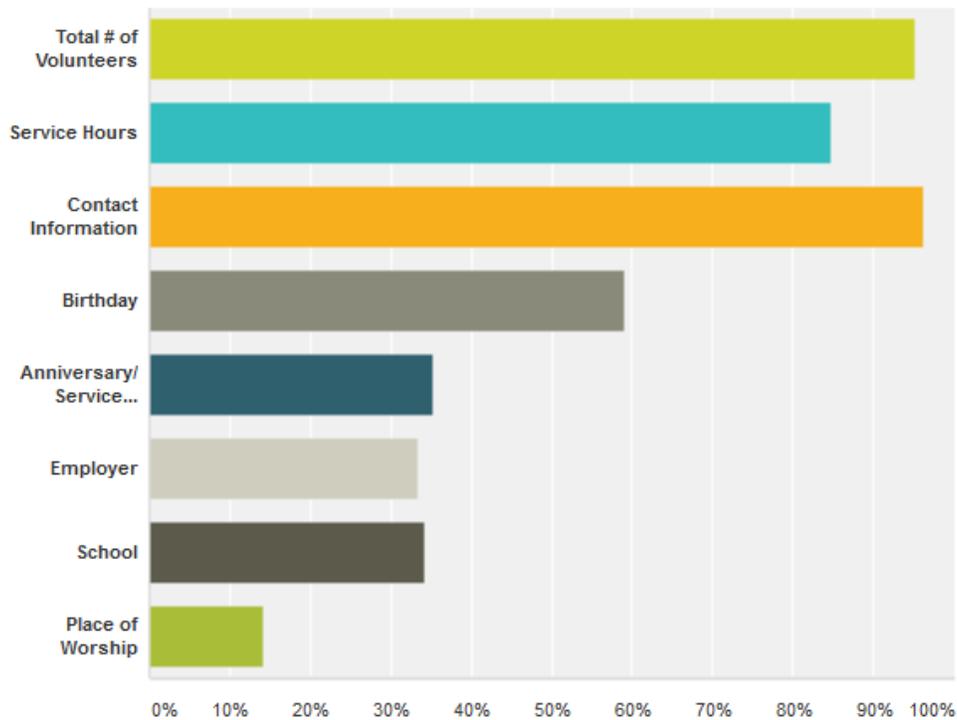
Answered: 106 Skipped: 3



West Michigan volunteer managers use these tools to track information for communication, reporting, and recognition purposes.

### What volunteer information do you track?

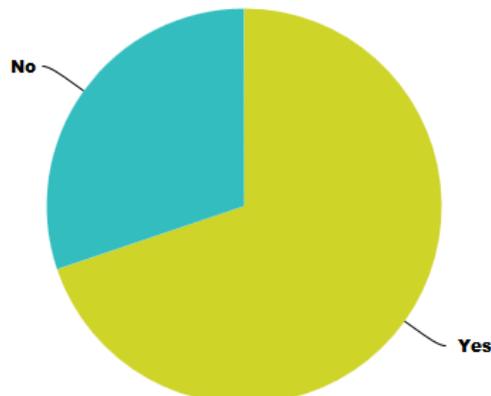
Answered: 105 Skipped: 4



Many organizations set age limits on their volunteers, but 70% report that they accept youth volunteers. For those that accept youth volunteers, there is a variety of minimum ages allowed to volunteer, both with or without supervision. Out of 70 total responses, 5 (7%) said age 13 is the minimum age, 10 (14%) said age 14, 7 (10%) said age 15, and 20 (28%) said age 16. 17 (24%) said they accept ages 12 and under. An additional 2 (3%) said they accept High School age volunteers. The remaining 14% did not specify minimum age requirements.

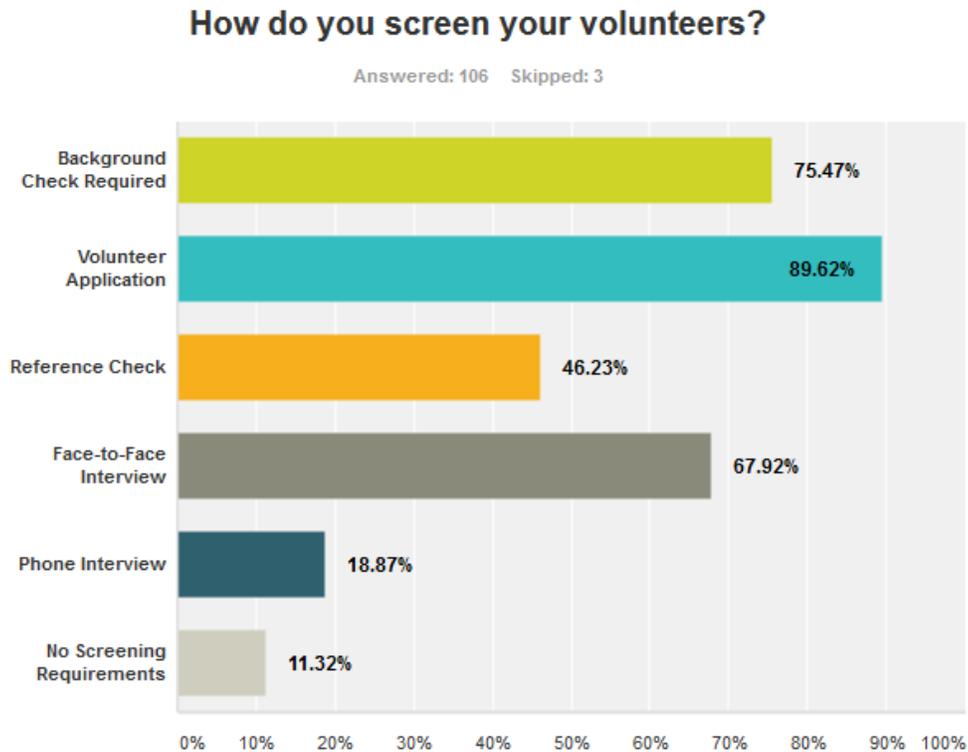
### Do you accept youth volunteers (under the age of 18)?

Answered: 106 Skipped: 3



Locally, volunteer screening procedures appear stricter than screening procedures across the country. A full 75% of West Michigan respondents said that they require background checks for volunteers, compared to just 49% nationally. Both nationally (85%) and locally (90%), almost all organizations reported that they require volunteers to complete a Volunteer Application.

**LOCAL**



**NATIONAL**

Screening Activities	Response Percent
State Criminal Background Check	49.1%
National Criminal Background Check	40.8%
Credit Check	1.2%
Reference Checks	42.0%
Face-to-Face Interview	59.8%
Phone Interview	22.2%
<b>Volunteer Application</b>	<b>84.6%</b>
Referrals From Staff/Partners/Volunteers	19.7%
Volunteer Resume	17.3%
We Have No Screening Requirements	8.9%
Other (please specify)	23.2%

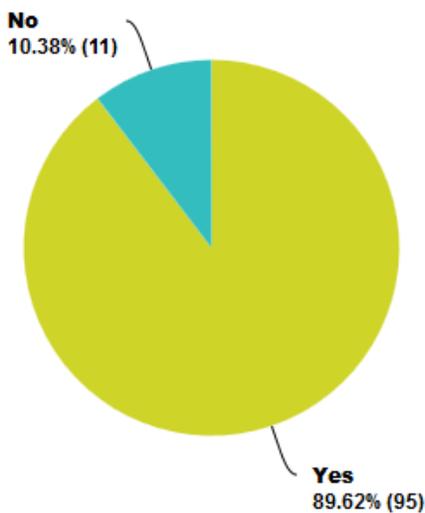
Following volunteer engagement, the most popular method for gathering volunteer feedback is through surveys, online and on paper; 65% of respondents said they use surveys. 34% use one-on-one interviews and just 4% use focus groups. Several comments from respondents also included

casual conversations with volunteers, typically as they wrap up a volunteer shift. 17% said they do not gather volunteer feedback at all.

In addition to the direct supervision of volunteers by volunteer managers, many organizations have a number of staff members that regularly work with volunteers. For those respondents that indicated there are other staff members working with volunteers, 65% said that those staff members do not receive volunteer supervision training. The 35% of respondents that said they do receive training outlined a variety of methods, including formal orientations or more informal coaching by volunteer managers.

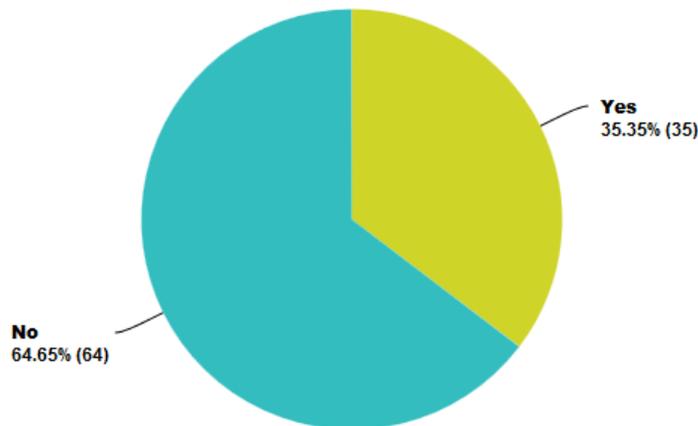
### Does anyone else within your organization work with volunteers?

Answered: 106 Skipped: 3



### If so, do they receive volunteer supervision training?

Answered: 99 Skipped: 10



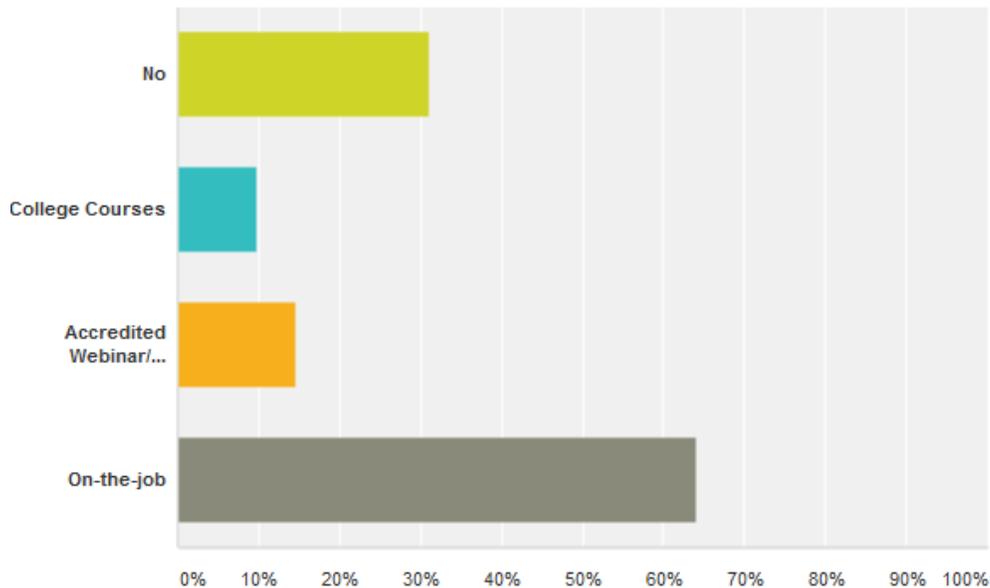
## Training

More than half of respondents (64%) reported that their volunteer management training came through on-the-job training. Fewer reported college courses (10%) or accredited webinar/workshops (15%). 31% said they received no volunteer management training at all.

Respondents were also asked which professional organizations they are affiliated with. Most popular were Volunteer Management Association of West Michigan (VMA),

### Did you receive volunteer management training?

Answered: 103 Skipped: 6



## Additional Information

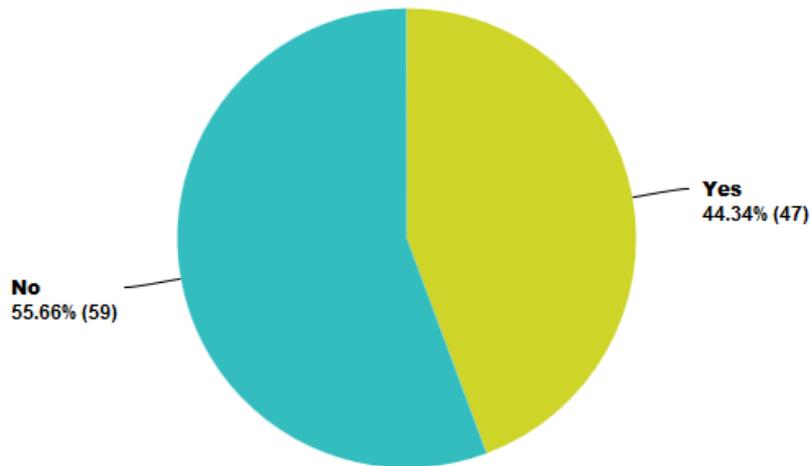
Volunteer Managers were asked about the biggest challenges in their role. 60% of respondents reported that their biggest challenge is limited time/hours and various responsibilities.

Answer Choices	Responses
Volunteer recruitment	43.27% 45
Gaining support & buy-in from staff/leadership/agencies	23.08% 24
Limited hours/time and various responsibilities	59.62% 62
Financial investment in staff & programs	26.92% 28
Volunteer retention	34.62% 36
Creating placement opportunities/assignments	38.46% 40
Communication with volunteers & staff	33.65% 35
Adequate & accessible training/education	20.19% 21
Managing change	24.04% 25
Supervising volunteers & staff	15.38% 16

Participants were also asked about their association with professional organizations. 44% reported that they are members of the Volunteer Management Association of Western Michigan. Other organizations reported are listed below.

### Are you a current member of the Volunteer Management Association of Western Michigan?

Answered: 106 Skipped: 3



#### Other Organizations:

Young Nonprofit Professionals Network of Grand Rapids (YNPN.GR)

Grand Rapids Area Professionals for Excellence (GRAPE)

Greater Grand Rapids Racial Equity Network

Mentor Michigan

Association of Fundraising Professionals

Leadership Grand Rapids

West Michigan AmeriCorps Collaborative (WMAC)

Lakeshore Non-Profit Alliance

Michigan Healthcare Volunteer Resource Professionals (MHVRP)

Grand Rapids Young Professionals (GRYP)

Kent County Mentoring Collaborative

ELO Network

#### CONCLUSIONS

Several key conclusions were made from the data collected.

Demographics data collected in the survey call for increased diversity in the field. This is not just a local issue, but a national one. Only 9% of volunteer managers said they received college-level training in volunteer management, with the majority responding that their volunteer management training took place on-the-job. The general accessibility of the field should allow for diverse recruitment of job candidates.

The responses regarding volunteer management training emphasize a need for professional associations, trainings, and collaborations. 17% of respondents said they do not gather volunteer

feedback. 89% of respondents have multiple staff members in the organization working with volunteers. This highlights opportunities to train some staff members on basic volunteer management, as well as opportunities for more advanced trainings that focus on volunteer evaluation and feedback, volunteer recruitment and retention, and engaging youth volunteers, to name a few.

## APPENDIX

Greetings!

If you organize, lead, or manage volunteers (as a volunteer or paid staff) this survey is for you! Don't miss your chance to have your voice heard by taking the **West Michigan Volunteer Manager Survey**. This survey is being conducted through a partnership of the [Volunteer Manager Association of West Michigan](#) and [Heart of West Michigan United Way Volunteer Center](#).

This "state of the industry" survey includes questions related to volunteer management practices, challenges, and needs. Researchers hope to paint a more complete picture of today's volunteer management pros while taking into account their organizational characteristics, resources, etc. Findings will be shared late this spring.

**Click here to add your voice to the survey:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VolunteerMgmtSurvey>

Following the survey you can select to be entered to win a \$50 Derby Station gift card or FREE VMA 2016-17 membership (\$50 value)!

**The deadline to complete is Friday, April 22.**

Thank you for all that you do!

In Service,

**Katelyn Kovalik**  
**Volunteer Center Program Coordinator**  
Heart of West Michigan United Way  
118 Commerce Ave SW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
p. 616-459-6281 x669  
f. 616-459-8460  
[kkovalik@hwmuw.org](mailto:kkovalik@hwmuw.org)