

Press Release
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For more information contact:
Mary Quirk, Project Manager
MN Association for Volunteer Administration
651-255-0469 (office) / 612-723-7946 (cell)
mquirk@mavnetwork.org

Release of Original Research
Minnesota Volunteerism in a Shifting Environment

Reliance on volunteers increases as nonprofit and governmental organizations continue to experience fiscal challenges. The Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration survey finds organizations transforming to engage volunteer capital in new ways.

MAPLEWOOD, MN February 16, 2011 – The Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) releases of survey report on the Status of Minnesota’s Volunteer Programs in a Shifting Environment. The survey of 350 organizations found:

Volunteers have a real impact in tough times

- **30%** reported volunteers helped preserve organizational services.
- **54%** reported increased reliance on volunteers compared to two years ago.

Volunteering plays an important role for the unemployed

- **66%** of those organizations experiencing increased inquires about volunteering indicated the increase was primarily driven by unemployed people.
- Job seekers are reportedly gaining references, skills, contacts and other benefits through volunteering.

Volunteer interest is still high

- **50%** of organizations reported that volunteer hours have increased compared to a year ago.
- **33%** experienced increased numbers of inquires from potential new volunteers.

Volunteerism practices are being updated to meet interests of today’s volunteers

- **58%** involved volunteers in new roles and positions in the organization.
- **48%** increased flexibility of when volunteers can volunteer.
- **42%** asked volunteers to use their professional or workplace skills.
- **35%** involved volunteers in leadership positions or managing projects.

As Minnesota is gradually coming out of the recession, MAVA conducted a second survey on the status of volunteerism and volunteer programs during challenging economic times. “As nonprofit and governmental organizations face continued fiscal challenges, organizations are clearly looking to innovate in how to involve volunteers” cites Mary Quirk, MAVA Project Manager. “Organizations are continuing to experience rapid change in the number and types of volunteers interested in helping. We learned that for many organizations, interest in volunteering

is still high and organizations are developing hundreds of creative strategies to involve the volunteer power during these changing times. However, for some organizations, factors in the environment are making it harder to find volunteers and times are tough,” says Quirk.

MAVA is using the survey results to hold symposiums and work sessions where leaders of volunteers can learn cutting edge solutions in the current climate. Funding for the survey was provided in part by the F.R. Bigelow, Otto Bremer, and St. Paul Foundations.

The survey [Executive Summary](#) and [Full Report](#) available at www.MAVANetwork.org/ShiftingEnv

Media Advisory

Survey Release Webinar on March 14, 2011 at 1:30 p.m. Contact Mary Quirk at mquirk@mavanetwork.org or 651-255-0469 to hear survey results and discussion.

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About the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration

The Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) has more than 800 members across the state of Minnesota. Founded as a 501(c)3 in 2001, it is an alliance of individuals and networks dedicated to providing support and resources to those who lead volunteers. MAVA (www.mavanetwork.org) unites administrators of structured volunteer programs and informal volunteer initiatives, as well as those who have an interest in promoting volunteerism across the state. MAVA members represent all sectors of society including faith communities, health care, social service, education, government, grassroots organizations and more.

MAVA Task Force on Engaging Volunteers in a Shifting Environment

Bonnie Esposito, Community Volunteer
Zeeda Magnuson, HandsOn Twin Cities
Jean Nierenhausen, Minnesota Historical Society
Janene Riedeman, St. Cloud Hospital
Gail Peterson, Courage Center
Polly Roach, Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota