

BENEFICIARY FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Hi, everyone. Thank you for being with us today. My name is XX, and I'm with ICF, a research and evaluation organization working with AmeriCorps to understand the impacts of its Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) grant. Today, we will be asking about ways in which this funding has been used by the [state name] State Commission and/or [program implementer] to support your organization by increasing volunteer recruitment and/or improving volunteer management practices. Your response will help AmeriCorps to improve its VGF grant program.

This discussion is voluntary. You can decline to answer any questions. You can stop participating at any time. The information you share will remain private during and after the project. Neither your name nor any personal information about you will be shared beyond the ICF research team. We will maintain discussion data in secure areas. I would like to record the focus group to document information accurately. Only the ICF research team will have access to the recording.

(Confirm permission to record the session and, if confirmed, begin the recording.)

Before we begin, I want to check with you again that it is okay to record today's focus group discussion.

Let's begin with some brief introductions.

1. Please tell me your role in your organization, your role in [VGF training activity], and how long you've been with your organization.
2. Please describe how your organization has participated in [VGF training activity].
 - a. How many staff from your organization participated in training? *(e.g., Just the focus group participant or several staff?)*
3. What are the different components of [VGF training activity]? *(Probe: webinars, workshops, conferences, online modules, lectures, etc.)*
 - a. How many hours was each training/session?
 - b. How often did your organization attend trainings/sessions? *(Probe: intensity of the training)*
 - c. What resources or training materials have you received, if any? *(Probe: slide decks, training manuals, etc.)*
4. What training program or curriculum was used, if any? *(e.g., Service Enterprise certification, Volunteer Impact Leadership Training certification)*
 - a. Did you, one of your colleagues, or your organization receive certification as a result of training? What did this certification entail?

Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

5. What training or capacity building did you receive on volunteer recruitment and selection?
 - a. What aspects of volunteer recruitment and selection training, if any, were helpful?
 - b. What aspects of volunteer recruitment and selection training, if any, could be improved?
6. What volunteer recruitment strategies have you learned, if any, that focused on recruiting volunteers during the beginning of the pandemic?
7. What challenges, if any, have you faced with regard to recruiting volunteers during the pandemic?
8. What volunteer management strategies have you learned, if any, that focus on recruiting diverse volunteers (or what strategies related to diversity and inclusion have you learned)?
9. What challenges, if any, have you faced with regard to recruiting diverse volunteers (or what challenges do you face with developing strategies that focus on recruiting diverse volunteers)?
10. What were the most important volunteer recruitment strategies you learned, if any, through your participation in training?
 - a. What strategies, if any, worked particularly well for your organization?
11. What were the least important volunteer recruitment strategies you learned, if any, through your participation in training?
 - a. What strategies, if any, didn't work for your organization?
12. How have your organization's volunteer recruitment and selection processes changed since the training, if at all?
 - a. How has training improved your organization's ability to recruit volunteer applicants and select volunteers, if at all?
 - b. What changes, if any, have you noticed in the number of volunteers recruited?
 - c. What changes, if any, have you noticed in the characteristics of volunteers recruited and selected? (*Probe: demographics, quality, and/or matching of skill sets*)

Volunteer Training and Management

13. What training or capacity building did you receive on volunteer management and retention?
 - a. What aspects of volunteer management training, if any, were helpful?
 - b. What aspects of volunteer management training, if any, could be improved?
14. What were the most important volunteer management strategies you learned, if any, through your participation in training?
 - a. What strategies, if any, worked particularly well for your organization?
15. What were the least important volunteer management strategies you learned, if any, through your participation in training?
 - a. What strategies, if any, didn't work for your organization?
16. How have your organization's volunteer management processes changed, if at all, since the training?
 - a. How has training improved your organization's ability to manage volunteers, if at all?
 - b. What changes, if any, have you noticed in volunteer engagement and satisfaction?
 - c. What changes, if any, have you noticed in volunteer retention?
 - i. What about the changes in the characteristics of volunteers retained?
17. What volunteer management strategies have you learned, if any, that focused on managing volunteers during the beginning of the pandemic?
18. What challenges, if any, have you faced with regard to managing, supporting, or retaining volunteers during the pandemic?
19. What volunteer management strategies have you learned, if any, that focus on managing diverse volunteers?
20. What challenges, if any, have you faced with regard to managing, supporting, or retaining diverse volunteers?

Data, Platforms, and Networks

21. What type of volunteer data, if any, does your organization collect? (*Probe: hours worked, satisfaction, retention*)
 - a. How does your organization use data to make decisions with regard to volunteer management?

b. What type of data, if any, does your organization collect on volunteer recruitment?

(If the state has an online volunteer platform or portal funded by VGF):

22. What is your awareness of [name of state volunteer platform]?

23. To what extent does your organization utilize this platform for recruitment?

24. How helpful, if at all, has this platform been for recruiting volunteers?

(If the state uses VGF funds to create or enhance a volunteer network):

25. What is your awareness of [name of state volunteer organization network]?

26. To what extent does your organization participate in this network?

27. How has this network supported your organization's volunteer management efforts?

a. What support was effective? In what ways was it effective?

b. What could be improved? In what ways could it be improved?

Concluding Topics

28. In what ways, if any, has the support from [program implementer's activities, and if applicable, volunteer portal/platform and/or the state's VGF-funded volunteer network] improved your organization's capacity to utilize volunteers?

29. What additional support do you need with regard to volunteer recruitment, management, or support?

30. What additional feedback or insights would you like to share with us regarding your participation in [program implementer's activities, and if applicable, volunteer portal/platform, and/or the state's VGF-funded volunteer network]?