Skills-Based Volunteering in the COVID-19 Crisis

In March 2020, COVID-19 began to significantly alter our way of life in the United States. While we had been hearing about the pandemic for a few months, it took just a few short days for it to fundamentally change the way we engage with each other and the world.

It would be very easy in this time of uncertainty for companies to pull back from their service commitments – but instead, they’re asking how they can be of additional support virtually from the safety of their employees’ homes. It would be very easy for nonprofits to turn down pro bono support as they fight new fires – but instead, they’re reshaping their needs related to financial scenario planning, risk management and crisis communication. It would be very easy for each of us in this moment of social distancing to pull back from one another, but what I’ve seen is the opposite.

It’s these moments that change our way of life, even if temporarily, that give us the opportunity to connect more deeply with each other as people, without titles, sectors or affiliations to divide us. While in many ways events like COVID-19 are considered “great equalizers,” this public health crisis is going to disproportionately impact the populations that are already facing discrimination, lack of access to services and economic hardship. These are the populations that nonprofits serve and will need to serve more and more quickly than they had to last month.

This guide shares the virtual models that will allow you to continue to engage, enable companies to forge ahead in their commitment to service, as well as asking you to come together, virtually, to evolve our work and partnership in this new environment.

**Now is the time to plan and adapt, not pull back.**

Yours in service,

[Signature]

DANIELLE HOLLY
CEO, Common Impact
Virtual Education

A single or series of virtual convenings run by skilled volunteers with a specific expertise that supports a timely, sector-wide need, such as financial scenario planning or crisis communication.
COMMON IMPACT SUPPORT

**Issue Development**
Identify and shape the nonprofit sector need that aligns with the specific expertise from a company’s workforce, as well as in-kind materials and tools.

**Recruit**
Support recruitment of the skilled volunteers who will create and deliver the content.

**Curate**
Curate the virtual education content, including working with skilled volunteers to customize the content for a nonprofit sector audience, additional context setting and identifying shared resources.

**Manage**
Manage the virtual education operations, including technology, registration, attendance, Q&A and evaluation.
Skilled Volunteer Time

~4 hours per virtual education session

Outcomes

Social Impact: Broad reaching education to the nonprofit sector on a topic of key importance or critical, timely need

Employee Impact: Engage approximately 5-10 employees on a highly leveraged SBV experience, with professional development in content curation, executive presence and presentation skills

Brand Impact: Visibility for your company’s core competency and skill set, and your investment in the community
Just-in-time coaching and critical strategic guidance to nonprofit executives facing a new challenge or unchartered territory.
COMMON IMPACT SUPPORT

Issue Development
Identify and shape the nonprofit sector need and the specific expertise from a company’s workforce.

Cohort Definition
Define commitment level expected from each participating skilled volunteer or pool of volunteers.

Recruitment
Support recruitment of the skilled volunteers who will provide virtual support.

Share
Share opportunity with nonprofit community, scoped by mission area, geography or current company partners.

Match
Connect nonprofits to skilled volunteers with the right skill set.

Track
Track and manage relationships and outcomes.
Skilled Volunteer Time

~1 hour per week

Outcomes

**Social Impact:** Rapid response advisory for crisis situations or a quick injection of needed support for capacity-strapped nonprofits

**Employee Impact:** Engage a broad range of employees in a low commitment, high impact engagement with nonprofits

**Brand Impact:** Showcase your top talent and core expertise to the community
Virtual Skilled “Day” of Service

A “day” of virtual flash consulting in which teams of employees consult and create deliverables to address a specific, scoped nonprofit challenge. A single team or multiple teams can participate once in a classic event style format or over a defined period of time spanning one week to one month.

See Common Impact’s Day of Service Project Portfolio.
COMMON IMPACT SUPPORT

Scope
Source and scope high impact nonprofit projects, which can be targeted to align to a specific mission area, functional need or shared crisis moment.

Recruitment
Support recruitment of virtual skilled volunteers.

Preparation
Project preparation, orientation and management.

Virtual Event Management
Facilitation and management of the day of service or service delivery window.

Evaluation
Evaluate the impact of the day of service on your nonprofit partners, employees and company.
VIRTUAL SKILLED “DAY” OF SERVICE

Skilled Volunteer Time

Approximately 8 hours, either in a single day or over a month long service delivery period

Outcomes

Social Impact: Strategic, targeted investment in nonprofit partners, with up to 8 partners or projects per event, with an average Social Return on Investment of $7,500 per project

Employee Impact: Engage 6-10 employees per project and up to 80 employees per virtual event

Brand Impact: Expand the reach and impact of your more traditional days of service, and engage remote, work-from-home or non-HQ employees
Virtual Team Consulting

Teams of 5-8 skilled volunteers progress on a critical capacity building challenge with a nonprofit across a 6-week to 6-month time frame.

See Common Impact’s Team Consulting Project Portfolio.
COMMON IMPACT SUPPORT

**Scope**
Source and scope high impact nonprofit projects, which can be targeted to align to a specific mission area, functional need or shared crisis moment.

**Recruitment**
Support recruitment of virtual skilled volunteers.

**Preparation**
Project preparation, orientation and management.

**Engagement Management**
Weekly support to ensure progress on deliverables, support project troubleshooting and ongoing relationship management.

**Evaluation**
Evaluate the impact of the engagement on your nonprofit partners, employees and company.
VIRTUAL TEAM CONSULTING

Skilled Volunteer Time

2-4 hours / week for the duration of the project

Outcomes

**Social Impact:** Strategic, deep investment in the capacity of nonprofit partners, with an average **Social Return on Investment of $75,000 per project**

**Employee Impact:** Engage 6-10 employees per project

**Brand Impact:** High impact, “big bet” projects to demonstrate your company’s commitment to its community
Capacity Commons is a free online, interactive platform designed to serve as a one-stop shop for nonprofits interested in engaging in skills-based volunteerism to bolster their organization’s capacity to meet their mission. The website provides organizations with a step-by-step guide to planning and executing pro bono projects, and offers key interactive tools and resources to support organizations who are new to skills-based volunteering. Companies and foundations leverage Capacity Commons to equip their grantees and nonprofit partners to make the most out of their pro bono support.
In order to respond to the acute needs brought on in moments of crisis, such as COVID-19, Common Impact has assembled a selection of key tools and information to help organizations swiftly find critical support, including:

**Crisis Project Portfolio**
Examples of crisis-related needs that can be addressed by virtual skilled volunteers

**Project Scoping Tool**
An interactive tool that walks nonprofits through defining a pro bono project that meet core needs in the current moment

**Resiliency Assessment**
An organizational resiliency assessment, that help nonprofits identify core areas of organizational vulnerability that could be addressed through pro bono support

**Skilled Volunteer Sources**
A roster of sources of skilled volunteers, including virtual aggregators and local individual and corporate network
A purpose-driven workforce. A stronger community.