

Making Long-Term Impact through a Day of Service

*A closer look at how skilled volunteerism can
build sustainable capacity for the social sector*



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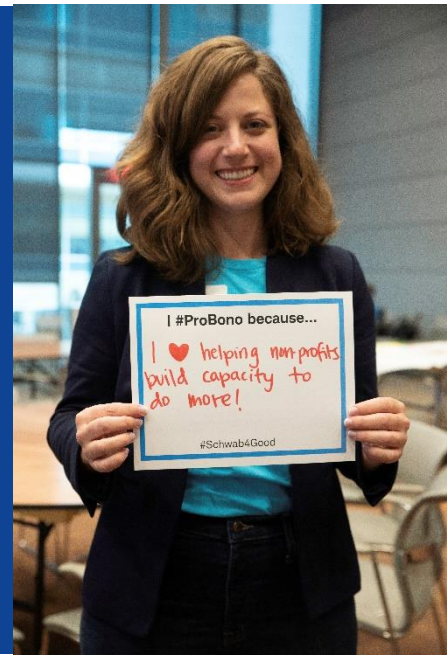
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A day of service is a tried and true volunteer program that provides companies with broad reach and high employee engagement. Applying this model to support nonprofit infrastructure needs can produce the same benefits while also creating deep and sustained impact. This report shares how the **Charles Schwab Pro Bono Challenge** has successfully positioned a short-term engagement model for long-term community impact.



A day of service has long been a great way for businesses to activate their employee base and give back to their communities. In fact, the day of service is one of the most popular volunteer models with more than 77% of U.S. corporations offering this type of program, according to the [CECP Giving in Numbers](#). When strategically deployed, relatively short, concentrated investments of corporate employee time in activities such as construction, cleaning or meal service can provide nonprofits with the volunteer power needed to staff programming, improve facilities and carry out their mission.

Outside the realm of hands-on volunteering, the day of service model is newer. [Charles Schwab](#), in partnership with [Common Impact](#), was one of the first firms to apply skills-based volunteerism to the day of service format. Skills-based volunteerism develops infrastructure for nonprofits that often operate with sparse teams and reduced budgets so that they are better positioned to service their missions and their communities.

Through extensive evaluation, Schwab has seen that its program has yielded a meaningful immediate impact for participating employees and nonprofits and, more notably, has continued to drive social change long after the event itself has ended. This report shares these results, along with tips for optimizing a day of skilled service for years of impact!

Nonprofits spend an average of **2%** of their overall budget on core business functions, compared to an average of **35%** in the corporate sector. The result is a nonprofit sector running on fumes – over **77%** of organizations are challenged to keep pace with growing demand for their programs and services.*

In response, Charles Schwab and Common Impact partnered to introduce a new corporate day of service initiative. Launched in 2014, the [Charles Schwab Pro Bono Challenge](#) engages Schwab’s most important philanthropic asset – its people – to provide nonprofit leaders with capacity building resources in a “quick hit” format.

Since establishing the model, Schwab has scaled its program to support about 70 nonprofits annually and has completed nearly 300 projects, making it one of the largest industry initiatives of its kind. The program is not only distinguished by pure scale, but also by its proven ability to create sustained impact for participating nonprofits, employees and the broader social sector.

Read on for tips on designing a quick hit intervention for a long-term impact.

In 2018, the Charles Schwab Pro Bono Challenge engaged nearly 400 volunteers and close to 70 nonprofits in nine different locations to deliver an estimated \$500,000 in value.

“We aim to go deep with these deserving organizations by offering the collective skills of our talented employees to build the capacity of our nonprofit partners. The Pro Bono Challenge events are an extension of Schwab’s culture of service and serve as another way we can help strengthen these organizations and amplify their impact on the communities they serve.”





– Carrie Schwab-Pomerantz
President
Charles Schwab Foundation


Create a Launchpad

Consider positioning the day of skilled service as a launchpad for ongoing collaboration by training participating volunteers and nonprofits on how to continue their work together after the event concludes. Schwab accompanies this training with a \$1,000 grant in seed funding for nonprofits to implement the projects originated at the event.

The results?

 82% of nonprofits utilized or implemented the deliverable from the event within six months

 Over 55% of participating nonprofits continue partnering with their Pro Bono Challenge volunteers as ongoing volunteers, board members, cause advocates and funders

 75% of nonprofits that participated in the Pro Bono Challenge intend to come back the following year

The Pro Bono Challenge also **looks beyond the individual nonprofit investment towards sector-wide impact**. In 2018, Common Impact and Charles Schwab created the “[Clubs Helping Clubs Playbook](#)” in partnership with the [Boys & Girls Clubs of America](#). The resource, now available for 4,000+ chapters, offers templated deliverables and instructional case studies that emerged from local club participation in Pro Bono Challenge events. The peer-generated, expert-developed solutions in the playbook equip clubs across the country to develop their organizations in line with national strategic objectives. By sharing event outputs with a key institutional partner, Schwab was able to exponentially scale the impact of its pro bono work far beyond the bounds of the event itself.

Coming Soon: In 2019, Schwab and Common Impact are working to bring this sector-wide model to an even larger scale by creating an open-source online tool that equips nonprofits to prepare for, engage in and evaluate pro bono projects.

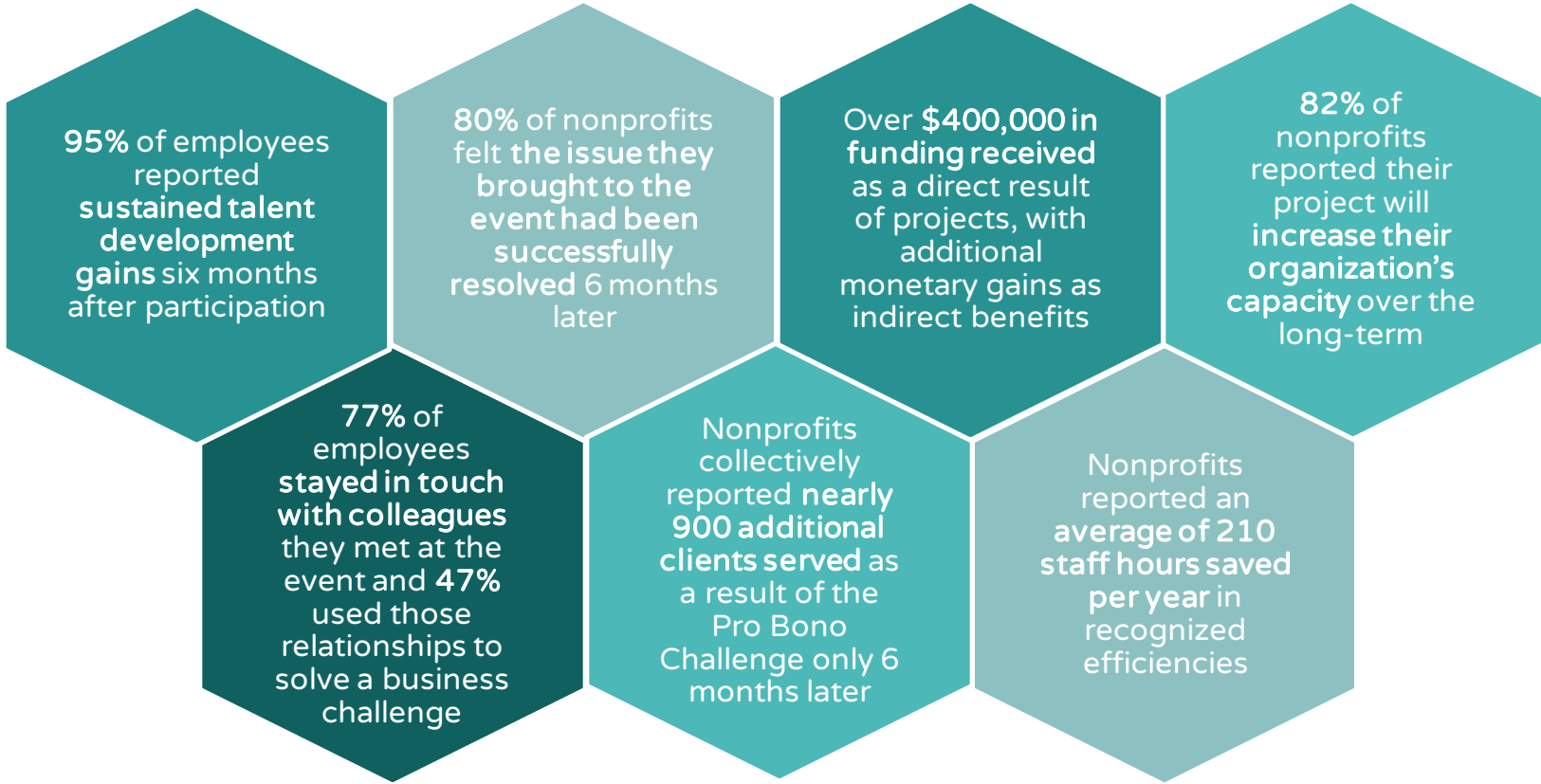


Measure What Matters

The true impact of skilled volunteering isn't instantly measurable, but surfaces after the capacity building projects have been implemented. While the immediate post-event results are always strong in measuring volunteer engagement and nonprofit satisfaction, Schwab has ensured that it's also tracking the long-term results. Six months after each Pro Bono Challenge, Common Impact follows up with participating nonprofits and volunteers to understand if the initially reported impact has been realized, enabling Schwab to see both how its projects are improving its nonprofit partners' outcomes, as well as its employees' sustained [talent development benefits](#).

Pro Tip from Common Impact:

Unsure how to approach measuring the success of your day of service program? Check out Common Impact's [Measurement Framework](#) for ideas on how to assess talent development, employee engagement and community impact.



*Percentages are out of nonprofit survey responders, not all participants

Measure What Matters

Skills-based volunteer programs not only deliver tangible benefits to nonprofit partners, they also contribute to increases in employee engagement at work and volunteer service in the community.

For Charles Schwab Pro Bono Challenge volunteers:

Employee Engagement & Development

- ✓ **97%** agree with “I am extremely satisfied with Schwab as a place to work”
- ✓ **96%** agree with “Schwab’s values stir something in me”
- ✓ **96%** agree with “I would recommend Schwab as a great place to work”

Continued Volunteer Service

- ✓ **80%** want to participate again
- ✓ **35%** continued to work with the nonprofit they supported at the event
- ✓ **27%** are exploring board service

“When I started at Schwab, I was so impressed with our highly experienced and client-focused employee base. I knew if we could harness that talent in our volunteer programs, we could make a world of difference for nonprofits that needed access to marketing, technology, finance and HR experts – so we launched Schwab’s Pro Bono Challenge. Today, Schwab’s Pro Bono Challenge has provided over \$2M in consulting to nonprofits in our communities and also serves as a leadership development tool for our employees. What I really love about this program is that it creates new ways of thinking and has been a driver of innovation for us.”



– Amanda Lenaghan
Senior Program Manager
Schwab Community Services

Connect the Dots

Skills-based volunteering, at its most strategic, reinforces grantmaking and employee engagement activities. The nonprofits Schwab invites to the event are typically current partners, prospective grantees or employee-nominated organizations. Working with these organizations to solve capacity challenges enables Schwab to more deeply understand its current and potential partners' needs and operating models, leading to more informed and responsive partnerships and investments.

Marrying that responsiveness with its own employee engagement goals, Schwab intentionally recruits senior employees with 15+ years of experience for the event. Schwab's focus on tenured employees positions the Pro Bono Challenge as a unique development opportunity for senior talent. **Close to 100% of employees reported that the event was a useful professional development opportunity.** Schwab surveys managers after the event, who have validated these findings by citing an increase in creative thinking, problem solving and adaptability.

Pro Tip from Common Impact:

While Schwab's model pairs senior talent with strategic projects, the day of skilled service can be a useful talent development tool for nearly any employee population. Learn more about tailoring yours to meet your engagement and development goals with [Common Impact's Talent Development Toolkit](#).



Case Study EARN

EARN is a national nonprofit that works at the intersection of financial technology and economic inclusion to empower low-income Americans to achieve financial security.

Create a Launchpad: EARN leverages the Pro Bono Challenge to define its marketing focus for each year. In 2015, EARN received branding recommendations that sparked a new website. In 2016, the organization developed a digital marketing plan for its new online brand and in 2017, it expanded on its efforts with a communications and PR plan. EARN remains connected to Schwab volunteers and experts throughout the year to ask questions about new marketing tactics and emerging advertising technologies.

Measure What Matters: *“After our Pro Bono Challenge session, we feel much more confident about how to position EARN to journalists and how to tell a story that appeals to the media. We’ve taken our team’s advice of establishing a story collection and having several users ready to talk to the media on our behalf.”*

Connect the Dots: For more than a decade, Schwab has proudly supported EARN in helping working families achieve prosperity through savings.



In this episode of Common Impact’s Pro Bono Perspectives podcast, Leigh Phillips, CEO of EARN, shares more about her work using technology to empower low-income Americans to take charge of their financial lives.

[> LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)





About Common Impact

A Purpose-Driven Workforce. A Stronger Community.

Common Impact is a nationally-recognized nonprofit that works to build a society in which individuals and businesses invest their unique talents towards a shared purpose: strengthening the local communities in which we live and work. Founded in 2000, Common Impact has partnered with Fortune 500 companies and hundreds of the country's leading nonprofit organizations to create this transformational change through skills-based volunteering.

More information on Common Impact programs and services can be found at www.commonimpact.org



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