

Transform the Way Your Organization Engages the Community

ALIVE's Service Enterprise Program Maximizes the Engagement of Community & Volunteers Toward Mission Delivery

What Is a Service Enterprise?

An organization that leverages volunteers & their skills to deliver its social mission successfully. These high-performing organizations have deeply integrated volunteers into their strategic initiatives & organizational infrastructure, thereby allowing them to expand their budget, increase efficiencies, and maximize effectiveness in fulfilling their mission. As a result, volunteers contribute to the organization's mission and change its core economics, making it more adaptable, sustainable, and impactful!

Organizations that operate as Service Enterprises are better led, managed and operate at almost half the median budget as their peers.



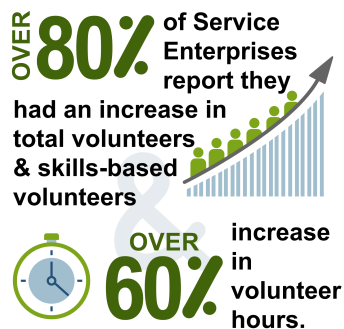
Guiding Principles

- **The volunteer ecosystem is more effective when all sectors participate in its evolution.** Volunteerism doesn't exist in a single sector, and the responsibility of successful volunteer engagement resides beyond nonprofits alone. We are interdependent in this work, and together, we can increase the impact of volunteerism by working to improve the system across all sectors.
- **Make volunteering a core strategic function, not an add-on.** Volunteers fundamentally increase our ability to achieve our objectives and advance the social mission of our organizations. Engaging volunteers effectively can help an organization serve more people in the community as well as change the core economics of an organization, which can allow it to scale more quickly in a cost-effective way. Organizations that think creatively about effectively engaging their volunteers can accomplish more and do so cost-effectively.
- **Focus volunteer engagement on true community needs.** Rather than responding to volunteer supply, it's crucial to identify community and organizational priorities and seek out volunteers with skills to address them. This strategic approach to volunteer engagement not only communicates the value of volunteers but also ensures that their service is aligned with true community needs, thereby maximizing the impact of volunteerism.
- **To get a return, you must invest.** Organizations that make volunteers central to their work and manage them well see an average of 3 to 6 times their return on investment. This is a smart way to maximize impact, but it requires upfront and ongoing investment in volunteer engagement.

For every \$1 an organization invests in strategic volunteer engagement they can expect a \$3-6 return on investment.



Association of Leaders in Volunteer Engagement (ALIVE) is the national association for leaders & professionals in volunteer engagement. We enhance & sustain the spirit of volunteering by fostering collaboration & networking, promoting professional development, & providing advocacy for leaders in community engagement across America. ALIVE provides monthly professional development opportunities, communities of practice, conferences, and more to help volunteer engagement professionals and organizations better engage their communities through volunteerism. Learn more at volunteeralive.org.



Service Enterprise Outcomes

1. All organizational capacities are significantly & markedly stronger.
2. Organizations are significantly better led & managed if they engage & manage volunteers well.
3. Organizations are significantly more adaptable, sustainable, & capable of going to scale.
4. Organizations have strong & well-developed HR management practices.
5. Organizations are equally as effective as their peers without volunteers, but at almost half the median budget.

Service Enterprise Change Management Program Model

Organizations participating in the program will move through the following process:

- **Diagnostic & Debrief:** Includes an online self-assessment tool that measures the degree to which an organization operates as a Service Enterprise. It also diagnoses strengths & challenges that an organization needs to address. After the diagnostic has been completed, ALIVE's Training & Implementation Partner meets with those at the organization who will participate in the Service Enterprise process. Together, they will discuss the results in-depth, review the report, and identify areas to focus on and potential quick wins.
- **Training:** Includes approximately 16 hours broken into 4 in-person or 7 virtual sessions and equips organizations with tools and strategies to help them operate as a Service Enterprise. Topics include building board support, determining the return on volunteer investment, defining roles for volunteers and identifying ways to institutionalize changes. Each session includes dedicated time to work on the tools and strategies presented,, but there are also assignments between sessions as well as an action plan, worksheets, & additional resources. Each organization shares a short presentation about its Service Enterprise work at the end.
- **Coaching:** The Service Enterprise Training & Implementation Partner will provide coaching or consulting during and after the training. Coaching includes support, review, resource connections, and accountability toward achieving accreditation. The organization working with the coach determines the topics and support needed.
- **Accreditation:** The length of time varies by the organization; once your organization has made significant progress against your action plan, apply for accreditation. Your Training & Implementation Partner will do a site-visit, observe volunteer engagement practices, interview those involved, and review evidence provided to show that the organization is achieving excellence in 9 characteristics. The Partner will submit an accreditation report to ALIVE who will review and approve the final accreditation. To maintain the accreditation in strategic volunteer engagement, you must apply for reaccreditation after three years.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Learning and growth are never over, so this is when you take what you've learned and continue to fine-tune your volunteer engagement to meet your organization's mission.

Service Enterprise Domains

- **Establishing the Foundation** - creating & sustaining the appropriate groundwork & necessary organizational underpinnings to assure the successful engagement of volunteers & other community resources
- **Best Practices in Volunteer Engagement** - practices that ensure the effective engagement of volunteers & community partners
- **Impact & Outcomes** - the degree to which your organization utilizes the tools to create & sustain relationships, tell your story, listen to your stakeholders, & measure success against your mission & organizational objective

Service Enterprise Characteristics

Establishing the Foundation	Best Practices in Volunteer Engagement	Impact & Outcomes
 Leadership Involvement*: Executive & board leadership demonstrate through actions their commitment to community involvement & the engagement of volunteers as a key strategy to achieve the organization's mission.	 Supervision & Support*: Supervision assures that volunteer & community partners' oversight & support are consistently provided, ensuring they're given the opportunity to succeed & feel valued & appreciated.	 Growth & Change*: Vibrant, exciting orgs. seek to improve services, cultivate leaders, continuously seed new ways of thinking, & create new platforms for action & problem-solving. Staying on the cutting edge of industry practices motivates staff & volunteers.
 Planning*: Thoughtful, comprehensive preparations for volunteer & community engagement based on established principles & practices of effective management.	 Training*: Education & skill development, as well as the knowledge of organizational parameters & boundaries, are critical to ensure that both volunteers & staff are equipped to perform their work & to work effectively together.	 Tracking & Evaluation*: Tracking & evaluation assesses the degree to which an organization monitors progress towards institutional goals & the performance of volunteers, staff, & partners in reaching these objectives.
 Funding & Resource Allocation: The provision of the financial, human, space, & material tools necessary for the engagement of volunteers and the willingness to seek additional support as needed.	 Onboarding: Providing a smooth pathway to service through careful screening, preparation, & guidance that includes both community members & staff involvement.	 Collaboration: - Being part of the community is vital to the work & services. Collaborative undertakings with other organizations, constituents, & your volunteers build relationships & sharpen the focus of service organizations.
 Technology: Broad-based utilization of technology facilitates all aspects of volunteer engagement, including record-keeping, communication, and service options.	 Recruitment & Cultivation: Engaging individuals and groups to serve as an ongoing cultivation process. Targeted recruitment assures a diverse mix of community members with skills, interests, and abilities to further your mission.	 Communication: Effective communication takes many forms & operates in a wide & diverse array of channels including formal/informal means, print & social media to send information to external & internal groups.

* Required characteristics to achieve certification and become an accredited organization in strategic volunteer engagement.

Benefits of Becoming a Service Enterprise

Becoming a Service Enterprise allows an organization to leverage the full value of volunteer time & talent & leads to more efficient engagement of volunteers. It leads to program growth & increased capacity & sustainability. It also offers specific financial incentives by increasing the ability of paid staff to focus their time & energy on roles & activities for which they are uniquely qualified and, as a result, will fundamentally grow an organization's operational capabilities. Nonprofits that successfully transform into operating as a Service Enterprise will:

1. Serve the community more effectively through increased organizational capacity
2. Improve networking opportunities, positive brand awareness, and community recognition (with people who are enthusiastic about an organization's mission & value)
3. Realize operational & infrastructure efficiencies through volunteer engagement
4. Recognize opportunities to grow organizational revenues by leveraging the time & talent of paid staff & volunteers alike in new & creative ways
5. Connect with other Service Enterprises through ALIVE's National Community of Practice
6. Receive discounts on conferences and services
7. Publicly promote your accreditation online and cite it in grants and funding requests
8. Strengthen corporate volunteer engagement relationships due to achieving accreditation
9. Transform the overall human capital engagement strategy at your organization
10. Cross-pollinate donor and volunteer engagement efforts for successful community engagement and increased resource development

Fundamentally changing how an organization uses volunteers is a long-term goal that happens over time. Organizational transformation and systemic change are never easy, and becoming a Service Enterprise requires significant time, resources, and commitment to the process. However, the benefits of transforming into a Service Enterprise are significant and sustainable.

Quick Links to Online Resources

- [Service Enterprise Program Overview Webpage](#)
- [Introduction to Service Enterprise Video](#) (5-min. Infomercial)
- [Service Enterprise ALIVE Academy](#) (1-hr. In-depth Overview)
- [Training & Implementation Partners & Organizations Map](#)
- [Service Enterprise Program & History Page](#)
- [Become a Service Enterprise Training & Implementation Partner Page](#)

For more information

John Palmer, Volunteer Services Director, Volunteer Florida
john@volunteerflorida.org
850.755.7894