



VOLUNTEERISM IN NEBRASKA

Impact on Individuals,
Communities, and the
Tourism Industry



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Working to create a more modern and robust democracy for *all* Nebraskans.

Youth
Engagement
Programs

Civic
Health
Programs

Nonpartisan
Voting Rights
Advocacy



What is
civic health?



+ Why does civic health matter?

- Our communities are stronger when we own them together.
- **Thriving and resilient economies.**
- **Accountable and representative government**
- **Trust in neighbors, high social capital**



+ Community Engagement

Nebraska Civic Health

- **In the past 12 months, have you done any volunteer activities through or for an organization?**
- In the past 12 months, have you worked with other people from your neighborhood to fix a problem or improve a condition in your community or elsewhere?
- During the past 12 months, did you donate money, assets, or property of more than \$25 to charitable or religious organizations?
- In the past 12 months, have you attended any public meetings in which there was discussion of community affairs?
- Did you participate in any school, neighborhood, community, service, civic, sports or recreation, religious, or other type of group in the last 12 months?
- In the last 12 months, have you been an officer or served on a committee of any group or organization?





Community Engagement

Nebraska Civic Health



Table 1. Nebraska's Civic Health vs. US Averages

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		NE*	US Avg.*	Ranking
	Volunteering	32.8%	25.4%	11th
	Working with neighbors	10.3%	7.6%	12th
	Charitable giving (\$25 or more)	54.5%	50.1%	17th
	Attended a public meeting	10.3%	8.3%	20th
	Group membership ¹	42.5%	36.3%	15th
	Leadership role in an organization ¹	14.6%	9.7%	9th



Volunteerism in Nebraska, an overview



In 2013:

- Estimated value of an hour of volunteer service was \$20.13
- 32.8% of Nebraskans volunteered.
 - Declined from 34.8% in 2012.
- Nebraskans served 58.5 million hours of volunteer work
- ...totaling \$1.3 billion of service contributed to communities throughout the state

Volunteerism is not “fluffy”

+ Benefits of volunteering.



- Through volunteering, communities:
 - Solve problems
 - Improve places, things, and even people
 - Connect individuals
- Individually speaking, volunteering:
 - Improves physical health
 - Is associated with lower mortality rates
 - Increases sense of purpose/improves mental health
 - Creates investment in a cause or mission
 - Creates future job opportunities



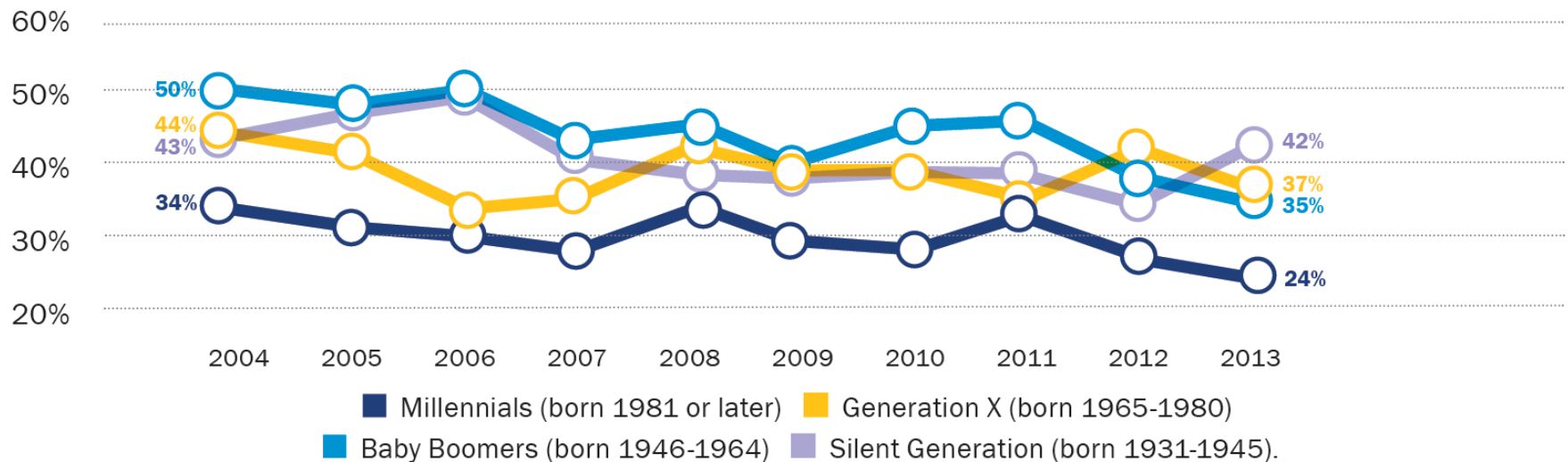
What could be.



- Although 32% of Nebraskans did volunteer, 67% of Nebraskans did not– if those folks volunteered for one hour, \$19.6 million would be further invested in Nebraska communities.
- When we break it down by age, we see that Millennials are volunteering at the lowest rates....

+ Volunteerism rates by age

Chart 5. Nebraska's Volunteering Rates by Generation (2004-2013)





How to engage a younger volunteer base.



- Understand Millennial motivation.
 - Supporting a cause. Focus on issues, not groups. Help people.
 - Create meaningful service opportunities with strong outcomes.
- Invite them to contribute.
 - ...either with their time or their dollars.
- Provide variety of options.
 - Young Nebraskans volunteer along a continuum of support.
- Market volunteerism/service as a way to build social capital.
 - Highlight peer involvement in volunteer activities.
 - Incorporate into professional engagement opportunities.



Volunteerism + Your Destination



■ Why?

- Create advocates
- Provides a creative solution for staffing challenges
- Capture the value of service hours

■ Types of Volunteerism/Service

- **Direct:** the project directly meets a need for your destination and/or the community (trail building, repairs, visiting the elderly)
- **Indirect:** the project supports direct service that meets a need for your destination/in the community (organizing volunteers, mailings, raising funds)
- **Raise Awareness:** the project outcome is designed to enlighten and educate a group on an issue or milestone (Nebraska 150, “Find Your Park”, etc.)
- **Advocacy:** the project selects one side of an issue and advocates for or promotes it (writing letters to the editor, researching and testifying for legislation, advocating for local/state funding)



How?



- **Recruit & Collaborate.** Hundreds of volunteers won't just show up. Reach out to local businesses to encourage them to incentivize volunteerism through workplace campaigns. Build a partnership with the guidance counselor in your public school system.
- **Marketing.** Push this opportunity out to your email listservs, social media, volunteer boards, etc. Make sure the who/what/why/when are clear. Perhaps emphasize the development or networking opportunities.
- **Create routine.** Help community members expect that they can be called upon for volunteerism at certain times each week/month/year. For example, "Chadron Serves Week" or "Red Cloud Fall Clean Up."
- **Recognition (and food).** No volunteer event is complete without profuse thanks, and maybe a meal. And a t-shirt.
- **Develop for the future.** Once engaged, continue to develop these volunteer sources for future opportunities.

+ Resources



- Nebraska Tourism Serves

- <http://visitnebraska.com/media/industry/2016-11-30-00-00-00-utc-nebraska-tourism-serves>

- Serve Nebraska

- <http://serve.nebraska.gov/>

- Americorps

- National Tourism Cares

- <http://www.tourismcares.org/>

+ Volunteerism + YOU.

- **Take inventory.** What activities and volunteerism do you do already? What groups/organizations/places do you want to support, but don't yet? What would enrich you? What time, realistically, can you devote to volunteerism? Where can you “donate” your professional talents?
- **Think of outcomes.** What do you want to come out of this? Is there a partnership that could be built by a once a week volunteer shift?
- **Take action.** Approach the organization you've been eyeing and offer your help. Sign up for a single event or for a reoccurring volunteer role, then adjust as needed. Once you're invested, invite others to support the organization.

"VOLUNTEERING IS THE
ULTIMATE EXERCISE IN
DEMOCRACY. YOU VOTE
IN ELECTIONS ONCE A
YEAR, BUT WHEN YOU
VOLUNTEER, YOU VOTE
EVERY DAY ABOUT THE
KIND OF COMMUNITY YOU
WANT TO LIVE IN."



HandsOn
NETWORK



More information



- Nebraska Civic Health Index:
 - <http://nereform.org> or
 - http://nereform.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/NECHI_2015.pdf



Questions?

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