103 WAYS TO ENGAGE REMOTE VOLUNTEERS

A wide-ranging list of examples compiled from a thorough search of real-life opportunities being recruited online. While the categories are a bit imperfect in that some ideas could be placed in more than one area, they are intended to provide inspiration for ways in which your team might develop suitable engagement strategies for your organization or cause.

WAYS TO PUT THIS LIST TO WORK FOR YOUR CAUSE

- [ ] Read through this list and circle any items that might be relevant to your operational needs or help to advance strategic goals

- [ ] Next, find or make a list of all of your current volunteer opportunities; make sure you understand *what* those volunteers actually do and *why* it matters

- [ ] Scan through this list a second time looking for ideas that could serve to expand, complement, or replace current volunteer activities

- [ ] If your organization struggles to recruit adequate support for any of your current opportunities, consider whether you might be able to expand (and diversify) your pool of candidates by making modifications to allow for remote support

- [ ] If you've had to suspend any current opportunities due to COVID-19 and social distancing, consider whether those activities could be modified to allow for remote access. If not, are there alternate activities that can keep volunteers engaged and/or put the same expertise or skills to use (even if for a temporary period until they can resume their original role)?

- [ ] As you work your way through these prompts, be sure to note any additional ideas you may generate for enlisting the support of remote volunteers that are inspired by this exercise. Jot them down below.

ADVOCACY:

01 share online petitions
02 prepare testimony in support of or opposition to local, state, or federal legislation
03 write to decision-makers (via letter writing, email, or postage-paid postcards provided by your organization)
04 conduct peer-to-peer texting campaigns
05 serve as a court appointed special advocate (CASA)
06 conduct research on policy issues
07 prepare, support, or lead informational briefings to update grassroots coalitions on policy issues
08 investigate and analyze legal issues
09 support hotlines that provide callers with individualized information or legal referrals
10 conduct outreach and training to strengthen coalition capacity

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS:

11 scan documents or photographs
12 organize physical or digital files, including image libraries
13 prepare mail-outs (affix labels, stuff envelopes, etc.)
14 transcribe audio files
15 monitor and/or respond to email messages sent to a shared program email account
16 make phone call reminders
17 research options for new services or supplies (including features, pricing, nonprofit discounts, etc.)
18 conduct data entry
19 update PDFs and/or web pages to be meet accessibility guidelines (e.g., document structure tags, alternative text)
20 improve or manage SEO tasks (e.g., update site maps, add meta descriptions to each web page, etc.)
21 take notes during web conferences
22 provide remote phone receptionist support

CITIZEN SCIENCE:

23 monitor + record animal behaviors via webcam
24 map street trees
25 conduct water quality monitoring
26 report wildlife sightings
27 document alien or invasive species
28 participate in a bird count or census
29 monitor bird nests
30 collect weather data
31 observe coral bleaching
32 listen for frog and toad calls
33 record spawning season observations for various species
34 gather other environmental data to document impacts of climate change (e.g., life cycles of plants, tidal activity, etc.)

MORE IDEAS TO SUPPORT OUR CAUSE:

COMMUNITY BUILDING :

35 moderate an online discussion spaces (e.g., Facebook group)
36 serve as social media ambassadors
37 host virtual social hours to connect team members (could include volunteers, staff, board, community, etc.)
38 provide friendly support during Zoom and other web-based convenings (e.g., welcome participants as they join, acknowledge comments and questions, etc.)
39 make phone calls to welcome or check in with new members
40 reach out to collect data or get feedback from existing members or clients
41 lead/facilitate a community of practice professional group
42 contact businesses for donations of goods or services
43 participate in or convene focus groups
44 host virtual volunteers orientations
45 set-up phone trees to get folks talking + sharing
46 host a virtual volunteer appreciation event

CROWD-SOURCING:

47 transcribe and tag scanned images of historical documents
48 map a disaster zone
49 help expose human rights violations
50 provide feedback on messaging
51 generate (or vote to select) a tagline, program name, or logo
52 create and/or contribute to an informational wiki page
53 generate subtitles for films or other lengthy videos
54 add indexing tags to online image libraries
55 survey populations to inform public health initiatives (e.g., disease detection and surveillance, behavioral interventions, health literacy, etc.)
56 invite submissions of personal stories, photographs, or memorabilia around a topic or issue (to become the basis of a campaign, collection, exhibit, or communications)
57 conduct market research
58 develop, coordinate, or contribute to a crowdfunding campaign to support a pilot initiative or unexpected and immediate need

MAKING THINGS:

59 make cards
60 knit, crochet, or quilt blankets for hospital patients
61 sew or mend clothing, costumes, or uniforms
62 make PPE (e.g., masks, face shields, head coverings, gowns)
63 make toys, treats, or blankets for shelter animals
64 make memory bears, pillows, or blankets to preserve the memory of lost loved ones
65 create video tutorials
66 build bookshelves or storage cabinets
67 prepare hygiene or toiletry kits
68 make rehabilitation gifts (e.g., lap robes, comfort pillows, wheelchair or walker totes, etc.)

PEER-TO-PEER ROLES:

69 conduct mock interviews
70 provide tutoring
71 serve as a mentor
72 provide support or supervision to other volunteers
73 make kindness calls to care home residents
74 provide emotional support to individuals dealing with illness or trauma
75 host online 'study hall' sessions
76 provide second language practice through video chat or telephone
77 provide peer-to-peer trauma survivor support
78 provide wellness or recovery support through texting and/or calls

SHARING SPECIALIZED SKILL:

79 translate materials into other languages
80 conduct website design, audit, and/or maintenance
81 provide coaching or training on digital literacy + safety
82 help create or review business plans or earned income strategies
83 lend graphic design services
84 serve as a photographer
85 provide crisis support or counseling
86 train staff to set-up or use new project management, database, website or other software
87 create infographics
88 advise on merchandising
89 serve on an advisory group available to provide expert guidance or input
90 provide bookkeeping support

WRITING & EDITING:

91 prepare (or contribute to elements of) grant proposals
92 copy-edit collateral materials
93 craft testimonials sourced from program participant survey responses or evaluations
94 write staff or volunteer profiles
95 contribute blog posts
96 generate content for social media posts
97 edit a newsletter (print or digital)
98 author, co-author, or ghost-write opinion-editorials
99 write captions for videos
100 serve as a pen pal
101 write quiz / trivia questions for newsletters, social media, or other uses
102 provide short reviews or summaries of books, videos, or other industry or sector content
103 write letters to seniors, front-line workers, and troops