

# **City of Roseville Volunteer Survey**

## **July 2017**

### **Introduction**

Volunteer participation has been a critical component of City of Roseville programs and operations since its inception. Engaged and vital volunteers contribute thousands of hours every year, expanding the City's capacity to accomplish great things. Recognizing that volunteers are indeed one of the City's greatest resources, wanting to maximize untapped potential of volunteers, and assure that volunteer resources and infrastructures are adapting to changing community needs and expectations, the City of Roseville created a full-time Volunteer Coordinator staff position that began in May 2014. The Volunteer Coordinator position was charged with establishing and implementing a centralized, consistent and comprehensive Volunteer Program that utilizes best practices, assures risk management and meets the needs of stakeholders in an efficient and sustainable way. The following Mission Statement was created for the Volunteer Program:

*The City of Roseville's Volunteer Program shall be a key resource to the citizens, staff, elected officials and other key stakeholders in partnering to build and maintain quality of life at the highest possible standard for all members of the community. The Volunteer Program shall offer opportunities and support to create a welcoming and inclusive culture of community engagement for all stakeholders, where contributions are utilized in impactful ways and volunteer and staff commitments are valued and supported, providing community strength, solidarity and sustainability.*

### **Purpose**

In order to foster an environment of continual process improvement for the City of Roseville Volunteer Program, it is recognized that a variety of avenues for stakeholder input need to be established. Wanting to determine if volunteer resources are being leveraged to the best extent possible, while fully respecting, utilizing and sustaining valuable time and talents, a survey was created and implemented. The survey was designed to assist in gaining volunteer perspectives and insights about the volunteer experience, how we might be able to build capacity, improve satisfaction, retention, and impact, as well as fully utilize the available talents and skills.

### **Methodology**

Over the course of six months a survey was developed based on identified goals. Questions were developed with the intent of collecting usable, meaningful and quantitative data. On May 5<sup>th</sup>, surveys were mailed or emailed to approximately 760 people. An estimated 45 were undeliverable and returned via USPS or email bounce-backs. Entrance into a drawing for a restaurant gift card (total of 3) was offered as an incentive to complete surveys. Reminders were sent via email, social media and City News Updates through the first week of June. Respondents were offered the opportunity to complete and mail back a paper survey or complete the questions online. A total of 232, or 33%, of surveys were completed. The vast majority returned hard-copy surveys, with less than 10% choosing the online option. Of those who completed the survey, 74% gave their name. Nearly 85% gave their age – more than were willing to share their name!

**THANK YOU and acknowledgements**

A sincere thank you to all who completed surveys. This important input is valued and appreciated. City staff are committed to improving the volunteer experience and outcomes for all stakeholders and your insights will help shape that ongoing work. To the best of our abilities we will address concerns and honor and celebrate the successes.

Grateful appreciation to Mary Rigney and Joyce Briggs for time, energy and sense of fun while stuffing hundreds of envelopes and doing hours of data entry.

A special thank you to volunteer Eileen McCormick, Ph.D. for her time, expertise and commitment to the project. Without her, the survey's results would not be as useable, meaningful or reliable.

### **Overview of results – first impressions**

Survey results will be analyzed for use in making decisions in all aspects of Volunteer Program planning. These results will help to guide future discussions and plans for things including recognition, developing volunteer roles and opportunities, and outreach efforts. These results and analysis will be made available as they are finalized. First impressions of basic responses, ie; answers to individual questions without comparing answers within subgroups, are included here.

#### ***How long have you or had you been volunteering with the City of Roseville?***

The vast majority of respondents fell into two timeframes, divided almost equally between “3 to 5 years or less”, and “more than 10 years”.

**Why this matters:** At first glance, it would appear that the timeframes for when the majority of volunteers started would lead to 2 primary conclusions; 1) the addition of a full-time Volunteer Coordinator able to focus on creating an infrastructure to support and sustain volunteers has increased the volunteer pool. 2) Given the number of volunteers that started 10 or more years ago, volunteers tend to stay committed once they engage in a role they feel a connection to. This group may also represent those who launched many of the projects they still volunteer for, and thus have a vested interest and affinity to the continued success of the project. Further, this group of long-term volunteers likely represents an age group whose volunteer commitments tended to be more long-term than those of subsequent generations.

#### ***In what department of the City of Roseville do or did you volunteer?***

Volunteers indicated that they volunteer in a wide array of roles across City Departments and beyond. The greatest areas of volunteerism within City Departments are within Parks and Recreation and the Police Department, with a sizable number also volunteering at other community agencies including Meals on Wheels, the Library and the Historical Society.

**Why this matters:** Volunteers are demonstrating an interest in, and available skill set, for needs across all City Departments. While some areas lend themselves more easily to volunteer engagement, volunteers are demonstrating the potential to explore new ways to leverage the resource of skills, time and connections that they can bring to the table.

#### ***How do you prefer to be recognized for your volunteer service?***

This is an area that further analysis, to determine preferences within specific subgroups, will provide more insight and opportunity for discussion and planning. At first glance of responses from the group as a whole, there are a number of things that stand out. One is that volunteers tend to not expect formal recognition, and in fact much prefer a “thank you from my supervisor” and “email or letter of thanks”. The options that volunteers least preferred are what might be considered more “traditional”, such as “Roseville branded item”, “formal awards” and “certificates”.

**Why this matters:** Volunteer retention is dependent on building on-going, supportive relationships with volunteers. Recognizing volunteers in ways that are meaningful to them is a key part of assuring that they feel valued and appreciated. In addition, with limited resources, it is imperative that volunteer recognition utilizes resources in the most prudent way possible. Responses clearly echo what the field of Volunteer Management has found to be true in other arenas, there is no one size fits all when it comes to recognition. The challenge will be to determine the best course of action given the current volunteer pool and the available resources.

### ***Gender***

Of the respondents, there is a nearly 50/50 split of males and females.

**Why this matters:** Historically and nationally, women have tended to volunteer in greater numbers than men. Creating and continuing to offer volunteer roles that span what might be perceived as “traditional gender roles” is critical to engaging, and retaining, men and women.

### ***Overall satisfaction and motivation for volunteering***

Several survey questions were developed to gauge volunteer satisfaction with their volunteer role and environment, as well as their reason for engaging. Overall, respondents were very satisfied with their volunteer experiences, find the work rewarding, feel valued and respected, and are motivated by their desire to support their community/city.

**Why this matters:** In order to sustain and retain volunteers, they will need to be part of an environment that supports and celebrates their success, values their contributions and potential, and engages them in ways that are meaningful. Volunteer are ultimately the most powerful ambassadors and recruiters - good or bad, they will share their experience with their circles of influence and impact if and how others may choose to engage. A positive experience, and a commitment to addressing and resolving issues and concerns, is key to the success and growth of a healthy, vibrant volunteer corps.