Converting Good Intentions into Greater Impact
Reimagining Service

We are inspired by our nation’s Call to Service. However, we believe that encouraging Americans to volunteer is only part of the solution. Reimagining Service is focused on ensuring that these volunteers are positioned to drive real, positive outcomes that address our communities’ toughest problems.

In order to see this vision come to life, we are asking you to contribute your thoughts, ideas and reactions to this initiative. On the following pages you will see how we’ve framed the opportunity and how you can provide your input. Thank you for partnering with us to reimagine service and turn the good intentions of volunteers into greater impact for our communities.

Who we are

We are a community of leaders from the government, nonprofit and corporate sectors seeking to increase the impact of volunteers and their ability to address our country’s most pressing social issues. Our conveners include:

Karen Baker
Secretary for Service and Volunteering, State of California

Evan Hochberg
National Director of Community Involvement, Deloitte

Bill McClements
Acting President, ServiceNation/Be the Change, Inc.

Michelle Nunn
CEO, Points of Light Institute & Co-Founder, Hands On Network

Bobbi Silten
Chief Foundation Officer, Gap Inc.

In addition to the conveners listed here, the ideas and strategies outlined herein were informed by the wider Reimagining Service Task Force – a group that includes some of the foremost leaders in nonprofit, government, business and philanthropy that dedicated their time and provided invaluable input to the formation of the Reimagining Service vision. A full roster of the Task Force is included.
What we believe

To turn good intentions into greater impact, there are several important insights to understand and critical steps all sectors must take to improve volunteer/service effectiveness.
What we believe

The Call to Service is a talent management opportunity

World-class organizations define clear roles and recruit top talent with the passion and skill sets required to achieve their mission. Too often we are focused solely on what a volunteer wants to do and we fail to mobilize skilled and passionate volunteers to address the critical needs of nonprofits, communities and individuals they serve.

We believe that there is benefit in incorporating the best management practices to structure volunteer opportunities in a manner that focuses on meeting the most pressing challenges of communities and nonprofits. People volunteer for many reasons, but mostly because they want to make a difference. We must value their time by ensuring it is used to make the greatest difference possible. While there are many skilled and experienced volunteer managers in the community, we need to build on this resource base. Much can be learned from the field of human resources management to ensure that we are matching the talents and interests of volunteers with the needs of nonprofits to drive real results.

Volunteers aren’t free

It takes time and effort to create the capacity to turn good intentions into greater impact. Organizations are eager to take advantage of the expertise and time of volunteers, but they often lack the management bandwidth and systems to appropriately manage this rich resource. We must ensure that the costs associated with the building of this nonprofit infrastructure are covered. There is a very high return on this investment.

We are calling upon our nation’s philanthropic organizations as well as governments to prioritize investments that leverage citizen service and promote other creative ways of maximizing the capital and capacity resources available to our communities. If we do so, we will create a volunteering marketplace that is efficient and drives real impact on pressing social issues.

Fulfilling the promise of the Call to Service requires more established leadership positions across sectors

The President and First Lady’s passion and example will prove invaluable, but many more leaders are needed. We must develop a cadre of leaders at the highest levels of government, corporate and nonprofit organizations who can bring a deep set of skills and thoughtfulness to enable the mobilization of volunteers to address real problems. We must also support these leaders with adequate resources so they can achieve their goals. We applaud Mayor Bloomberg and the founding caucus of the Cities of Service movement, and Governors Schwarzenegger and Paterson for recognizing the power of dedicated and elevated leadership for community service in their administrations. But these positions are still the exception rather than the rule – this must change to enable the Call to Service to deliver on its promise.

Further, these public service leaders must be matched with leadership for service in our communities. We are advancing the idea and tools for a universally recognized role of “Service Leader” in the workplace and community settings. This might be a volunteer manager if one is currently in place or a new role if one does not exist. We can imagine a Service Leader in every school, business and organization to mobilize and engage students, employees, retirees or members in meaningful service activities. We also encourage a dialogue with community leaders in hard-to-reach communities to bring attention not only to increasing the level of service, but the impact of service by leveraging existing and new resources.

Volunteers need organizational efficiency to be most effective

The marketplace for volunteering should be simple, transparent and efficient. Creating accessible tools and technologies for recruiting, placing, training, tracking and evaluating the performance of volunteers that are based on established guidelines and principles can help ensure that we are not re-creating the wheel and that every potential volunteer knows exactly what to expect from the process.
What we are doing

We seek to lead an open dialogue and exchange that elevates the practice of volunteerism in our country.

ReimaginingService.org is a community and a platform to foster ideas that make an impact. It is a place for anyone who believes that volunteering is more than just “a nice thing to do,” and that it holds the key to addressing some of our communities’ toughest challenges.

We will give lift to the numerous efforts taking place across the country that are taking good intentions and creating the models and infrastructure necessary to drive tangible, powerful community change from volunteer efforts.

ReimaginingService.org facilitates the sharing of ideas, practices, tools and resources, and fosters collaboration.
To jump start this effort, we have called together national leaders as a Task Force to inform the Reimagining Service effort and have organized the work into action groups focused on the five key areas described below. We recognize that these five areas are not comprehensive, but we believe they are the highest leverage areas to focus our work. We have generated preliminary ideas that will continue to be refined and detailed with specific activities by the action groups.

Bring the *best human resources management practices to the service sector* to attract, acquire, inspire and retain volunteer talent.

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| **Apply Private Sector Human Resources Capabilities to the Service Sector** | Leverage the HR profession to bring effective people practices to volunteer management | • Encourage corporations to provide HR boot camps to nonprofits  
• Create an HR pro bono movement targeted toward building nonprofit capacity  
• Establish a corporate challenge for pledges of HR service  
• Encourage the addition of volunteer management to the college curriculum for nonprofit management |
| **Innovate Around Skill-Based Volunteering** | Better equip nonprofits to identify and manage volunteers who want to contribute their professional skills and get volunteers to better examine what skills they have to offer the community | • Build tools to assess what types of professional skills are needed and duration of need  
• Train nonprofits in best practices to attract and retain volunteers focused on contributing skills  
• Create a simple diagnostic tool to aid volunteers and/or a volunteer manager in assessing skills and a matching tool that will effectively match them to the opportunity |
| **Create Alliances with Corporate HR Associations** | Work with corporate HR associations to bring resources, policies, innovation, etc. to volunteer management practices | • Engage key HR associations and secure a commitment from the profession to support nonprofit capacity building  
• Secure opportunities for nonprofits to attend trainings and conferences at low or no cost  
• Seek opportunities to secure new people management programs and share best practices information with nonprofits |
| **Ensure there is a Lifetime Volunteer Pipeline** | From K-12 education to retirement coaching, help people understand the range of volunteer options available to them throughout their lifetime | • Engage educators and service leaders in afterschool programs to develop service-learning curriculum that increases the focus on service impact to the community  
• Provide coaching firms and HR professionals with information to help soon-to-be and recent retirees understand the service options available to them |
Support the **development of the service movement by investing critical dollars in the building of volunteer management infrastructure.**

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| **Service Innovation Fund** | Create a fund that supports new, game-changing ideas that enable effective service | • Build a case for philanthropic leadership to support investments in volunteer management capacity  
• Encourage social innovation funds to invest in service innovation |
| **Full Funding of the Volunteer Generation Fund and National Funding Streams, such as AmeriCorps** | Seek full funding of the $100 million Volunteer Generation Fund and the proposed increase for AmeriCorps — both provisions in the Kennedy Serve America Act. The Fund authorizes funding for nonprofit organizations and state service commissions to expand volunteerism service nationally | • Prioritize full funding in the Administration’s FY2011 budget request  
• Map a strategic plan for leveraging a 5-year investment in the Volunteer Generation Fund as a central resource for delivering on the goal of 100 million Americans volunteering annually by 2020  
• Encourage the Corporation for National and Community Service to fund initiatives that would reach ethnic community nonprofits that currently lack the knowledge of federally-funded service dollars. Provide planning grants in this much needed area |
| **Corporations Fund the Service Movement** | Encourage corporations to fund the service movement in addition to funding employee volunteer programs with an emphasis on increasing the effectiveness of service | • Encourage companies with strong volunteer programs to contribute to the service movement in addition to the grants they provide to support staff for volunteer events |
| **Develop Strategies for Nonprofits to Seek Funding for Volunteer Management** | Volunteer management is not an area that is strategically funded. Build a more compelling case for volunteer management to increase funding for positions and programs | • Build a clear business case for building volunteer management capacity by demonstrating the impact that effective volunteers can have on an organization’s program delivery, fundraising, etc.  
• Encourage nonprofits to create volunteer/service board committees to bring greater focus to volunteer management |

Establish a **network of powerful leaders across sectors** that value the role of service and can use their positions of influence to promote a broad-based understanding that volunteers are a valuable resource in addressing community problems.

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| **Cabinet Level Service Leadership** | Encourage the creation of permanent cabinet level service leadership positions in government with the necessary resources to ensure success | • Establish Secretaries of Service in each state  
• Establish Chief Service Officers in every major city  
• Provide increased city funding for capacity building in volunteer organizations |
| **Strategies for City Leadership** | Develop strategies for city leadership to activate service at the local level | • Support and encourage the expansion of Cities of Service, an initiative to replicate NYC Service in other cities across the U.S.  
• Encourage the Corporation for National and Community Service to support city infrastructure for service  
• Engage in a dialogue with community leaders (e.g., religious leaders, teachers, community organizers) from hard-to-reach communities to determine the best way to support their needs to improve volunteer impact |
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<td><strong>Elevate the Service Leadership Role</strong></td>
<td>Elevate the volunteer manager role in nonprofits so they share equal status with development staff. Also, elevate the volunteer management role in corporations and integrate volunteerism into talent development practices</td>
<td>• Reframe the role of volunteer management in nonprofits and encourage investment in more seasoned and strategic talent</td>
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<td>• Encourage corporations to upgrade their volunteer management staff to deliver more skills-based and other innovative service programs to the community</td>
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<td>• Leverage learnings from the legal field and apply skills-based volunteering to talent development practices</td>
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<td><strong>Make a “Service Leader” Role Universal in Communities</strong></td>
<td>Establish a Service Leader role as a method for improving the quality of service at the neighborhood level with the goal of every school, business, faith-based organization and community organization having an identified and trained service leader. This would build on the existing base of volunteer management that is resident in some, but not the majority of organizations</td>
<td>• Establish a Service Leader role (full or part time) in all businesses (regardless of size), in schools (regardless of grade level), faith-based organizations (regardless of faith) and in communities (regardless of socio-economic status)</td>
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<td>• Create a system that the sector can use to train volunteer leaders that includes virtual and physical training components and allows volunteer leaders to “graduate” to higher levels of capacity and competency</td>
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<td>• Encourage service leadership through self-organized volunteerism and provide tools to aid in delivering effective service</td>
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<td><strong>National Service Corps for Volunteer Management</strong></td>
<td>Create a National Service Corps for volunteer management, like New York City’s Civic Corps, to help nonprofits manage their volunteers and build community-based expertise</td>
<td>• Maximize current VISTA members around volunteer engagement and research possibilities of dedicated stream of AmeriCorps members around service and civic engagement</td>
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<td>• Gather and apply lessons learned from NYC’s Civic Corps program</td>
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<td><strong>Facilitate Discussions Focused on Service Impact</strong></td>
<td>Create policy, information sharing and action-oriented discussions and meetings at the local, state and national level focused on increasing the impact of service</td>
<td>• Create discussion opportunities that engage senior leaders in all sectors and call attention to service impact</td>
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<td>• Explore opportunities to leverage existing, high-visibility forums for service impact discussions</td>
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<td>• Invest in outreach to hard-to-reach communities via community leaders</td>
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<td>• Attract media attention for service impact gatherings</td>
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<td><strong>Value Civic and Volunteer Experience in Employment through the Use of a Civic Transcript that Documents Relevant Experience</strong></td>
<td>Develop a central system that documents an individual’s civic engagement. Create links between careers in nonprofits and public sector and recognize the value of volunteer experience in hiring practices</td>
<td>• Start with a coalition of organizations (such as studentvolunteer.com) and hiring institutions to pilot the inclusion of these experiences in their recruitment and review processes</td>
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<td>• Build an online “civic transcript” tool with common classifications for service experience that is valued by employers</td>
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What we are doing
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Develop **tools that raise the quality and efficiency** of placing and managing volunteers.

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| Scale HR Tools and Practices through Technology | Utilize existing technology platforms to provide easy access to tools, training and guidance | • Build an electronic library of tools and training that incorporates existing and new tools  
• Deliver virtual trainings and certification programs through webinars |
| Fast Pass for Volunteering               | Create a Volunteer Fast Pass through a national database for volunteer screening and background checks to reduce costs to nonprofits | • Leverage learnings from NYC’s program  
• Explore existing commercial platforms to determine if they can be effectively leveraged for volunteer screening and background checks |
| Enable Volunteer Self-Organization       | Empower citizens by providing tools and resources that will make it easier for them to organize volunteer efforts independent of nonprofit organizations and institutions | • Leverage existing service clubs and encourage the formation of new clubs  
• Find ways to use open source organizing tools on the web  
• Collaborate with the most widely used social networking platforms to enable new applications |

Develop **common metrics that assess and communicate the outcomes** of effective volunteer programs.

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| Metrics to Drive Service Impact           | Work with evaluation and service experts to identify the metrics that are the strongest indicators of impact in the community | • Work with CNCS, state commissions, local governments and service organizations to adopt an impact metrics approach, track performance against goals, and report annually on progress made  
• Explore what data is relevant based on the range of communities being served through volunteer efforts  
• Explore an annual venue/report to communicate progress on service impact |
What we ask of you

To move the conversation forward and help implement these strategies, the Reimagining Service movement asks for your insights via www.ReimaginingService.org and your support in making these changes that have the potential for significant, transformational impact.
Reimagining Service Task Force

Jennifer Aaker  Professor, Stanford University, Graduate School of Business
Jim Anderson  Communications Director, New York Mayor’s Office
Diana Aviv  President and Chief Executive Officer, Independent Sector
Greg Baldwin  President, Volunteer Match
Liz Blake  Senior Vice President and Advocacy, Government Affairs and General Counsel, Habitat for Humanity
Jean Case  Chief Executive Officer, Case Foundation
Josh Collins  Founder and Executive Director, Student Volunteer Foundation
AnnMaura Connolly  Chief External Affairs Officer and Senior Vice President, City Year
Brian Gallagher  President and Chief Executive Officer, United Way
Chris Gates  Executive Director, Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement
John Gomperts  President, Civic Ventures
Bill Hoogterp  Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner, The LEAGUE
Aaron Hurst  President and Founder, Taproot Foundation
Anne Mosle  Vice President for Programs, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Gail Nayowith  Executive Director, Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund
Jim Pearl  Executive Director, HandsOn Battle Creek
Barbara Quaintance  Senior Vice President for Volunteer & Civic Engagement, AARP
Shirley Sagawa  Co-Founder, Sagawa/Jospin
Susie Stern  Chair, New York State Commission on National and Community Service
Lester Strong  Chief Executive Officer, Experience Corps
Kerry Sullivan  President, Bank of America Foundation
Jane Wales  Vice President of Philanthropy and Society, Aspen Institute, Program on Philanthropy and Social Innovation/World Affairs Council
Laysha Ward  President of Community Relations and Target Foundation, Target
Peter York  Senior Vice President and Director of Research, TCC Group

In addition to the Task Force members, the report was reviewed by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Further, several industry and corporate leaders provided input, including: John Bridgeland (Civic Enterprise), Suzanne DiBianca (Salesforce.com) and Susan Ellis (Energize, Inc.).

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