



Michigan Voices for Volunteerism Detroit – May 12, 2010

In April and May of 2010, the Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC) hosted a 10-city listening tour, “Michigan’s Voices for Volunteerism.” The listening tour provided an opportunity for community stakeholders to share their thoughts on how to expand service and volunteerism to help address our state’s biggest challenges such as: hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, high school dropouts, and the environment.

Tour stops included:

- Benton Harbor
- Cadillac
- Detroit
- Flint
- Grand Rapids
- Online*
- Houghton
- Lansing
- Muskegon
- Saginaw
- Sault Ste. Marie

**More than 70 people participated in the listening tour by responding to an on-line survey.*

People who attended the 10-city listening tour represented the following groups: K-12 schools; aging networks; colleges/universities; faith-based organizations; nonprofit agencies; public safety; community based organizations; community leaders; businesses; healthcare; elected officials; concerned citizens; foundations; corporations; service organizations; state government and; media.

In Detroit, 54 people lent their diverse voices and thoughts to discussions that centered around community challenges and how volunteerism and national service programs can be expanded and utilized more effectively to improve the quality of life for citizens in these and other communities throughout Michigan.

Listening tour participants were asked a series of questions related to communities, volunteerism, resources, capacity, national service, and impact. The themes that emerged from Detroit’s stop are listed below.

Note: Many bullets below may be accompanied by a number in parentheses. This indicates multiple individuals/groups responded with the same/similar thoughts.

1. Challenges

What are the critical challenges or issues faced in your community? Please list.

- Unemployment (8)
 - Michigan fight for jobs/Michigan not retaining workers
- Under-employment (2)
- Education (5)
 - College Preparation
 - Job Retraining
 - Graduation Rates
- Hunger (3)
- Apathy (2)
- Funding/Resources (3)
- Outreach (2)
 - Identifying possible volunteers
- Single parent families
 - Quality day care
- Transportation (5)
 - Mass transit
- Crime/Public safety (5)
 - Use of technology
- Substance abuse
- Leadership (2)
- Foreclosures (3)
- Homelessness (2)
- Poverty (2)
- Health
- Basic needs
- Racism and Classism

2. Successes

How are volunteers currently addressing critical challenges in your community?

- Training & Recruitment (2)
- Volunteermatch.org/United Way (2)
- AmeriCorps (5)
- Boys and Girls Club
- BoardnetUSA.org
- Tutoring/Literacy Volunteers of America – Detroit
- Mentoring (3)
- Eliminating blight, beautification (2)
- DPN (Men of DPN; Watchdogs)

- Urban farming, agriculture, food banks, community gardens (2)
- National Service Commission
- High school community service
 - Environmental/cleanups
- Faith-based community effort
- Service-learning in schools (3)
- Corporate volunteers (2)
- Coordinating resources
- City Year (2)
- Ginsberg Center – UM
- Ford Model teams
- Senior Volunteer Programs (3)
- Summer in the City
- Reading Corps

3. Resources

What resources are not being tapped to support volunteering in your community?

- Disability community
- Children and youth/college students (4)
- Alumni association (2)
- Churches/faith-based organizations (4)
- Seniors (2)
- Social clubs
- Returning citizens
- Seniors/skilled retirees (2)
- Government incentives for service and volunteerism
- Incentives for small businesses and new businesses
 - More increased access
- Increased access to national service
- Increased corporate engagement (2)
- No standard for volunteer management (formal training)
- Financial institution open doors to other resources
- Nonprofits not collaborating
- Governmental (2)
- High schools
- Veterans
- Grants for the programs
- Technology (central portal)
- Coordinating Communications
- Public transportation
- Security screenings (background checks)

- UAW employees
- Volunteer directory with descriptions so groups can collaborate

4. Capacity

How do we increase the capacity of organizations to engage more volunteers and do it effectively?

- Funding (7)
- Recognizing the need (3)
- Technology that will support growth
- Dedicated volunteer coordinator (3)
- Educate volunteers (3)
- Maximize media (3)
- Collaborative training (4)
- Volunteer management (4)
- Central volunteer deployment (3)
- Mandated volunteerism for college students BEFORE they graduate
- Not taxing the ed-award and stipend of AmeriCorps members
- Social networking (2)
- Vehicles for change
 - Clearinghouse/coordinator needed long-term
- Recruitment (2)
- Capacity building
- Sharing of information and resources (3)
- AmeriCorps
- Volunteer tracking software
- Volunteer recognition (2)
- Utilizing unpaid interns
- Assessment and evaluation tools to be updated and utilized
- Volunteer job descriptions, tasks and duties
- Volunteer feedback
 - Incorporate and adapt programs
 - Be open minded and take advantage of their experience

5. National Service

How can National Service be used to enhance volunteer efforts and impacts?

- Internships
- Tax incentives
- Infrastructure development
- Sustainability
- Expose more volunteer organizations
- Be more attainable – within reach

- Better marketing (3)
- Education
- Information networking
- AmeriCorps members/VISTAs to coordinate volunteer programs
- AmeriCorps member helps coordinate volunteer activities at other agencies
- Increase media coverage of national service
- Time and knowledge are needed to collaborate – commitment
- Organization could become a VISTA program
- Service-learning programs (really important, especially at a K-12 level)
 - Kids in service-learning can establish a connection to the community – greater self-efficacy and improved academic achievement
- Leveraging national service programs to reach other volunteers
- Connecting with other organizations for more volunteers

6. Impact

How do we as a community maximize the impact of volunteerism?

- Educate consumers of goods about the ability to give back
- Engaging community based businesses – should be required to volunteer
- Show a positive example (2)
 - Tell the great stories
- Recognize volunteering longer commitment
- Ownership back into community (neighborhood focus)
- Public speaking
- Honor the work/Recognition (6)
- Strategic networking with other individuals and organizations doing similar work
- Social media and media
- Focusing on retention
- Use volunteers as ambassadors
- Recipients of services returning to volunteer
- Learning motivation of volunteering
- Volunteer feedback/voices heard
- Follow-up
- Better promotion
- Network - utilize the person next to you
- Identify resources
- Provide a support system
- Community outreach (neighborhoods, churches)
- Clearer relationship between volunteers and resources
- Seeing other people volunteer (publicity/media – sharing photos, videos, stories)
- Increasing the value of the volunteer work

- Employee incentives
- Utilize technology – social networking, emails networks through community
- Address basic needs to remove barriers for volunteers – child care, transportation