



**CAREER
CONNECT**

Engaging Employees through Skills-Based Volunteerism

**Enhancing K–12
Education and
Driving Workforce
Development**



Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Key Trends	3
Real-World Examples	5
Best Practices	6
Tracking Impact	7
Key Takeaways	7

Introduction

An organization is more than their revenue, and the ways a company contributes to the local community and world can enhance their reputation, brand, and ability to attract and retain talent. Many companies are increasingly expanding their focus from solely prioritizing profits through sales channels to also emphasizing their role in supporting the communities they serve.

Corporate community partnerships have evolved over the years. What was once a separate, “nice to have” corporate activity has become an integral part of the business

77%

Momentum in Skills-Based Volunteerism

According to the [2021 Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose Giving in Numbers report](#), 77% of companies offered their employees skills-based volunteer programs.

When corporations work closely with their communities, they not only support the community, but they can also gain critical insights into communities' experiences and needs, potentially inspiring innovation in their own products and services to better meet those needs.

strategies of many companies. When companies have strategic, authentic plans to improve the communities around them, they can also attract and retain employee talent as more [candidates seek employers](#) that align with their values and provide rewarding, engaging experiences. These programs can also enhance a company's reputation among customers, which increases trust and brand loyalty.

Corporations can partner with communities in many ways, including donating funds or goods to causes, improving sustainability practices, encouraging an inclusive workforce, and volunteering. When it comes to volunteer work, skills-based volunteerism is especially impactful, particularly in K–12 education.

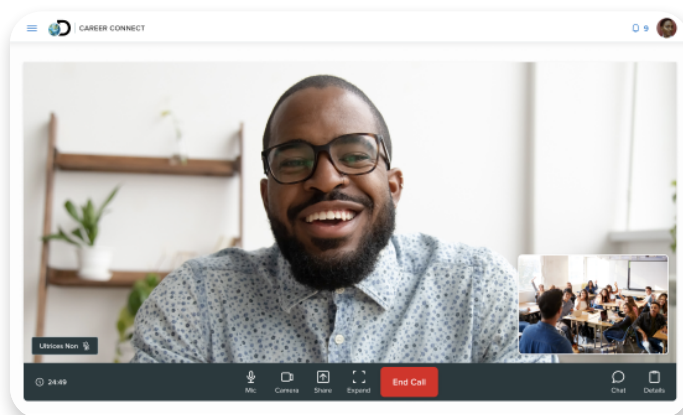
Skills-based volunteerism involves individuals contributing their expertise and professional skills to a group and/or individuals to address key challenges organizations or communities face. In the K–12 world, this means sharing those professional skills with schools, teachers, and students. Skills-based volunteerism focuses on taking time to leverage specific talents to close gaps in knowledge, expand students' skills, and improve educational outcomes.

The Importance of Private Sector Support for Education

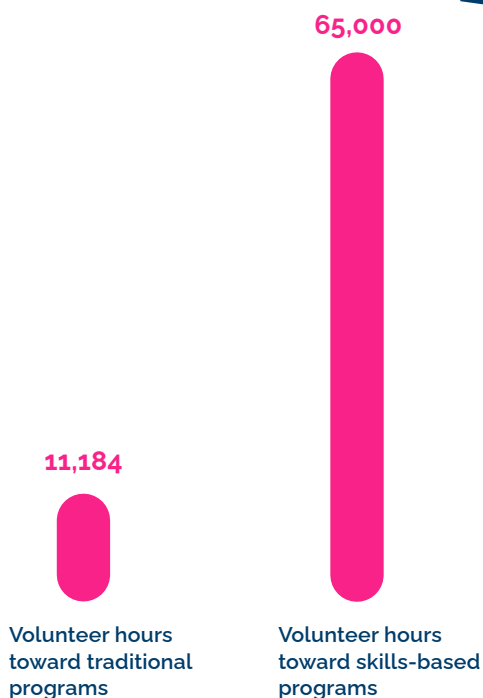
According to [UNESCO](#), 1 billion young people will enter the workforce in the next decade.

A strong K–12 education system is foundational for developing a skilled and capable workforce, which directly impacts businesses, the economy, and society as a whole. Corporations depend on an educated and skilled labor pool to meet their current and future workforce needs. When the private sector focuses their volunteer efforts on education, they can help address skills gaps and ensure that graduates are eventually well-prepared for the demands of the job market.

In this resource, you will understand key trends in employee volunteerism, explore real-world examples of K–12 volunteerism, and learn best practices for impactful K–12 volunteerism programs.



In 2022, companies achieved a median of 65,000 skills-based volunteer hours.

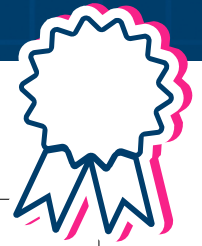


Key Trends in Employee Volunteerism Programs

Employee volunteerism is often supported by a company's employee engagement strategy. According to the [2023 Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose Giving in Numbers report](#), 87% of companies offer flexible scheduling or paid time off for employee volunteer opportunities. In 2022, companies with **skills-based volunteer programs** achieved a median of 65,000 volunteer hours (a 31% increase from 2020). Companies with traditional volunteer programs had a lower median of 11,184 volunteer hours.

Additionally, the rise of remote work has led to more opportunities for virtual volunteering. Employees can contribute to projects or initiatives from anywhere in the world, allowing for greater flexibility and inclusivity.

Source: [2023 Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose Giving in Numbers report](#)

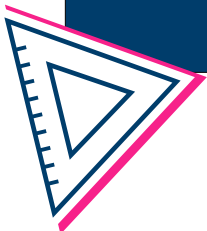


Corporate and Brand: Benefits of Employee Volunteerism

Attracting Talent	Many prospective employees prioritize working for companies that support employees' overall well-being. Offering volunteerism opportunities can improve how applicants see a company's culture. According to a Deloitte volunteerism survey, 70% of working Americans "agree that companies who sponsor volunteer activities have a more pleasant work atmosphere."
Gaining Strong Brand Visibility	Fostering a culture of employee volunteerism contributes to a positive brand reputation. Demonstrating a commitment to giving back helps organizations attract consumers and build brand loyalty.
Increasing Retention and Engagement	Volunteering provides employees with opportunities to contribute to causes they care about, creating a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Encouraging volunteerism can positively influence company culture as well as employee morale, engagement, and well-being.
According to a volunteerism survey by Deloitte: 74% of working Americans "think volunteerism provides an improved sense of purpose."	
Showing Impact	There's a growing emphasis on demonstrating the impact of volunteer programs. Companies are using KPIs and case studies to evaluate the effectiveness of their initiatives and communicate the positive outcomes to stakeholders.

Community: The Benefits of Employee Volunteerism in K–12 Education

Developing the Career Pipeline	Quality education is crucial for developing a pipeline of talented individuals entering the workforce. By supporting K–12 education with skills-based volunteerism, corporations help develop a diverse pool of skilled candidates for future employment opportunities.
Expanding Students' Worldview	Volunteering in the education sector allows professionals to provide students with an opportunity to learn about an industry or job they may not have known existed. Students can begin picturing themselves in a profession and understanding what it takes to enter it.





What does skills-based volunteerism in education look like in practice?

Microsoft TEALS Program

Founded in 2009 by a former high school computer science (CS) teacher turned software engineer, Microsoft's [Technology, Education, and Learning Support \(TEALS\)](#) program is a powerful example of skills-based volunteerism in education. Many high schools are unable to teach advanced computer science courses due to the lack of subject matter familiarity among their faculty. TEALS leverages the talent and knowledge of Microsoft—and many other companies'—skilled computer scientists who volunteer their time to nurture interest among high school students, preparing them for college and careers in the growing field of technology.

[Learn More](#)

The Model

TEALS partners with high schools to build sustainable, inclusive CS programs by upskilling their current staff. TEALS pairs industry volunteers and vetted curricula with teachers from any subject area to help them learn to teach CS. Through teacher training and supporting new and growing CS programs, TEALS aims to increase access to CS education for students across the country.

There are different [TEALS volunteer models](#).

- **Technology industry employees** use skilled volunteering hours to serve as teachers, leading lessons as classroom teachers can learn CS content alongside students, ultimately preparing those teachers to offering advanced CS courses independently.
- **Skilled volunteer teacher's assistants** support classroom instruction by working with students on assignments.
- **Virtual skilled volunteers** meet with and train teachers remotely. Schools who do not have access to local CS or tech professionals receive the support needed to teach CS to their students.

The Impact

Since 2021, TEALS has expanded to eight countries, which has broadened their impact across education even more.

As of the 2022–2023 school year, the TEALS program:

- Serves over 100,000 students and 2,000 teachers
- Includes over 7,500 professionals in its pool of technical volunteers

Finally, about 47% of TEALS students represent racial groups historically excluded from CS.

[Explore a Success Story](#)



7 Steps to Kick Start Skills-Based Volunteerism Programs at Your Organization

Developing a successful K–12 education volunteerism program requires careful planning, focus, and collaboration. Key best practices include:

1 Align to company values.

When developing the program, ensure it mirrors your corporate values. For example, if one of your company values is creativity, volunteers could host problem-solving sessions focused on building students' creative skills.

2 Establish clear objectives.

A successful K–12 volunteerism program needs defined and measurable objectives. You'll want to maintain records of volunteer activities—such as hours contributed—to help you quantify success.

3 Leverage employees' unique skills and talent.

Consider using a skills assessment to determine employees' aptitudes and create a map to understand strengths within the company. You can use this information to better match volunteer opportunities with employees' specific skillset.

4 Foster partnerships with school communities.

Take time to work with administrators, teachers, and other staff members to understand their community's specific needs and educational goals. It's important to establish effective communication channels between volunteers and educators and collect feedback from your key stakeholders: volunteers, educators, and students.

5 Offer flexible volunteer opportunities.

While your program should be structured, it should also allow for some flexibility. Offer various K–12 volunteer opportunities to accommodate diverse skills, interests, and schedules, which in turn, enables more employees to participate.

Skills-based volunteerism programs are also scalable in hybrid work settings.

For example, [Discovery Education's Career Connect](#) provides employee volunteers the opportunity to meet with classrooms virtually to share their industry expertise and insights with students.

6 Train and support volunteers for success.

Ensuring employees are well prepared for volunteering in the educational environment benefits them, educators, and students. Volunteers will need comprehensive training and onboarding around school policies and procedures, child safety, and effective communication.

7 Recognize your volunteers.

Employee volunteerism and recognition are a powerful combination when it comes to building company culture. Celebrate volunteers' impact and show your appreciation with awards, social media shoutouts, gift cards, or other forms of recognition.

Tracking Impact and Telling the Story of Company Purpose

A key indicator of a successful K–12 education volunteerism program is its impact on students and schools and internal metrics such as staff retention rates. To measure a program's impact, it's important to continuously collect and analyze data. Helpful data points may include:

- Number of students, educators, and schools served
- Regular, standardized survey feedback from volunteers, educators, and students
- Surveys on employee belonging
- Staff retention rates
- Number of hours volunteered
- Volunteer participation rates
- Volunteer retention rates

Finally, continue to nurture your strong partnerships by showcasing community and success stories.



Use this data to tell your volunteerism story in a compelling way. Consider creating engaging content, such as an interactive 'volunteer footprint' map, newsletters, blogs, videos, employee and educator testimonials, and social media posts.

Key Takeaways

Integrating a K–12 skills-based volunteer program into your organization can establish a positive brand identity rooted in community impact as you support both employees and students. Leveraging the talents and expertise of your employee volunteers enhances students' learning journey while also strengthening the employee experience.

In summary, here are the key takeaways of implementing a skills-based employee volunteer program:

- 1. The company and its employees benefit.** Incorporating volunteerism in your organization's community involvement strategy can help you attract talent, especially as more people look for employers who align to their values. For current employees, skills-based volunteerism fosters increased employee engagement, purpose, and fulfillment—all of which can improve your company's culture, retention rates, reputation, and business outcomes.
- 2. K–12 volunteerism allows your organization to have impact at scale.** Skills-based volunteerism provides students with the unique opportunity to learn about industries, jobs, and skills they may not study in a typical school day. This, in turn, helps them better understand the demands of the job market and improves broader career readiness.
- 3. Rolling out a program requires thoughtful planning.** As outlined above, developing a successful skills-based volunteer program requires seven key steps. Most importantly, ensure your program aligns to company values, has clear goals, utilizes employees' talents, remains flexible, fosters relationships, provides training, and recognizes volunteers' efforts.



CAREER
CONNECT



Discovery Education's Career Connect is a streamlined two-way platform that connects diverse industry professionals with the workforce of tomorrow through dynamic education opportunities. Find out how employee volunteers are helping educators transform the workforce readiness conversation by leveraging real-life industry experience.



Learn more about the Career Connect program.



CAREER
CONNECT