

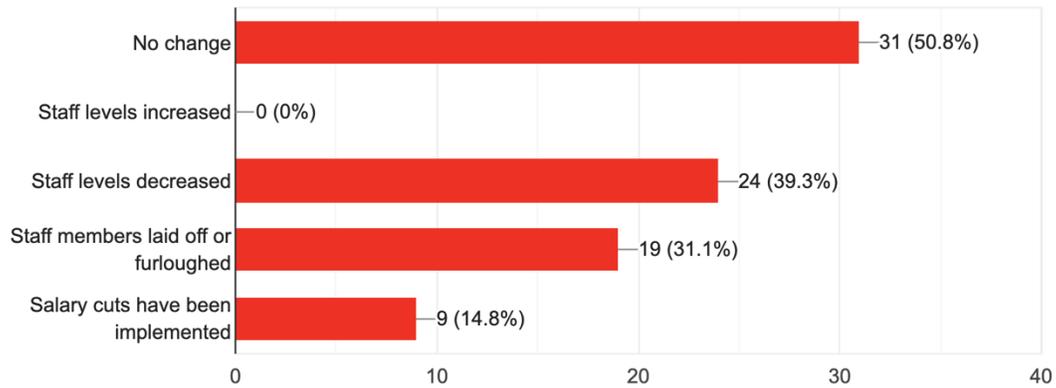
COVID Impact to Volunteer Program  
Survey Results – March 2021

Number of volunteers in your program:	February 2020	March 2021
Less than 50	17	23
50-150	19	18
151-300	13	11
301 – 500	8	5
501-750	3	2
751- 1000	0	1
1000+	1	0

Volunteer Department Staff:	February 2020	March 2021
<b>Full Time:</b>		
0	15	14
1	28	36
2	13	4
3+	5	7
<b>Part Time:</b>		
0	35	43
1	18	11
2	6	5
3+	2	2

How have volunteer department staff levels been impacted in the past year? (check all that apply)

61 responses



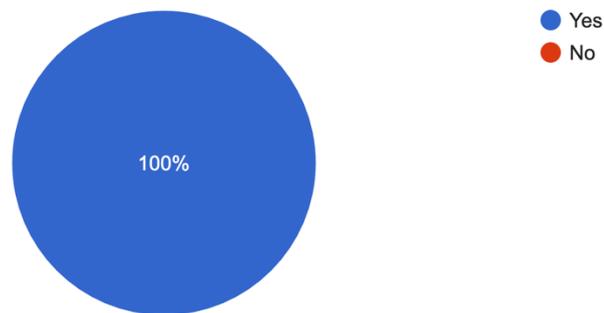
Annual museum attendance:	Average for past 5 years	2020
10,000 or less	8	28
10,001 – 50,000	15	5
50,001 – 100,000	5	6
100,001 – 250,000	8	4
250,001 – 500,000	5	2
500,001 – 1 million	1	0
More than 1 million	3	0

What type of museum do you work for?

History Museum	16
Art Museum/ Center	11
Specialized museum	8
General (Multi-Disciplinary)	2
Science/Technology	1
Historic House/ site	10
Natural History/Anthropology	4
Aquarium	1
Arboretum	5
Archeological site	1
Memorial museum	2

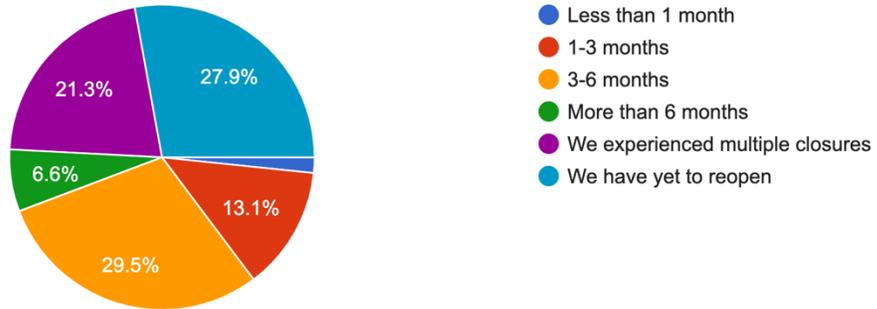
Did your museum experience a closure during 2020?

59 responses



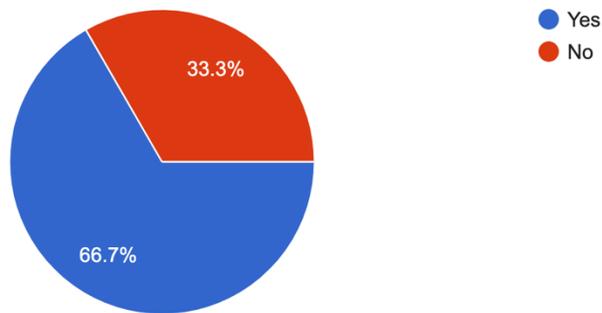
Follow up: If your museum experienced a closure, how long did it last?

61 responses



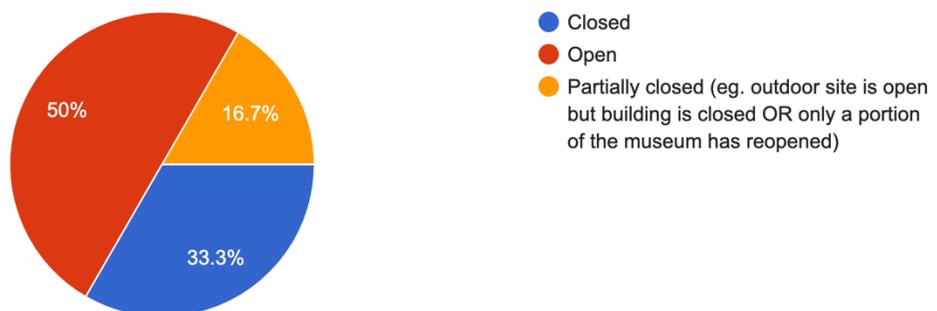
Follow up: If your museum experienced a closure, were volunteer department staff involved in reopening planning meetings?

60 responses



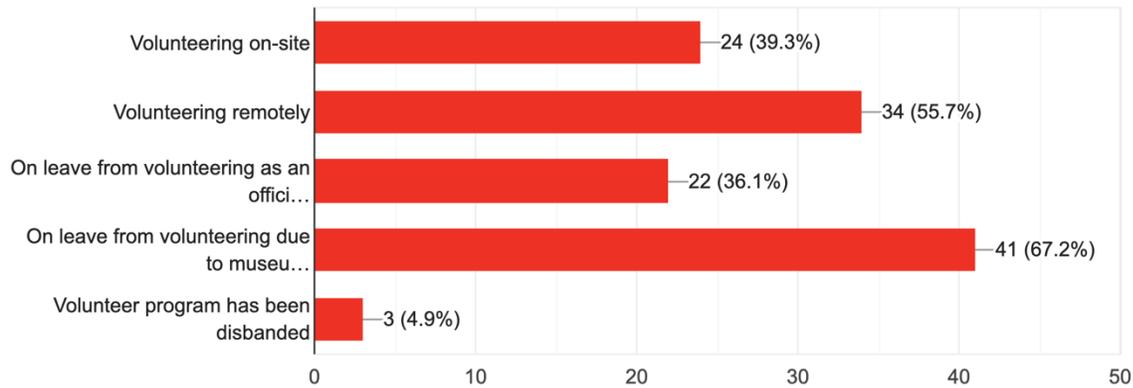
Is your museum currently:

60 responses



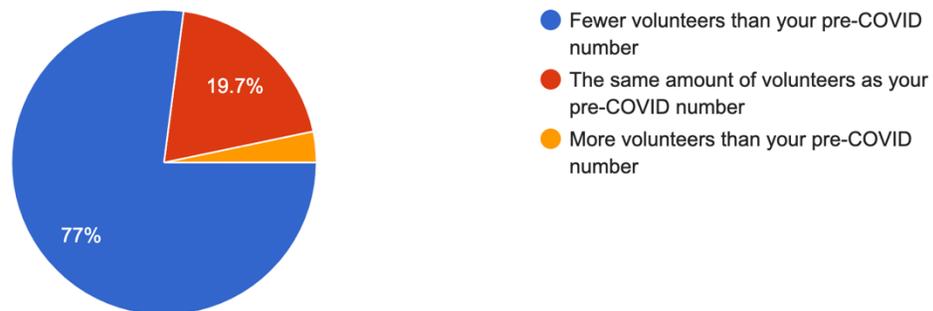
### Are your volunteers currently (check all that apply):

61 responses



### In the next 3 to 6 months, do you anticipate having:

61 responses



Follow up from the previous question, why do you think your numbers will go down/stay the same/ go up?

- The number is going down as all recruitment has been suspended, we do not have group volunteering presently nor anticipate it returning anytime soon, increased attrition as volunteers move on in one way or another
- Some volunteers have left to join other organizations that have accepted volunteers back with reopening
- We have few volunteers because our volunteer population is mostly older. Many are waiting for the vaccine to become more widespread for them to return to volunteering.
- Most of our volunteers are retired and until they get vaccinated, I don't expect them to come back.

- Fewer because we haven't yet planned for onsite touring (docents) and onsite volunteering staffing would need to fit under lower capacity levels from local health authorities.
- I think many things will still be status quo for the next 3-6 months. Even if we add a few new volunteers as we start to resume some activities, I expect that we also see a slight decrease in our volunteer numbers due to life changes, etc. Since we currently have less volunteers than we did pre-COVID, I expect that to remain the case for at least a while longer.
- WE have not allowed volunteers on site since Covid last March 2020. Many have found other volunteer roles, or aged out of the volunteer role they played here.
- We are supporting our volunteer corps with zoom meetings and virtual lectures.
- We think the return to volunteering will be an occasion for those who were already planning or considering retirement to make a firm decision.
- Rebuilding the vol program with new manager, some pandemic-averse former vols staying away, and new manager of volunteers building her own networks. Previous manager had statewide networks but our new manager is focusing more locally.
- Our volunteers are 60 or plus
- We have very dedicated volunteers, important since the organization has only one paid part-time staff member
- We are still following guidelines for social distancing. By doing so we automatically reduce the number of volunteers on site.
- We will not begin recruiting volunteers until we know when we will reopen
- Volunteers are still nervous about health risks of working with the public.
- In the coming months, it will take time to rebuild our student volunteer base, as many of our prior volunteers will have graduated and we have been unable to start the recruitment process for the next class of volunteers.
- We won't be up to pre-covid visitor numbers for a while, so likely won't need a full volunteer corps
- portions of the museum will not be able to host volunteers until COVID safety measures can be lifted. Volunteers have stated that they are not comfortable returning until they have a vaccine/the pandemic is over.
- Health issues for our aging volunteers interfere with their ability to participate
- Our museum is being very cautious and will limit visitors until it is safe for all to intermingle.
- We are onboarding a few new volunteers now, and a few have moved away. Most have said they plan on returning.
- We have been closed since Aug 2020. As part of a college, they have not given us permission to reopen.
- We had a few take the opportunity to 'retire' and volunteer recruitment has been difficult the past couple years
- People have moved on to different interests or are afraid of in person
- We've maintained high engagement during the pandemic with weekly Zoom events, etc... while allowing volunteers to step away if needs be. Few have chosen to leave the program.
- Our Volunteer Corps is heavily invested in the Museum's mission. Many stated support for (and comfort in) our closures and suspension of volunteer roles. They remain poised to help the Museum slowly and safely increase visitor numbers and respond accordingly.
- Our volunteers are senior citizens and are more fearful about their health.
- Needing to work more because of money issues; Health concerns beyond/exacerbated by COVID

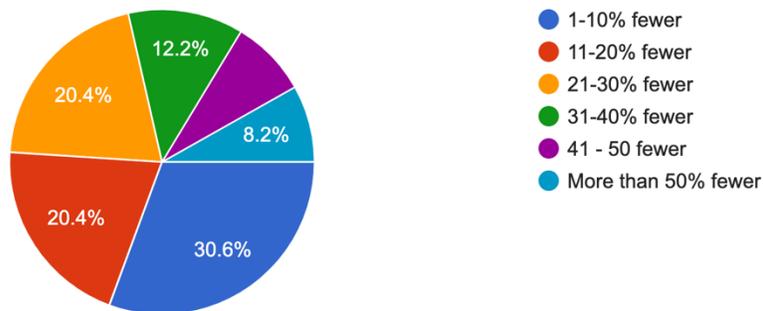
- Our volunteer core is almost exclusively in the collections department with occasional student research positions. It is therefore not affected by visitor numbers, only by closures. All of them have been eager to return each time we open. We have been able to accommodate our seasonal research student intern remotely as well. We are not currently recruiting any new volunteers, though, because training would require prolonged contact between staff and the volunteer.
- The bulk of our volunteer work focuses on leading school visits; we do not anticipate hosting school visits for another 12 months.
- Natural attrition
- Although we have onboarded a few volunteers over the past year by virtual orientation, it is difficult to recruit at the current moment.
- social distancing, need fewer volunteers because it slower. Safety.
- All public facing volunteers and roles are on indefinite hiatus. That group of 229 volunteers has no estimated return date. We also don't anticipate onboarding new volunteers prior to 2022.
- They may not know we exist or are open
- To avoid closure, we must be exact w/ health and safety protocol and only use staff/volunteers that are up-to-date and strict on regulations.
- Our hours and opportunities are limited for now. I expect they will increase gradually as people get vaccinated and we are able to increase hours/days of operation and open more volunteer opportunities.
- Distancing allows for fewer visitors and, therefore, fewer volunteers
- The majority of our large volunteer numbers were based on hosting large events. We will not likely resume such large-scale events within this year.
- We will probably not have as many volunteer opportunities available.
- We are not receiving volunteers while the museum is closed.
- Many of my volunteers are in the older demographic who are already getting their vaccination. Many - not all though have indicated they plan to return. I have worked hard to provide virtual experiences throughout our shut down to keep them engaged.
- Many have retired or moved, some are high risk and will not return per their written statement
- We hope to begin reopening gradually next month, but fewer volunteers will be needed
- We have a lot of older volunteers who are at high risk.
- Many are waiting for the vaccine (although many have been vaccinated as well). As soon as the volunteers get vaccinated, they will come back.
- We continue to recruit through 2020 and 2021, we don't plan to remove people from the program until after COVID is over. So people not volunteering will still technically be considered in the program for at least another year.
- I think we will see a slight drop in volunteer numbers once our volunteer activities return to normal. We've retained the vast majority of our volunteers, so I expect this number to reflect the normal amount of drop off over a year, while we haven't been recruiting new volunteers to keep up with that drop off.
- We hope to have guided tours again, and to open up our volunteer-run gift shop.
- We are only allowed three people in a building at any one time
- Since closing March 2020, the volunteers that I manage (there are 1000 for the organization), we have been maintaining connections but not doing much active virtual volunteer

opportunities. Many Docents were over age 70 and I expect they will retire instead of coming back to the "new normal"

- Our volunteers are dedicated and cannot wait to return to service.
- Our volunteers are older (65+) and are hesitant to interact with the public
- Our museum's need will remain low after reopening
- I am not actively recruiting at the moment and we are keeping the current group engaged through various activities
- Health reasons (either the volunteer or family member) will determine when and if they will return. Even though many volunteers have received the vaccination, they don't feel comfortable being around the public.
- They are going to come back SLOWLY. The reason I chose "same amount" is that we have opened a new venue. It will attract some new volunteers, but not in the numbers we need.
- We have kept our volunteers engaged with the museum through virtual book clubs and ongoing training, and our volunteers are eager to return as soon as it is safe.

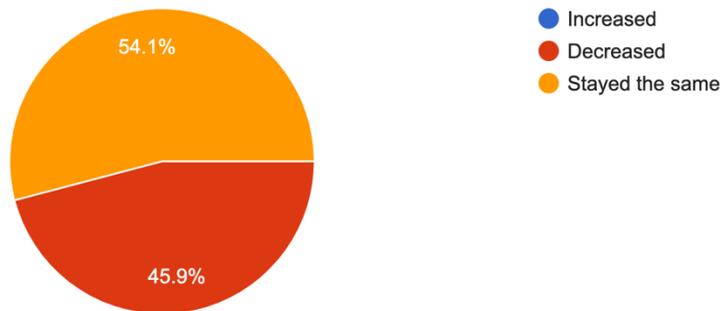
Follow up: if you answered Fewer Volunteers, what level of decrease do you anticipate?

49 responses



Since the arrival of the COVID 19 Pandemic, has your volunteer department budget:

61 responses



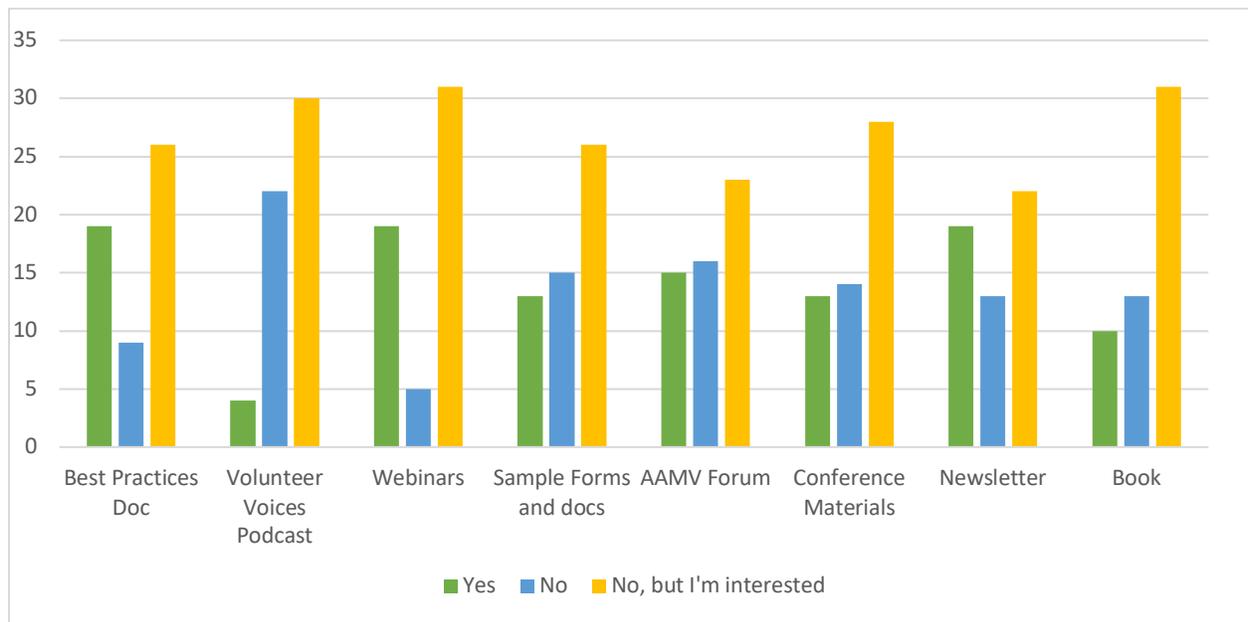
Have you taken on new duties/ other duties at your museum in 2020?

Yes	39
No	22

Please explain if you answered yes:

- Volunteer dept is with other duties and those have expanded.
- Assisting with some HR duties and all staff newsletter.
- Collections Management
- Covered public programming and also managed interns (the intern programs did not close)
- Created and facilitated an 8-week adult education online Natural History Course with 30 guest speakers. Helped Education staff with online teacher resources. Participated in other museum operations and cleaning duties.
- Docent duties
- Exhibit checks and disinfection responsibilities, staffing VS while we reduced on-site staffing during a COVID surge in our community
- General HR projects - training, administration work
- Human Resources coordination
- I am participating in Virtual Tour Development.
- I have been working on virtual content, editing sound and video and shooting video for remote tours.
- I have taken on several projects, some involving work in digitization normally done by volunteers
- I have taken on the responsibilities of my co worker who was let go.
- I helped our museum by project managing the reopening by interdepartmental collaboration and planning.
- I now also manage the guest services department along with other GS managers. I also work with the Sales team and exhibitions team on special projects.
- I now oversee volunteers and community outreach efforts
- I'm also now the interim director, as well as my regular job.
- More basic functions, less time for management, no new projects, fewer collaborations
- My dept had significant layoffs, I am now interim director, added another volunteer group to manage, working with leadership to reorganize/restructure visitor programs and public programs departments
- Social media and marketing
- the volunteers are my new duty ; they are added to my current duties of education, guest services, social media, marketing/pr, site maintenance
- Unrelated to volunteer management
- Video editing, virtual programs
- Volunteer staff were reassigned to other duties 50% so am taking on their responsibilities.
- WAY more attention to fund raising and volunteer maintenance/recruitment
- While the museum was closed, everyone took on virtual initiatives that were not in place before and are still happening.

Which of the following AAMV resources have you used or would be interested in using?



What other resources could AAMV provide for you?

- Discussion board to post questions
- How to get more supervisors and staff on board with having volunteers.
- Community content so I could hear how other small museums are handling similar situations
- Would appreciate strategies for DEAI volunteer recruitment as well as wording to share about DEAI in materials shared with volunteers during recruitment and onboarding.
- Annual grants to hire an assistant.
- funding
- I like networking meetings (virtual!)
- anything free is appreciated, given budget constraints
- volunteer training ideas
- How to best support volunteers returning to campus after a traumatic (physically, emotionally, mentally, etc) year+
- Safety in a time of covid.
- I would love to hear more about what other volunteer managers are doing creatively to navigate these times, or other topics. Maybe in the form of a blog?
- recruitment ideas for 20-30 year olds
- Mentorship program, advocacy work, recruitment ideas
- the forum isn't active. AAM really has become my go-to for all things museums. I understand AAMV is volunteer-led compared to AAM, but it has been disappointing that AAMV members haven't joined forces, used the forum, even have a regular monthly meeting just to talk and compare. My husband is a camp director and he meets monthly with camps across the country just to share how everyone is doing.
- The ongoing support has been appreciated no idea for what else
- morning meetings - my workday is short now

- I use the document library resource.... I wish there were more submissions!

Common/ grouped answers for How are you staying connected with your volunteers?

Email	47
Virtual trainings/ meetings	30
Phone	20
Newsletters	15
Virtual Social Events	11
Mailed cards/ notes	9
In person, distanced	4
Social Media	3
Daily Positivity/ fun Emails	2
Texts	
Gift delivery	
Calls from Board President	
Virtual Coffee with Curators	

What interesting things are you doing in volunteer management/engagement?

- Hosting curators and other staff speak about their projects on Zoom
- sharing any updates regarding the museum, but also sending relevant links or updates about the larger organization
- Started a collections/specimen highlight for the volunteers to view while they are at home and virtual coffee hours with museum experts.
- Accessibility programs geared towards people with Alzheimer's
- Rather than forcing volunteers to "learn" something during this time just staying connected with "conversational" elements. I didn't want to stress out volunteers making them think they could only be engaged by learning something. As time went on mixed in some educational elements particularly relating to DEAI and connecting with the community.
- We've been taking advantage of the virtual space to program training sessions and other meetings for our volunteers, and have been doing so in ways that are engaging and fulfilling for our volunteers.
- We have been able to use volunteers if they work outside in our gardens & grounds or with our flower show watering transporting pots etc.
- Zoom meet-ups have proven to be a fun event for those who stop by.
- We moved our volunteer engagement online very early. It was a good proving ground for programs and activities we offer to the general public. We started working on virtual tours but due to a staff departure (personal, not COVID) those are on hold.
- Recently started offering discreet research assignments to support programs. Assignments are done remotely.
- none
- I've created a Bingo game to try to get them more interested and give them something to do
- Developing more virtual opportunities

- just completed a volunteer survey and one-on-one conversations with all volunteer supervisors to help identify needs and strategies for 2021.
- Providing training and virtual field trips; providing remote volunteer opportunities
- Providing opportunities to hear Zoom lectures, participating in virtual tours of related museums that are local; learning about various departments of the museum
- Currently planning virtual and socially-distanced social activities to keep the team connected with each other and staff, including walking club, trivia/game nights, virtual crafting nights, etc. Also taking the relatively quiet time to do a program assessment to build out the program more and plan for what the future might look like
- Mostly the personal touch. Individual communication and care.
- bi-weekly educational webinars for volunteer only
- Continuing education series featuring staff and community members who are experts in their field
- involving certain volunteers in the creation of new digital/virtual offerings
- Virtual volunteering and Zoom session to continue interest levels.
- We've done everything from book clubs to film clubs to inviting colleagues and scholars to come speak. We've enjoyed virtual field trips. We try and make it fresh every week.
- We are going to interview volunteers for our next newsletter, discovering why they volunteer
- Expanding our digital volunteer program
- We've toyed with starting a virtual book/film club
- Thinking about ways to expand the diversity among volunteers.
- Checking in with volunteers
- Using Zoom for trainings for the first time ever! Also able to share recordings of staff lectures, which are via Zoom and more accessible to all volunteers.
- Making volunteer opportunities more virtual
- We have done all-staff well-being checks on our volunteers, we continued quarterly meetings and enrichment in a virtual environment instead of in-person, we created a handful of virtual opportunities, we invited our volunteers to participate in other Citywide volunteer opportunities, we created an online 8-week course to inform volunteers and give them the opportunity to qualify as a Museum Guide to lead small group tours eventually, when we are able to do so, working with other Citywide volunteer coordinators to organize a National Volunteer Week "Volunteer Walk of Fame," when museum reopened, set aside member/volunteer days/times to visit the museum, surveys to gauge comfort in returning
- Creating activities they can participate in remotely, including games that help other volunteers get to know each other, and outdoor scavenger hunts to get them out of the house in a safe way.
- We are inviting volunteers to take part in a series of focus groups to determine what kind of learning and development they are interested in, which will inform our monthly training program for all volunteers.
- Delivering gifts of appreciation, sending personal letters to everyone, and Zoom Happy hours regularly
- Zoom presentations by various staff members; we have volunteers working from home in our Digital Assets section
- I send them weekly trivia quizzes to keep them interested in the museum and I host monthly zoom calls with them

- We are going to celebrate National Volunteer Week by having an activity planned for each day that week.
- Trying to make our SOPs more inclusive, accessible. New engagement ideas virtually including a staff meet-and-greet series, volunteers getting involved and maybe starting in our museum podcast series
- In fall 2020, we did a virtual recognition program that included museum staff driving all around town to hand-deliver awards, goodie bags, and yard signs to all of our volunteers who were being recognized. Having that personal touch point was so appreciated by our volunteers!
- Building new archives associated with collections
- Docents develop "talks" for each other over zoom - to stay connected with each other, to keep engaged with content, and to practice technology in a safe place with each other and not the public
- The lecture series.
- guest speakers and online video discussions
- We replaced our in-person lunch and learn series with a "Coffee with Curators" happy hour event to provide an opportunity for the volunteers to engage with other museum staff. We have kicked off a virtual Spotlight Tour program that allows the volunteers to research an object on display a create a brief 10 minute tour on that topic. We are considering creating a Teams Channel to allow them to share information to keep them engaged. One of our volunteers is an Infectious Disease Dr. and provides briefs each month on the latest COVID news.
- Dedicating more of my time to reach out personally to each volunteer when possible.
- Opening new venue and getting Board involved in volunteer relations.... It sounds pretty good when I put it in words, but I know we should do way more....

What has been the biggest struggle with COVID and your volunteer program?

- Managing expectations with returning to volunteer
- Getting information from leadership of org about when volunteers will be allowed back
- Keeping supervisors and staff interested in having volunteers in their departments, whether that be in-person, remote, or a hybrid of the two.
- All of our volunteers were in the highest risk group
- The uncertainty. Not being able to answer the questions "when will the museum reopen?" "when we will be able to come back to volunteer?" Too many unknowables which is unnerving to everyone.
- Our biggest struggle has been responding to volunteers' dissatisfaction, both towards a lack of opportunities for active volunteering as well as a lack of public programming from the institution. We have not yet resumed onsite tours for many reasons, and Guides have often been vocal in their disappointment to not be actively giving tours, often comparing us to other institutions. As a large institution, we have explained that things are not simply as easy as turning things "back on," that each institution is different, and that safety is at the forefront of every decision we are making.
- Management does not allow volunteers on site as docents or to work in offices with collections.

- Giving volunteers support so they will be there when we reopen.
- There are so many of them, all with different needs, interests and abilities around technology. Those who do not want to engage online are slipping through the cracks.
- Finding a way forward to support the mission while keeping everyone safe.
- age of our volunteers and program cancelations
- absences
- keeping volunteers busy while social distancing from each other, staff and guests
- Keeping myself motivated to work on ways to improve the program when we're still closed
- Most of the volunteer force is older, so we disbanded all volunteering.
- Attendance and getting new projects started
- Multiple things, too complex to describe in this survey!
- not being able to engage volunteers in onsite volunteering given COVID safety measures
- Keeping the volunteers engaged and ready for when the Museum opens again.
- Finding new opportunities to keep the volunteers engaged.
- Keeping everyone connected to each other and to staff considering: unequitable access to Internet, proper devices for the types of engaging remote participation, ability to use technology, interest/access to email
- Increased applications, and nowhere for the volunteers to work
- The public and volunteers are no longer allowed on campus.
- Keeping some of our volunteer groups who are less social connected with each other, continuing to have to say "no" to the question of when they can return
- being able to safely bring people back
- Keeping people interested with no in person to offer
- Giving the team purpose while not being able to perform our traditional duties
- Feeling connected
- Keeping the volunteers engaged
- The emotional toll of having to tell people they can't come to the museum, worrying about their safety
- Volunteers not understanding that the decision to close and remain closed is not for the museum to make, but that it is handed down to us from public health officials.
- Keeping volunteers engaged.
- People's comfort level of coming back. Many of our volunteers use public transportation to get to our museum and that is probably one of the biggest factors for people's hesitation in coming back
- safely bringing them back when some do not follow cdc recommendations
- Not knowing when more volunteers can return. They are all so eager, but we don't have timelines.
- Inability to have volunteers on site to help
- Capacity, training on COVID protocol, changing County rules
- The 6 month+ museum closure of course kept volunteers away. Not having volunteers to help with all in-house exhibits construction due to social distancing requirements, being unable to provide as many opportunities.
- Understandably, they don't feel safe leaving their homes and volunteering.

- Most volunteers only leave home for essentials and no longer feel comfortable volunteering. For those continuing to volunteer, we struggle with fidelity to CDC guidelines regarding facecovers and physical distancing
- Not being able to engage volunteers in remote volunteering due to lack of remote projects (with some staff working from home needing projects to work on due to quarantine etc.).
- Telling them that we can't receive them
- Staying in touch with the older volunteers who are not as Tech Savvy as others.
- The Museum being closed means no volunteers
- Keeping them connected to us throughout this long year so that they will return when it's over
- It is hard to train new volunteers while maintaining social distancing
- People are uncomfortable coming back mainly because of having to use public transportation. Since we are located in a city, public transportation is the easiest and most affordable way to get to the museum.
- Being stymied by staff/leadership. They want to keep the "pause" button on everything that has to do with volunteers. No new initiatives, no change to current operations, no recruitment, no activities, no budget.
- Staying connected, dealing with the very long period of not having answers to volunteer questions about when they will be able to return. Also, the increased demand for volunteer engagement programming from my department, while simultaneously having more institutional responsibilities to oversee.
- As a university affiliate, our volunteers are mostly students. Being closed to volunteers for >1 year means that we lose our experienced volunteers, so it will take longer to ramp back up once we are able to have volunteers in the buildings again.
- staying connected, Now that I'm several people, I dont have the time to keep up with individuals or even team emails; they WANT to be open and don't seem to fully understand we can't open due to cut staff and budget because other museums in the city have opened;
- Telling them to not come in for almost a year. Even when reopened the volunteers were not allowed back.
- maintaining personal contact with our volunteers
- consideration from leadership
- Keeping the volunteers engaged with projects. Our museum has limited resources to move projects to a virtual environment. Our volunteers are eager to go back onsite and many are frustrated with the current COVID crisis (as we all are!)
- Answering the question - when can volunteers return?
- Reluctance to come back
- Most of our volunteers are older and do not feel safe in a public space yet.

In 2020, did your volunteers participate in development related activities?

Direct Giving	22
Promotion of Direct Giving	10
Virtual Program Promotion	8
Virtual Program Assistance	11
Increased vol. efforts for revenue generating operations	6
None	3

Other:

- participating in virtual programs and in Zoom Happy hours
- Helped design/implement Giving Tuesday fundraiser
- Pointed them to help other museums/archives with virtual collections projects (online transcribing, etc)
- Transcribing

How has your museum responded to the increased national discussion around race, systemic racism and police brutality?

- Our Director did not want to release a statement around this topic because he considered it "pandering."
- Our museum has developed an Office of DEIA and has programmed regular sessions to engage staff, volunteers, and trustees around these concepts and how we might meaningfully incorporate these ideas in our work.
- The Museum provided public programs to develop awareness and response
- Hosted public discussions
- Development of values statement
- Yes.
- Our museum has issued a statement supporting Black Lives Matter, and then followed up by having conversations with individuals who called us out for walking the walk but not talking the talk.
- By becoming an open place for people to gather and talk. And we share more resources online.
- Increase DEIA trainings for all staff
- performatively
- We ARE getting there!!!! We are scheduled for our second meeting with the local tribe. We held a visioning session with community leaders, and Board members embraced the idea of fostering various community relationships!!! (SO excited!)
- We did special postings about racism in our community, posted videos, increased diversity on our board of directors
- Through our social media platform, we have non-aggressively and seemingly indirectly shared local histories related to racism to build awareness and understanding that these are problems that have long persisted in our own community. I have completed a Cultural Intelligence Certificate Series of coursework through the Continuing Education Program at the local university.
- Created DEAI committee, hosted a few diverse public panel discussions
- We already had established an active DEAI Committee before 2020 started, so the recent expanded national discussion has helped informed our approach and work in creating a DEAI plan
- Trying to gear our interpretation to be more inclusive
- Blogs, social media posts
- It is part of our core conversation with all volunteers and enhanced activities connecting with our volunteers and our communities.

- Our parent organization has appointed a DEAI officer who has convened working groups among the staff who are pursuing various aspects of development--up until now efforts have been ad-hoc in various departments. Our specific division has been working on building our ability to interpret the history of race in America for about four years now, (growing collections, researching how to interpret, piloting trainings) so those efforts continue in the online format.
- staff have been doing racial justice work; continue to offer public programs (virtual of course);
- We've had more conversations about inclusivity, but that's about it.
- no
- Responded with staff wide DEAI trainings, taking controversial pieces off display to correctly and accurately represent them, informing the staff and public of their intentions to change and ways they plan to do so.
- We've incorporated it as a discussion topic in our Conversation Stations but mostly we are still working on educating ourselves and examining our own privilege to see where our blind spots are
- We have formed an internal committee to look at ways we could improve our museum, have created a webinar series for our staff and volunteers on issues relating to diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility
- Our university has dramatically increased efforts to address systemic racism through multiple outreach and educational programs, as well as policy changes.
- we celebrate Black history
- none
- Instead of focusing on a Single Narrative we've recentered around our storytelling capacity about, by, and for whom. We've gained a happier, more diverse pool of volunteers, widened our support, and improved nearly every metric. When we focused on items in your question metrics fell. No one likes to feel bad, so we turned around and embraced the positives.
- Staff have discussions, but we have not formally responded. Our museum is run by a city government.
- Exhibitions, contracted help to diversify Board, staff convos, added a DEAI statement to Workplace Culture Statements
- N/A
- Our museums has not currently responded. We have had discussions with our volunteers, offered training, resources, and support
- We now have a Chief Diversity Officer and have been working with a diversity consultant firm.
- The organization has somewhat by hiring a director of diversity and inclusion, but that was only recently accomplished. Staff would like to see more IDEA initiatives implemented throughout the organization
- Nothing has been incorporated in our programming
- Rewrite of DEI statement, internal document compiled with demands of museum directors, adjustment in programming to more directly speak to the aforementioned topics
- created an IDEA Coalition and invited employees and volunteers to join. The Coalition is working on tasks like a diversity statement, land use acknowledgement statement, increasing accessibility and representation in physical spaces

- We are in additional trainings
- Exhibitions to raise awareness
- We've created a DEI committee. We've increased online programming with a wider array of voices and perspectives. We've repositioned our collection development policy.
- We had already been creating a new permanent exhibit around our enslaved population, but the closure has given us the opportunity to dedicate more time to it.
- DEI taskforce
- Including DEAI topics and resources in our weekly newsletter, multiple focused group discussions, implementing organization-wide DEAI planning, and working towards becoming an actively anti-racist organization.
- As a city-owned facility, we take our lead from the City regarding policies, discussions, social media, etc. Regarding our volunteer program in particular, we have increased discussions around and efforts towards decolonization, and discussions about inclusivity.
- Planning an African American exhibit
- Yes
- We put out a statement on racism and injustice, and we have increased our efforts to provide learning opportunities for staff and volunteers on anti-racism subjects. We are preparing a full-day staff retreat in May 2021 with a focus on systemic injustices related to our work as a museum.
- Not much at all...

Have/ how have volunteers been involved in these responses? (eg. included in equity team work, requested information about museum's response, received training, etc.)

- Not involved
- In fall 2020, Volunteer Services staff and Education staff developed a four-part virtual Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) Guide Training program. This mandatory training offered Guides an opportunity for self-reflection and professional development around DEIA concepts and practices. It aimed to ensure that we provide a meaningful and inclusive experience for a diverse range of visitors, while also attending to the complex specificities of our collections and historic houses. DEIA Guide Training is part of a larger institutional commitment to increase equity, inclusion, and diversity among staff, volunteers, and trustees, and in our engagement with visitors. In collaboration with the Office of DEIA, our museum continues to host virtual workshops on DEIA concepts and practices, which are available to all volunteers.
- Other than being invited to the public programs, there has not been other training
- Invited to the public programming
- DEAI discussions via Zoom
- When we reopened in the summer, we set up a town hall to provide information about the steps we were taking to ensure everyone's safety. We also sent out a survey to gauge their comfort level about returning to volunteer. Volunteers appreciated being included in various forms of communication and also have the voice to share their feedback/opinions with us.
- No they have not.

- None at this time.
- No
- Trainings are being planned/developed to take place when we can reopen.
- this issue hasn't been brought up by volunteers
- Key volunteers serving in staff functions...
- sent information and video links to help us educate our community
- no
- Nothing
- Mostly at the board level so far, but the volunteer team was provided the same DEAI surveys that staff and guests have received for input and comments. Our DEAI plan draft has incorporated volunteers into various areas, including volunteering activities, recruitment, training
- n/a
- Maybe liking or sharing the posts
- Through email updates. Through programming. Through training workshops.
- We have a committee of about 25 volunteers who are specifically interested in this topic. They are researching tour material, sharing readings, planning virtual tours for their peers, etc. The larger docent group receives content via their newsletters and trainings on a regular basis and will be visiting Black history sites when travel resumes in the fall. They will be included in anti-bias etc. training when our parent organization offers it.
- nothing for volunteer corps but have discussed it (there is currently no organization-wide volunteer manager)
- Our volunteers have always been proponents of inclusivity.
- no
- Plans for DEAI training specifically for volunteers has been requested and is in the process of implementation
- They have not been involved
- I have been involved directly. We have discussed our plans with the volunteers, and we have begun preparing for training for the volunteers
- received training
- we are all volunteers
- We are a staff of 5. Our volunteers are part of the team. We couldn't have turned around without them.
- no
- No
- No
- We have offered opportunities for training, resources, and support.
- Limited participation on diversity project panels
- Nothing yet. Hopefully training programs will be developed
- None have been engaged this way
- Not at all
- volunteers were invited to apply to join the IDEA Coalition. I am also planning a volunteer training for summer 2021 that will include equity and inclusion training

- The volunteer leadership is developing a IDEA statement.
- No training yet. But virtual touring of exhibitions
- Trainings! As well as a renewed focus on what little in our collections represents more diverse voices.
- Training
- Volunteers receive training annually
- Volunteers also receive the weekly newsletter with DEAI topics/resources. We are hoping to have some volunteer specific discussion sessions in 2021.
- Training in decolonization and inclusivity
- We held a virtual volunteer program about the Statement of Recommitment released in July by our director
- Volunteers have always been invited to attend staff trainings on inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility topics, but participation has been low. The volunteer advisory board is receiving training and having focused discussions about inclusivity and equity within the volunteer program in 2021.
- Not at all.

What are some of your major 2021 and 2022 goals for your volunteer program?

- Retain and attract any volunteers possible
- As we look toward the future, we are taking this hiatus as an opportunity to thoughtfully reflect on the current structures and systems we have in place for managing, recruiting, onboarding, scheduling, training, etc. our volunteers. We have many volunteers who have been involved with our institution for decades, and so change can oftentimes be tricky. The pandemic—and our slow return to a “new normal”—is forcing us to reconsider the status quo and be intentional in how we’d like to structure things for volunteers moving forward. It’s also important to us that our volunteers have a voice in these conversations, and so we’ll be looking to hear their thoughts and ideas as well.
- redesign training program for new volunteers
- Revise training procedures. The volunteers participated in a workshop in which they came up with wonderful suggestions.
- Staff and train volunteers for the needs of the Center
- Ensure that our volunteers are safe if they choose to come back. Develop more remote volunteer options
- 1) Create a more robust training program for volunteers, including a standard evaluation for training. 2) Work with staff members across the Museum to reimagine how volunteers can add value to our guest experience across the Museum when we welcome volunteers back.
- Making sure our volunteers feel comfortable is a priority.
- Get them up and running!
- at this point to bring them back working on site as docents, research assts, greeters etc.
- Train for new protocols due to COVID-19; Recruit more volunteers to raise numbers;
- reinstatement after identifying viable roles
- Operating at full capacity.... transparent communication.... pro-active appreciation program
- Keep in touch, maintain interest in our museum and its goals, help them to feel safe enough to volunteer again

- Achieve >50% staffing of visitor services shifts with volunteers. Move toward "impact celebration" for volunteer recognition (and away from emphasizing "total volunteer hours"). Improve volunteer retention and satisfaction as measured by a recurrent survey of our volunteer corps. Improve online-interfacing of volunteer resources and information.
- Make virtual volunteering permanent, create more overlap with volunteers and staff, expand program (especially with youth/ HS), create intern program
- Use findings from the volunteer needs assessment process to identify rooms for improvement and make appropriate changes to the volunteer program, onboard an additional 40 volunteers, create a structure for including student and family volunteers (have traditionally focused recruitment on adults)
- maintain our current volunteer base and introduce new means of interpretation
- increase the number of volunteers, volunteer engagement and happiness
- Increase our volunteer base and have a steady and reliable base
- To build back to appropriate numbers of volunteers to meet increased attendance. To ensure staff which use volunteer support do so effectively. To transform touring practices and styles. To improve the volunteer training and onboarding.
- Our main goal is to return to touring and to train the new staff member who is in the hiring process now. We will also be replacing our docent website per our IT department. We also want to continue the DEAI work that was underway before COVID.
- Organization is currently undergoing restructuring of several dept. Volunteer roles and responsibilities may change due to this, there may be new opportunities, formally create virtual volunteer opportunities. Hopefully the organization finally hires a FT organization-wide volunteer coordinator because it has been by dept for many years and is very disjointed.
- Bring them back into the museum!
- Creating a stronger volunteer program.
- Build a stronger relationship between volunteers and staff, build a more robust program that benefits both the staff member and volunteer equally, make volunteer voices more heard and give them a chance for feedback
- Complete metadata updates to digitized photograph collection and make it available online, reorganized photograph collection; continue update of vertical files and newspaper collection; resume collections inventory when it is safe to do so (this typically involves direct supervision by staff and a great deal of prolonged contact)
- Get back to work, improve training sessions, recruit a more diverse group of volunteers
- restarting the program.
- I'm not aware of any goals being set
- Continue to tap our storytelling capacity.
- Make more meaningful volunteer responsibilities
- Development a thriving Internship program
- Continue to develop virtual projects, increase engagement, increase numbers
- Re-establishing collaboration partnerships and core volunteer positions.
- retention, creation of virtual work, diversity training, recruitment
- Jump starting the virtual alzheimer's program as well as increased virtual programming for classes
- Continued support of current volunteers, keep prospective volunteers engaged until we have training/maybe host virtual training/open house
- Longevity and involvement outside of volunteer shift

- Grow student volunteer base, expand volunteer programs with more teaching artists/hands-on workshop
- To safely bring back as many volunteers who are willing to return
- To safely bring back as many volunteers who are willing to return
- 2021: develop new strategies based on volunteer survey and supervisor conversations; develop methods to measure volunteer impact; maintain communication with volunteers since most have not returned to onsite volunteering, take (and pass) my CVA exam. 2022: develop and implement a recruitment plan. And depending on when the pandemic ends: implement the return of all volunteers to onsite volunteering.
- Return the public/volunteers to campus/grounds.
- To grow the program to a recovery level offering quality opportunities that enrich our institution as well as their experience. Volunteer program that has more buy in to our mission!
- Launch a Zoom based "virtual visits" pilot. Reopen the galleries. Recruit a new class of volunteers.
- To bring them back on site, and revamp our training because of it.
- Expanding diversity of volunteers, removing volunteers who do not meet DEI best practices
- For 2021, the focus is on making the program more accessible and welcoming via changing requirements and continued volunteer training. For 2022, we hope to onboard new and more diverse volunteers.
- Recruit and onboard to build up volunteer numbers to pre-Covid numbers. Refine adult online Natural History Course to offer 2x yearly. Create Museum Guide Training separate from NHC to prepare volunteers to lead museum tours. Enhance training and frequency of cultural sensitivity training. Create new volunteer training manuals for new galleries opening this year. Create a Volunteer Coordinator operations manual. Determine skilled-trade needs and look at recruiting skilled-trade volunteers. Support all museum departments by engaging talented volunteers.
- Retain the volunteers we have and leave it up to them as to when they feel comfortable returning.
- Using this time to restructure our volunteer program and re-launch it when our museum opens to the public.
- Our department has been changed by the pandemic closure in ways that still remain to be seen. Goals: expand roles for our volunteers as we reopen; increase diversity of volunteer team; raise profile of the volunteer program within our department and within the larger community
- 2021: Continue to retain volunteers while they are stuck at home; slowly and safely bring back our in-person volunteering roles. 2022: Planning for a big recruitment effort to get our numbers back up to normal, and hoping to be able to build relationships with the volunteer program and parts of our local community that have previously been excluded or felt unwelcome.
- Retrain and welcome them back onsite
- Provide Diversity and Inclusion Training

For institutions that have welcomed volunteers back to service, what feedback are you receiving about their new experiences?

- Have not heard any feedback
- After a hiatus of 6 months, we have resumed training (virtually) for our Guides. While they aren't actively leading tours, they are appreciative of this opportunity to be learning and staying connected with our museum.
- The volunteers who have taken on remote responsibilities are appreciative to be able to support the Museum and have something meaningful to do.
- They are happy to be back
- Although many won't come back for a while and until they are vaccinated, those who have returned are excited to have the option to volunteer again. They feel safe and they like having something to do.
- The volunteers who have come back are pleased with the precautionary steps the museum has taken to ensure their safety.
- We must keep them distanced, but so far so good!
- Thrilled to be back-needed to get out of the house and do something worthwhile.
- The volunteers working together setting up the new venue are comfortable with that because they know one another well and feel safe. Only one or two volunteers are actually comfortable being "in the public" at this time.
- volunteers are happy to feel so safe and be able to share and maintain the museum they love!
- They like being back, not too concerned about COVID exposure. A little bored since lowered capacity.
- They appreciate the policies and efforts the museum has put into focusing on health and safety and implementing related procedures. Have found creative ways to do their in-person assignments within restrictions. Have seen visitors relatively regularly to our outdoor campus (although less total numbers) and those visitors are generally good at following procedures and happy to have volunteers there to greet and chat with them.
- Volunteers are excited to get back and see each other (through social distancing means)
- happy to be back, happy to have precautionary structure in place
- No feedback
- They love being back as they have really missed being in the museum. They love interacting with the visitors.
- no
- Good feedback regarding engagement activities and positive responses for all the safety protocols set in place.
- They seem to be fine with the changes, they are mostly relieved to be back
- Appreciation for safety.
- They are comfortable with the COVID restrictions we have in place and are thrilled to have something to do.
- The one to come back has felt we are practicing as safely as we can.
- Some have same interaction level with visitors but others feel a lack of involvement with guests since we no longer are doing guided tours.
- It's quiet but they are very happy to be back
- they love being back; for most, this is the only opportunity they have to get out and do something
- Mostly positive! Other institutions in our area seem to take volunteer safety very seriously.

- They feel safe and are just happy to be back! The roles that have returned are the same as pre-covid. We don't have volunteers involved in enforcing safety protocols/capacity limits.
- Volunteers are happy to be back, they are satisfied with the safety protocols, they plan to continue volunteering.
- They appreciate the new safeguards and policy changes we have put in place. Those who have returned feel comfortable enough to continue. No complaints from them.
- I hear volunteers being so grateful for the chance to be back at the museum and to see other volunteers again, and I hear praise that we are being so cautious and successfully keeping folks safe while giving them a chance to be back at what they love. I hear a few complaints that their time is so much more restricted than it used to be.
- Not much

Is there something your museum's leadership could be doing to better support your team and the organization's volunteers through difficult transitions?

- Provide any sort of museum-wide communication. We have had three all-staff meetings in the past year. No communication is going out to the volunteer corps as a whole, although I have tried to keep periodic communication in my department.
- I personally feel that volunteers are almost always an afterthought for museum leadership, and I'd love for them to be more top of mind and included in institutional decisions, communications, etc. Also, leadership tends to look at the bottom line and how to save money, but extra discounts and other perks for volunteers would go a long way for fostering better morale and helping volunteers feel better appreciated and vital to the institution.
- Continue to support the volunteer program and keep them involved.
- I think they could be a bit more flexible in allowing volunteers to participate in remote projects.
- Once we have the ability to train tour guides, they should be trained in DEAI before beginning.
- Better communication about the future of volunteering here on site. All depends on vaccines & NYS restrictions.
- n/a
- It's key to have an understanding of how volunteer service supports operations and to place value on retention via staffing and resources.
- Spending is being cautiously examined at this point. We need a generous volunteer budget and a return to income normalcy that will support the spending.
- Web-based resources integrated with the main museum website with gated log-in access for volunteers to protect intellectual property and provide a more secure (no public access) platform for volunteers to have electronic access to information and files that could occasionally contain identifying information (like volunteer schedules). ~Quarterly development (including EDI workshops, basic web/computer skills, etc.) opportunities provided for all volunteers.
- Yes! Not a lot of support, prioritizing revenue generating/increasing ticket sales. Putting anything volunteer related on "we'll get to that eventually, just sit tight."
- Our leadership is relatively supportive of our volunteer program's needs and progress overall. I am impressed with the focus that they've provided to the team as a whole.
- board could be more involved and step in to fill spots where volunteers are not able to fill.

- not at this time
- Hire a FT volunteer coordinator for organization-wide support and cohesive policies; not assuming volunteers will replace laid off staff and that there will need to be effort to retrain and organize volunteers for "new normal"; pay for additional modules for volunteer mgmt software for training and communication purposes; finally start background checks for volunteers; not require virtual tours of any kind if not providing staff and volunteers with the necessary technology and training
- I think right now they are doing all that they are asked to do.
- yes, training, engagements
- More transparency
- Enforcing guidelines/consistent messaging
- no, they are very supportive
- recognition
- support the dept. decisions
- Can't think of any
- Include us in initial planning activities versus being told something after a decision has been announced and implemented.
- We currently do not have a budget for our volunteers, even a small amount would be helpful to increase engagement, recognition, and creative projects.
- Providing better guidance for how to communicate COVID-related restrictions, policies, etc.
- I feel the crisis has shown who true leaders are in the museum field. We suffer from extremely low moral and the leadership has yet to address it.
- no, I feel that my museum's leadership is very supportive of volunteers and the volunteer program
- Yes! They could actually get involved and attend some of our Zoom sessions and meet our volunteers that have stuck with us.
- More desire to say "yes" instead of "no, but maybe" in relation to new initiatives spurred by the circumstances
- Encourage staff to proactively reach out to their volunteers and come up with recognition ideas - we seem low on the totem pole for things like that, and the support would be appreciated.
- The volunteers and I are supported by museum leadership.
- Upgrade job title/salary to reflect the volunteer management responsibility I have taken on.
- Yes, to promote the importance of our volunteers within the staff.
- I need more dedicated staff time for volunteer management, but my leadership is unable to provide that because of restrictions at the university we are affiliated with.
- More information and direct communication and encouragement.
- We have 100% support from our leaders.

Any silver linings you would like to share?

- Our institution paid for a website redesign, which will hopefully attract more people to use the resources there.

- One notable positive takeaway during the pandemic has been that we've been able to experiment with and utilize technology in ways that would never have been possible had it not been necessitated. Volunteers are now comfortable meeting virtually through platforms like Zoom, and we've been able to record all of our Guide training sessions... a huge plus, since we now only have to offer a program once, since all Guides have access to the material whether or not they can attend because it's recorded. Additionally, we aren't restricted by onsite programming limitations: we aren't limited to room capacities, we have much more flexibility with when we schedule sessions, we don't have to factor in volunteers' commute time to get to the museum, etc. We've also experimented with an online archive of training videos, web articles, and additional resources. I should note that—to facilitate this move to virtual platforms—there was a significant amount of staff time and energy dedicated to technology training and usage with volunteers. This included hosting "how to" sessions, creating PDFs, and sending many emails back-and-forth. That said, much of this effort was very successful, and we've had greater volunteer engagement than at the start of COVID.
- Lots of new volunteers
- While many volunteers haven't been able to come back yet, those that have been are excited to be volunteering again.
- Volunteers have adapted well to the emerging virtual technology. They have also become engaged in spreading positivity to me and other volunteers.
- Since offering our talks & tours via Zoom we have tripled the size of our audience that would normally attend these same programs on site.
- Older volunteers are learning to use online platforms to stay engaged.
- Increased awareness of the needs of the broader community. More intentional/targeted fundraising... seeking new revenue streams.... BUT it's still SCARY!
- Many are much better at different types of technology, more willing to try new technology things, and are able to use those outside of museum-related activities (i.e. with family and friends)
- Volunteers have been very supportive and involved
- There is interest in volunteers coming back
- I actually feel closer to my volunteers because I have had to be in more constant contact with them. When we were in the museum, the interactions were more episodic and fleeting.
- The volunteers were our guinea pigs for online programming that is now available to the public. We are about to hold an online symposium with 300 participants partly based on what we have learned related to docent training.
- organization-wide restructuring and re-organization - opportunity to finally break through the organizational culture and "traditions" that hold people and the org in the 1980's, a real opportunity to professionalize volunteer corps
- I think some of them have become more technologically proficient by necessity.
- The shut down gave us more of a reason to stay in contact with our volunteers, creating remote learning and engagement opportunities. It also made us think about how we can make the program more accessible in a remote/virtual platform, giving better access to people that do not live near our museum but would still like to help and participate in a remote capacity.
- Adding virtual communication/meetings to our tool belt will be useful in the future for sure
- Our Zooms have allowed our volunteers to get to know each other better as they usually only see the people they work with directly.
- our all-volunteer efforts have attracted a major funding source

- transcribing
- Find opportunities, don't look for reasons not to do something.
- People are good and generous intrinsically.
- Our attendance at monthly meetings has been higher than in-person, I typically hear from more of our volunteers on a regular basis, and they have become very supportive of each other, the museum, and staff. They are interested in newer, virtual projects and moving outside their comfort zone. I feel th
- Been able to work on some program development such as new positions
- I have not included information about virtual interns (these too are volunteers as they are unpaid) but they have been recruited as remote interns and done their work that way, and that program has increased, so I have been managing them that way. Interns are very different from volunteers for me because there is a professional training aspect to the work they do and they do not engage with the public the way my volunteers did on site at the Museum before the pandemic closure.
- Staff and volunteers are much more computer savvy for virtual platforms.
- More volunteers are able to participate in meetings because of the online/recorded platform
- Our corps volunteer group is closer than ever!
- I've been told repeatedly by our volunteers that our ongoing efforts to engage the team every week have been a consistent bright spot in the pandemic. As our vols are some of the best people I know, this unforgiving stretch has felt like a success.
- The ability to do virtual orientations, trainings, and interviews is a game changer! I see that making it MUCH easier for new volunteers to get up and running. Less commute time and expense (parking).
- COVID forced us to look at new ways of doing things. We have embraced technology that we will be able to continue using even post-Covid to carry on our operations and continue contributing to and enhancing our community.
- Time to research, assess the program, plan for the future
- Our teen volunteer program ran all year to keep the teens engaged and connected digitally. Hopefully we can continue this instead of being just a summer program.
- Our Volunteer Team is very fortunate to still have a job.