



VolunteerMatch



The Impact of COVID-19 on Volunteering

A Two-Month Comparison



Introduction

Since the very start of the COVID-19 pandemic, VolunteerMatch has remained as committed as ever to ensuring communities around the U.S. get the support they need.

The series of surveys conducted by VolunteerMatch are designed to better inform your decision-making and encourage collaborative problem solving.

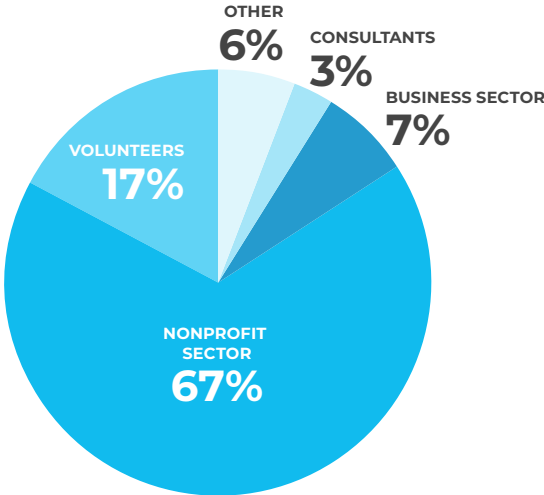
The results of those surveys—conducted in March and May of 2020—have provided valuable data on the state of volunteering during COVID-19. In both surveys, participants ranging from nonprofit program directors to CSR practitioners to government officials to volunteers themselves were asked the same series

of questions centered around how current environmental, economic, and social conditions were influencing their attitudes and behaviors.

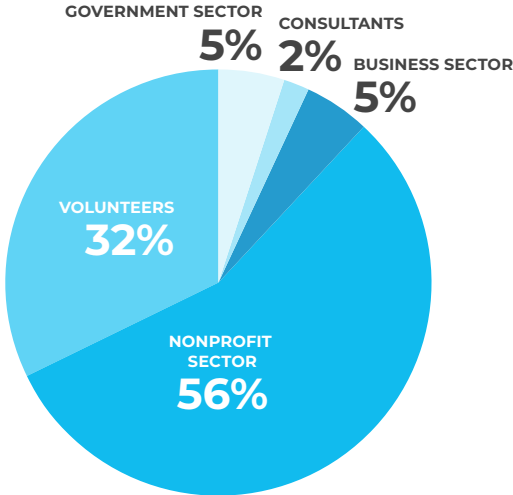
Here are some interesting trends that have come to light as people's responses to the pandemic have evolved.

Breakdown of Survey Respondents

The March COVID-19 survey garnered over 730 responses, while the May COVID-19 survey garnered over 2200 responses. Below is the breakdown of survey-takers by type.



MARCH 2020

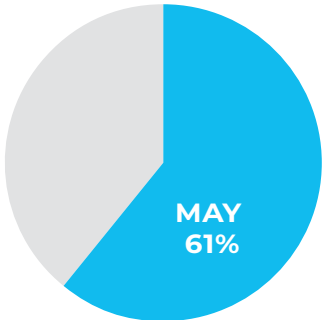
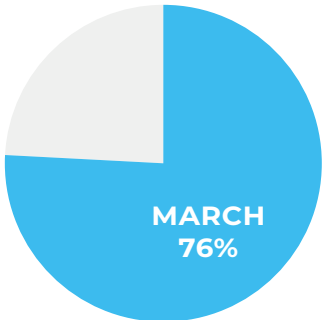


MAY 2020

Concerns About the Current Conditions Impacting Volunteering

When we collected responses on our first survey in March 2020, the fear surrounding the virus was still new and the uncertainty around it was significant — many communities had recently enacted lockdown measures, and information about the pandemic was being published at an alarming rate.

A whopping 76% of respondents indicated they were *very concerned* about how the current environmental, economic, and social conditions may impact volunteering programs or volunteering activities. Two months later that number dropped to 61%.



Concerns About Executing Against Current Budget in This Climate

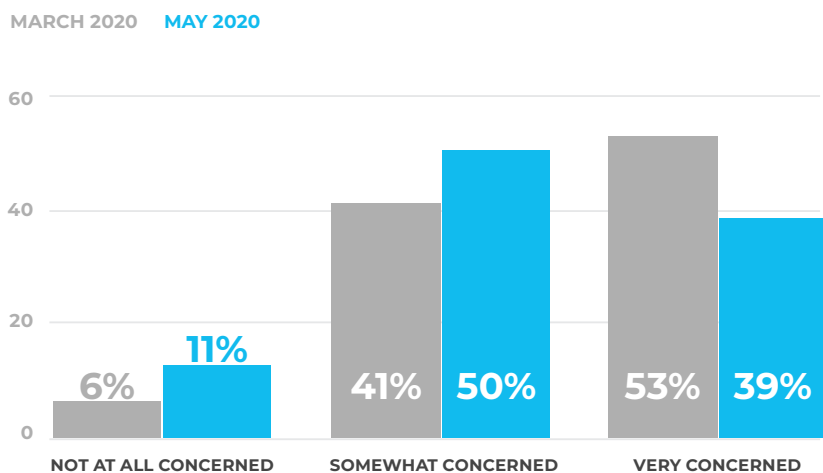
Similarly to the last question, when surveying nonprofit organizations and CSR leaders, over half of respondents told us they were very concerned about their ability to execute against their current budgets in this climate. When asked the same question two months later, the number had fallen to 39%.

Two months later, the number of those who were very concerned had fallen from 53% to 39%

On the plus side, the number of respondents who indicated that they were *not* concerned about executing against their budget nearly doubled from 6% in March 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic to 11% in May 2020.



How concerned are you about your ability to execute against your current budget in the context of the current environmental, economic, and social conditions?



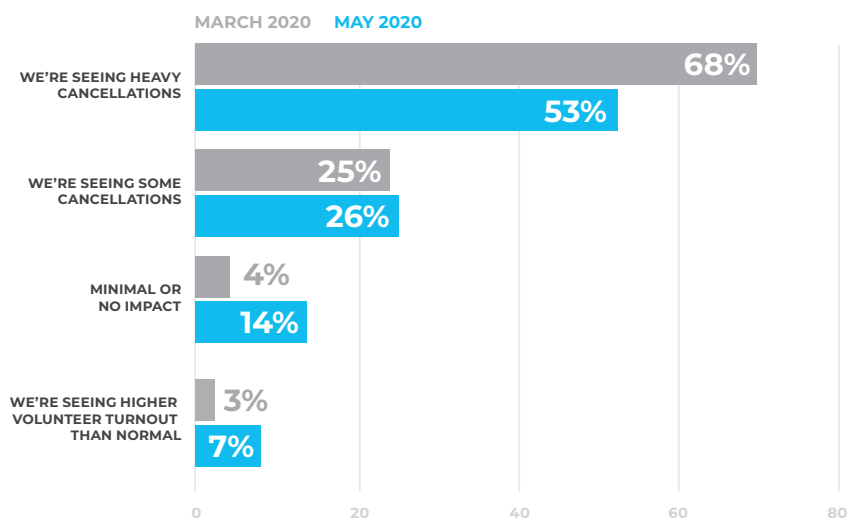


Impact on Volunteer Attendance

The number of nonprofit representatives and CSR practitioners who shared that they were seeing heavy cancellations in volunteer attendance decreased from over two-thirds in March 2020 to just about half by May 2020, indicating that greater numbers of volunteers are becoming more comfortable getting back out into their communities.

In both surveys, around a quarter of respondents answered that they were seeing at least some cancellations. An increase in volunteering from before the pandemic is by far the least popular answer, but it more than doubled to 7% in May.

How have the current environmental, economic, and social conditions impacted your volunteer attendance?



Adjustments to Volunteer Engagement Strategy

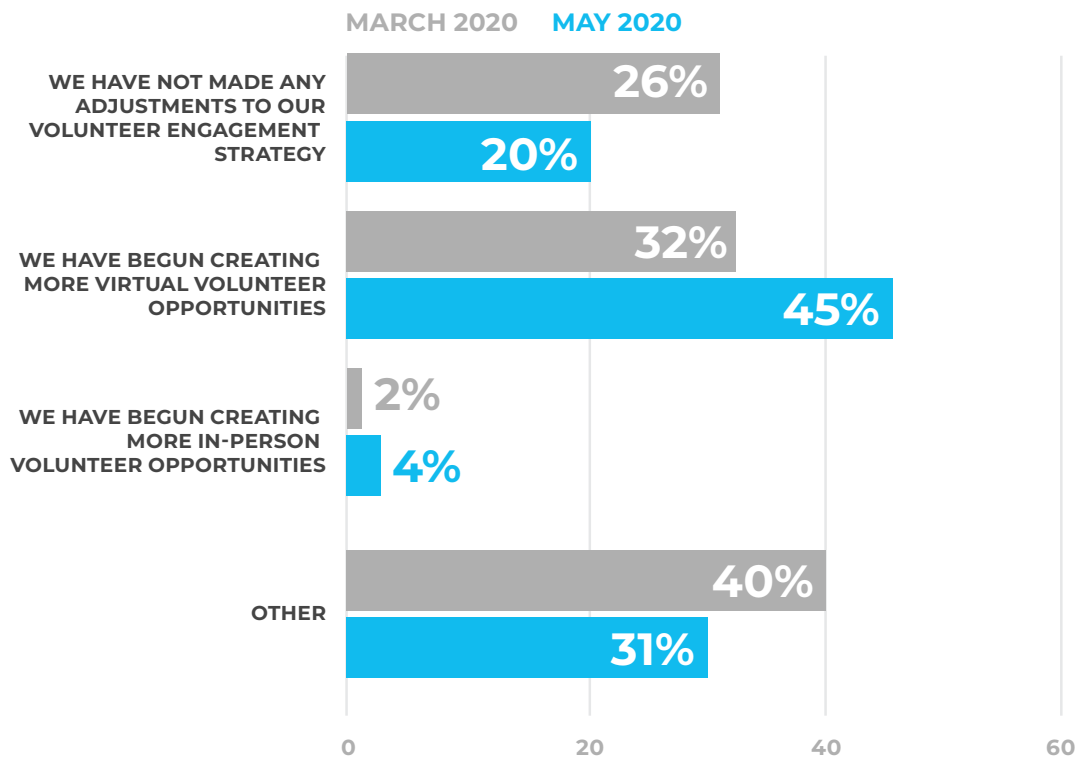
With shelter-in-place orders and the emerging need to make volunteering environments safe and sterile, many nonprofits have had to make significant adjustments to their volunteer engagement strategies.

The number of organizations who hadn't made any adjustments at the start of the pandemic showed a marked decrease after nearly 3 months in, and the popularity of virtual volunteering opportunities increased from under one-third to almost half in the same time frame. For many nonprofits, making adjustments has been an absolute necessity for maintaining their volunteer force.

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Unfortunately, for many organizations, indicated in their "Other" selection were written responses about how they've suspended all volunteering activities until further notice.

In what ways have you adjusted your volunteer engagement strategy given current environmental, economic, and social conditions?

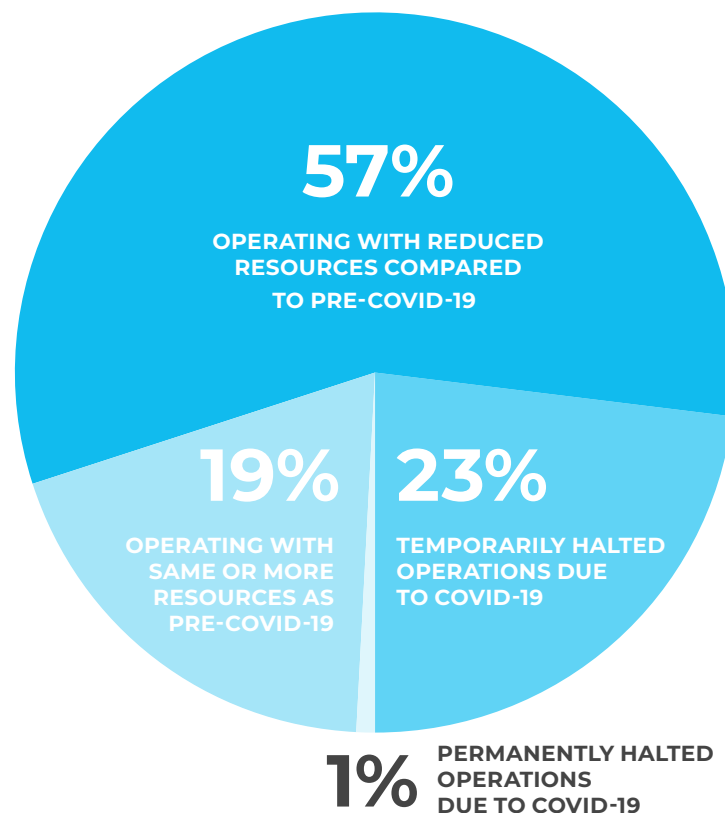


Organization's Current Status

When asking nonprofits about their current operating status, nearly a quarter of them have temporarily halted their operations and over half have been challenged to operate with reduced resources.

Nearly 1 in 5 have been fortunate to be able to operate with either the same or more resources as they had access to before March 2020, and a full 1% indicated that they had permanently halted their operations.

What is the current status of your organization?





Current Conditions Impacting Decisions Around Investments in Workplace Volunteerism

For those who manage corporate social responsibility programs, there were three areas of CSR initiatives for respondents to consider—corporate giving, employee fundraising, and workplace volunteering

By and large, investment into employee fundraising and matching programs remained relatively stable. However, investments into corporate giving programs and workplace volunteering both saw significant decreases, unfortunately at a time when the nonprofit sector has not only made considerable progress in rethinking their volunteer engagement strategies to be accommodating of the current environment, but also happens to be under existential threat from the lack of adequate funding to meet the needs of their communities.

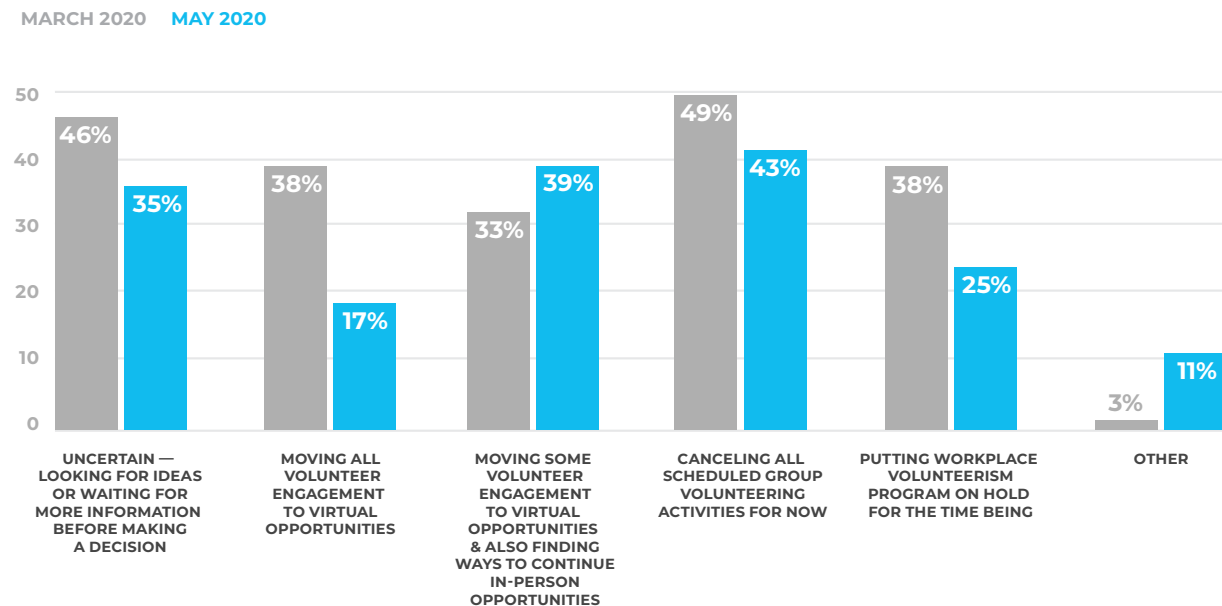
By and large, investment into employee fundraising and matching programs remained relatively stable.

Thoughts Around Volunteering and Employee Engagement in the Current Context

As more time has passed, CSR leaders have been able to explore options, so the portion of those who replied that they were uncertain and looking for ideas or awaiting for more information before making a decision decreased from nearly half in March to roughly a third by May. While the number of respondents who indicated that they were moving all volunteer engagement to virtual fell by half between March and May, virtual volunteering on the whole did show a significant increase.

Between March and May of 2020, those that replied have had the time to react to current events and make more informed decisions. As a result, fewer of them are continuing to put their workplace volunteerism programs on hold.

How are you thinking about volunteering and employee engagement in the current context?

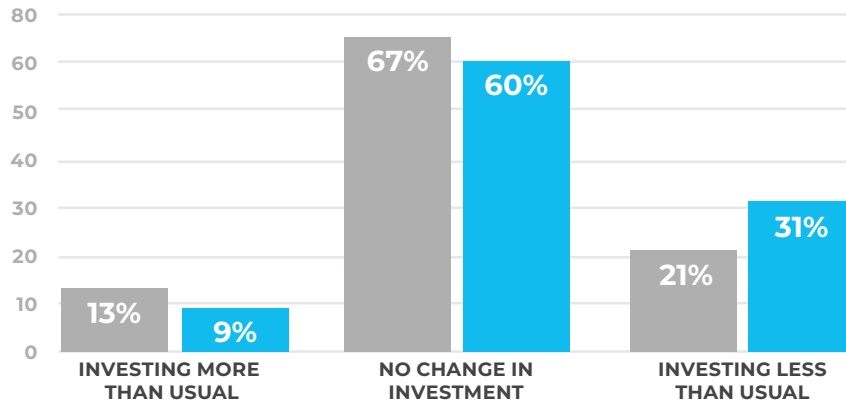


Respondents were able to select more than 1 answer

How are the current environmental, economic, and social conditions impacting how you make decisions around investments in workplace volunteerism or other CSR initiatives?

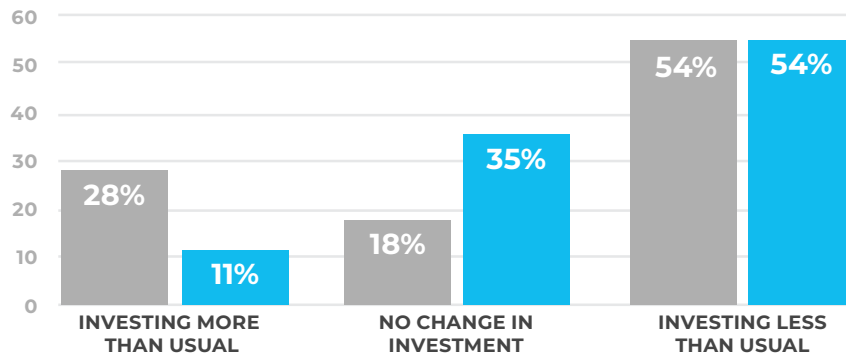
EMPLOYEE FUNDRAISING AND MATCHING

MARCH 2020 MAY 2020



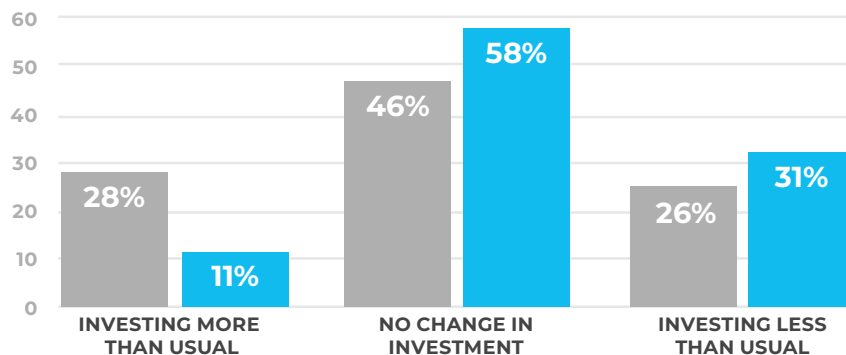
WORKPLACE VOLUNTEERISM

MARCH 2020 MAY 2020



CORPORATE DONATIONS AND CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

MARCH 2020 MAY 2020

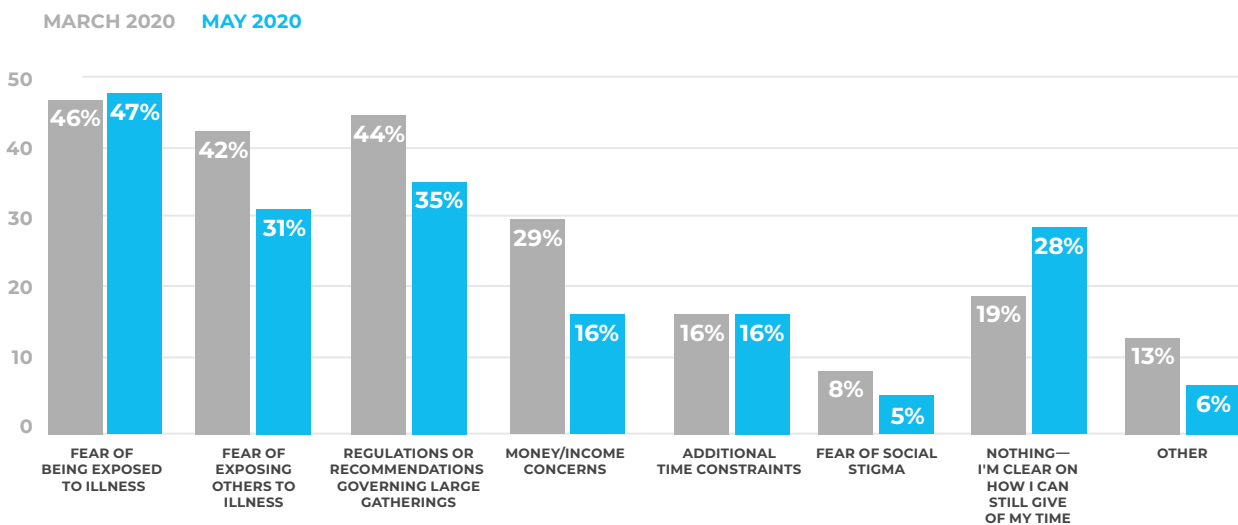


Barriers to Volunteering Commitment During This Time

When asked of volunteers about the barriers that may be getting in the way of giving their time, the fear of being exposed to illness remained the single greatest concern. Interestingly, concern around spreading illness dropped by roughly a quarter from March to May, and financial concerns likewise decreased by nearly half.



What barriers might get in the way of your volunteering commitment during this time?



Respondents were able to select more than 1 answer

Conclusion

The pandemic has changed the way people volunteer and run their volunteering programs. It's encouraging to see a 15% drop in nonprofits reporting volunteering cancellations from the previous survey conducted in March, and to see the number of survey respondents that were seeing an increase in volunteering from before the pandemic double. What are ways each of us can contribute to continuing this trend?

Even as the number of cancellations and the concerns over the impact of COVID-19 seem to be decreasing, a large portion of nonprofits have suspended all volunteering activities until further notice. Additionally, CSR leaders are investing significantly less in their corporate giving and workplace volunteering programs. The nonprofit sector has made considerable progress in rethinking their volunteer engagement strategies to be accommodating of the current environment. And the number of people needing their services is growing. Now is the time to come together to support the nonprofit community and combat the increasing challenges we are facing.

Making it Easier to Engage Volunteers

VolunteerMatch is committed to the resiliency and recovery of our nonprofits and the constituents we serve. We connect passionate people with meaningful volunteer opportunities in their communities. In fact, we have ways to get involved in every city, state, and zip code across the U.S.

If you're at a company, you can [connect with us](#) to help you:

- Implement an employee volunteering program in your workplace
- Use technology to provide more volunteering opportunities for employees
- Provide your network or community with a technology solution to help them get involved with causes that are meaningful to them

If you're at a nonprofit, be sure you've registered your organization on [VolunteerMatch.org](#) to start recruiting great volunteers right away. We can help you reach individual volunteers as well as volunteers giving their time from within a wide range of corporations.

And if you're an individual volunteer, make sure you've registered at [VolunteerMatch.org](#), so you can learn about causes that need your help and get involved in your community.

