

Service Enterprise Initiative Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Service Enterprise?

A Service Enterprise is an organization that fundamentally leverages volunteers and their skills at all levels of the organization to achieve their social mission. Research conducted by the TCC Group and Deloitte found nonprofits that operate as Service Enterprises outperform peer organizations on all measures of organizational capacity. This allows nonprofits that operate as a Service Enterprise to more effectively fulfill their social mission while potentially operating at half the annual budget. Service Enterprises are more adaptable, sustainable, and better able to scale. They are also better led and managed.

What are the benefits of becoming a certified Service Enterprise?

- The Service Enterprise certification communicates value to funders, volunteers, and the community by highlighting the organization's success through volunteers.
- The overall process assists the organization to identify key steps to build volunteer engagement and fully utilize the skills of volunteers. This process will help organizations get to the next level of volunteer engagement.

What have organizations across the nation participating in the Service Enterprise Initiative noticed?

- Nationwide, over 500 organizations have been trained and over 250 organizations achieved certification
- Nevada has 3 certified Service Enterprise organizations, the Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum, Tahoe Rim Trail Association, and the Volunteer Services Department at Washoe County School District.
- Over 80% of Service Enterprises report they had an increase in skills-based volunteers and over 60% increase in volunteer hours
- 91% of Service Enterprises reported they are more effectively engaging skills based volunteers, resulting in improved internal operational and financial systems to enhance organizational sustainability

Is my organization ready for Service Enterprise?

To achieve a certified Service Enterprise the following should be in place:

- The organization is ready to assess current practices, eager to change and develop advanced volunteer engagement practices.
- 3-10 staff members are willing to complete the Service Enterprise Diagnostic (takes about 30 minutes) and participate in a 2-hour pre-training meeting prior to the training sessions.
- 3-8 staff members commit to attending the four Service Enterprise trainings.
- The organization has the support from top management to make the changes necessary to become a Service Enterprise.
- To achieve certification, the organization must go through the implementation period after the training. This period includes implementing SE strategies learned during the training, creating a guiding coalition, and completing an action plan, which logs the process and changes the organization made.
- The organization understands this process is more than volunteer engagement training, it is a change process and requires time and effort to put SE strategies in place.

What is the timeline for the next Service Enterprise cadre?

There is some preliminary work that needs to be completed by interested organizations before the training sessions begin. In order not to be rushed, Nevada Volunteers follows this timeline:

- A pre-application conversation, lasts about 1 hour: 3-2 ½ months before training
- Application, takes 20-30 minutes: 2 ½ months before training
- Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), takes 20 minutes: 2 ½ months before training
- Completion of the SED, the assessment takes about 30 minutes: 1 month before training
- A 2-hour pre-training meeting to interpret the results of the SED with the organization's leaders: 3 weeks-3 days before training
- The training sessions, each session is 4 hours:
 - Session 1: Laying the Foundation
 - Session 2: Building Support
 - Session 3: Creating Sustainability
 - Session 4: Moving to Success
- After the training sessions there is an implementation period before the organization applies for certification. During this period the organization implements SE strategies, completes an action plan, and may receive up to 10 hours of coaching from Nevada Volunteers. For most organizations the implementation period lasts 6-12 months.

If you are interested in participating in a Service Enterprise cadre please contact us!

Who should be involved in the Service Enterprise process for your organization and what is the time commitment?

- To participate in a SE cadre you must have the support of your Executive Director or position equivalent, who is willing to take the SED.
- You need 3-10 people from your organization to complete the SED assessment. These people should know the organization well, understand how the organization currently engages volunteers, and be able to commit 30 minutes to take the SED assessment.
- There should be at least 3 members from your organization at each of the four, 4 hour long training sessions. There must be at least 1 person from the organization that is consistently at every training, others can rotate as needed.
- During the implementation period, your organization will need to select members for a guiding coalition. The guiding coalition is the committee that will support and guide the changes throughout the entire organization. Your guiding coalition will consist of 3-10 people from various areas of the organization. They should be willing to commit to 1-2 meetings a month, depending on where you are in the implementation process.

Where can I learn more about the Service Enterprise Initiative?

You can learn more by going to www.nevadavolunteers.org/volunteer-programs/sei/. If you are interested in applying for the fall cadre please contact Sarah Norman at sei@nevadavolunteers.org.