** Service Enterprise Initiative FAQ**

**What is a Service Enterprise?**

A Service Enterprise is an organization that uses volunteers and their skills at all levels of the organization to help achieve their mission. By leveraging the skills of volunteers, nonprofits can increase their ability to provide services and programs. Nationally, 750 organizations have been trained in the Service Enterprise model and 357 organizations have achieved certification in 21 states.

**What are the benefits of becoming a certified Service Enterprise?**

* The process assists organizations in identifying key steps to build volunteer engagement and fully utilize the skills of volunteers
* Service Enterprise certification communicates value to funders, volunteers, and the community by highlighting the organization’s success through volunteers
* According to research, Service Enterprises are more adaptable, sustainable, and better able to scale. They are also better led and managed.

**What changes have organizations that have participated in Service Enterprise Initiative noticed?**

* On average, organizations saw a 23% increase in the number of volunteers annually
* 80% of organizations increased both volunteers and skills-based volunteers annually
* 60% of organizations increased the number of volunteer hours
* 91% of organizations reported they are more effectively engaging skills based volunteers, resulting in improved internal operational and financial systems that enhance the organization’s sustainability
* Service Enterprise increases awareness of the need to proactively and thoughtfully integrate volunteers throughout the organization, especially skilled volunteers
* Service Enterprise legitimizes the use of best practices, helping to make the case for further investment in volunteer programming

**What is the timeline for the next Service Enterprise cohort?**

Complete an application (Nonprofit Application Link: <https://survey.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8iHjn9MwNxVZp5P>)

* Orientation-TBD 9-10:30 am
* Complete Service Enterprise Diagnostic (SED) by TBD. This will take approximately 30 minutes per participant
* Pre-Training meeting. This is a 1-2 hour meeting with the organization’s leaders to interpret the SED results
* Training Sessions: (all dates TBD)

-Session 1-*Laying the Foundation*, 9-12 pm

-Session 2-*Building Support*, 9-12 pm

-Session 3-*Creating Sustainability* 9-12 pm

-Session 4-*Moving To Success*, 9-12 pm

* After the training sessions, there is an implementation period (typically 12 months) before the organization applies for certification. During this period, the organization begins implementing strategies in their action plan and may receive up to 10 hours of coaching from HandsOn NWNC

**What is the cost?**

The Service Enterprise Initiative is valued at $4,000 per organization. Thanks to grant funding from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of NC Foundation, the cost to nonprofits is $800 per organization. Payment plans are available!

**Who will need to be involved and what is the time commitment?**

* The organization must have the support of the ED who is also willing to take the SED
* One lead contact for your organization who will serve as the SED Administrator and manage communication with the team from your organization
* A minimum of 3-5 staff who will take the SED. Participants are staff members or volunteers who know the organization well, understand how the organization currently manages volunteers, and be able to commit 30 minutes to take the SED
* A minimum of 3-5 members from your organization who can attend all four training sessions

**Is my organization ready for Service Enterprise?**

To gain the most from Service Enterprise, an organization should:

* Be ready to assess current practices and be eager to develop advanced volunteer engagement practices
* Commit 3-5 staff members to complete the Service Enterprise Diagnostic (SED)
* Commit 3-5 staff members to attend all four Service Enterprise trainings (see timeline above)
* Have support from leadership to participate in Service Enterprise which includes the SED, trainings, completing an action plan that tracks the progress and changes the organization makes, and participate in an online survey to share your progress and challenges on volunteer engagement as well as provide feedback on your experience in becoming a Service Enterprise
* Understand that the Service Enterprise process *isn’t a volunteer engagement or recruitment training*, but a change process that requires time and effort in order to implement strategies

**Questions to consider before applying**

* What motivates you to apply for the Service Enterprise program?
* Can you commit your staff to this program?
* Is the cost feasible for your organization?
* Can you make the training dates work with your schedule?
* Does your organization have 3-5 people who can independently complete the Service Enterprise Diagnostic (SED?) This will take approximately 30 minutes/person.
* Does your organization implement best practices for volunteer management? Service Enterprise is best for organizations that have some systems in place for onboarding, supervising, tracking and recognizing volunteers to allow them to go to the next level. Does that fit with your organization?
* Can you commit to participate in the required annual evaluation survey? The survey allows you to share your progress and challenges on volunteer engagement as well as feedback on you experience in becoming a Service Enterprise.

Research conducted by the TCC Group and Deloitte found nonprofits that operate as Service Enterprises outperform peer organizations on all measures of organizational capacity, allowing them to more effectively fulfill their mission while potentially operating at half the annual budget.