



# 2025 MAINE VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Welcome to the 39<sup>th</sup> year of our conference

## ***Volunteerism: Embracing Civic Engagement & Stewardship***

**Volunteerism:** the act or practice of doing volunteer work in service to a community

**Civic Engagement:** the ways citizens participate in their communities to improve conditions and shape the future

**Stewardship:** the responsible management of something entrusted to one's care

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## 2025 MVLC Agenda Detail

8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

**Conference Registration**, coffee and informal **Networking** in the Atrium

8:45 AM - 9:35 AM

### **Morning Keynote**

**Angela Stone, Founder & Executive Director of Maine Needs**, shares the story of starting and scaling a non-profit, the key roles volunteers play in providing critical resources in the community, and what it means to them and to the organization to make a difference every day.

9:45 - 10:35 AM

### **Breakout Session 1** – Choose a session

**1.1: Volunteerism Panel - Environmental Stewardship;** Nikki Burtis, Stewardship Manager for Friends of Acadia; Gregory LeClair, Executive Director for Maine Big Night: Amphibian Migration Monitoring; Alison Cooney, Executive Director of Lake Stewards of Maine; Lauren Glennon, Co-founder of Chickadeeds; and Ruth Indrick, Project Director for Kennebec Estuary Land Trust

The way that we treat our planet is linked to the ways in which we engage our neighbors and our communities. Stewardship is defined as the responsible management of something entrusted to one's care and so environmental stewardship is the management and care that we offer to the Earth. Conservation is also reliant upon the support of individuals that care for people and planet, volunteering their time and service to maintain its health. This panel brings organizations that engage people from all walks of life in a variety of environmental stewardship activities, from virtual citizen science initiatives to intergenerational acts of community conservation. This panel will speak to the relationship between environmental conservation and volunteerism.

**1.2: Stewarding Resilience Building in Your Community;** Brenda Zollitsch, PhD, Faculty Lecturer at University of Southern Maine Muskie School of Public Service, Founder and President of Resilient Roots LLC

Ever wished you knew some things you could do to help build resilience in your community? This session will introduce you to some of the fundamentals of resilience-building then launch you right into real-world-focused scenario action! Taking a "ripped from the headlines" change event, the session will have the group unpacking the good, the bad and the ugly and identifying opportunities for resilience building. The session leader will share a variety of tools that participants can take back for use in their own communities. The session will engage participants in flexible thinking exercises, asset and vulnerabilities assessment, and planning to overcome the "same old ways" with forward-looking practices that embrace change.

### 1.3: **Voter Engagement for Nonprofits**; Mary Alice Scott, Public Affairs Manager at Maine Association of Nonprofits

Many nonprofits mistakenly believe they can't get involved in elections at all. While 501(c)(3) nonprofits are banned from endorsing candidates, there are numerous ways nonprofits can—and should—promote voter and civic engagement as part of their charitable and educational mission. Join this session to learn the basics of limitations and allowable activities. Nonprofits have the power to foster a more inclusive democracy; come see how yours can.

10:50 AM - 11:40 AM

### **Breakout Session 2** – Choose a session

#### 2.1: **Volunteerism Panel - The Funders Perspective**; Diana Morris, Executive Director of the Onion Foundation; Katie Howard, Community Partner with Maine Community Foundation; Diana Grandoni, Assistant Vice President & Community Relations Supervisor for Bangor Savings Bank; Amie Hutchinson, Community Partner: Animal Welfare, Nature-based Education with the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation

A common theme among volunteer and service initiatives is the lack of fiscal resources for the work. It can feel odd to apply monetary value to the impact that volunteerism has on the bottom line. When engaging funders, it is important to understand what they look for in effective programming and how they perceive the value of service. This panel will engage with funders of volunteer agencies on the components they seek when making funding decisions and what programs can do to be more robust candidates for consideration.

#### 2.2: **How Volunteerism, Changed MY LIFE**, Chap. Eddiegreyfox Burgess CADC PP-C MHRTC-CSP IPSS BHP-RC, Wellness Mobile Foundation and VA Compassion Corps

Have you wondered why folks should volunteer? Why service hours and a wellness class is required in many high schools to graduate? You might want to hold on to your seat and review 30 years of information validating why volunteerism got Eddiegreyfox to civic engagement or the check book of LIFE!

#### 2.3: **Intro Volunteerism - 101 class**; Jennifer Lobley, Extension Coordinator for Volunteer Development with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension & Michael Ashmore, Training and Program Development Officer at Volunteer Maine

Come join us as we answer the question “how do I... recruit, train, support, retain, and manage volunteers, measure impact, and make a difference in the community? Drawing and standards for Volunteer Management, decades of experience, and some basic frameworks, the presenters will share on why volunteer management skills matter, how you can grow yours, and what resources are available to help.

**Note:** *The Lunch/Network Block is set up so that half the attendees are eating and the other half are participating in networking gatherings. Groups A & B will be randomly assigned. **Please stay with your group** so that the meal and the sessions stay balanced.*

*Please also note that this year's luncheon is supported by a generous gift from Michelle Arnold & Paul Martin.*

11:45 AM - 12:30 PM

**Lunch** - Group A

or

**Formal Networking** Session - Group B

12:35 - 1:20 PM

**Lunch** - Group B

or

**Formal Networking** Session - Group A

1:25 PM - 2:15 PM

### **Afternoon Keynote**

**Jeannette Andre, President & CEO of Maine Philanthropy Center**, will share the work she does to steward funders in the state of Maine and provide the audience with a window into how funders see the work of volunteers and the agencies that use them well.

2:20 PM - 3:10 PM

### **Breakout Session 3** – Choose a session

**3.1: Volunteerism Panel – Experienced Volunteer Managers;** Lloyd Ziel, Volunteer Workforce Manager & Corporate Safety Officer for Ogunquit Playhouse; Dawn Walker-Elders, CPTD, CVA, Director of Adult Learning for Girl Scouts of Maine; and Lisa Morin, Coordinator of the Bodwell Center for Service and Volunteerism at University of Maine.

Maine is often called “One big small town” and while there is great community among its residents, the towns and the agencies that serve them are spread out. This distance can make it challenging to share resources and knowledge, especially in a field that is full of people kept constantly busy. Here we have a handful of the many incredible volunteer managers in the state who are excited to share their wealth of knowledge and experience with conference attendees.

**3.2: Stewardship of Volunteers through Play,** Dawn Lavalley, Associate Director for Playworks New England

Join Playworks for a hands-on workshop where you'll learn how to harness the power of play to enrich the lives of volunteers and those they serve. Learn and practice new activities that can help foster the community you're working to build.

**3.3: ServeMaine.gov Introduction,** Volunteer Maine Staff

ServeMaine is the new state-wide Volunteer matching tool your agency can use to recruit and schedule volunteers, and count their hours, too. All at no cost! Come see how the site works, learn how to create an agency profile, and start scheduling your volunteers into the roles you need most.

3:25 PM - 4:15 PM

**Afternoon Civic Engagement Plenary**

*Building Civic Trust from the Ground Up: What Maine's Civic Health Reveals about Community Engagement*, Nicholas Jacobs, Inaugural Director, Colby Public Policy Lab, Goldfarb Center Faculty Associate Director, Associate Professor of Government

Drawing on recent findings from the Maine Civic Health Index and broader research on place-based civic engagement, this plenary will explore the overlooked foundations of civic life in rural and small-town communities. Professor Jacobs will share new data on how Mainers participate in public life — from volunteering and local problem-solving to trust in institutions — and why national metrics often miss what really matters in local civic ecosystems. The talk will spotlight the role of informal leadership, local volunteer networks, and nontraditional civic actors in sustaining democracy where formal engagement is low but community attachment is high. See the report here: <https://goldfarbcenter.colby.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Strengthening-Maines-Civic-Life.pdf>

4:15 PM - 4:30 PM

**Conference Wrap-up**, final words, thank you's and **raffle**!

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Slow-walk exit – last chance to **Network** with those you met at the conference