

Be a pro volunteer with RSVP's VEC program

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RSVP hosts nonprofits at a free resource workshop. (Courtesy of RSVP)

Transitioning from a full-time career to retirement can be an abrupt change. While many enjoy the newfound freedom, others miss the routine and workplace relationships.

Volunteering is a great option for those who want to put their professional skills to work. Skill-based volunteering can recreate that routine on a smaller scale.

Sylvia Lifschitz, Ph.D., has been with RSVP's Volunteer Executive Consultants (VEC) program for almost 10 years. Her career has consisted of conducting market research projects for the pharmaceutical industry, often contributing to development decisions. She now uses her skills to help local nonprofits through free workshops and as a project consultant.

Lifschitz appreciates that she can use her professional skills in a volunteer role.

"I enjoy using my analytical skills to help nonprofits learn about themselves and apply that learning to strategic planning and becoming more business-oriented," she said.

RSVP's VEC volunteers have a variety of professional backgrounds. The group works together to help nonprofit organizations with many focus areas: fundraising, board development, grant writing, strategic and business planning and more.

Many volunteers explore skill sets outside of their careers as they learn from each other and projects. As rewarding as the experience is for the nonprofit organization that can utilize this free resource, it is also rewarding for the volunteers.

Lifschitz finds the work she and the program are doing is very fulfilling.

"I enjoy the enthusiasm people have for their nonprofits and working with people in organizations that span many different missions and visions," she said.

Though the group can only accept a limited number of projects, it provides free workshops throughout the spring and fall to maximize its impact. Over 280 nonprofit representatives accessed these workshops in 2022, emphasizing the consultation needs of organizations in the Greater Philadelphia area.

Lifschitz will present an in-person workshop in October at RSVP's office, giving nonprofit organizations insight into the importance of market research. Her 30 years of experience in the field is an excellent resource for nonprofits and VEC volunteers. Most nonprofits do not know how to even begin with market research.

Lifschitz sees many benefits of the topic for nonprofits.

"Market research covers many aspects of how those involved in nonprofits can improve their organizations, from knowledge about their environments to their perceived strengths and weaknesses to opportunities for future development," she said. "Market research provides the essential foundation for running nonprofits."

VEC welcomes new volunteers with expertise in fundraising, grant writing, social media and other business areas. For information, email Kathy Stocker at kathys@rsvpmc.org or call 610-834-1040, ext.123.

For more information

- For a new volunteer form, visit <https://www.rsvpmc.org/form-builder>.
- Nonprofits requesting VEC management assistance can visit <https://www.rsvpmc.org/vec-mangement-assistance-form>.
- Startup nonprofits can visit <https://www.rsvpmc.org/vec-management-assistance-form-star>.
- To register for a VEC spring workshop, visit www.rsvpmc.org/events-news.
- To learn about other RSVP programs, visit www.rsvpmc.org.
- RSVP improves the lives of vulnerable populations in the Greater Philadelphia area and beyond with programs focusing on education and wellness that utilize a dedicated pool of 1,200+ volunteers.