



POINTS OF LIGHT

CIVIC LIFE TODAY

A look at American civic
engagement amid a global
pandemic

September 2020

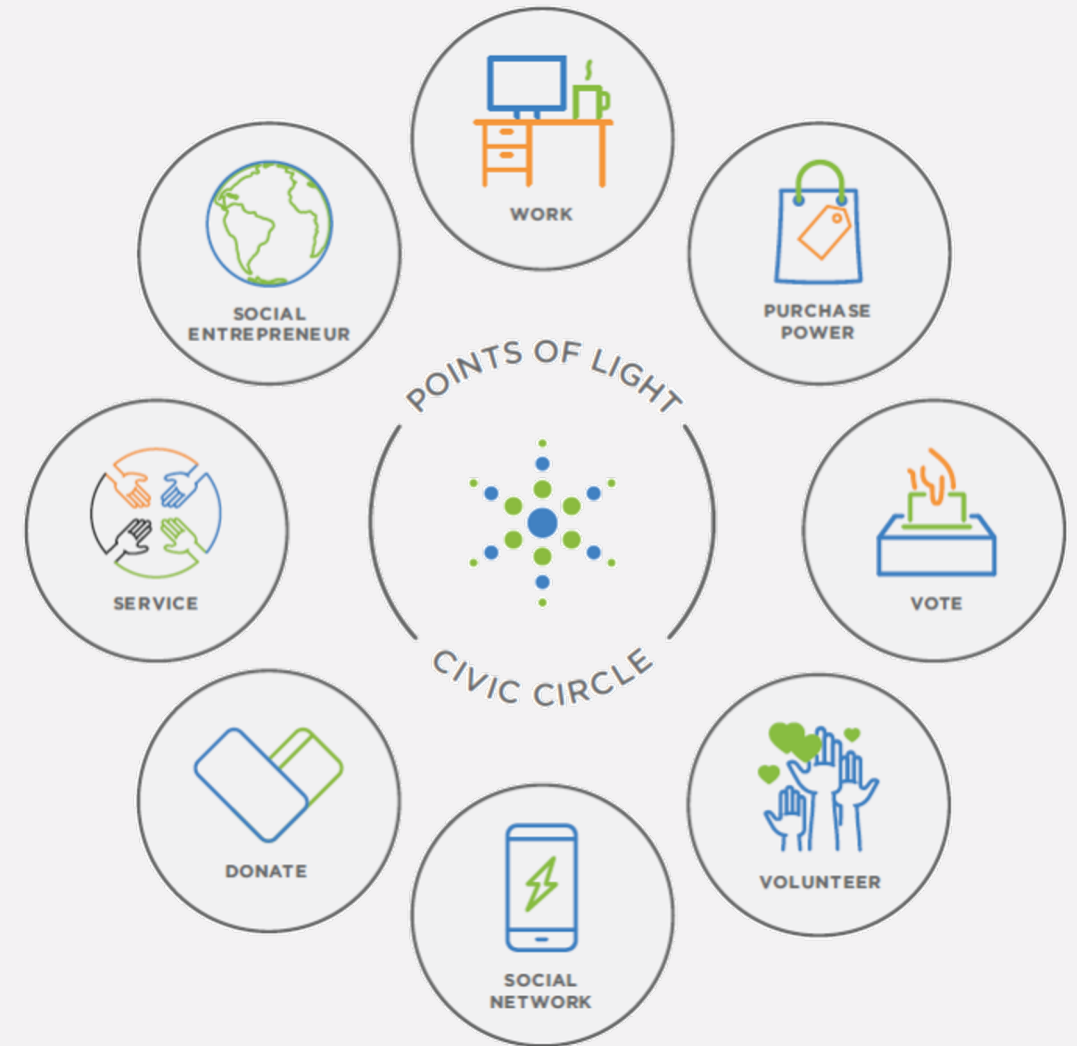
INTRODUCTION

Points of Light is committed to empowering, connecting and engaging people and organizations with opportunities to make a difference that is personal and meaningful. At Points of Light, we believe that the most powerful force of change in our world is the individual — one person making a positive difference in their community.

When we think about civic life today, we know that doing good comes in many forms. Today's engaged person may express their desire to do good through the purchases they make, in what they share on social media, where and how they choose to work, and what nonprofit organization to support as a volunteer or donor. But in a world changed by global crisis, where will people find the inspiration, creativity and sustained energy to make change? How will people engage? How can institutions support them?

In Spring 2020, Points of Light commissioned a unique research study to understand the current state of American civic engagement - in all its facets - and explore the path forward for catalyzing deeper and broader civic participation.

Points of Light is grateful to our partners at AT&T, Hart Research and Carol Cone ON PURPOSE for their support of this work.



METHODOLOGY

In May 2020, Points of Light commissioned a unique research study from Hart Research to understand how to catalyze civic engagement in 2020 and beyond. The survey dove deep into Americans' behaviors, attitudes and motivations for civic engagement.

Audience: U.S. Adults

Sample Size: n=1,441

Margin of Error: +/-2.8%

Timing: May 13-19, 2020

Research supplemented by third-party studies on social change:

2020 Edelman Trust Barometer and Spring Update: Trust and the Covid-19 Pandemic
(2020 Barometer: National Online Survey, Fall 2019; Spring Update: National Online Survey, April 2020)

Cause and Social Influence: Influencing Young America to Act
(National Online Survey of Young Americans, June 2020)





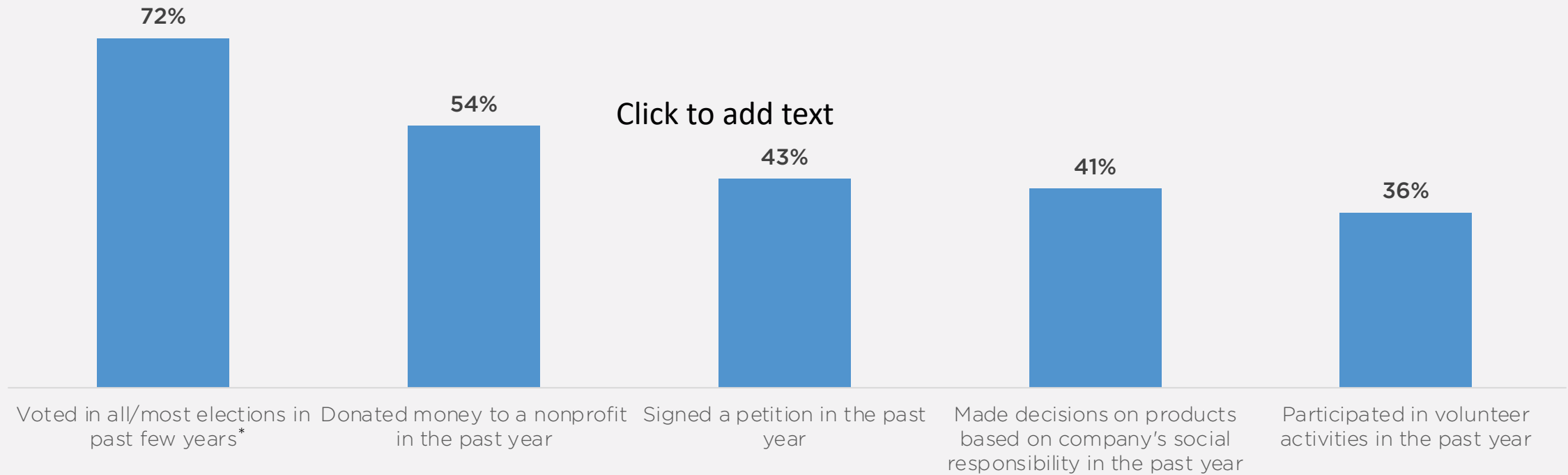
FINDING PURPOSE AND MEANING FROM DOING GOOD



PRE-PANDEMIC ENGAGEMENT LANDSCAPE

Prior to the pandemic, Americans were modestly engaged in civic life, primarily through voting and non-profit donations

Participation in Civic Life *Top 2 Box*



Points of Light: Engaging Americans in Civic Life (May 2020)

*Among registered voters

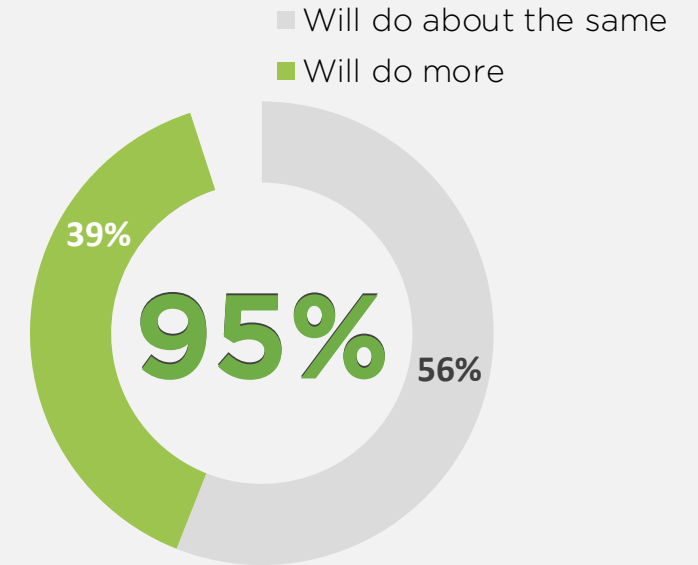
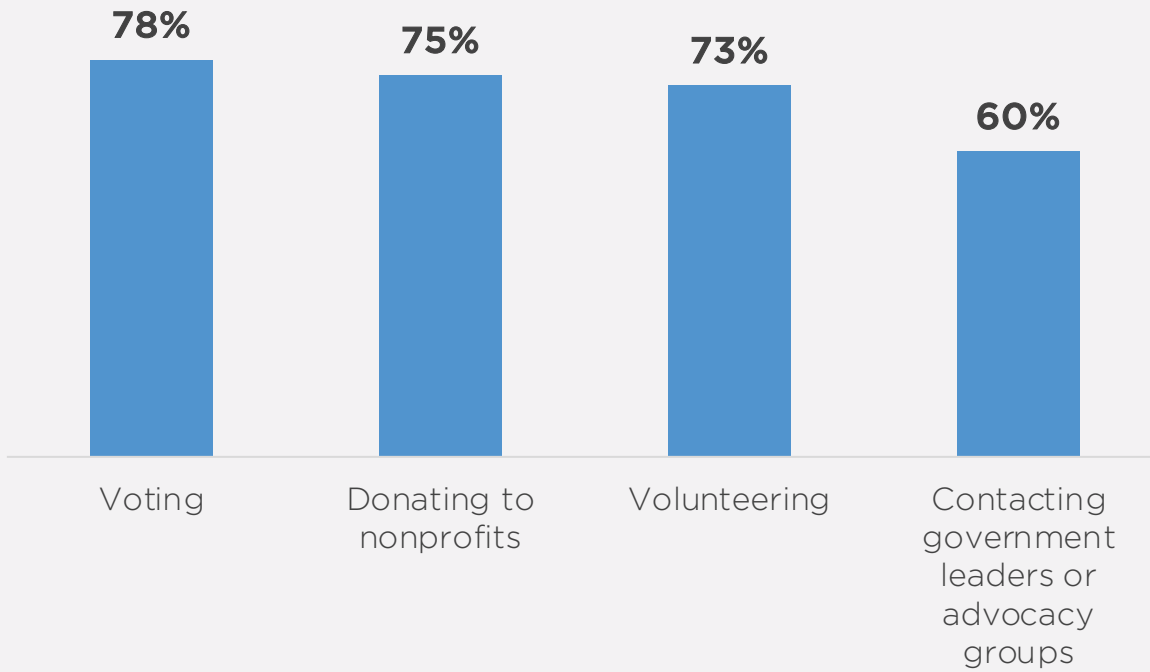


POST-PANDEMIC ENGAGEMENT LANDSCAPE

Today, they believe civic action is more important than ever before

Actions that will be More Important than Ever After the Coronavirus

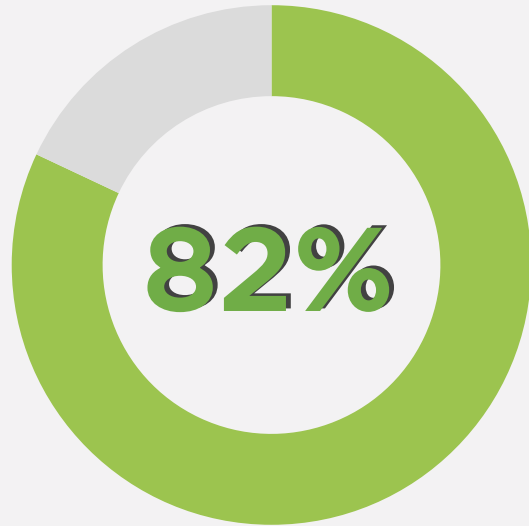
Top 2 Box



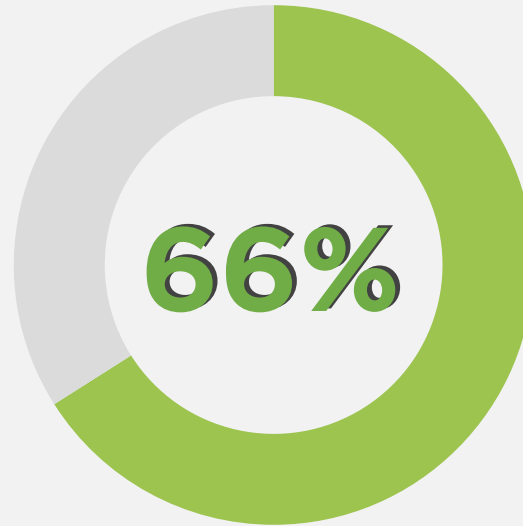
Say they will maintain their current level of involvement or do more to get involved and make a difference after the pandemic passes

PEOPLE WILL STEP UP

People are holding themselves and each other accountable to get more involved and create a more connected future



Agree “we all must get involved to rebuild our communities and country” post-COVID-19



Agree “the coronavirus will have a long-lasting, positive impact on consideration for others and willingness to get involved in making a difference”

64% agree
that “as horrible as it is, this pandemic will lead to changes for the better in how we live, work and treat each other as people.”

(Source: Edelman Trust Barometer Spring Update, April 2020)

THE POWER OF PEOPLE FOR PEOPLE

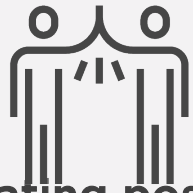
Across generations, “helping people” is at the heart of civic action

Top Desired Outcomes from Civic Engagement *% Selected*



Helping People

59%



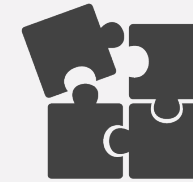
Creating positive
change

47%



Making a difference

42%



Solve Problems

30%



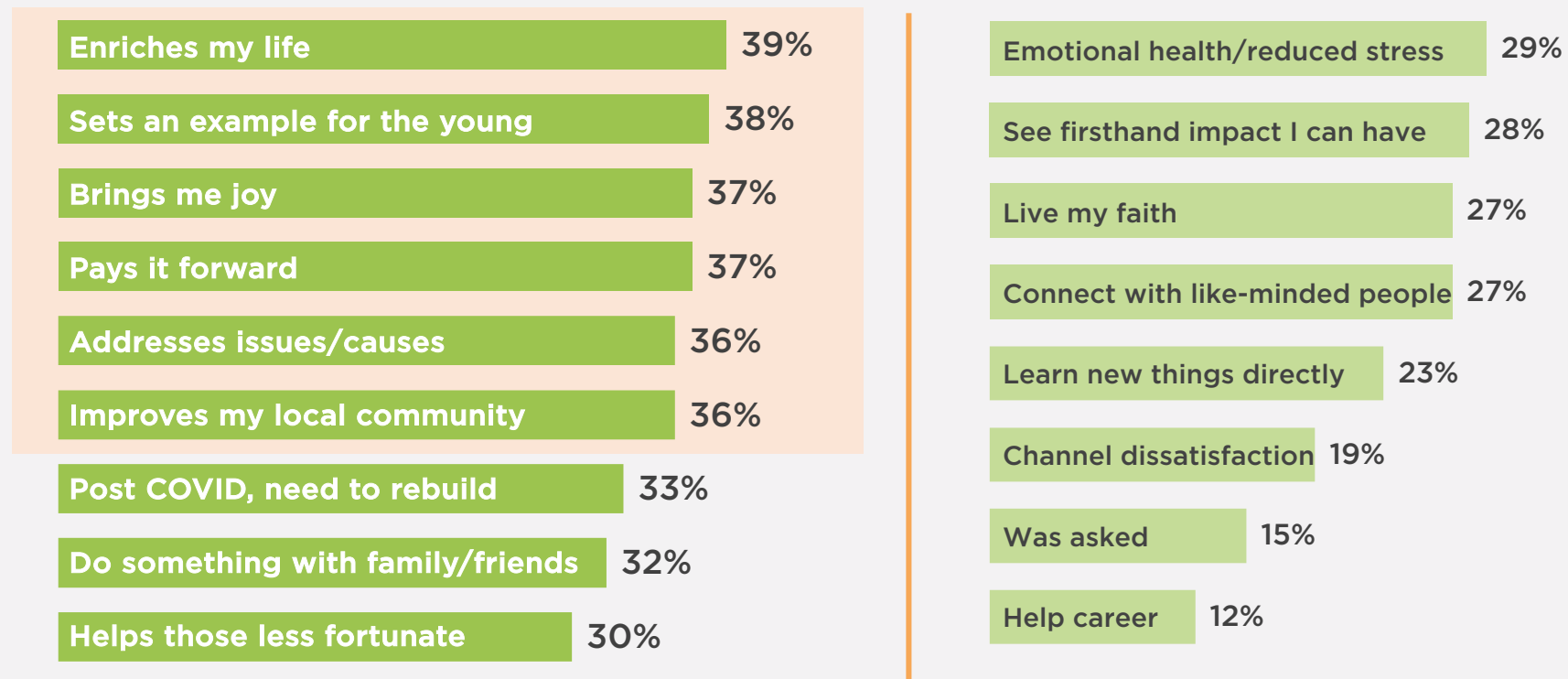
Give back

21%

CIVIC ACTION SPARKS JOY

People are motivated to get involved because it enriches their lives and the lives of those around them

Personal Motivations for Getting Involved and Taking Action to Make a Difference *% Selected Response*





GEN Z: TODAY'S CIVIC LEADERS



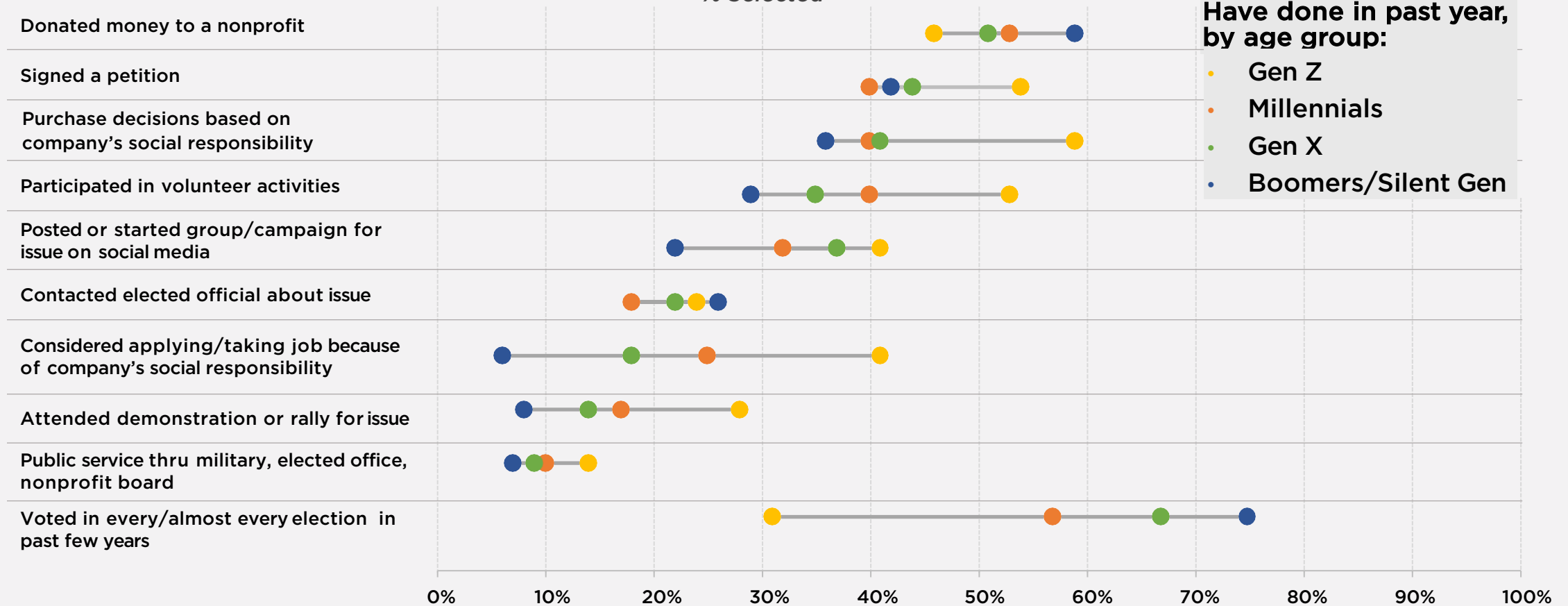
GEN Z: THE MOST CIVICALLY-MINDED GENERATION ALIVE TODAY

Just at the cusp of voting age, Gen Z already demonstrates higher rates of civic engagement than older generations

Types of Activities Participated In Past Year
% Selected

Have done in past year, by age group:

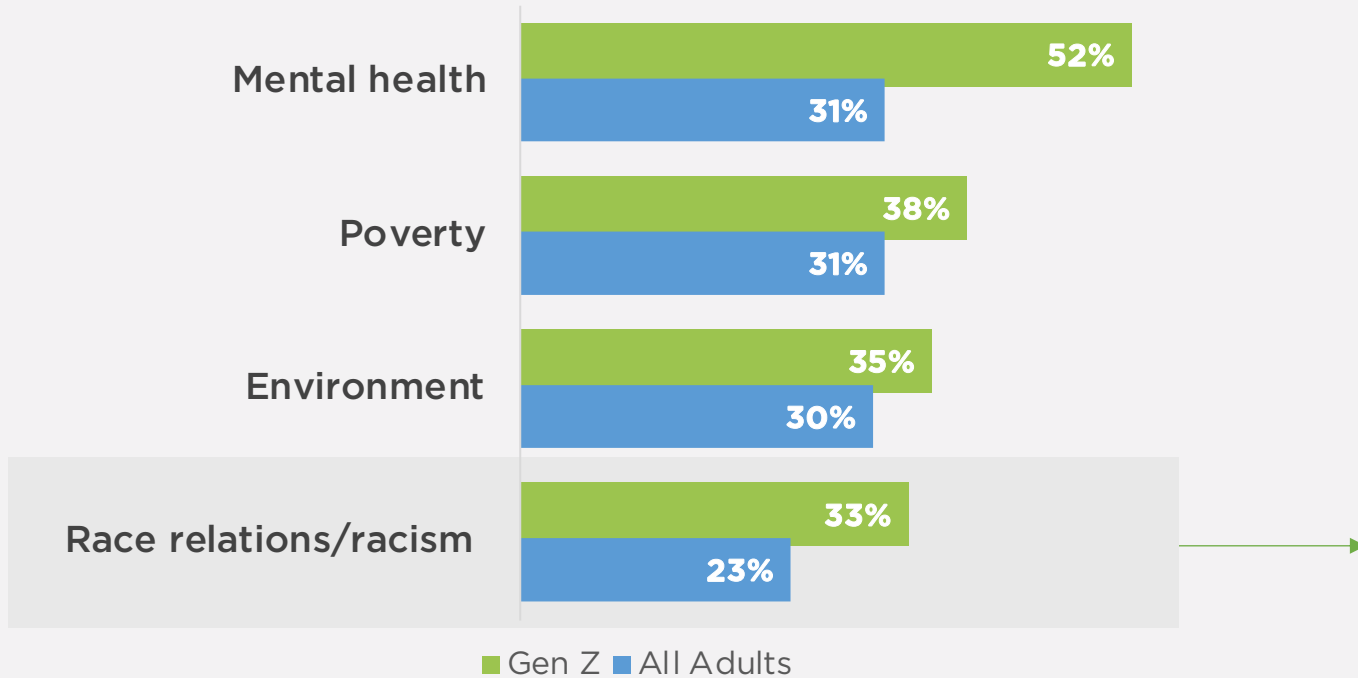
- Gen Z
- Millennials
- Gen X
- Boomers/Silent Gen



GEN Z DEMANDS CHANGE

Gen Z is living with the impact of the problems we haven't solved, and they demand change

Issue Priorities for Civic Engagement
% Selected; Shown: Top 4 Issues



Snapshot of Gen Z and Racial Justice

79% of Gen Z
took at least one action to address racial discrimination and inequality in late May/early June

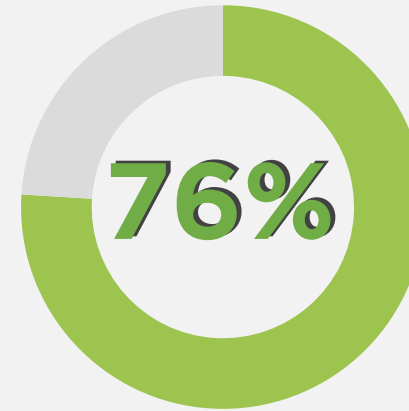
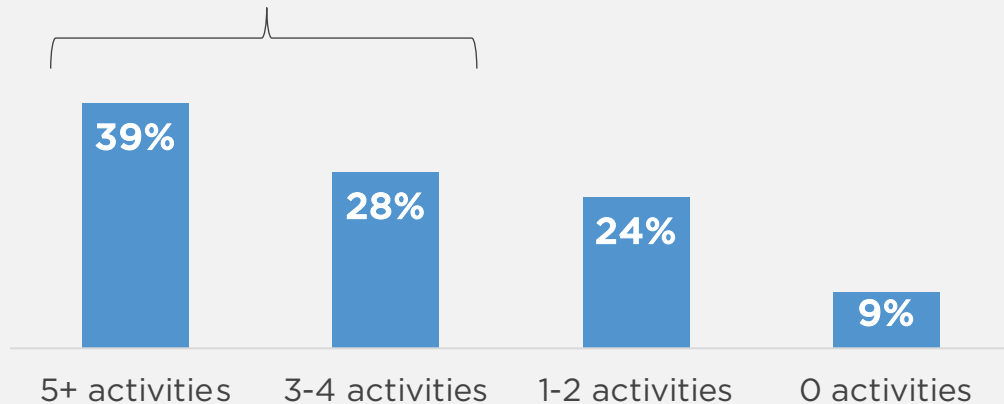
(Source: Cause and Social Influence Influencing Young America to Act, June 2020)

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT WAVE OF ENGAGEMENT

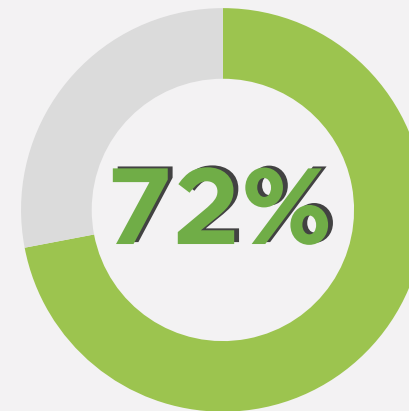
Business, organizations and governments must prepare for a new generation that will be highly engaged on issues that they care deeply about

Number of Activities Engaged In Past Year
% Selected Among Gen Z Respondents

67% GEN Z VS. 52% OF ALL ADULTS
have done 3+ activities



GEN Z vs. 70% OF ALL ADULTS agree “it is important for me to be able to see with my own eyes the results of actions I have taken to make a difference.”



GEN Z vs. 57% OF ALL ADULTS agree that “social media is an important way to learn about and discuss issues that I care about.”

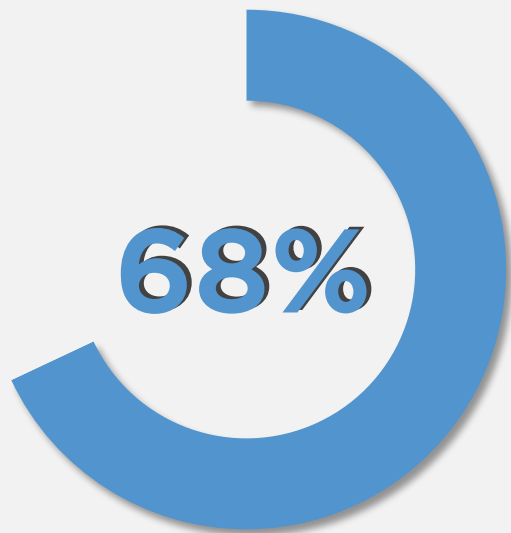


BUSINESS: A PARTNER FOR CHANGE LEADERS



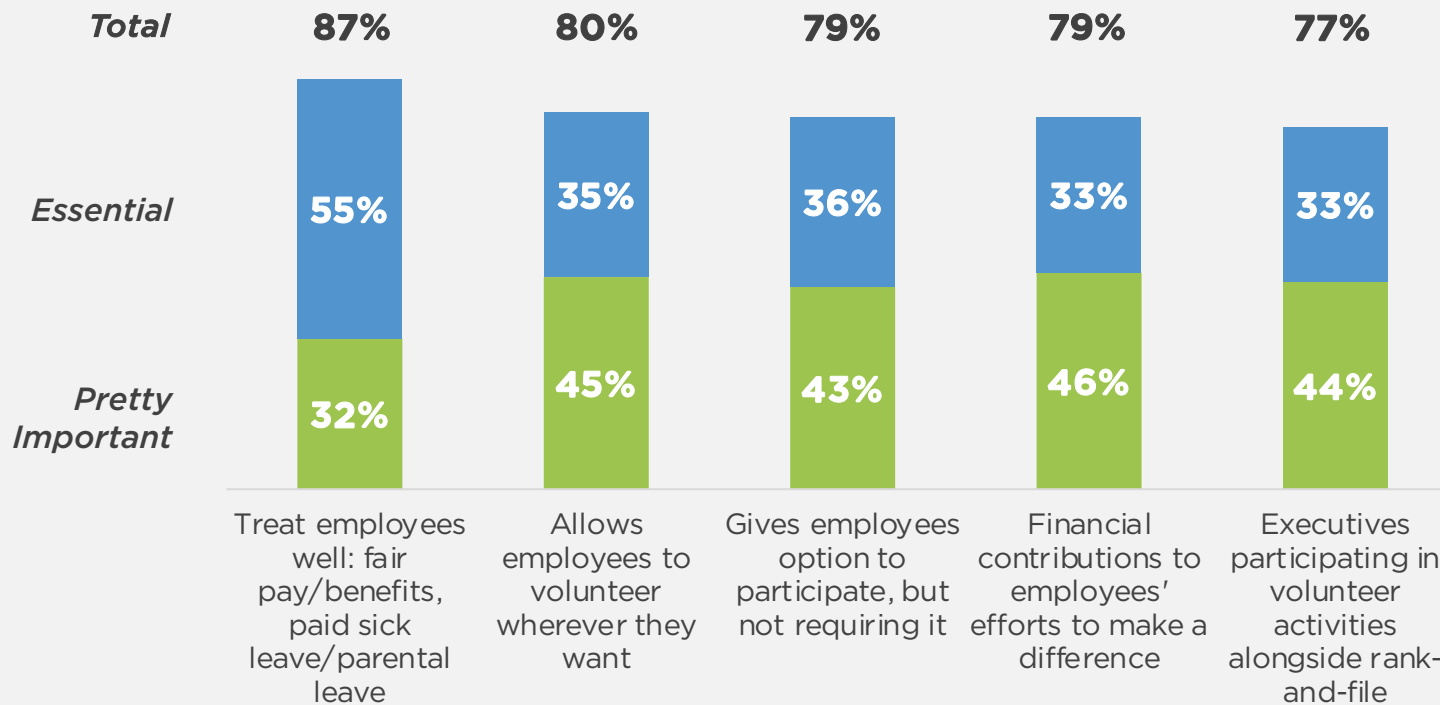
BUSINESS MUST NURTURE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In today's age of corporate social justice, employee welfare and empowerment are top priorities



Agree that companies can take actions that both increase profits and improve conditions in communities where they operate²

Top Corporate Actions to Promote Civic Engagement¹
Top 2 Box



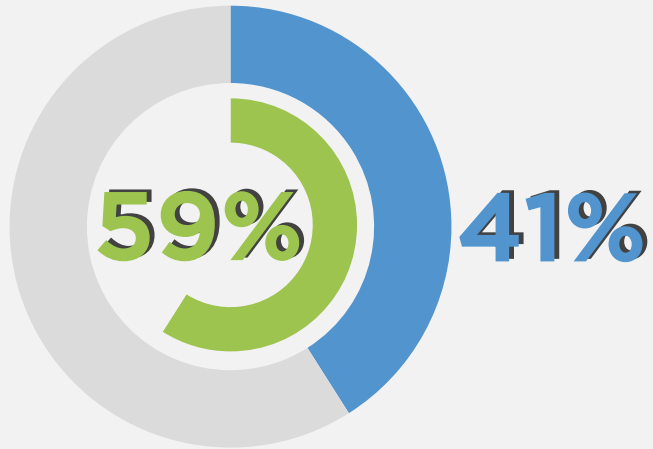
1. *Points of Light: Engaging Americans in Civic Life (May 2020)*

2. *2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Spring Update: Trust and the Covid-19 Pandemic*



IMPACT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL ACTIONS ON PURCHASING

Corporate social responsibility informs consumer purchase decision-making, especially among younger adults

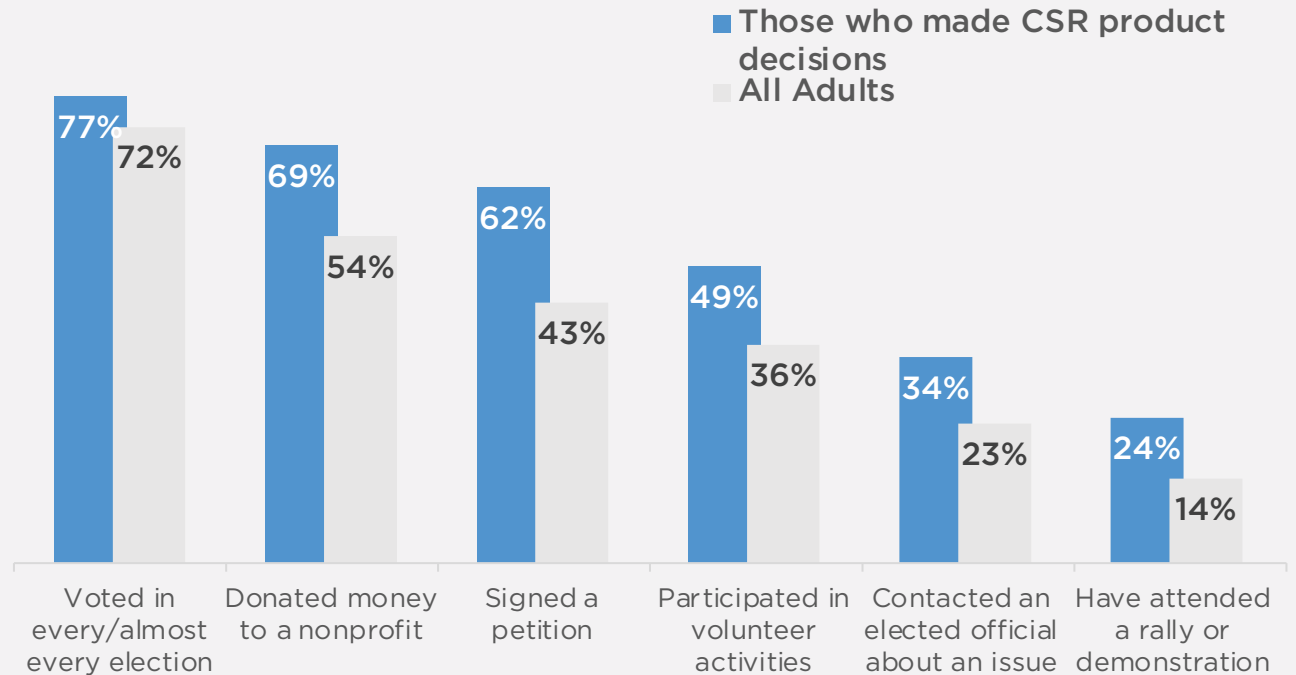


41% OF ALL ADULTS and 59% of GEN Z have made decisions on products based on a company's social responsibility

Who They Are:

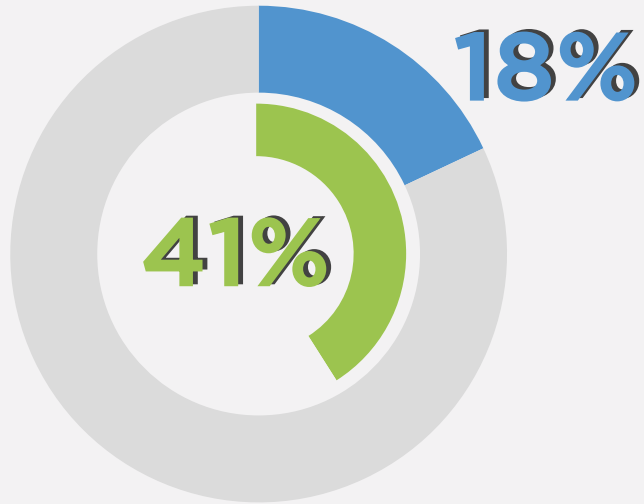
- 49% male, 51% female
- 36% under age 35
- Reflect the general population on race/ethnicity
- 39% have a college degree or higher
- 32% are parents of children under 18

How They Engage (in the last year) % Selected



IMPACT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL ACTIONS ON HIRING

Company commitments to social responsibility will be key for attracting the next generation of talent

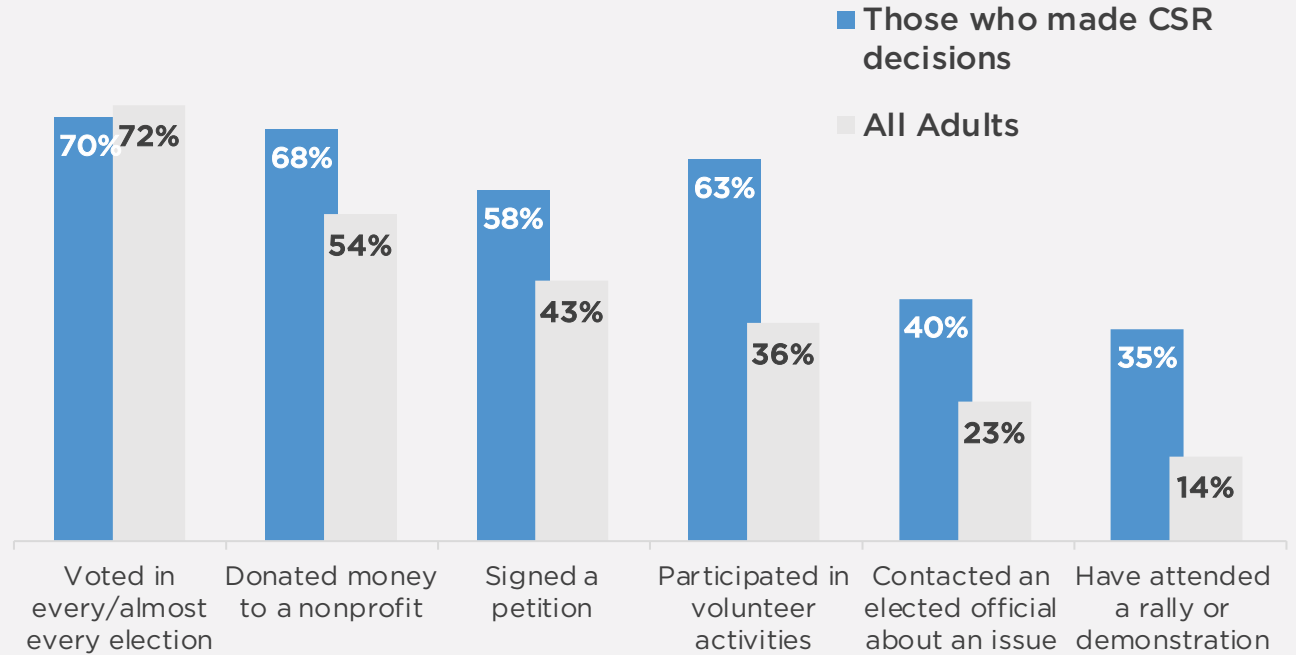


18% OF ALL ADULTS and 41% of GEN Z have considered applying for or taking a job with a company specifically because they believe it is committed to being socially responsible

Who They Are:

- 53% male, 47% female
- 54% under age 35
- More likely to be Hispanic or Latino (25%)
- 39% have a college degree or higher
- More likely to live in urban areas (38%)
- 39% are parents of children under 18

How They Engage (in the last year) % Selected



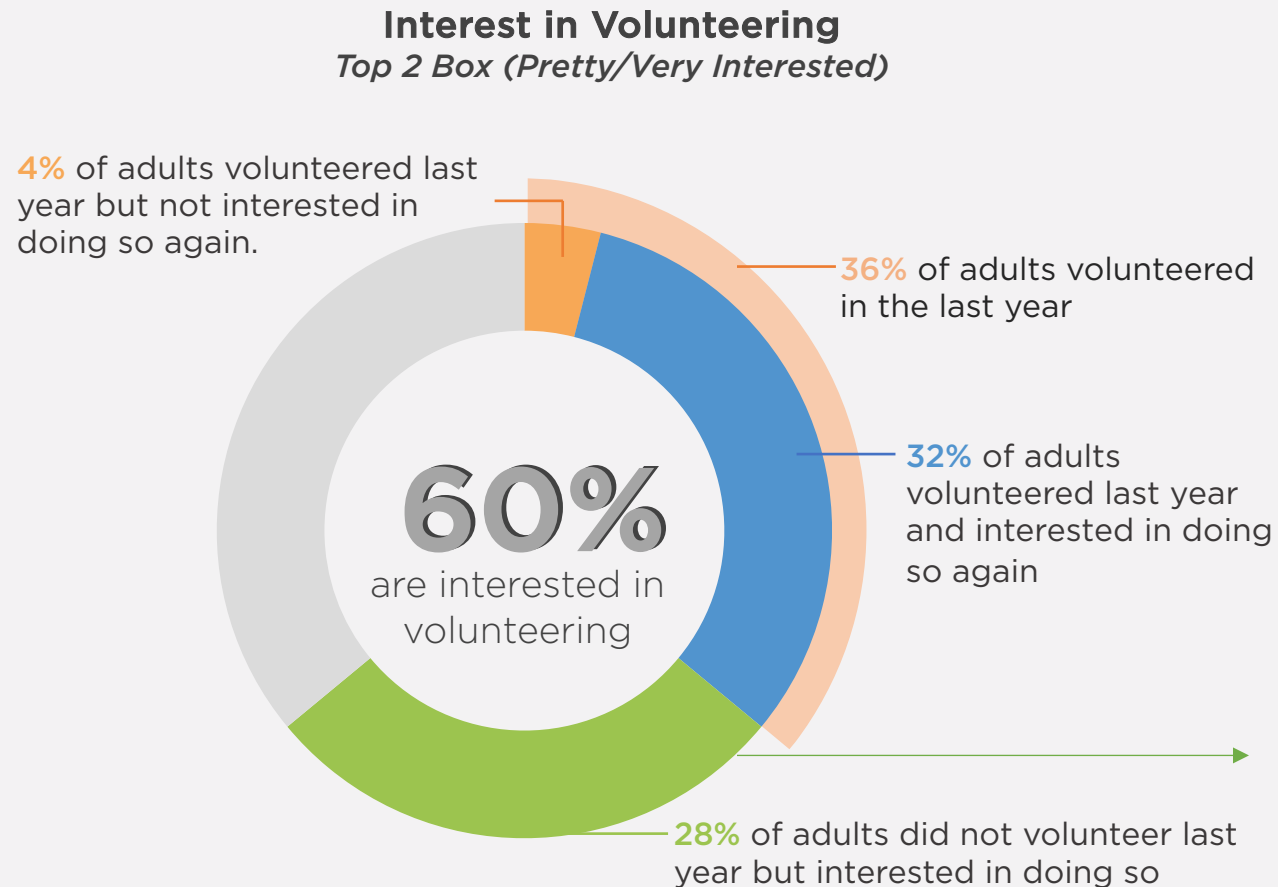


SPARKING ACTION: HELPING PEOPLE VOLUNTEER



CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN DESIRE AND ACTION

Nearly three in 10 adults have not volunteered in the past year but are interested in doing so



There is an opportunity to engage the **nearly 3 in 10 adults** did not volunteer in the past year but are interested in doing so.

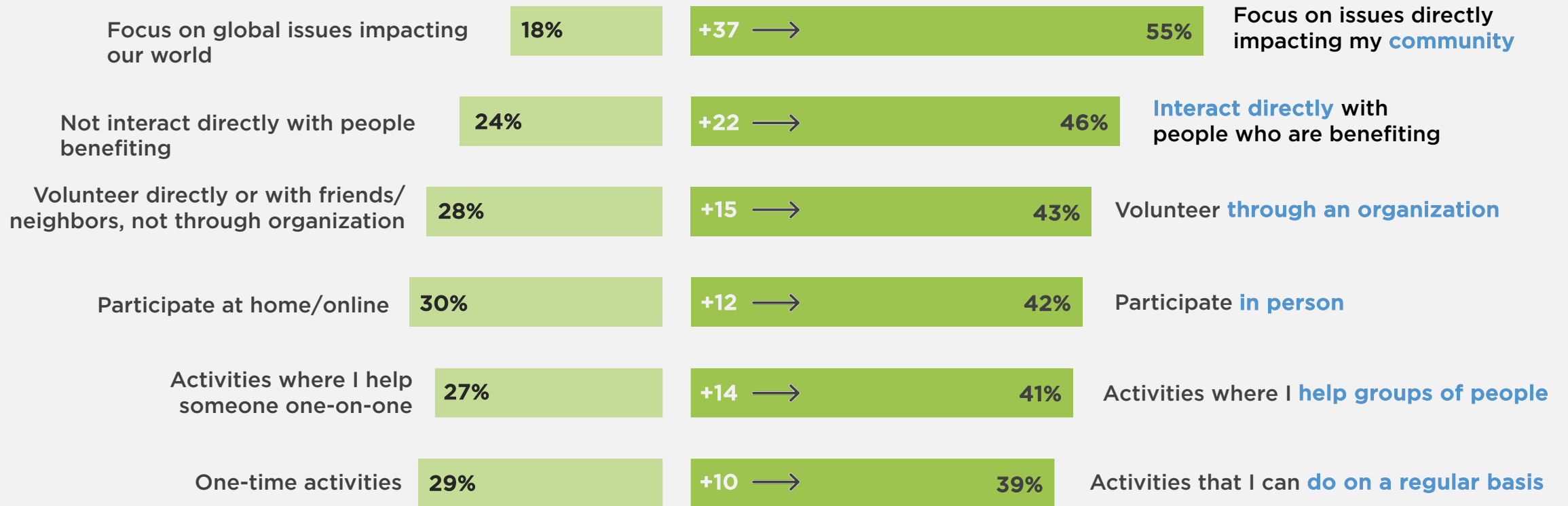
The following groups are slightly more likely to fall into this category:

- Gen Z/Millennial Men
- Parents
- Millennials
- African Americans

MAKING VOLUNTEERING PERSONAL

People want to grow where they are planted, focusing on local opportunities that let them engage with those they are helping

Volunteer Preferences % Selected



ERASING THE SIDELINES

Finding meaningful opportunities to get involved are primary barriers to volunteerism

Top Barriers To Volunteering
Top 2 Box (Major/Moderate Barrier)
Among Those Interested in Volunteering Who Have Not Done So

Unsure how to get involved or where to find opportunities 44%	Cannot find opportunities near me 44%	Not sure what I can do that would be helpful 43%
Busy, don't have time to volunteer 42%	Haven't found a group of volunteers with whom I fit 41%	Haven't found opportunities matching my skills, abilities 41%
Rather do other things when I have free time 34%	Uncomfortable volunteering with people I don't know 33%	Don't believe my efforts will make a difference 26%

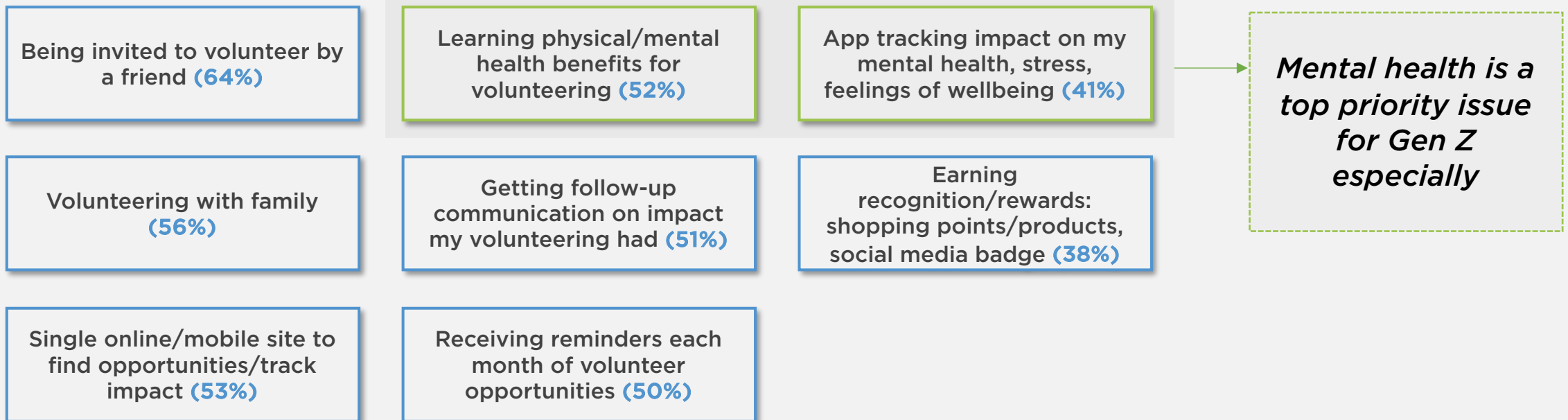


INVITE A FRIEND AND BRING THE FAMILY

Invitations from friends and family help people get involved, overcoming barriers to engagement

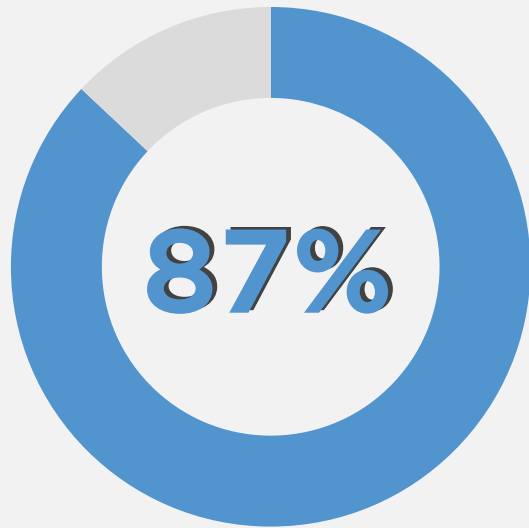
Top Incentives For Volunteering

Top 2 Box (Somewhat/Much More Likely) Among All Respondents



DELIVERING WORTHWHILE EXPERIENCES

Americans will make the time to participate in volunteer opportunities that feel worthwhile



Will make time for a worthwhile volunteer opportunity

From the volunteer perspective, a worthwhile experience:

- **Is discoverable.** Can be easily found online
- **Is local.** Addresses an issue important to my community
- **Is credible.** Delivered by an organization with local/issue expertise.
- **Is social.** Allows me to invite my friends and family
- **Is authentic.** Explains why my actions will matter, upfront
- **Is personal.** Allows me to engage with beneficiaries
- **Is impactful.** Shows me the outcomes of my actions
- **Is repeatable.** Provides an avenue for me to reengage



INSIGHTS TO ACTION



INDIVIDUALS: CONNECTING TO OPPORTUNITIES

Doing good comes in many forms.

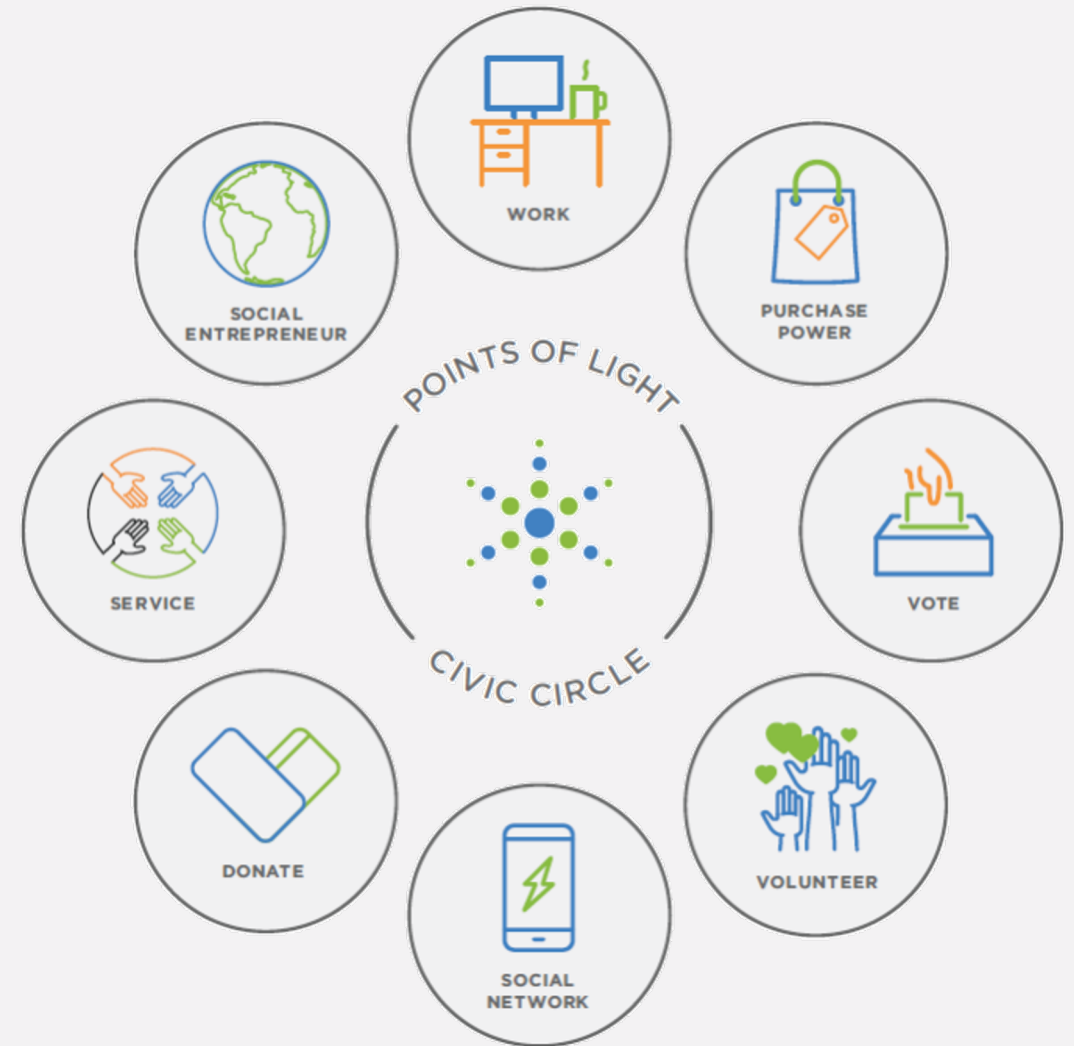
Call to Action: What does this circle of action mean in your life? How can you help your health, your friends and your community by getting engaged? Use the Civic Circle to give yourself credit for the ways you are already taking action, and then challenge yourself to do more.

Combat the barriers to engagement that you can control.

Call to Action: Invite your friends to join you in volunteering, seek opportunities for families (however defined!), say yes to workplace engagement opportunities.

Utilizes the tools available to you to combat others.

Call to Action: Visit sites like engage.pointsoflight.org to find thousands of volunteer opportunities in your community managed by credible, local organizations.



NONPROFITS: PREPARING FOR THE NEXT WAVE OF ENGAGEMENT

Organizations must prepare to “catch” the post-pandemic wave of engagement

Call to Action: Make sure your programs and opportunities are online and discoverable through aggregators like allforgood.org.

People must understand the impact of their actions and support.

Call to Action: Get articulate about your organization’s impact and outcomes at the enterprise and activity level.

Organizations must focus on delivering an experience.

Call to Action: Evaluate your communication strategy, volunteer management strategy, and program strategy based on the principles of what makes a “worthwhile” opportunity.



SUPPORTING CORPORATE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic life is business action plus community engagement

Call to Action: You are being held accountable that your actions match your rhetoric.

In the age of corporate social justice employees must be number #1

Call to Action: Employee pay, benefits and environmental action matter to the health of your community.

Social responsibility is now a corporate imperative – it is only becoming more important as Gen Z enters the workforce.

Call to Action: Listen and learn in authentic partnership with local leaders to make engagement meaningful to your employees, recruits and customers.

Offer employees the opportunity to get involved in their community through their workplace.

Celebrate and recognize your employees volunteer activities with matching grants and peer recognition.





The solution to each problem that confronts us begins with an individual who steps forward and who says, “I can help.”

President George H.W. Bush, Founder,
Points of Light



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