

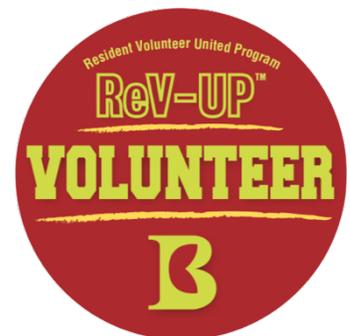
**An Updated Brief from the Field**  
(a companion to the published White Paper - Dec. 2013)

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**Engaging Residents in Low-Income Housing  
Communities in Volunteering Through Earning an  
Economic Opportunity**

**An Innovative Approach to a Supportive Service Program for Residents  
in Low-Income Multifamily Rental Housing**

July 1, 2016



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We appreciate the support of Kathleen Clore, Juanita Jones, Randy Bryant and William Rowan for coordinating the survey process. We are deeply thankful to all the resident volunteers and the respondents who have contributed to our surveys and case studies in the past. At their request, we have kept their full names anonymous.

## About the ReV-UP Program:

ReV-UP is the acronym for the Resident Volunteership United Program. Bella Communities affixed the suffix '-ship' to 'volunteer' to denote a craft or skill gained through volunteering. The ReV-UP program's theory of change is by introducing a volunteer/service learning model augmented with a rent credit, low income families participate in civic engagement, increase social capital, gain skills, earn a financial economic opportunity leading to housing stability. The ReV-UP program was launched and **vigorously** piloted from 2012 through 2013. From 2014 to the date of this report, the ReV-UP has been in its "bridge phase" as we scale the program up to a larger demonstration phase with more participating host properties and a larger pool of resident volunteers. The main difference between the pilot period and the bridge phase is that during the former the property's service coordinator was working in the field on the front-line to introduce the ReV-UP program. During the bridge phase, the program has relied more on community volunteers and property-management staff<sup>1</sup> than the service coordinator.

## About Bella Communities:

Bella Communities is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to provide affordable low-income housing and to engage residents in volunteering, creating change from within and improving their economic opportunities. Bella Communities also intends to provide consulting, training and services to other nonprofit organizations to launch similar resident volunteer-engagement programs.

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<sup>1</sup> *The property management firm was switched at the commencement of the bridge phase; and during the bridge phase 2014-2016, the property management firm again was changed twice. Neither Bella Communities nor the program has authority over recruiting or selecting the staff of the property management firm.*

## Introduction

This brief is a companion report to the white paper originally published in December 2013 at the end of the pilot period. The white paper can be found at Issue Lab, a service of the Foundation Center.<sup>2</sup> The present report is intended to update information about the ReV-UP program with the results from the fieldwork undertaken between 2012 and June 30, 2016, the pilot period through the bridge phase.

This brief contains three parts:

1. Program metrics,
2. Case studies showing program outcomes, and
3. Participant survey results.

### Observations

The internal evaluation of the evidence suggests clear benefits to offering economic-opportunity programs to residents of low-income multifamily rental housing. The self-reporting data from the resident volunteer participants also intimates that the earned economic opportunity assisted with rent affordability, emergency assistance and reduced reliance on public-safety resources. The evaluation also shows promotion of self-development and a suggestive trend towards improved resident-housing stability as well as potential benefits in cost savings to low-income-housing operators or developers. Because only a small sample size of properties and low-income families were available for this pilot program and bridge phase, the appropriate level of services to offer to more diverse sets of residents should be researched before definite recommendations are made.

### Additional Reading Resources

Bella Communities designed and tested an innovative supportive-service program to create financial empowerment, greater civic engagement and improved housing stability. There are other studies along with surveys in related fields that demonstrate the positive effects of supportive-service programs for low-income families. We recommend these studies and their thought-provoking findings for further reading:

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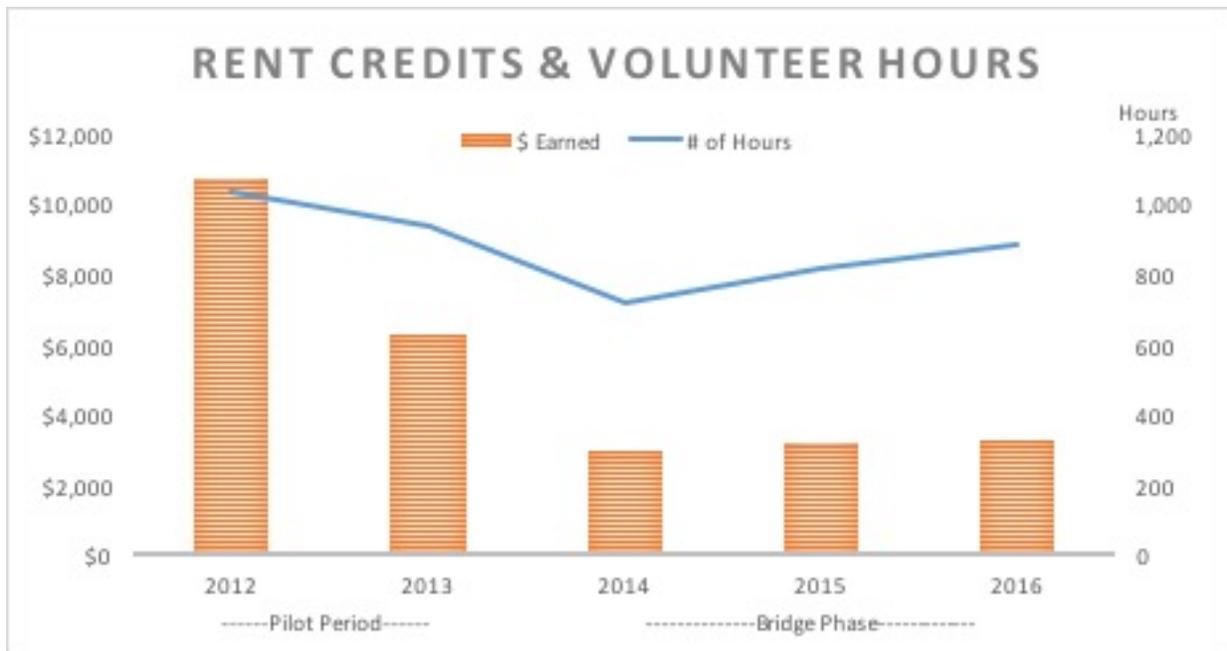
<sup>2</sup>The URL for the Issue Lab, a service of the Foundation Center in New York City, is [http://www.issuelab.org/resource/engaging\\_residents\\_in\\_low\\_income\\_housing\\_communities\\_to\\_volunteer\\_and\\_earn\\_an\\_economic\\_opportunity](http://www.issuelab.org/resource/engaging_residents_in_low_income_housing_communities_to_volunteer_and_earn_an_economic_opportunity).

1. *“Thriving Residents, Thriving Cities, Family Financial Security Matters for Cities”* by Signe-Mary McKernan, Caroline Ratcliffe, Breno Braga and Emma Kalish, Urban Institute, April 2016.
2. *“What It’s Worth: Strengthening the Financial Future of Families, Communities and the Nation,”* Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco and Corporation for Enterprise Development, December 8, 2015.
3. *“Financial Empowerment in a Thriving Community Development Network,”* National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations, April 16, 2015.
4. *“Volunteering as a Pathway to Employment: Does Volunteering Increase Odds of Finding a Job for the Out of Work,”* Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Evaluation, Washington, DC, 2013.
5. *“Small Changes, Real Impact: Applying Behavioral Economics in Asset Building Programs,”* the Behavioral Economics Technical Assistance (BETA) Project, Corporation for Enterprise Development, December 2013.
6. *“Resident Services in Subsidized Housing for Low-Income Families, An Evaluation of Property, Tenant, and Community Outcomes,”* Prepared for the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California, San Francisco, California, by Adam Dunn, Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley, May 2011.

## PART I Program Metrics

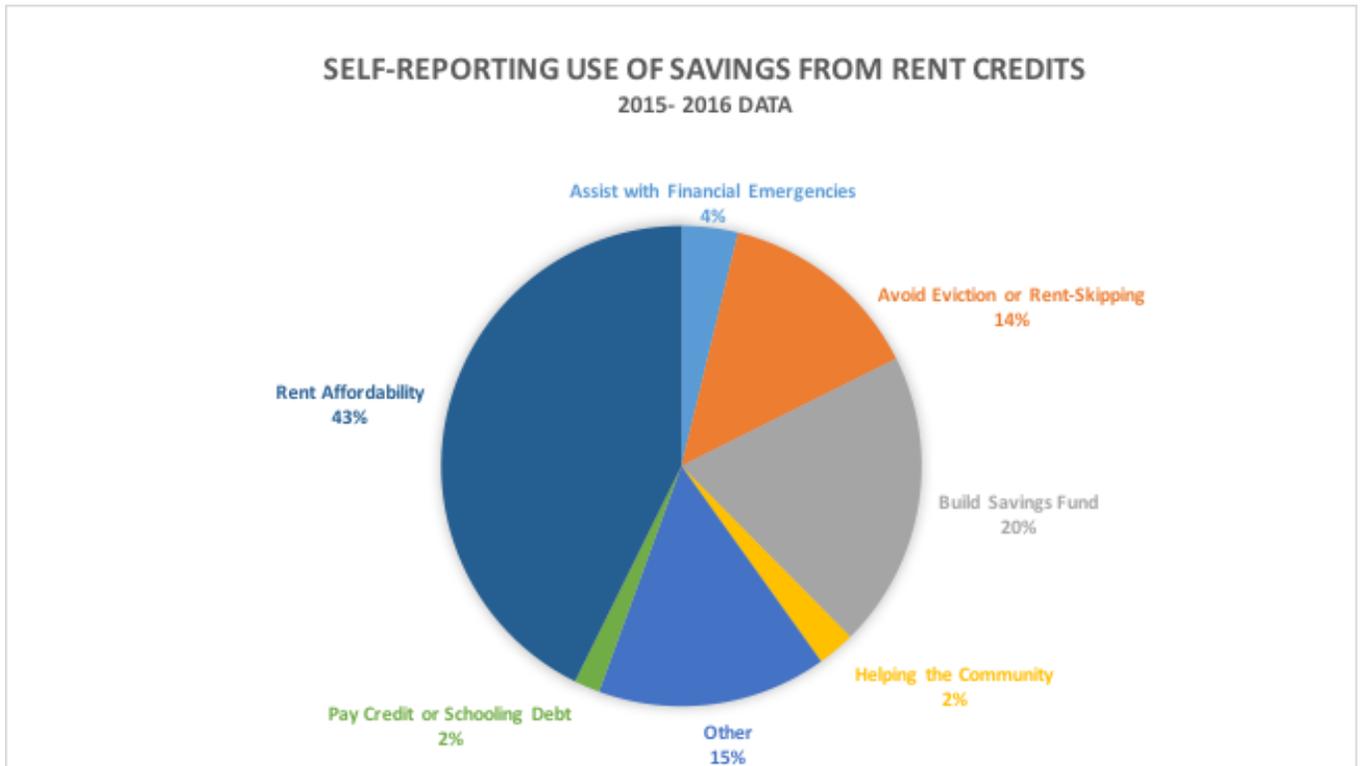
Low-income residents continue to participate and find value in the ReV-UP program. The ReV-UP program has yielded positive results over the initial pilot period. Residents have earned and generated \$17,000 of rent subsidies and have provided 2,000 new volunteer hours to nonprofits serving the broader community. During the bridge phase, moreover, the economic opportunity generated was close to \$10,000 with some 2,500 new volunteer hours generated. Graph 1 presents the cumulative results from the pilot period and the bridge phase. It should be noted that the 2016 annualized data were extrapolated based on actual results reported through June 30, 2016. Also, during the bridge phase two program changes were made: 1) the rent credit incentive was reduced from \$50 to \$25 per month; 2) and the required minimum number of volunteer hours per month was raised to 6 from 4 hours.

**Graph 1**



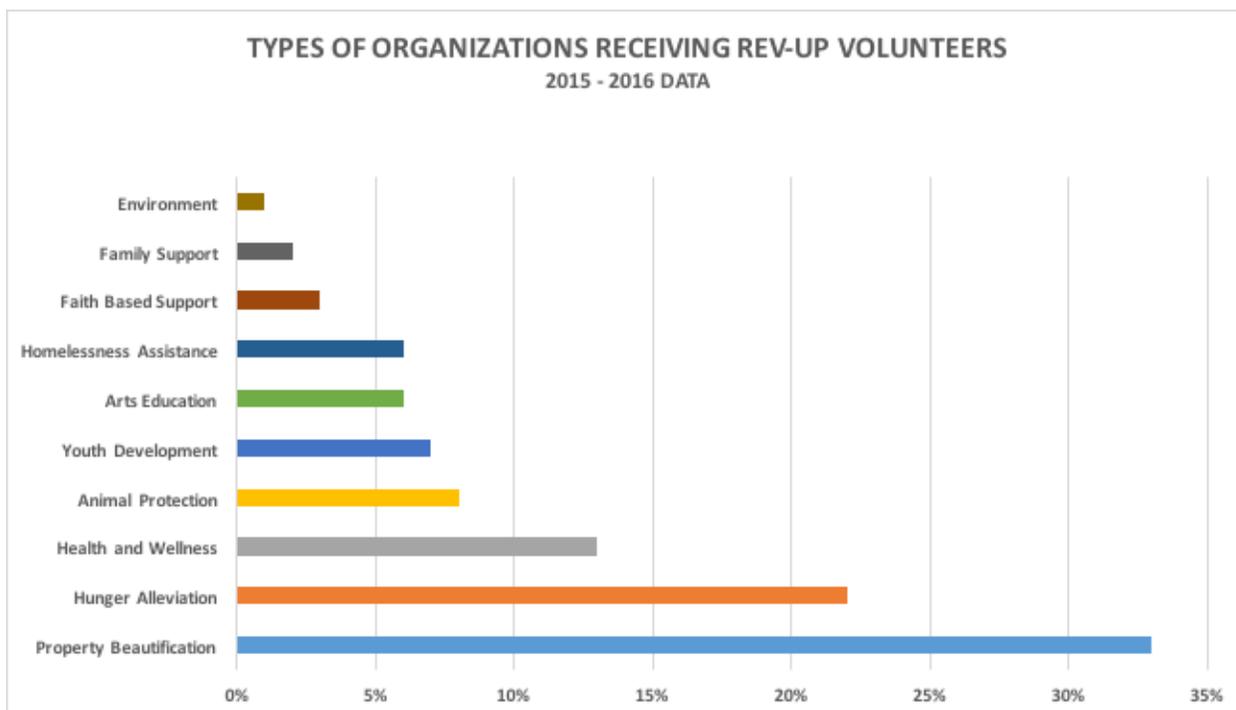
During 2015 and 2016 we asked the ReV-UP volunteers to self-report their use of the earned financial assistance derived from the rent credits. As indicated in Graph 2, 43% used the rent credits to make their rent payments more affordable, while 20% built up their savings accounts to create greater financial liquidity. Another 14% used their rent credits to make rent and avoid eviction or penalization for rent skipping, with another 4% laying up a reserve against future financial emergencies.

**Graph 2**



ReV-UP volunteers assisted a variety of nonprofits based on their interests and community needs. Graph 3 illustrates the breakdown of the classifications for 2015 and 2016. Noteworthy is that 45% of the volunteer hours were accrued within the property, with resident volunteers assisting on-site nonprofit service delivery and property management. The remaining 55% performed their volunteer hours off site at nonprofit-agency field offices.

**Graph 3**



The program metrics above are closely aligned and further illuminated by the survey responses. Please see Part III of this brief for the complete survey results.

1. At both survey points, 96% of the respondents 'Agree[d]' or 'Strongly Agree[d]' that they felt more connected to the community because of their volunteer work.
2. Residents continued to feel positive about their volunteering experiences and consistently scored high on the "promoter" scale of the program. About 70% of the volunteers, stated their willingness to promote the ReV-UP program actively and consistently.
3. Furthermore, residents endorsed the program by volunteering beyond the required minimum hours needed to receive their fixed-rent incentives. They also volunteered multiple times per year.

## **PART II**

### **Case Studies**

#### Case #1

##### The Situation and the Need

The Girl Scouts of Central Indiana's (GSCI) mission is to provide Girl Scout leadership experiences for girls living in the community. To that end GSCI employs a special curriculum—Positive Enlightened Achieving Resilient Leaders (PEARLs)—for girls ages 5-18. The curriculum covers such topics as Women in History, The Girl Scout Way, Courageous and Confident Girls, Healthy Living, BFF Anti-Bullying, Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) learning, Financial Empowerment, Girl Sports, and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. The GSCI wants to provide PEARLs to girls from low-income families at no cost, thereby removing barriers to participation in Girl Scouting and its enrichment programs. However, the GSCI had a challenge in recruiting committed volunteer troop leaders to form new Girl Scout troops within the low-income multifamily rental-housing communities. In addition, having a safe, convenient place for the girls to meet without causing transportation difficulties proved a concern for the organizers.

##### The Solution

Using a place-based approach to service delivery, the GSCI worked with Bella Communities to engage the property-management team to bring the program into its multifamily rental communities. The critical success factors in launching a new troop there included the property-management team's involvement in outreach and marketing, access to a community room for the meetings, and the availability of a local volunteer able to relate to the girls and work well with the GSCI staff. The solution was to use the ReV-UP Resident Volunteer Program to recruit a troop leader from within the property residents. The ReV-Up processes and procedures were followed to recruit and retain the ReV-UP volunteers. Those interested attended an informational session to learn about the PEARLs program, submitted a resume and applied for the position and were interviewed. The selected individual then attended a training session. This person also complied with the GSCI requirement of having a criminal background check.

##### The Effects

The PEARLs coordinators wanted to make sure that their low-income participants had no barriers to participating in the program. These girls were able to overcome the primary barrier of a distant, hard-to-reach location by having a new troop established directly in their community. Transportation would have been the largest barrier, and the selected ReV-UP volunteer along with the property management did their part by making sure the girls had a safe place to meet right in their community's clubhouse. This arrangement also helped develop a sense of a partnership when the ReV-UP volunteer lived in the

same community as the girls. By having someone in this position that the girls could relate to, the latter felt more motivated to study the program materials to prepare to become the future leaders the GSCI envisioned. The ReV-UP volunteer built up such a positive rapport with the girls that they always looked forward to their Girl Scout meetings.

Thanks to LaKeyda's excellent leadership, this troop has continued to grow and is helping the GSCI to reach its goal of serving as many girls in Central Indiana as possible. In 2015, LaKeyda outreached heavily and had 30+ girls registered to join the troop. At the start of 2016, 21 girls had already re-registered, a number that would grow with the warmer weather. Currently the LaKeyda has been working on recruiting a second ReV-UP volunteer to assist with the larger number of girls. These ReV-UP volunteers will help the extension staff work with an increasing number of girls from disadvantaged communities who would not otherwise have been able to have a Girl Scout experience.

-The Girl Scouts of Central Indiana

## Case #2

### The Situation and the Need

Having secured affordable housing, Myra was able to provide stability for her family. She is part of the working poor, putting in full-time hours but still earning less than the federal poverty rate. Even though she receives housing subsidies, she still lives dollar-to-dollar and just barely covers her portion of the rent and other necessities. She has no financial reserves or liquid savings, and this financial fragility weighs her down. Despite her life situation, Myra longs to be part of the community and make a positive contribution and be charitable while providing a more sustainable livelihood for herself and her family.

### The Solution

Myra joined the ReV-UP program in her community. This place-based program allowed her to be close to her home and involved in the lives of her children. The time commitment, which is manageable, minimal and flexible, made it possible for her to fit it into her work schedule. By volunteering as a family unit, she could be involved in community events while simultaneously spending time with her family in a fun, impactful and charitable way. Volunteering thus became an enjoyable learning-service experience for her and her children.

### The Effects

By volunteering in her community, Myra felt connected to her community. She was proud to be able to give back to her community despite her economic situation. She felt like she was providing a good example to her children. Through this ReV-UP program, she was able to volunteer, earn some financial relief and have meaningful fun with her family.

-A low-income resident in Indianapolis, Indiana

## Case #3

### The Situation and the Need

Property management is working hard to keep vacancy rates down and increase occupancy. Long periods of vacancies negatively affect rental income. To differentiate itself from other housing providers in marketing its property, the property management needs to provide value-added incentives and demonstrate to prospective renters that the living community is neighborly, has an esprit de corps and maintains a unique connection to the broader neighborhood.

### The Solution

Property management adopted the ReV-UP program as a marketing tool. Prospective residents learned that the ReV-UP rent credits could be used as a type of rent concession to make the rental rate more affordable. The ReV-UP program also served as a platform for residents to feel part of the community, participate in activities that have a positive impact on other people in need and help contribute to the residents' financial and emotional well-being.

### The Effects

Property management was able to improve its reputation and community standing. Prospective residents responded positively to the marketing efforts that informed them about how they could make their rent more affordable through engaging in neighborhood improvement. The overall result was an emerging social covenant between property management and the residents. Through this volunteership program, both developed trust, mutual respect and a sense of collaboration in working together to solve problems.

-An Affordable Housing Property in Anderson, Indiana

## **PART III**

### **Participant Survey Results**

#### **Survey Methodology**

The ReV-UP survey was adopted from the framework used in the October 2013 Volunteer Innovation Program by the United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI). For the second round in 2015, the paper-survey was distributed by the property-management office to ReV-UP volunteers from December 4 until December 31, 2015. It was mailed directly back to Bella Communities in a sealed, pre-stamped envelope. The survey focused on four key areas in volunteer-program administration: volunteer engagement, volunteer motivation, volunteer attitudes and the link between volunteering and donating.

The data presented in this report were based on rounded percentages. If any percentage listings on the same table equal less or more than 100%, then the error is due to rounding.

#### **Survey responses**

Survey Period	Response
<b>October 2013</b>	26
<b>December 2015</b>	25

The following section discusses the various demographics of the survey respondents.

#### **Demographics**

The following section discusses the various demographics of the survey respondents.

Gender	October 2013	December 2015
Female	85%	83%
Male	15%	17%

Age	October 2013	December 2015
18-24 years	4%	17%
25-34 years	22%	8%
35-44 years	17%	8%
45-54 years	30%	25%
55-64 years	22%	33%
65 or more years	4%	8%

Race	October 2013	December 2015
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	0%
Asian	0%	0%

Black or African American	42%	35%
Latino*	1%	4%
White (non-Latino)	42%	52%
Two or more races	5%	9%
Other (please specify)	10%	0%

\*The question of Latino heritage was asked separately. Please note that those indicating Latino heritage were able to select another group or groups as well.

Education	October 2013	December 2015
Less than high school	5%	8%
High school/GED	38%	20%
Some college	33%	24%
2-year degree	0%	12%
4-year degree	14%	28%
Masters-level degree	10%	8%
Doctorate	0%	0%

Marital status	October 2013	December 2015
Single, never been married	55%	44%
Domestic partnership	5%	0%
Married	5%	16%
Separated	0%	0%
Divorced	30%	40%
Widowed	5%	0%

Children under 18 at home	October 2013	December 2015
Yes	27%	16%
No	73%	84%

## Survey Report

Responses were submitted mostly on paper, with 25 respondents submitting their survey by the December 31, 2015 deadline. The responses described below are based on the number of individuals who answered each question. In some cases, however, when respondents were allowed to select more than one answer, the total number of surveys received, 25, was used to calculate the percentages. Because of multiple-answer questions, some of the percentages for a question in this report do not equal 100%. This outcome is consistent with what is found in the 2013 survey.

## Volunteer engagement and motivations

Question 1: It is easy to find a quality volunteer experience in Central Indiana.

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Strongly disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	2	9%	1	4%

Agree	11	50%	13	52%
Strongly agree	8	36%	8	32%
Unsure/don't know	1	5%	3	12%

Question 2: I feel more connected to my community because of my volunteer work.

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Strongly disagree	1	4%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Agree	14	56%	14	56%
Strongly agree	10	40%	10	40%
Unsure/don't know	0	0%	1	4%

Question 3: Why did you start volunteering? (Multiple answers accepted)

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Helping my fellow Hoosiers	8	31%	2	8%
Making my community a better place	14	54%	11	44%
To use my free-time productively	8	31%	9	36%
Meet new people	9	35%	6	24%
Learn more about my city	2	8%	0	0%
Fulfill a faith or spiritual commitment	6	23%	10	40%
Gain new skills and knowledge	3	12%	3	12%
Encouraged by my employer	0	0%	1	4%
Required (internships, community service, etc.)	1	4%	1	4%

Question 4: Why do you continue to volunteer? (Multiple answers accepted)

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Helping my fellow Hoosiers	7	28%	5	20%
Making my community a better place	13	50%	10	40%
To use my free-time productively	9	35%	8	32%
Meet new people	8	31%	7	28%
Learn more about my city	3	12%	2	8%
Fulfill a faith or spiritual commitment	2	8%	8	32%

Gain new skills and knowledge	4	15%	3	12%
Encouraged by my employer	0	0%	1	4%
Required (internships, community service, etc.)	0	0%	0	0%
I did not continue to volunteer.	4	15%	4	16%

### Volunteering and incentives

Question 5: I am more likely to volunteer when I receive incentives such as shirts, mugs, gift cards or financial assistance.

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Strongly disagree	4	16%	7	28%
Disagree	5	20%	5	20%
Agree	7	28%	7	28%
Strongly agree	7	28%	2	8%
Unsure/don't know	2	8%	4	16%

Question 6: I would volunteer more hours if each hour of volunteer time was rewarded by...

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
\$1-\$5	2	9%	3	13%
\$6-\$10	4	17%	1	4%
I would like recognition in some other form.	3	13%	5	22%
I am not motivated by rewards to volunteer.	14	60%	14	61%

### Takeaway:

The Bella Communities model does use more financial incentives than tradition models to encourage volunteerism. Behavioral economics does seem to be a factor for some of the ReV-UP volunteers. For example, volunteers had the highest rate of favorable response to financial and other incentives to volunteer, but at the same time 60% of the respondents stated that rewards did not motivate them to serve more.

### Volunteer behaviors, length of service and ability to serve

Question 7: I prefer to volunteer...

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Alone	3	13%	12	50%
As a part of a group	14	58%	8	33%

With my family and friends	7	29%	3	13%
With my coworkers	0	0%	0	0%
Other (please specify)	2	4%	1	4%

Please note the most commonly selected response for "Other" was "All of the above," "Any" or "Whatever the organization needs."

Question 8: Which statement reflects your volunteer activities in the community over the past 12 months?

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
I volunteered for a church/religious organization.	7	27%	10	40%
I volunteered for a school/educational institution.	1	4%	2	8%
I volunteered at one local nonprofit.	12	46%	16	64%
I volunteered for multiple local nonprofit organizations.	2	8%	1	4%
I volunteered for government events.	0	0%	2	8%
I did not volunteer.	3	12%	0	0%
Other (please specify)	2	4%	2	8%

NOTE: Respondents selected more than one answer to this question. Therefore, the total number of surveys received (25) was used to calculate the percentages.

Question 9: When you think of a volunteer opportunity that realistically fits into your schedule and you are willing and able to complete, which statement best describes it?

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
I find it difficult to fit a regular volunteer opportunity into my schedule.	5	19%	1	4%
I can usually volunteer once a year.	0	0%	0	0%
I can usually volunteer 2-4 times a year.	5	19%	2	8%
I am able to commit to a monthly volunteer position for a year or longer.	10	38%	14	56%

I am able to commit to a weekly volunteer position for a year or longer.	6	23%	7	28%
Other (please specify)	1	4%	1	4%

Question 10: In the past 12 months, how many total hours did you volunteer?

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
1-5 hours	6	23%	3	13%
6-20 hours	5	38%	3	13%
21-40 hours	1	31%	6	26%
41-100 hours	8	19%	6	26%
More than 100 hours	3	12%	5	22%
I did not volunteer in the past 12 months.	3	12%	0	0%

Question 11: How long have you been volunteering?

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
0-1 years	8	35%	12	48%
2-4 years	8	35%	9	36%
5-9 years	4	17%	1	4%
10+ years	3	13%	3	12%

Question 12: Which best describes you?

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
My employer lets me leave during the business day to volunteer.	2	9%	3	12%
I am unemployed.	8	35%	9	36%
I am self-employed.	1	4%	0	0%
I am a college/ university student.	1	4%	0	0%
I am a retiree.	3	13%	6	24%
Other (please specify)	8	35%	7	28%

Please note that the most popular response to the "Other (please specify)" was that the volunteer worked and was unable to volunteer during work hours. Offering opportunities for individuals during evenings or weekends was the best way to keep the volunteer program accessible to all types of volunteers.

**Takeaways:** Bella Communities had a higher percentage of volunteers with only 0-1 years of volunteer experience than a typical nonprofit organization. In regard to employment and volunteering, Bella Communities had a higher rate of unemployed volunteers than a typical nonprofit organization. The program thus provided an opportunity to engage these individuals creatively as a part of their life in the apartment

communities. Approximately half of them volunteered from 1 to 40 hours during the year. As seen in Question 9, a large portion (92% of the respondents) indicated that they would be able to commit more regularly to volunteer assignments. The important takeaway from this information is that there is a ground swell of desire for increasing the size of this program and that we should continue to add opportunities by expanding and leveraging the program broadly and quickly.

### Volunteer opinions regarding service, position and impact

Question 13: My current volunteer work is interesting, challenging, and rewarding.

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Strongly disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	1	4%	0	0%
Agree	13	57%	12	48%
Strongly agree	8	35%	11	44%
Unsure/don't know	1	4%	2	8%

Question 14: When I first started volunteering, I received enough training to prepare me for my position.

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Strongly disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	2	9%	1	4%
Agree	13	57%	12	50%
Strongly agree	6	26%	11	46%
Unsure/don't know	2	9%	0	0%

Question 15: I believe that my volunteer efforts improve the ability of the organization to better complete its mission.

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Strongly disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	1	4%
Agree	10	45%	11	44%
Strongly agree	11	50%	11	44%
Unsure/don't know	1	5%	2	8%

Question 16: I understand and can explain the impact of my volunteer efforts.

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Strongly disagree	0	0%	1	4%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Agree	15	65%	10	40%
Strongly agree	7	30%	12	48%
Unsure/don't know	1	5%	2	8%

Question 17: I am interested in ongoing training about the community problems addressed by the agency where I volunteer.

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Yes	20	87%	14	81%
No	3	13%	9	39%

Question 18: The organization where I volunteer provides me with adequate feedback so that I know I'm doing a good job [or] so I can improve my performance.

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Strongly disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Agree	12	52%	13	54%
Strongly agree	10	43%	9	38%
Unsure/don't know	1	4%	2	8%

Question 19: How likely would you be to recommend the ReV-UP volunteer program to friend or colleague? (net promoter score)<sup>3</sup>

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
1 (low)	0	0%	0	0%
2	0	0%	0	0%
3	0	0%	0	0%
4	1	5%	0	0%
5	0	0%	3	13%
6	1	5%	1	4%
7	3	14%	1	4%
8	2	9%	3	13%
9	4	18%	3	13%
10 (high)	11	50%	13	54%

The net promoter score is a business measure to help organizations understand how well they are meeting the needs of clients or in this case volunteers. A score of 7 or higher indicates a supporter, and a score of 9 or 10 indicates that volunteers are willing to promote the organization to others. 68% of October 2013 and 67% of December 2015, respectively, consistently rate the program a score of 9 or greater.

Question 20: Volunteers are valued by the staff at the organization where I currently volunteer.

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Strongly disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

<sup>3</sup> For further information on the adaptability and implications of this kind of score in the nonprofit sector, please refer to <http://feedbacklabs.org/net-promoter-score-for-the-nonprofit-sector-what-weve-learned-so-far/>

Agree	11	50%	7	29%
Strongly agree	10	45%	13	54%
Unsure/don't know	1	5%	4	17%

Question 21: Volunteers are involved in decisions that affect their volunteer work at the agency where I currently volunteer.

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Strongly disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	2	8%
Agree	15	65%	8	33%
Strongly agree	6	26%	6	25%
Unsure/don't know	2	9%	8	33%

Question 22: Volunteers have sufficient opportunity to advance in responsibility at my volunteer agency.

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Strongly disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	2	9%	1	4%
Agree	9	39%	2	8%
Strongly agree	6	26%	6	25%
Unsure/don't know	6	26%	15	63%

### Takeaways:

Volunteers at Bella Communities had a very positive opinion about their experiences as volunteers. The net promoter score indicated that the volunteer program and organization were strongly supported by the volunteers who responded to this survey.

### Volunteering and giving behaviors

Question 23: At the organization where you volunteer most often, was [it] your FIRST experience as a donor or volunteer?

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Donor	0	0%	1	4%
Volunteer	23	100%	22	96%

Question 24: Did becoming a donor influence you to become a volunteer at the same organization?

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Yes	0	0%	4	20%
No	0	0%	16	80%

Question 25: Did volunteering influence you to make a donation at the same organization?

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
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Yes	13	62%	6	27%
No	8	38%	16	73%

Question 26: In the past 12 months, did you donate to AND volunteer at the same organization?

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Yes	9	43%	8	36%
No	12	57%	14	64%

Question 27: In the past 12 months, at what level did you donate to the place where you volunteer?

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
\$1-\$50	6	29%	1	5%
\$51-\$250	6	29%	4	20%
\$251-\$499	0	0%	1	5%
\$500-\$999	0	0%	1	5%
\$1,000-\$1,499	0	0%	0	0%
\$1,500=\$4,999	0	0%	0	0%
\$5,000-\$9,999	0	0%	0	0%
\$10,000 or higher	0	0%	0	0%
I did not make a charitable donation to the place where I volunteer.	9	43%	13	65%

Question 28: How long have you been donating to the place where you volunteer?

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
0-1 years	11	61%	12	63%
2-4 years	3	17%	3	16%
5-9 years	1	5%	0	0%
10+ years	3	17%	4	21%

Question 29: If you did not donate to the organization where you volunteer, why did you choose not to donate? (Multiple answers accepted)

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
I was never asked/contacted.	5	19%	2	8%
Volunteering is more a form of giving	10	38%	8	32%
Lack of resources/can't afford to	3	12%	1	4%
I am retired.	0	0%	3	12%
I gave money to other charities.	1	4%	0	0%

Feeling pressured to give makes me not give.	0	0%	0	0%
Not sure where the money actually goes.	0	0%	0	0%
None/no reason/don't know	2	8%	4	16%

Question 30: Which statements reflect your philanthropic plans in the next 12 months? (multiple answers accepted)

Response	Oct 2013	Oct2013	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
I plan to volunteer at the same level.	12	46%	13	52%
I plan to increase my volunteering.	10	38%	7	28%
I do not plan to volunteer.	1	4%	1	4%
I plan to donate at the same level.	2	8%	1	4%
I plan to increase my donation to charities.	3	12%	2	8%
I do not plan to make any charitable donations.	0	0%	2	8%

**Takeaways:**

The volunteers who responded to the survey did not usually volunteer and/or donate to the same organizations, but they were very dedicated to maintaining or increasing their volunteer service in the future.

## Closing

Low-income housing families have an acute need to gain an economic opportunity to build financial stability. Bella Communities' innovative resident volunteer engagement program, coupling the opportunity to earn rent credits through volunteering with the promotion of civic engagement, is rooted in the idea that the opportunity to earn an economic incentive through volunteering can fundamentally impact people's financial stability in two ways: first, by creating a financial reserve to help them deal with emergencies and shortfalls and, second, by enabling them to improve both their personal well-being and the community's through volunteering.

In the near term, we intend to use this updated brief along with the white paper to inform and encourage other property investors and owners of low-income housing communities to adopt this innovative program. Through the lessons we have learned, we can use our training and implementation methodology to help other communities implement a similar program and mitigate implementation risks, compress roll-out time and remove complexities and cost inefficiencies. Our goal is to build on the pilot period and bridge phase to collaborate during the demonstration phase with a growing number of partners.

Through the next demonstration phase, we then work towards conducting impact evaluations and research studies to build a scientific, evidence-based body of collected data to advocate for a broader public-policy conversation about funding for low-income housing as well as financing and servicing these developments. The desired outcome and aspiration will be to provide programs for low-income housing residents to help them build financial stability and participate more fully in civic life.□