Hi!

I chose the advanced web development project to build a non-profit website

that helps volunteers find opportunities in the United States across multiple organizations.

Based on Americorp`s report, I created a chart from their results that clearly shows a declining trend in the U.S. across all four categories of volunteering. Formal volunteering, where individuals are registered with an organization, shows the highest decline. Informal help shows the least decline, but that is a factor that can only be measured by the volunteer's honest responses, while the others can be verified through factual data.

On the other hand, based on the National Centers for Environmental Information report, there has been an increase in disasters causing more than a billion dollars in damage. From the 1980s to 2023, there was an annual average of 8.5 such events, but in the past five years, this number has increased to 20.4 events.

The numbers of the two report clearly shows that volunteering is declining while the need for volunteers is increasing.

40 Nonprofit Trends for 2024 study highlights the challenges Nonprofits are facing. The top 4 challenge revolves around finding and retaining volunteers to meet the demand. It also highlights communication and scheduling as an issue.  
  
Rosterfy’s survey looks at the same issue from the volunteer’s perspective and what motivates them. It highlights the online accessibility and the recommendation system.

In Volunteerhub’s report – which relyes on multiple sources - there are statistics about volunteering in the U.S.:

- over 71% of volunteers work with only one organization, which raises the question: why is that?

- 67% of volunteers find opportunities online, which indicates that a

well-designed website could help reach even more people.

- 77% of nonprofits believe skilled volunteers could improve their business practices so allowing organizations to search for volunteers based on skills would be beneficial.  
These findings highlight the same areas of focus with the previously mentioned studies.

There are more than 1.8 million nonprofit organizations in the US. Among the top 15 most trusted organizations, only two — Red Cross and Salvation Army — focus on multiple areas of volunteering, including disaster recovery efforts.

If I look at the American Red Cross website, finding volunteer opportunities is a multi-step process, and filtering is limited. Understandably, for all non-profits, it only shows opportunities provided by the given organization. From the volunteer perspective however, this means they can’t find more opportunities unless they register to other organizations and brows them separately.

If I look at the Volunteers of America website, it doesn’t properly list the available volunteer opportunities. Instead, it provides contact information for volunteers to reach out to. It also offers a reverse option where users can search for services likely provided by Volunteers of America's volunteers, but the search is limited, and the result is just a

list of contacts with a map. This provides even less convenience for the volunteer.

I believe my website can increase the number of events a volunteer participates in, by offering a single platform where they can browse opportunities from multiple organizations. It will provide the event recommendation by a friend.

It will also provide a reverse search option for organizations to find skilled volunteers, but only if the volunteer opts in to be visible to them. If not, then their information will remain private. These will answer multiple issues raised by the studies mentioned earlier. Additionally, users could track statistics about their efforts, such as the number of organizations they’ve worked with, hours spent on tasks, and more. The search functionality will be extended to allow filtering by organization, distance, required skills, or event date. If time allows, I will also try to implement an event-based chat feature, so volunteers participating in the same event can communicate and discuss it on a common platform.