Offer more services with fewer resources is a common nonprofit motto. The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the state’s community foundation, saw an opportunity to reframe this perspective by taking a look at the roles skills-based volunteers can play in nonprofit capacity building.

The High Impact Volunteer Engagement (HIVE) pilot was seeded by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation as a unique initiative that was implemented with the expertise of two cross-sector partners. As part of the initiative, ten nonprofit organizations were selected to participate in a year-long training, coaching and support program to expand capacity through skills-based volunteer engagement. The selected nonprofit organizations represented a broad range of issue areas and services: from support of victims of domestic and sexual violence to housing help for the homeless, to programs promoting art and culture.

The impact has been far-reaching. The HIVE pilot inspired nonprofits by giving them the means to think creatively about volunteer roles and responsibilities. It served as a catalyst to build momentum for wider organizational transformation.

The ten teams shaped their nonprofits’ transformation based on new ideas: that volunteers are equally invested today in the impact of their service, that they are as accountable as full-time staff, and that their contribution can be far greater than routine, administrative tasks. In fact, volunteers are a valuable resource for the leadership, direction and sustainability of any organization’s endeavors.