Webinar: Donate Your Professional Experience to Great Causes in 2023

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I’m Josh Groll, the nonprofit success coach here at the Taproot Foundation, I work primarily with our taproot plus team to help bring our kind of online programs, our online marketplace to nonprofit users, and skilled volunteers such as yourself. So as we're kind of beginning the presentation here, if you all want to drop your, as we call, as we'd like to say, professional superpower into the chat, and talk about, you know what skills you might be interested in donating to nonprofit organizations, you can do so.

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But thank you all, I'll give you an official welcome for being here on our donate your professional experience to great causes in 2023. Still weird to say 2023. We're excited to have you join us all today as we look to kickoff 2023 On a positive note. So creating connections that lead to social change is what we are all about. So I'm excited to share information about our nonprofit Taproot Foundation is a nonprofit ourselves, and how our pro bono programs offer business professionals like yourselves, opportunities to make a difference using your professional strengths on behalf of mission driven organizations.

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So despite all the challenging circumstances that these organizations are facing today, people like you are ready to step in and help their communities and the mission driven organizations in their communities. So without further ado, we can go ahead and jump into our main content. And I'm actually just going to talk a little bit about Taproot Foundation, and what we're actually going to be covering throughout the event today, to get you kind of up to date on what our agenda is going to be.

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So we also are going to have a few minutes at the end of the presentation for a q&a session. So if you all have any questions, keep in mind, they might be they might be answered throughout the duration of the presentation. But if they're not, you can drop them into the chat or the q&a. And my colleague Megan is going to boost those out to me at the end of the presentation during our q&a. So a little bit more about Taproot Foundation. The Taproot Foundation is a nonprofit that drives social change by leading mobilizing and engaging professionals in pro bono service. Since the early 2000s, taproot has partnered with over about 9000 social change organizations, and about 30,000 volunteers, I'm rounding up because these stats are a little old. So that number has increased, since we last updated these periodically, altogether total, totaling over 260 million in donated professional services to nonprofits. In addition to tap Roots, pro bono programs, and our own consultancy work, we're leaders of a global pro bono network and are committed to advancing the pro bono movement through further research, education and events. So during today's event, we'll be covering why your skills matter to the social sector and to mission driven organizations, especially now. We'll also going to be joined by a special guest, a nonprofit who is used taproot plots, that's going to share their experience working with skilled volunteers, people like you. And they're also going to talk about what to expect while working with nonprofits, and best practices for managing a successful pro bono project. Following that conversation, I'm going to share kind of a step by step guide about how you can kind of get into using our online marketplace taproot plus to donate your professional skills to nonprofits on a pro bono basis, and give you some tips for managing a virtual pro bono engagement. Then we will dive into our q&a after that if you have any outstanding questions. We're also going to post contact information and be available afterwards as well. So this won't be the last time you hear from us we'll send a follow up email to you all with a recording of this webinar. We will also try to answer any questions that we were not able to take on the live on the webinar will follow up with you since we do keep a recording of the chat. So be on the lookout for that follow up email. It will also have some information if you'd like to get in touch with our with our nonprofit guests today as well. So I'll start you off with like a few stats about why pro bono is so necessary and why it's important for skilled volunteers to be doing this kind of work for nonprofits. So

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Over the last two years, nonprofits have had to operate more leanly than ever, meeting rising community needs while dealing with decreased areas access to hands on volunteer support, a lot of canceled fundraising events and even more. So in tap Roots 2020 nonprofits profit resiliency survey, we found that about 63% of respondents reported a decrease in funding due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Meaning that these are all these already small and scrappy organizations are making do with even smaller budgets and less bandwidth as they try and dig out of the kind of pandemic economy along with everyone else. So it goes without saying what a vital role social good organizations play in keeping our communities safe, strong and kind. Social Good organizations are being looked at more and more for vital services. But at the same time, their traditional funding and volunteer sources are shifting and or shrinking dramatically. Even more reason that your pro bono support with your skill set as a skilled volunteer is all the more vital.

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So really, to put it simply, most organizations tackling social problems don't have access to the resources, funding or staff expertise needed to fully accomplish their vital missions. The lack of ability to invest in their internal operations saps their ability to build strong, resilient and sustainable organizations. And due to the current global crises that are ongoing, nonprofit organizations are feeling the strain right now kind of more than ever, as you might expect.

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So this is where skilled volunteers come in. This is where you come in. So Taproot Foundation helps bridge the nonprofit resource gap through connections with skilled volunteers, like you who provide your expertise in tech, marketing, HR, strategy, finance, and much, much more. And you provide that experience on a pro bono basis for nonprofits. So that's what taproot is all about is fostering those types of engagements. I want to just pause here for a moment, and we'll do a little a little etymology. Often when people hear the term pro bono, they think of legal services, it's almost ubiquitous, to think of pro bono in a legal context. But actually, you can have pro bono anything. So you can just have pro bono marketing, you can have pro bono, you know, design work, you can have pro bono web development, pro bono is just donated professional services benefiting organizations working to improve society. So that is our definition. In the business community. Like I said, this typically refers to things like marketing, strategic planning, financial management, HR, and it needs. But pro bono can run the gamut from professional services from plumbing to architecture, as well. So it's not just the legal field. Even though that's the place where you hear the term pro bono, the most

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taproot actually feels that our partners in the legal field already do pro bono service really well. So if you are, if you are looking to engage in pro bono legal service, we can point you in the right direction. But we leave that to them since they already do it so well. In fact, in many ways, we're working to kind of create the same infrastructure they have in that field for pro bono service. So to help make it easier to understand how everything fits together, the Taproot Foundation created this helpful diagram showing the full spectrum of common corporate community engagement activities. We've grouped them by the common types of nonprofit needs, that need to be addressed. And then the different ways companies and the kind of private sector can help support them. So at the very top is a simplified categorization of nonprofit needs from making budget, extra hands and infrastructure and leadership. Making budget just means having the funding that they need to run the organization's programs. Extra hands means to deliver services and programs directly to the community. So these are the people staffing the soup kitchens, doing the actual kind of work on the ground, and it's that kind of nonprofit, we're looking to envelopes. You know, stamping them put it you know, distributing things, that types of hands on volunteer support that are so critical to a lot of nonprofits.

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And infrastructure and leadership is the last segment. So having those critical components in place that are the backbone of any healthy institution.

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then beneath that are the common buckets of support that companies tend to provide to address those needs. So obviously, providing financial support is one of the most obvious ways you can benefit nonprofits. But you can also benefit nonprofits with hands on volunteering or kind of general skills. So you can see

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See the examples listed out underneath each of those. When we say volunteerism, this is actually typically what most people think of when they think about working on behalf of a nonprofit, they're thinking about, you know, painting the painting the wall, or stuffing the envelopes or something like that, where you'd kind of get down and start doing the the nitty gritty hands on volunteering in many, many nonprofits use that type of volunteer support. And that type of volunteer support is critical for the operations of those nonprofits. But we want everyone to know that that's not the only type of volunteer support that nonprofits can benefit from. So you can see, skills based volunteering is also a form of engagement that is oftentimes not discussed. So basically, you can use the skills that you already use on a daily basis doing your job to benefit nonprofits. So you can see things like pro bono expertise, like we facilitate here at the Taproot Foundation. But also things like board service and general skills fall into the bucket of skills based volunteerism as well.

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So hands on volunteering, financial donations, and pro bono service all play key roles in strengthening a nonprofit and helping it it's a cheat and helping it achieve its mission. One form of an engagement should not fully replace the other. However, pro bono service offers a great option for professionals like yourself, who might not have 1000s of dollars to donate to nonprofits that they love and care about and make a difference in their community. But you can make a huge difference just by donating the skills that you already use on a day to day basis for your for your own job.

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So I do want to briefly just talk about the actual value of pro bono service. So in 2019, taproot and CECP chief executives for corporate purpose updated the findings around the actual financial impact of an hour of pro bono volunteering in the areas of PR, information technology, HR, financial services, design, advertising, marketing, and accounting. Through this study, we determined that the average hour of business pro bono across all sectors, just an average is about $195 per hour. So we all don't have 1000s of dollars laying around to donate to our favorite mission driven organizations. But the benefit of pro bono service is really in its multiplier effect. So pro bono projects done with nonprofits using your skill set, oftentimes are valued in the 1000s of dollars. So donate your skills is a way that you can actually donate 1000s of dollars to nonprofit organizations, I would love to be able to throw a ton of money at all the organizations I care about. But we don't always have that, right. So this is another way in which you can give back that can really have a multiplier effect.

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So we've talked a lot about what nonprofits receive from pro bono service. But you also get value out of the experience of doing pro bono service as well. So you can make a substantial impact obviously, on causes that are near and dear to your heart. While learning about challenges impacting communities across the globe, you can build your own professional network. It's really helpful in flexing existing talents and new environments and develop key soft skills such as empathy, leadership, and collaboration.

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You can also help strengthen your resume and portfolio with tactical examples of experience and your connection to the community. So it's really a great way to demonstrate to any future employees, that you're engaged with your community. It's also a really great way to avoid any of those kind of dreaded gaps on a resume. You can take on pro bono projects in between opportunities or in between jobs to keep your skills fresh. And obviously future employers love to see that as well.

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And at the end of the day, the biggest benefit of pro bono is the support you're able to offer the nonprofits, so you'll be assisting their mission, and that in turn supports community members. So when you give back on a marketplace, like taproot plus you have the opportunity to support organizations working in all of these cause groups. taproot supports nonprofits in pretty much all issue areas, which means you can align your professional talents with a cause area that you're uniquely passionate about.

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And I just want to give you this wonderful quote from Anne Holcomb, of the nonprofit unity parenting and counseling, who's benefited from taproot services. Your efforts as volunteers really pay off for nonprofits at the end of the day.

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and nonprofits bottom line is their mission. And you can help them get there when your skills are paired with the the right nonprofit need.

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So now I want to just pause and actually talk to an actual member of our nonprofit community who is going to just pop in and talk about their experience using pro bono support.

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And we're going to get her perspective on, you know, working with volunteers, and what, what kind of impact that has made on her organization and to also give you some kind of tips and best practices about what to expect in working with a nonprofit. So I want everyone to give a warm welcome to both Gunn, Basharat, who is joining us from Durham, North Carolina. And we have some kind of basic facts up here about Mozcon. And and her nonprofit in her vision foundation Incorporated, and some recently completed projects that she was able to complete with skilled volunteers just like you on taproot plus, so I want to welcome both gone. Hi. And I think we'll just kind of start off by Can you just tell us what your what is your nonprofits mission and vision? What are you all doing in the community? Awesome. Well, hi, Josh, and welcome, everybody, what a great organization to be a part of, and I really appreciate being here with you all.

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In our vision, is really born from this place of experience for me as an as an eye doctor, in terms of communities in need, that truly need accessible eye care. And however, there are so many folks that can't afford it and don't have health insurance or any means of getting that care. And so our organization, our foundation really truly goes to communities to do this work. And we partner with other nonprofits who are on the ground already helping others in the community. And that is how we are connected to other organizations doing this work. Yeah, and are really at the whole mission is to really be able to take care of folks who truly don't have access to care and need it. Yeah.

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Yeah, so many, so many nonprofits are kind of called upon to fill in gaps in, you know, various sectors, in, you know, the economy. And that's obviously, you know, big reason why the social sector is so important. So, obviously, pro bono work from skilled volunteers is, is done for free, which is great. But are there any other reasons that you engage in pro bono work with skilled volunteers, or maybe other benefits that you kind of discovered along the way of getting that kind of assistance? Yeah, I really appreciate this question. I feel like it hits the heart of it. All right. We're in this work to really be of service to others. And to work with pro bono volunteers who are skilled at what they do, who are opening their heart to doing this work is just a continuation, it's like an echo that we are all in in terms of really, truly opening our arms wide, and doing this work together. So it's, it feels really connected to work with others who are really aligned with you. And are, are there to really help from their heart and are skilled at what they're doing. Right. Yeah, we oftentimes collect data and have taken internal surveys from our skilled volunteers in our system about, so why do Why do you donate services? Why do you volunteer and one of the biggest reasons is, you know, I want to do something I care about, I want to use my skill set, you know, to do something that's, that's mission driven, that I know I can actually make an impact on. So you know, being able to like have that experience of helping you know, a nonprofit can be really, really edifying. A lot of people have found and it's one of the main drawls it's probably a reason why there's probably a lot of people on this call right now who are interested in donating their service.

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So we have some of these projects listed out that you've recently completed with skilled volunteers.

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Do you have an example of a one of these maybe that was like particularly impactful? And kind of what was the deliverable? What what did you all work towards kind of how did how did it make a difference to the organization? Yeah, thank you. Really two really integral pieces because we're truly a very young nonprofit. You know, we started in 2021. And so we had, we really needed grant writing help as

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is a very young organization trying to get off the ground. And the work that we did through a skilled volunteer through taproot was paramount. And our ability to get the grants at least to get a floating and moving and taking action that's sustainable in really doing this outreach to our community, and really going out there and doing these mobile clinics. That was enormous. And

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it was like a nine week timeframe, we met weekly, it really taught me a lot about grant writing.

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So I really appreciated that as well, the learning that came with that, yeah, and also meant of that individual, we were communicating, communicating through like different parts of the world, as they were in South Africa. So it was huge and so doable. So I really appreciated that. And the other project that was really super valuable, because it really highlighted for me, I'm a very action oriented individual. And so I already started the clinics and was out there doing all this work, without really ever sitting down and realizing the strat and the minutia of all that it took to really do this work. And I worked with a skilled volunteer who really showed, like, created this beautiful Action Plan map of like all of the work that we've been doing. And this really helps us when it comes to asking for funding, but also really talking about the work that we do, and all these different layered ways. So that was really insightful and super helpful and other aspects of our organization. Yeah.

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Yeah, I love all that. And

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really, like when you're when you're working with skilled volunteers,

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what are you thinking about when you maybe post a new project, and you have interested people kind of approaching you, and asking you about the project and applying to it. And for people, for people on the call, I'll go into kind of like the logistics of how you can do that a little bit later. But I'm really interested in hearing from you. What are you looking for when you are selecting, you know, kind of the perfect match for a project? What are the qualities you think skilled volunteers working with nonprofits should should focus on? So give us give us kind of like the insider tips about what nonprofits might be looking for when they're vetting skilled volunteers, because it can be maybe a little different nonprofits have different priorities than maybe people are familiar with, when they go into a maybe like an interview in the business world or something like that. Yeah, I appreciate that. Um, honestly, I think it has to start with commitment, like really being clear about what you're willing to commit to, and really showing up just like you would any, any paying job, right? That that that level of commitment is matched to this purpose, right, that if you're really moving with purpose, you're also moving with commitment to that purpose. And then communication is really important here, communicating with the nonprofit, contact person directly, and being very clear about boundaries, and also ways that you're willing to really show up makes a difference. And just keeping, you know, keeping up to date about everything is helpful. That's not really any different I don't think from a nonprofit to profit world.

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And then skills, my goodness,

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being really clear about your skills and what your skill level is a what you're very, like comfortable and adept at, that you can bring to the foreground for that nonprofit. It's huge. Yeah, very big. Like, we might go in thinking we want something and then this volunteer, the volunteer will show up and we'll start speaking about what they're really good at. You're like, Oh, my goodness, I didn't even think about it like that. So that's really valuable. Yeah. You mentioned something that kind of hit on internally, we have this thing that we'd like to call the golden rule of pro bono, which is, you know, the golden rule of pro bono is if you take nothing else away from this webinar, but this treat every project like it was a for pay engagement. And that generally will secure the best outcomes. And that is true for the nonprofit and for the skilled volunteers. So committing to deadlines, committing to a communication plan, committing to honest feedback, and direct feedback. A lot of times nonprofits are like, well, they're volunteering, so we'll just kind of accept whatever you know, and we always say like, No, you know, this is a this is a partnership use the golden rule of pro bono, and we found that in most cases, volunteers don't want to be buttered up, you know about their, you know, their work. They want honest and direct feedback. They want to know that what they're producing is actually really, really helpful for the nonprofit

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Um, and so we always like kind of push that that golden rule of pro bono, you touched on something else. That's really critical in kind of the vetting stage, which is, you, as skilled volunteers on this call, you are kind of the experts in whatever skill set that the nonprofit is looking for. So sometimes people read project descriptions on our marketplace, and they go, Well, you know, I might, I don't know if I'm completely, I'm not clear on this, or I'm not sure if I can complete every item in you know, the deliverable. But oftentimes, it can be really helpful to just have that initial conversation with the nonprofit, because a lot of times the nonprofits don't have the kind of knowledge level to know, you know, hey, this, this part of the deliverable you want is probably just going to be the main piece, and that we need to kind of wait to work on, you know, other aspects of it later, you're the experts in the in whatever the skill set is, and you can really help nonprofits actually better understand their own need. Because that's something that a lot of nonprofits have historically struggled with is understanding, like, what their their need is.

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And so that's always really, really helpful. Sometimes, you know, volunteers get disappointed, because they're like, well, once we unpack the knee a little bit more, we realized that the nonprofit actually needed to go back to the drawing board. And so we decided not to move forward with the project. And what I tell them, you know, is just, you know, you might have talked them out of doing this project, but you still added value, because you save them time on, you know, going down kind of a rabbit hole trying to do this project, that you both realize together, you did not necessarily they did not necessarily like have all their ducks in a row to actually accomplish. So I think you highlighted that, you know, when you were talking about, like sharing the knowledge and the skill itself, in a really, really important way.

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So let me just say something,

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just to kind of tag on to that. And this is something that I was actually thinking about, is that truly what I appreciated about the volunteers that I worked with, that were so skilled at what they were doing,

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was how they stepped up, to really guide to really maneuver the project.

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I may have thought about it as a certain way. But the fact that they opened the door and the window to a whole different perspective and really drove it

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helped me grow as somebody who's running a nonprofit, and I really appreciate it that so there is some equitability here that I really want folks to take away is that your skills and your knowledge and your competency are no small thing to a nonprofit, that is really having to deal with so many aspects of running a nonprofit or get making things happen. And so it is tremendous what you bring to the table. Yeah, I love that. Because we always try to tell volunteers as well, you know, again, you this, your professional skills you're the expert in, and the nonprofit, you know, might there might be unknown unknowns, right at the nonprofit that they don't even know about. And we also tell skill volunteers that remember, a lot of a lot of people who run nonprofits are they, they maybe necessarily have never been in like a professional project management setting or something like that before. Um, so when it comes to really kind of managing this project together, one of the biggest skills that I think volunteers bring to the table no matter what their specific skill set is, is just, you know, directing and organizing the the actual engagement, because a lot of you know, a lot of nonprofits are led by, you know, people who didn't necessarily work in a professional setting, but now they've retired and they're just very passionate.

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You know, and it's it can mean that the skilled volunteers can really step in and use project management expertise to kind of direct like the engagement. And it's, it's kind of a bridging between two worlds of, you know, professional services, and nonprofits who have these really inspiring missions and kind of need that structure that skilled volunteers can actually provide.

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Yeah, so I'm interested in hearing for you kind of what what advice do you have for any skilled volunteers and people on this webinar, looking to donate their skills to nonprofits, or if you have any kind of specific do's and don'ts that would be helpful to kind of prep people for these types of opportunities. I think really taking the time to get very clear about the time that you're willing to give is really relevant.

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Some of the pitfalls that we experienced or volunteers that would like, say yes, and then not show up,

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which is just a lot of time wasted on both parties. And so like being very clear about the time that you're willing to give the commitment, you're willing to give, you know, your own boundaries around the work that you're willing to do.

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And taking action from this really connected and centered space around what really matters to you and how you want to show up. Because it does, it does resonate, and it does make a difference for the nonprofit.

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Yeah, and communicating. Again, back to that communication is just getting, we all have different communication styles, and really appreciating the complexity of navigating that with another person on the other side, regardless of who they are, it really is important, right? It's just like, how we connect with each other. So let's really work at that, let's really try to understand a little more. So yeah. And it's interesting when, you know, when it there's cases when you know, pro bono projects didn't pan out or failed, and nine times out of 10. It's that really basic kind of elemental stuff. That is the reason for the ultimate derailing of the project. It's it's misaligned timelines, or not unclear communication, or unclear expectations about how we're going to communicate,

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you know, like that, it's actually very, very kind of basic elemental stuff is usually nine times out of 10, that kind of point of failure. It's not, oh, this, this task was actually too difficult, you know, for me, or like, my, I didn't actually have the skills to do this. It's always in kind of those kind of basic core components of, you know, project management, which is why I emphasize with our skilled volunteers, but you know, kind of take the lead on that with a nonprofit, because it can be so, so helpful. And it will pay dividends for you as a skilled volunteer, it makes all the difference. Right. Yeah. So and now, the nonprofit has also learned something and the same time.

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as pursuant to that, you know, I think you've already talked about this a little bit. But what's something that you've learned from skilled volunteers that maybe you didn't know before?

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Yeah, exactly what I said, like I, you know, I am an eye doctor, and I am also a somatic coach. And I have all these other things that are in my wheelhouse, but sometimes there's not a lot, I just learned a lot around business development that I'm still trying to learn.

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Just in terms of the the, the whole aspect of the nonprofit world was so unique to me. And having someone who was familiar in that world is so helpful, so helpful, when you know, you're coming from that perspective. So just, yeah, I really feel like every every opportunity to work with somebody is a growing experience for both of us. Yeah.

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And we do have, there's somebody who dropped a question. Really,

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they wanted to hear a little bit more about that financial.

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Yeah, we were running into like, a little bit of the end of the year, oh, my God, we have to file are this 1099 thing that we have no clue about? And so we needed some direction. I really like how do you do this? Like, what is the, how does this even happen? And so the individual is very just helpful and getting us to take care of that and really, like be able to make that happen in a timely manner. So that we were following the guidelines with the federal government to be able to still remain nonprofit, right, keep over keep our designation. So that was pretty much what that was. Pretty straightforward, very clear, delivered very much on time.

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And I, you talked about that, that grant writing projects. I think starting off with that, um, you know, to anyone who might be watching who has any kind of grant writing experience, especially in the nonprofit sector, that is, it's one of the areas in which it's a tremendous, like, area of assistance of like nonprofits need. We always, always, always, always are looking for skilled volunteers who are grant writers. We always have more nonprofits with needs in that area, than we actually do skilled volunteers in our pool that can do that. So I'd be so happy when that was actually one of the projects you were able to complete because you were able to get one of the coveted grant researchers or writing assistant people that are that are so kind of value

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You. So if anyone has that skill set in particular,

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I really loved love to have you in our system. And it worked out so beautifully for them. Because after we finished our work together, they asked me if they could use me as a reference for this job that they were applying for through this really big organization in doing some work around that. And it worked out so beautifully, because I had such direct contact with them, they were able to get that job. Right. So it felt really good. Yeah. Yeah, that's, I mean, that's wonderful. Going back to that information I showed of, you know, the ROI is, is obvious for a nonprofit in a certain way. But for skilled volunteers, you know, if you if you do such a good job and have such a good partnership, it's obviously you know, keeping your resume current, but you now have like, a new reference who will speak glowingly about you for any, you know, future opportunities. And it's a nonprofit, you know, it shows a lot of community engagement. So that's just another one of the benefits, along with like that personal edification, but it can also help definitely with career advancement as well.

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So yeah, I mean, most gone, thank you so much for your time, and sharing your nonprofits experience and working with skilled volunteers. I love having guests on these webinars, not only because it, it allows me to take a drink, and then kind of clear my vocal cords. But oftentimes, the the people who actually use and do pro bono can put it in way, way better terms than I can. So we'd love having guests and people that have actually used these services and given pro bono service on these webinars.

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But I know you're busy. So we're gonna let you get back to it.

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Everyone wondering, we are going to put most guns information in the follow up.

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So if for whatever reason you'd like to reach out or learn more about the nonprofit, you could do so there, but we are going to let Mozcon go for now.

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Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody. It was really nice to be with you all. We'll see you online later. Okay, have a good one.

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So obviously, most gun was able to share her perspective on being a nonprofit that's benefited from skilled volunteerism. Now that we've kind of talked about the impact of pro bono and skilled volunteerism, I kind of want to get into some logistics of okay, how do you end up working with a nonprofit like most guns, nonprofit? Where can where can you go to find people who work in nonprofits who need help. So that's kind of where we come in here at the Taproot Foundation. So we actually have, as you probably heard, referenced multiple times our online marketplace taproot plus,

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which is really kind of a one stop shop for all things pro bono. You can see my colleague Megan has actually put the signup page ribbon on the screen where you can go and just hit that button to take a look at the website. Or you can just go to taproot plus.org And if you haven't signed up already, you can kind of look at the signup process. Um, but basically, taproot plus is designed to be a flexible and nimble service so that any nonprofit can get skilled volunteers no matter how big they are, or where they're located. In any skilled volunteer business professional, can support said nonprofit, no matter where they're located. And of course, it's completely free to use for both parties. There are no hidden fees or cost or anything like that for nonprofits or skilled volunteers using taproot plus, this is taproots way of scaling up the pro bono movement and making sure all those who want to give back on a pro bono basis can do so. Currently, taproot plus is open to business professionals and registered nonprofits and public institutions and in social good organizations in the United States, the UK, the European Union, Canada, and India. And we have over 85,000 total users.

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And at this point, basically, I'm just going to go into some of the kind of nuts and bolts of how you can use taproot plus to start partnering with nonprofit organizations.

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So, as you can see here, this is just kind of a basics of the signup process.

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And it's works similarly to any other like service you've ever signed up to before will ask for some basic information. Your email will send you an email confirmation message Make sure to confirm your email so that you can get updates about all the opportunities you've reached out

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About will ask you to create a password etc. You also have the option of using your LinkedIn account to do a more speedy signup. So we have a partnership with LinkedIn that allows you to just port your information from your LinkedIn account over. So if you want to do that, you can do that as well. We've tried to make the signup process easy. So you all can get started immediately.

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And then we'll ask you to designate your kind of skill sets. So the skills that you want to donate, this will help us boost in pitch projects to you. It'll help us curate your marketplace. I'll get to what that looks like actually what the actual marketplace looks like in a few slides here. So you're going to tell us these are the skills that I'm interested in donating. We recommend that volunteers have at least three years of professional business experience in the skill sets that they flag themselves for.

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The reason why we provide this guideline is that when nonprofits reach out for pro bono support, whether with taproot or anywhere else, it's because they're understaffed, under resourced, resourced, and need experienced support that can immediately jump in. So with this in mind, pro bono projects are generally not the best places to practice or break in new skill sets

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in or necessarily like learn on the job. Keep in mind that your work will impact the nonprofit's bottom line, and try to only flag yourself for skill sets that you are actually really experienced in going back again to that that golden rule of pro bono, you can also update these skills through your account. So you're not necessarily just locked in to whatever you designate right now today. If you have a new skill set, you want to add that you feel very confident in donating, you can do that as well, by changing the skills that are listed on your account.

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So I mentioned I talked about the Marketplace quite a bit. So this is an example of once you get your account up and running what the marketplace actually looks like. So you'll be able to browse all the projects and one on one consulting opportunities that are available on the marketplace by going to the Browse opportunities option here. There's a ton of you know, filtering options, where you can sort by the project by issue area, or specific skill set that you might want to donate. So you can play around with those filtering options. You'll also see that there are several different kinds of engagements pro bono engagements you can engage on with nonprofits.

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We do primarily one on one projects or one on one consults. Our own advisory services department here at taproot also runs special volunteer volunteer led events that they organize. And we actually want to extend an invitation for you to volunteer at an upcoming taproot scope Athan event. This is really a half day event where volunteers work in teams with nonprofit leaders to explore the root cause of an organization's challenge and using their professional skills and experience to develop a scope of work that addresses the issue.

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So tap root provides volunteers in the nonprofit support templates and training to be successful during the scope of fun. We have scope pythons coming up on March the 23rd and April the 23rd. And what we're going to do is we'll actually include information about how to just put your hat in the ring to be a part of one of those scope Athan events. Those are primarily virtual events. So we host those kind of in a big virtuals, half day setting on Zoom. And we'll include information about that an email follow up, you will need a taproot Plus account to sign up. If you can see on the screen here, where it says events next to project sessions. That's actually where you would go to look at the upcoming events were happening. So if maybe you don't have, you know, a few weeks to dedicate to a project, but you can do like one of these half day events like a pro bono marathon or scope. Athan, we also facilitate those through taproot programming as well. So keep an eye out that for that in the follow up email.

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And you'll notice I've talked a little bit about the types of pro bono you can do on taproot plus on taproot plus there's really two main types of pro bono service you can engage in consultation sessions, which we just call sessions for short, and projects. So as the names would imply

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A consultation session is actually a kind of one hour one off consulting session. These are great for when nonprofits need help diagnosing an issue brainstorming or troubleshooting, or even just mapping out a scope of work for a potential project that they're going to come back to taproot plus two source assistance for projects, as the name would imply, is really kind of like the big feature that taproot plus facilitates. So projects are more long term engagements where you're partnering with a nonprofit organization over a period of weeks. I think you heard both gone talk about Mozcon talk about one of the projects being up to nine weeks, on average taproot plus projects are two to 12 weeks. But those are two, that's just kind of an average. The final kind of timeline will be determined, of course, by you and the nonprofit that you're you're partnered with. But we just wanted to give you kind of a sense of, you know, the average length of these projects. It's highly dependent, obviously, on the deliverable and your own kind of project plan. But these are the two main things you can engage in on taproot plus, so when you go to that marketplace, you'll be able to filter and sort by consultation sessions and projects, along with seeing what those kinds of special events like scope add ons and pro bono marathons coming up are and if there's any available that you can put yourself forward on.

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So what will happen is, once you create an account, let's say you're interested in one of these projects that you see up here, you can actually click on the heading of that project. And if you have the right skill set for it, you can apply directly to that project. So what'll happen is we'll help facilitate getting in touch with that nonprofit, and setting up the initial phone call between you and the nonprofit so that you can start discussing the project to really see if you're a good fit. And just striking up a rapport with the nonprofit, and seeing if this is something that you might be able to partner with them to do. So taproot plus is going to help facilitate that connection will ask you for a statement of interest, basically short cover letter detailing your skills and experience.

We'll send that over to the nonprofit along with your LinkedIn information, and your email information. And we'll ask you for a set of times that you might be available in the near future, to actually have a call with that nonprofit. And we'll send that slate of times over to the nonprofit as well. If they select one of those times, we will actually confirm and set up the meeting for you, we'll send you a confirmation message. And it works similarly with consultation sessions. So if you apply to a consultation session, taproot plus will help you actually schedule that meeting as well. In both cases, we assign you both parties that conference line you can use. I always tell people though, if you want to get in touch in a different way we are, we are not at all going to be offended if you do not use the OSI a conference line. If you feel more comfortable on Zoom, or Google meets or whatever, you can email your your partner, nonprofit and ask them if they just want to meet on Zoom or one of those services instead. But really, we're focused on getting you in touch with each other and getting you the information that you need to make a good decision about whether or not you want to put yourself forward for one of these opportunities.

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And finally, this is just an example of what your dashboard would look like maybe if you've done a few kinds of opportunities, you'll see that your dashboard will kind of start filling up with information, how many projects you've done, how much value you've donated. That big like blue toolbar on the left hand side here is going to kind of be your Northstar. So you can keep track of open applications or projects that you applied to projects that you've finished. It's also where you can edit your kind of profile settings if you want to add skills

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to that to your profile, so that you can start applying to different kinds of projects if you have a new skill set that you feel very confident that you'd be willing to donate. So that's just a taste of kind of at a glance what's available on your user dashboard.

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We do also have an engagement team that is there to help if you have any troubleshooting questions or need any more assistance using taproot plus. So you can always reach out to our engagement team at help at taproot plus.org

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as well they can get you over to me if you if you'd like to talk to me as well. So we do have an engagement team ready to field any questions. But that pretty much

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He wraps it up in terms of the official content. So now I want to just take a moment to dive into any q&a questions that you might have.

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And get those answered on air. Like I said, if for whatever reason we miss your question, we'll try to follow up with you. So I know there's already a few questions that have come in. One of them is, if you can filter opportunities by location, right now, the vast majority of projects are done kind of in a virtual setting. So there's no location filter specifically. But that is something that is going to be a feature that we have in future iterations of taproot plus, since we know that a lot of getting a lot of cases, people are really, really interested in donating their time to nonprofits in their community.

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There are some nonprofits that post projects that are what we call local only projects, meaning they require someone to actually be in the area to do the project on site. So for example, like a photography project, or something like that, would be a local only opportunity. And what happens with those is they only appear and get boosted out to volunteers kind of in that geographic range. So right now, that is the biggest kind of by location feature that we have on taproot plus, but I know that's going to change in the future.

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Another great question that came in, is how long that statement of interest should be, if one paragraph would be enough? Yeah, it would, it would basically be a shorter version of a cover letter. So maybe one or two paragraphs, you don't necessarily have to write a thesis. But really, you want to just introduce yourself what your skills are. And just demonstrate, you know, that you kind of understand what they're asking for. And in particular passion for the mission. as you heard Mozcon talk about demonstrating that, you know, this is a cause or issue area that might be near and dear to your heart. If it's something that has affected you, personally, or affected someone you've loved personally, if you're an animal lover, and you're applying to, you know, an animal rights organization, you can talk about that as well. nonprofit leaders are very passionate, they work for mission driven organizations. So they're going to that goes a long way in instilling confidence in using that statement of interest to talk about your your skills and experience. Also be open to you know, supplying more information, your resume or CV, examples of prior work if that applicable. And even references if you've worked with other nonprofit leaders before, it's great to you know, be forward with that information or say you know, that you're willing to get them in touch with other people that you've worked with.

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It doesn't have to be as long as a cover letter, but maybe a paragraph or two, describing your skills and experience and kind of passion for the mission

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are usually what we're looking for, with a good statement of interest. And again, if you have your LinkedIn account attached to your account, that's immediately going to be supplied to them as well. So if you if you'd like your LinkedIn page, you can definitely go ahead and just put that up there. And there'll be able to see, you know, your skills, your work history, where you've worked, etc, and any information you have on that LinkedIn page.

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So I think that about concludes it for questions for the q&a. I want to just thank everyone for being here today. You know, time is valuable. Thank you so much for considering donating your skills to nonprofits. I hope that we were able to supply you with some good information about how to do that. And again, reach out to us if you have any questions, take a look at taproot plus, and be on the lookout for the follow up here that's going to have most guns information and also the information about that that those two scope Athan events that you might be interested in signing up for along with a recording of this presentation as well. So if you want to boost this out to anyone in your professional network, who maybe might be interested but wasn't able to make it today, please do.

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And we hope to see you all online. Thank you all for attending. You all have a good one. Bye