



**Metropolitan Volunteer Program Fiscal Year 2025
Student Fees Advisory Committee Questionnaire**

Question #1: Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, how you accomplish your unit's mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.

Mission:

The mission of the University of Houston Metropolitan Volunteer Program is to create and provide service opportunities for students by collaborating with campus and community partners. Through this, we aim to develop responsible citizens with a lifelong commitment to service while creating sustainable change in our campus and community.

Accomplishing Our Mission:

The Metropolitan Volunteer Program (MVP) accomplishes our mission by providing the diverse student body of the University of Houston with unique, flexibly scheduled and accessible service and awareness opportunities that fall under the following social issue areas: Children & Education, Environment & Sustainability, Health & Wellness, and Hunger & Homelessness.

MVP is made up of four committees, each led by a Chair and focused on one of the specific service areas mentioned above. Through the work of the committees, our volunteers are able to connect with these 4 different social issues and others, enabling them to engage with the issues that matter most to them. With the Chair's passion and expertise in the service area, meaningful and intentional dialogues are created through our service events. For example, if a student is studying education, we can directly connect them with tutoring or other education-related opportunities. Similarly, when groups request our assistance for volunteer/service events, we have a wide range of partnerships for specific service areas that we can connect them to. MVP continues to hold service as a core value of the organization and we aim to ensure that students have access to opportunities that make a tangible and sustainable impact within the UH campus and local community.

Justification:

MVP offers a large variety of service opportunities to UH students, faculty, and staff to participate throughout the year. MVP hosted a total of 102 volunteer events during FY 24. This is slightly lower than the year prior due to a vacancy in the Environment and Sustainability position during the fall semester. Had that position been filled and met the target number of events for each chair, this number would have increased slightly from the year prior. Overall, the number of people coming to our programs is growing. Our unique attendance from FY 23 to FY24 increased from 1,395 to 1,615, showing that more unique individuals are interested in our programs.

Question #2 Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the evaluate strategic initiatives and/or action steps and their importance as compared to others that you might pursue. Where data exists, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and any assessment measures and/or learning outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting this data.

Attendance:

MVP's primary method of evaluating the success of our organization is by tracking attendance at general meetings, service events, workshops, awareness events, and all other MVP events. Students must register for events in advance via the MVP website, and then sign into the event under the supervision of an officer. After every event, MVP records the information in a database that tracks the number of volunteers, individual service hours logged with MVP, the annual number of service hours, and a monthly/yearly participation count. Attendance is also recorded in Get Involved for each of our events. Our tracking for events in FY24 indicated that our volunteers logged **3,289 volunteer hours** in the Get Involved platform through our events. We found that a high number of individuals have volunteered with MVP multiple times indicating that our retention is high. Our tracking showed our most popular events were Be the MVP, with 477 attendees and our two Volunteer Fairs which had a combined total of 659 attendees.

Over the years, we have found that many students want to participate in service based events, but are unable to go off campus for an extended time or don't have transportation. To maintain our impact while including students unable to make it off campus, we began hosting on-campus service events, such as Service Nights. During these events, students would spend an hour creating service projects on campus, which were then donated to our community partners. Projects included care packages for local animal shelters and hygiene kits for both unhoused individuals and low-income schools. In FY 24 alone, 291 students participated in Service Nights. We continue to offer these opportunities because we recognize the importance of providing students with on-campus ways to make an impact. These events also allow students with varying schedules to volunteer and contribute to meaningful change.

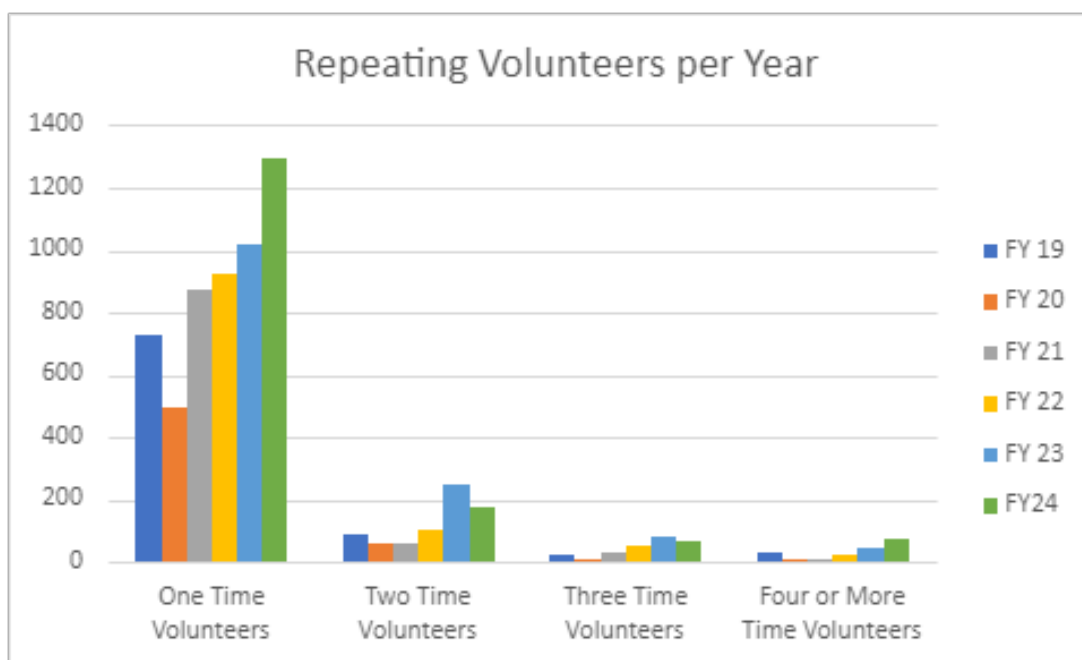
Number of Returning Volunteers:

Another method MVP uses to evaluate the success of our volunteering events is by analyzing volunteer retention from event to event. One of the ways we focused on retention last year was by offering weekly recurring events, such as volunteering at Cougar Cupboard, Nora's Home, The Post Houston, and Peck Elementary, along with opportunities to volunteer in our office. However, one challenge in getting returning volunteers was transportation to off-campus events.

We encouraged students to carpool with each other and incentivized this by offering promotional items or an additional service hour to those who carpooled.

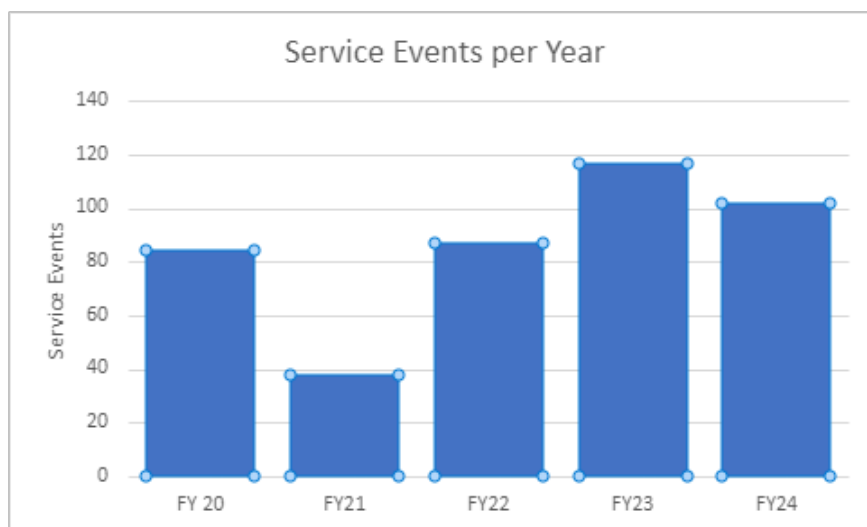
To further boost retention, we partnered with registered student organizations like the Black Student Union, Hispanic Business Student Association, and Women of Gold to foster a culture of service. We also implemented a tier system, where students can earn items like a free shirt, tote bag, or notebook after attending a certain number of events.

As a result, we saw 1,298 one-time volunteers, 175 two-time volunteers, 65 three-time volunteers, and 77 who volunteered four or more times. These numbers reflect the unique students who participated in our events. As you can see in the graph below, both our one-time volunteer numbers and total unique attendance are up along with our volunteers returning 4 or more times. This shows that those who return are returning more often and increasing their impact in our community. We are working to continue to convert those one-time volunteers into returning volunteers.



Number and Variety of Volunteer/Service Events Provided:

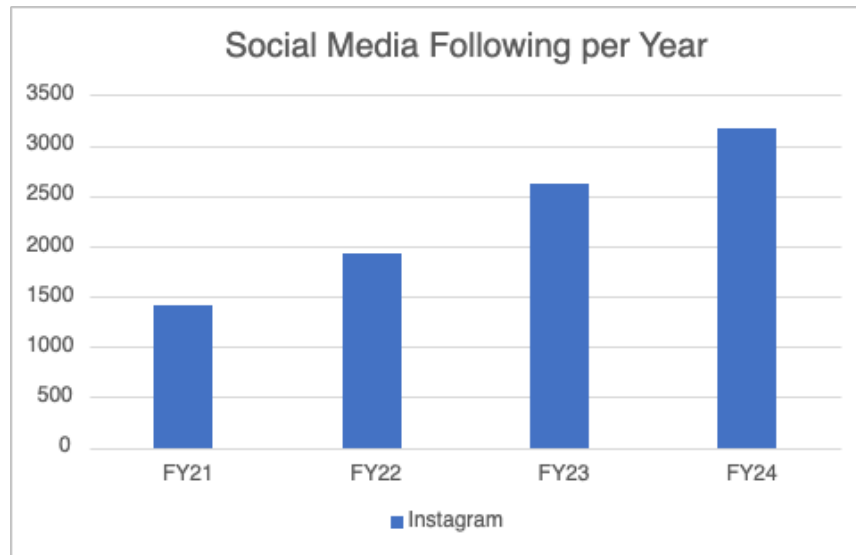
During FY24, MVP hosted 102 service events. This is slightly lower than the year prior due to a vacancy in the Environment and Sustainability position during the fall semester. Had that position been filled and met the target number of events for each chair, this number would have increased slightly from the year prior. As mentioned above, the overall number of people coming to our programs is growing. We are on track this year, with a full team, to get back to that increased number of events.



Growth of Social Media Pages:

MVP is currently active on Instagram and has seen a 20% increase in followers from last year to this school year. We closely monitor follower growth on social media to measure how effectively we are reaching current and new students and promoting our events. As shown in the charts, Instagram follower numbers have steadily increased over the past few years.

In the FY 24, we prioritized our social media presence by ensuring timely posts about events. We also incorporated Instagram Reels to showcase the board's personality, implemented a Linktree in our bio for easy access to relevant links, and highlighted event recaps after each signature event. By following trends in event promotion, using popular songs, designs, and more our content became more engaging. Showcasing our volunteers at events has also further boosted both our follower count and interaction on Instagram.



Survey Assessments & Reflection:

Every service event hosted by MVP has a site lead, an MVP board member responsible for organizing and managing volunteers during the event and facilitating post-event reflection. This reflection involves discussing the social issues the event focused on, challenging students' perspectives, and asking them what they learned from the experience. Each board member undergoes training in the reflection process before leading events.

MVP also sends each volunteer a thank-you email within 24-48 business hours after the event, asking for feedback on their experience. The responses are reviewed by MVP and discussed during board meetings to help us continuously improve the student experience. Through this feedback, we found that many students rated their experience as either 'Good' or 'Great.' They also provided suggestions for future community partners and offered insights on improving communication between site leaders and volunteers. This feedback has been instrumental in guiding event planning and refining our communication processes for organizing future events.

Question #3 Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2025) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds that they requested, that some programs were impacted by additional expenses after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections.

MVP received \$5,971.50 in carry forward funds from FY24 to FY25. These funds were approved to pay for goods and services received in FY24 where expenses were processed in FY25 as outlined below.

Program		
Amount	Description	Description - MVP SFAC
\$929.70	High Point	MVP board uniforms
\$2,232.50	High Point	MVP Membership shirts
\$2,152.16	Houston Tents and Events	Be the MVP tents (Event on 8/19/2024)
\$657.14	Best Entertainers	Cat's Back entertainment split among USOs

\$5,971.50

Question #4 Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2023 base funding is extremely limited and recognizing that it is likely that some units will not be allocated the new base budget and/or one-time funds requested. Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 5.0% in your total FY2024 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.

An additional 5% base budget reduction, amounting to \$4,470, would force our organization to remove key signature events like one Volunteer Fair and Adopt-A-Beach. Instead of hosting two Volunteer Fairs in the fiscal year, we would only be able to hold one due to costs such as food and event activities continuing to increase year over year. This reduction would negatively impact our volunteer fairs which would impact both our students and community partners, as these fairs are essential for fostering connections and growth. Students look forward to engaging with our partners, exploring opportunities to collaborate beyond our organization through continued volunteer opportunities and internships.

Furthermore, we would no longer be able to host our Adopt-A-Beach event, which has been a foundation of our environmental efforts. With growing student participation, cutting this event would negatively affect both our students' engagement and the positive impact we strive to make on our environment.

Question #5 What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them (e.g. grants, donations, etc.)? If you receive funds from other sources, please briefly describe the source, purpose, and duration of the funding and report the amounts received in the appropriate rows/columns on the SFAC Spreadsheet.

MVP currently does not have any additional sources of funding available to the organization.

Questionnaire completed by (please include name, title, email, and phone number):

Omar Castañón

Director Metropolitan Volunteer Program

mvpdir@uh.edu