



volunteer.Grassroots.org

The Internet For Charity

For nonprofits, it is crucial to develop and maintain a powerful Internet presence. The Internet enables compelling new channels for communication with funders, partners, constituents, and both new and traditional media. As more of us turn to the Internet for our primary research, a web presence becomes a crucial factor in determining an organization's legitimacy.

Website design has traditionally been an expensive proposition, with independent consultants charging exorbitant amounts for basic design services. The base price for a custom-designed website is \$7,500 (Graphic Artists Guild Handbook "Pricing & Ethical Guidelines" 2007). Many small nonprofits cannot afford these services, yet require a web presence to raise funds and meet community needs.

It is also clear that nonprofits have unique needs in website design. For example, many organizations that receive funding from foundation sources or the federal government are required to maintain certain levels of accessibility for special needs users; working with a consultant who is unfamiliar with these needs can lead to very expensive website overhauls.

In addition to a well-designed website, printed collateral and graphic design materials remain extremely important for nonprofits to look professional. Items such as a letterhead and business cards can help even the smallest nonprofit to better market their mission. However, many nonprofit organizations cannot afford to hire a designer to help them with this costly service. For instance, the market cost of having just a logo designed is \$3,000 (Graphic Artists Guild Handbook "Pricing & Ethical Guidelines" 2007).

Grassroots.org's solution:

Grassroots.org's volunteer programs stem from this immense need for design services among our nonprofit member organizations. Through our **Volunteer Web Design Program**, we recruit volunteers to help our individual nonprofit members to develop or redesign a webpage. Volunteer projects range from creating dynamic content management system based-sites to basic HTML pages to helping members customize templates on Grassroots.org's free website builder. In addition, Grassroots.org's **Volunteer Graphic Design Program** matches volunteers with nonprofits to complete design projects that include logos, letterhead, merchandise and business cards.

For the volunteer, donating skills to a nonprofit organization translates into a meaningful real-world design experience. Plus, volunteering online gives volunteers access to a broader set of opportunities; making it more likely for a volunteer to find a position that matches their goals. Not only an opportunity to build a portfolio, Grassroots.org's designers realize they are helping

very worthy causes. Grassroots.org provides our volunteers with resources such as Free Portfolio Hosting and Free Search Engine Optimization training as well.

“Volunteering is giving me a chance to help the community and further my understanding of design.” –Grassroots.org volunteer Elizabeth Pearce

The Process:

Grassroots.org finds interested volunteers across the globe by posting opportunities to Volunteer Match, Craigslist, Idealist.org, and other volunteer sites. New volunteers also find Grassroots.org through word of mouth referrals from current volunteers and by searching Google for online volunteering opportunities. The following is an example of a Grassroots.org volunteer web design post:

Headline: Web Designer Volunteers Needed

Description: Grassroots.org is a nonprofit organization that is changing the world by making free technology tools available to nonprofit organizations everywhere in the world. We are currently recruiting volunteer web designers to work with our 1,200+ nonprofit clients.

You will be responsible for designing and implementing a nonprofit website project from start to finish, adhering to the latest standards and surpassing accessibility and usability compliance requirements. We'll be around to help when you need it, whether it's figuring out that CSS bug or giving you advice on planning a project.

Our volunteers develop great websites and build up solid portfolios! We're also rapidly expanding our technology offerings, so designers / developers with an interest in CMS or elated technologies should get in touch. Visit <http://volunteer.grassroots.org/volunteer-program-basics> for more information.

Requirements:

- Experience designing and developing web pages and web sites. These could be college projects, real world projects, or anything in-between. You don't need a giant portfolio (we know a lot of you are looking to build up a portfolio with us), but some familiarity with web design is expected. We can support you, but we can't train you from scratch.
- Communication skills. You have to be able to talk to a non-tech nonprofit client and understand their organization and their work, and build a product that represents them on the web.
- Experience with the standard technologies of the trade...XHTML, CSS, and perhaps a dash of Javascript. We prefer clean CSS for layout over tables. Again, you don't need to be a guru, but we expect a basic understanding of the languages and underlying technologies involved.
- The ability to work independently. This is a telecommuting opportunity, so this is a given.
- Knowledge of accessibility issues, or a willingness to learn (quickly...it's not that hard).
- Knowledge of web standards, or a willingness to learn. We write valid, standards-compliant code for our clients.
- Access to your own design and coding tools. We write code in Kate through Konqueror, Smultron on OSX, and Notepad ++ on Windows, to name a few. If you're a Dreamweaver jockey, your code's probably bloated, but that's ok! As long as you have access to your preferred set of tools, we're flexible on how you get the job done.

Type: Ongoing Opportunity, www.volunteer.grassroots.org

When an interested volunteer comes across a Grassroots.org post, they are directed to our volunteer website: <http://volunteer.grassroots.org>. Volunteers are asked to sign-up and create a profile on this site. Prior to accepting a volunteer, we conduct a review of their past work experience and abilities to ensure a successful project. Current volunteers working on nonprofit web projects range from talented student designers to professional consulting firms. Once volunteers create a username and password, they may login to view our volunteer bulletin board.

Volunteer Web Design Opportunities

Welcome Grassroots.org volunteers! We recently upgraded our volunteer opportunities system. Please browse through organization-created web design applications to learn more about each nonprofit and their website needs and goals.

If an organization strikes your fancy, please contact them directly, and cc our volunteer coordinator Laura Benack, laura@grassroots.org. Happy volunteering!



[*You will need to be logged in to see the current opportunities page*](#)

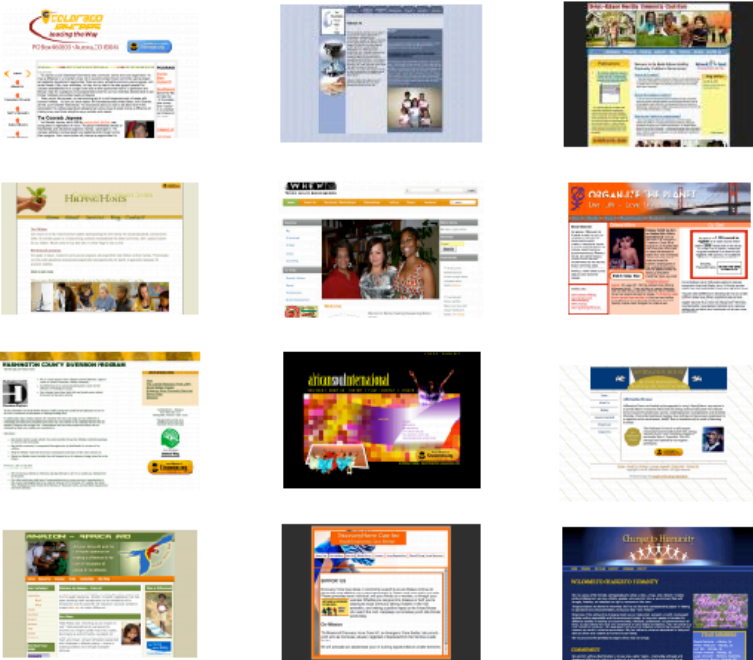
The volunteer bulletin board is comprised of “opportunity postings” that have been created by organizations in need of a designer. To post an opportunity, organizations are directed to an online questionnaire that once submitted, filters directly to the bulletin board. When a volunteer comes across an opportunity that interests them, they are instructed to send an introductory e-mail to the organization’s contact person. Volunteers copy Grassroots.org Volunteer Coordinator, Laura Benack, on this introductory e-mail so that Grassroots.org has a record of the match and the opportunity can be removed from the bulletin board. Once an organization has posted an opportunity, the average wait time for a volunteer is 2-8 weeks.

Since launching the Grassroots.org Volunteer site in January 2008, the site is now seen world-wide as a resource for volunteers with design and programming skills. Instead of trolling the web and endless volunteer sites for opportunities that meet their skill sets they can come directly to Grassroots.org for a wide variety of volunteer ventures that they are capable of taking on.

"Without Grassroots.org we would not have even considered building a website--a costly and time-consuming procedure. Thanks to the free service provided by Grassroots.org we are able to obtain better recognition. And this has had a direct and measurable impact on our mission."

-Grassroots.org member Stepping Stones for Veterans

View the volunteer web design gallery: <http://www.grassroots.org/member-gallery>



View the volunteer graphic design gallery: <http://volunteer.grassroots.org/image/tid/2>



Please visit <http://volunteer.grassroots.org/volunteer-program-basics> to find out more about how Grassroots.org's volunteer programs help nonprofit organizations.

Volunteer Web Design Program Outcomes:

- Since January 2008, there have been 54 websites designed by volunteers = \$405,000 in savings.
- There are currently 46 websites in the process of being designed by volunteers. When completed, the savings = \$345,000.
- Grassroots.org projects volunteers will design 100 sites in 2009. The total savings passed on to Grassroots.org's nonprofits = \$750,000.

Volunteer Graphic Design Program Outcomes:

- Since January 2009, there have been 4 graphic design projects completed by volunteers = \$12,000 in savings.
- There are currently 26 graphic design projects in the process of being designed by a volunteer. Savings = \$78,000
- Grassroots.org projects volunteers will complete 48 graphic design projects in 2009.
Total savings = \$144,000

Combined savings for graphic and web design programs passed on to Grassroots.org's nonprofits in 2009 = \$900,000