

# Hub and Spoke Villages

## A National Survey

Submitted by Betsy Carrier and Pazit Aviv

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## Executive Summary

Villages are local, volunteer-led, grassroots organizations that aim to support community members who choose to age-in-place. Villages foster social connections through activities and events and coordinate volunteer help at home using neighbor-helping-neighbor model. While most villages operate as independent nonprofits, there are several examples in the country of villages that have come together as one organization. These are called hub-and-spoke villages. The hub-and-spoke model is defined as a single nonprofit organization with a hub village that provides a variety of organizational and administrative support to several spoke villages in its geographic area. The rationales for such a model include reduced cost, improved efficiencies, and increased sustainability. Several examples of this model have existed since 2011. This report summarizes interviews with seven such organizations, analyzes similarities and differences, and offers observations about benefits and challenges of the model.

## Introduction

Villages have been operating since early 2000. The grassroots nature of the movement has been its greatest source of strength, as villages build on local leadership empowered to create community organizations uniquely suited to their needs. While villages often rely on each other for mentorship and support, each village charts its way. Similarly, hub-and-spoke villages are developed locally, each designed with slightly different goals.

In the summer of 2022, Montgomery County villages expressed an interest in learning more about this model as a potential solution for sustainability and growth. They wanted to understand what other hub-and-spoke villages look like, what they offer, and what challenges they face. To answer some of these questions, Betsy Carrier, Bradley Hills Village member, and Pazit Aviv, Montgomery County's Village Coordinator, conducted structured interviews with seven hub-and-spoke villages.

Interviews took place over the phone or on Zoom calls. All respondents were representatives of hub organizations. Most were able to share documents, such as bylaws, budgets, and policy manuals. We are grateful for the interviewees' time and energy. They were generous with their knowledge and happy to provide insights and lessons learned. The writers have been asked not to publicly share internal village documents but if anyone is interested in setting up a hub-and-spoke village, please contact us.

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Pazit Aviv, Montgomery County Village Coordinator

[Pazit.aviv@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Pazit.aviv@montgomerycountymd.gov)

Betsy Carrier, Bradley Hills Village

[betsycarrier1@gmail.com](mailto:betsycarrier1@gmail.com)

## Names and Locations of Participating Hub-and-Spoke Villages

We interviewed seven hub-and-spoke villages. These seven organizations were either self-identified or referred to us by Barbara Sullivan, Executive Director, and Travis Mowers, Operations Manager, from Village to Village Network. It is possible that there are other hub-and-spoke-villages that we are not aware of. The hub-and-spoke villages interviewed are:



1. Marin Villages CA:

<https://www.marinvillages.org/>

2. The Village Common of Rhode Island

<https://providencevillageri.org/>

3. Village Volunteers RI

<https://villagevolunteer.org/>

4. Villages NW OR

<https://villagesnw.org/>

5. Villages of San Mateo County CA

<https://villagesofsmc.clubexpress.com/>

6. North Jersey Villages NJ

<https://northjerseyvillages.org/>

7. A Little Help CO

<https://www.alittlehelp.org/>

**Table 1. Characteristics of Hub-and-Spoke Villages**

Village	Marin County Villages, CA	The Village Common of Rhode Island	Village Volunteers Greater Lewes, DE	Villages NW Portland, OR	Villages of San Mateo County, CA	North Jersey Villages Bergen County, NJ	A little Help Denver, CO
Active spokes	6	4	2	10	3		10
Developing spokes			2	1		2	
Geography	Suburban	Urban, Suburban, Rural	Suburban, Rural, Urban	Urban, Suburban, Rural	Suburban	Suburban	Urban, Suburban, Rural
Year established	2009	2015	2013	2014	2015	2016	2006
Number of members	500	300	350	700	250	150	929
Staffing	Hub -3FT, 3PT Spokes - 0	Hub – 1FT and 1PT	Hub: -1 FT 2PT Spoke - 3PT	Hub – 0 2 Spokes – 0.5 FT each	Hub – 1.5 FT Spokes- 0	Hub -1FT	10 FT; 3 PT
Budget	Hub: \$450,000 (spokes' budget included)	Hub: \$230,000	Hub: \$290,000 (spokes' budget included)	Hub: \$40,000 Spokes: \$12,000 (no staff) \$50,000 (staff)	Hub: \$120,000	Hub: \$10,000 Developing spoke: \$2,500 (no staff)	\$1,000,000
Funding sources	Member dues Grants Fundraise	Member dues Grants Fundraise	Member dues Grants Fundraise	Member dues Grants Fundraise	Member dues Grants Fundraise	Family Foundation Grants Fundraise	Grants Donors Fundraise Member Dues
Governance structure	501(c)(3) Spokes have reps on a hub council No formal MOU	501(c)(3) Steering committee meets monthly MOU with spokes	501(c)(3) Working group for both spokes meets biweekly	501(c)(3) Hub board has representation from all villages	501(c)(3) BOD with spokes represented. Executive Committee MOU with spokes	501(c)(3) Board meets monthly MOU with spokes	501(c)(3) Highly centralized structure
Startup support: funds & technical assistance	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

# **Commonalities and Differences among the Hub Organizations**

## **1. The mission of many hubs is to support the startup of new villages.**

While some villages become hubs after operating as a single village for a period of time, others began intentionally as a hub. All reported the reason for becoming a hub was to support the development of new villages in their area.

## **2. Hubs support a large area.**

Many hubs reported serving a large geographic area that can span an entire state, or several counties and zip codes, suggesting there is no need for geographic proximity between the hub and the spokes. Most hubs stated they support villages in several communities and geographical areas.

## **3. Most hubs have paid staff (but a couple of executive directors are volunteers).**

All hubs reported that hubs need an executive director's level of skills to manage the operations of the hub and spoke. Some hubs have staff which functions in the dual role of ED for their village as well as hub manager. Two of the hubs have a volunteer executive director. Most of the hubs did not have staff at the spoke level with one exception – Villages Northwest in Portland, Oregon.

## **4. Hubs rely on diverse funding streams.**

Most hubs reported membership dues and grants as key sources of revenue. The decision on dues is made in consultation with all spokes and is usually homogenous across the spokes. Many hubs report greater ability to secure grants thanks to their ability to efficiently support several local groups. Some hubs rely heavily on grants to sustain their operations.

## **5. All hubs generally provide basic nonprofit administrative functions. Some provide additional services.**

All hubs interviewed offer bookkeeping, liability insurance, and a governance structure that spokes can join. However, there is a wide variety of how hubs and spokes work with one another. This governance is perhaps the most complex characteristic as each village has created a unique governance and operational structure, making it difficult to describe a best practice. For a better understanding of the different models, refer to the summaries in the next section.

## **6. Cost saving.**

It is difficult to establish the precise cost saving for the hub-and-spoke models. This is because there is little in the way of "before and after" for most organizations. However, cost saving is reported in liability insurance, database management services, bookkeeping, fundraising, and sometimes with staffing. Additionally, because hub models are larger than a single village, they create efficiencies and sustainability for smaller villages that would otherwise have difficulties forming and or sustaining operations.

## Elements of the Model that Support Stable and Sustainable Villages

The hub-and-spoke model can provide the following benefits:

### **1. Startup support**

In states and counties with little village activity, a hub can offer infrastructure to support budding initiatives. The new spokes do not have to spend time on developing a governance structure or securing funding. Spokes do however need to agree to the way the hub sets up the governance structure.

The types of startup support hubs provide include:

- Existing 501(c)(3) status, which eliminates the effort required to establish this designation for each individual spoke
- Access to marketing, branding, and other communication resources
- Access to a website and a database management system
- Staff support for operational needs
- Credibility of the village concept
- Startup know-how: how to go through the process without having to reinvent the wheel

Hub-and-spoke models are flexible about the number of spokes they can have. The organizations we interviewed reported a range of one to 10 spokes. It is unclear what the optimal number is and some of the variation in size is dependent on staffing.

### **2. Financial Sustainability**

The hub-and-spoke structure can provide stable financial support for villages. Most villages do not have the means to invest resources in fundraising staff, but hub-and-spoke villages often do. The old saying “it takes money to make money” holds true for the model.

Additionally, hub-and-spoke villages are attractive to foundations, and some have been very successful in securing and managing large grants from governmental and private sources. This is a significant benefit of the model, as many villages either avoid applying for grants or are not as attractive to grantors as a small organization. The size of the operation and its collaborative nature makes it appealing to larger funders.

### **3. Growth**

As seen in Table 1, the hub-and-spoke model can have anywhere from one to 10 spokes. Once a hub is established, the growth of each spoke and the area it can cover increase significantly. Additionally, growth can happen in the scope of services, partnerships, and membership size. The survey did not ask a specific question about types of partnerships and collaboration facilitated by the hub, but the narratives in the appendix describe some of the partnerships.

Hubs can provide support to achieve membership growth, as they can have the ability to develop a branding strategy that can improve outreach efforts, which helps with both recruitment of members and volunteers as well as with new startup spokes.

## **Challenges of the Model**

### **1. Cost**

Most hub-and-spoke operations require a significant financial investment. Villages that are interested in an all-volunteer, no-dues model will not find this model viable for their operations, unless the hub can absorb all the cost. Hubs typically require staffing to accomplish their intended purpose, which means that spokes need to participate financially. Some spokes do that in the form of membership dues, others combine dues and local fundraising efforts.

The cost saving occurs due to operational efficiencies, including with liability insurance, accounting, database management, and staffing.

### **2. Operations procedures uniformity at baseline**

For smooth operations, most hubs stated that it is very difficult to allow each spoke complete freedom in its operations, since spokes are considered a part of one organization and are expected to abide by its bylaws. While this is an advantage when considering a startup village, when mature villages choose to integrate their operation into a hub-and-spoke model, they find the process of merging into one entity challenging and often frustrating. This does not mean it is not a good idea, but that additional attention must be paid to the organizational culture change. See comments for the San Mateo County Villages.

Hub-and-spoke models report a high level of coordination. This means that both the hub and the spoke are continuously in communication with one another. This latter can be seen as either a positive or a negative, depending on the village leadership style.

## **Conclusion**

We believe that the hub-and-spoke model holds great promise for the village movement and hope this report can help other communities interested in this model. While there is great variability among the seven organizations we interviewed, there are salient features they share. Critical aspects include greater grant writing ability, efficiency of staff time, cost reduction, and leadership sustainability. Challenges include the cost for villages with very limited budgets and the need for baseline conformity of operations.



## Appendix: Interview Summaries

### Villages of San Mateo County <https://villagesofsmc.clubexpress.com/>

The Villages of San Mateo is in San Mateo County, south of San Francisco, California. The Villages of San Mateo is a membership-based 501(c) (3) nonprofit. The hub-and-spoke model has worked well with only two villages that collaborated to achieve economies of scale. Furthermore, a larger membership has helped the organization appeal to foundations.

The Village started as the Sequoia Village and seamlessly merged into the Peninsula Village. The merged villages then became a hub and added the Village of Coastsides two years ago. This village has lower dues and offers fewer services. The Village of Coastsides has a slightly different membership demographic.

Villages of San Mateo County currently has a total of 250 members. Membership recruitment and intake is at the spoke level. The membership contract is between the member and the Villages of San Mateo County.

Fundraising is at the hub level. In 2021 they had a significant increase in revenue. They collected \$272,000, approximately 40% from dues and the balance in grants and donations. They had \$138,000 in expenses. They report that their income and expenses for 2022 will be more balanced as they will have increased expenses due to hiring an executive director, and they will not receive any COVID relief funds.

The villages have different membership fees. For Sequoia Village and Peninsula, when dues are paid in advance, the annual membership fee is \$600 for an individual or \$750 for a household. If paid monthly, a small processing fee is added. For Village of Coastsides, dues when paid in advance are \$480 (\$40 monthly) for an individual or \$600 (\$50 monthly) for a household. Approximately 75% of the dues go to the hub for operations and 25% of the dues to the spoke to pay for specific activities.

They are currently staffed with an executive director and an office manager.

The Village of SMC coordinates volunteer services at hub level. In 2020, they reported providing 9,971 volunteer hours. A volunteer phone line is answered from 9AM-1PM each day. The villages provide handyman services, wheelchair ramps, minor repairs, and rides.

Volunteer services include:

- Driver
- Minor home repairs
- Technical assistance
- Run errands – shopping, etc.
- Volunteer office staff

- Friendly visits or phone calls
- Social events – plan and assist
- Copywriting – newsletter, etc.
- Marketing of village programs

At the hub level, a volunteer application is submitted, an interview occurs, and a criminal background check is completed. For volunteer drivers there is also a driving record check and verification of automobile insurance.

Membership fees are used for various purposes, including social events, staff salaries, office supplies, vetting and background checks, equipment, insurance, education materials, and outreach programs.

## **North Jersey Villages & NJV Hub Village** <https://northjerseyvillages.org/>

North Jersey Villages, Inc. (NJV) is in Bergen County, New Jersey. NJV has formed a hub and now is in the process of helping to create spoke villages. The NJV hub's vision is that working with several Age-Friendly Community Initiatives within their large and diverse service area (Bergen County and bordering Passaic County communities), grassroots interest and model villages will emerge. Since 2014, NJV has provided numerous presentations to Bergen County older adults and their service providers to introduce this Village concept.

In 2018, NJV launched the NJV HUB Village with free membership for all Bergen County older adults aging at home. Older adults completed membership forms to participate in a book club and to take advantage of discounts for home maintenance services provided by a third party.

With the onset of COVID, NJV focused on creating a robust one-stop website. The NJV website lists services available in the county as well as a variety of community activities available to the county's older adults. A consultant is paid for 30 hours/month to update the website weekly.

The NJV HUB Village also provides live and Zoom programs to assist in aging at home. The programs are recorded and provided to local TV and YouTube stations to reach isolated older adults or those who would not attend live events or are not computer savvy.

North Jersey Villages, Inc. is a 501c3 nonprofit, membership organization following a virtual "Village" model. They have bylaws and a budget. They adapted an executive director job description from the VtVN 101 Toolkit. As the hub-and-spoke model evolves, they are modifying the job description of the executive director and developing job descriptions for other positions.

The NJV Hub Village has an active/working board. Board members have responsibility for specific areas of hub operations. New members joining the all-volunteer board/team are invited to undertake tasks/responsibilities according to their experience/background. The executive director has an oversight role.

NJV is working to help launch the first spoke—Glen Rock Neighborhood Network (GRNN). There are two NJV board members who are leading the development of the GRNN spoke and other board members are leading efforts/assisting with other potential spokes. There is a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that describes the responsibilities of the hub and spoke.

## **The Village Common of Rhode Island** <https://providencevillageri.org/>

In 2015 a small group of interested seniors launched Providence Village. After four years of successful operations, the board of Providence Village realized that the long-term sustainability of Providence Village – or any village in Rhode Island -- would be strengthened by a network of villages, all supported by a single hub. In December of 2019, The Village Common of RI was established to directly support the creation and long-term sustainability of villages in RI. There are now a total of four villages that are members of The Village Common of Rhode Island and one in development.

The hub's annual budget is \$230,000 with 1/3 coming from dues, 1/3 from grants and 1/3 from donations. The four villages have a total of 300 members and 200 volunteers. Annual dues are collected at the hub level using a “pay what you can model” based on members’ income. Village members select what annual dues they pay, ranging from \$120-\$480 for a single person and \$180-\$720 for a family.

The Village Common is the “umbrella” 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. The four local villages are not separately incorporated. The Village Common has a small, professional administrative staff consisting of an executive director, part-time office manager and one part time consulting bookkeeper (3-4 hours per week) and web expert (three hours per week). These positions support all four villages, while each individual village is staffed and led by volunteers from the respective community. There is a detailed memorandum of understanding between the hub and each village (spoke) that describes responsibilities. Each village selects two members to attend a monthly coordinating council meeting that acts as a steering committee for the hub organization. There are also informal weekly leadership meetings where operational questions are discussed.

If someone lives in an area of Rhode Island where there isn't a local village, they can still join the hub organization; however, they might not be able to receive direct services. The Village Common also encourages people to start a local village in their community and plays an active role in supporting groups that want to create a local village. They provide information about how to get started and support.

The Village Common offers social events, including:

- Outings to museums, movies, concerts, and lectures.
- Gatherings for picnics, walks, and potlucks.
- Calls and visits from village members (at a member's request).

- Interest groups around whatever members love: books, gardening, crafts, theatre, movies, and more.
- Neighborhood Circles that connect members who live near one another.
- Calendar of local educational, cultural, and entertainment activities.

All Rhode Island Villages provide the following volunteer support:

- Rides from volunteers who have been vetted and trained.
- Errands (grocery pick-ups, prescriptions, and the like).
- Help with electronic devices - VCRs, TVs, phones, computers, etc.
- Household chores, such as changing light bulbs, helping with a fall clean-up, or getting winter clothes out of storage.
- In-person consultation to improve home safety.
- Healthcare counseling, education, and referrals to other organizations and services.

Village members call The Village Common office when they want to request a particular service or some other form of assistance. This call line is staffed by volunteers working in four-hour shifts during the day. The volunteer works to help fulfill those requests. In 2021, a total of 833 rides and 362 services were provided to members in the four villages.

## **A Little Help, Denver, Colorado** <https://www.alittlehelp.org/>-

A Little Help began in 2005 when a group of neighbors joined together to help older adults in their community age at home. Their organization was based on the national village model. In 2007, A Little Help incorporated as a 501(c)(3) with the vision of neighbors connected across generations, creating strong communities.

In 2011, A Little Help hired its first full-time executive director, contributing to organizational growth, which included increased member and volunteer participation; offering more services; professional board and staff recruitment; and fundraising through foundation grants, corporate partnerships, giving campaigns, individual donors, and events. The Village also expanded programming systems, capacity, and vision; improved service coordination and volunteer management; and improved branding, marketing, web presence, and strategic planning, and visioning.

With A Little Help, older adults are connected to neighbors, experts on aging, and local resources, helping members to age in their homes. Since its founding, A Little Help has served nearly 2,000 older adults and has engaged thousands of community volunteers.

Currently, A Little Help has 10 spoke organizations located in three distinct locations across Colorado with a membership of more than 920: the Metro Denver Area including Denver and Jefferson Counties

where they have more than 675 members, Northern Colorado in Fort Collins as well as Berthoud and Loveland where they have more than 300 members, and the Western Slope in Grand Junction and the Roaring Fork Valley where they have more than 50 members.

**Staff:** The Village has 13 staff of which 10 are full-time. Most of the staff is in the Denver hub.

Staff includes:

- executive director,
- development director
- program director
- operations manager for each of the four areas: northern, metro, western, Denver
- membership coordinator
- volunteer coordinator
- operations assistant

**Financials:** The organization's 2020 revenues were almost \$1 million, with expenses of almost \$700,000. The Village has experienced significant growth of income from year to year. In 2021, 38% of their income was from the government, with several grants for COVID work. Most of the income is grants and government funds. Fundraising is done in each location and by the hub.

Dues average from \$100-\$200 per year. A Little Help's membership model is 'pay-what-you-can,' a completely sliding scale. Only 2% of their budget is from dues, the remainder is from businesses, donations, and government. Some fundraising events are held at the spoke level.

**Services Provided:** The Village provides support similar to a social service agency. When someone becomes a member, a paid staff member conducts a detailed intake to determine the individual's needs. The Village provides some services, such as yard work, to individuals who are not yet members. Volunteers from the spokes can provide services to members, including transportation, snow shoveling, light cleaning, handyman help, respite, and yard work.

**Volunteers:** The hub is coordinating large numbers of volunteers- 3,000 volunteers (all require background checks). YTD 2022, January to July volunteers provided 4,000 services. All service coordination is managed by paid staff.

**Governance:** The hub is a 501c3 and is incorporated in Colorado. Spoke villages are not incorporated separately. The organization has a high level of coordination and spokes are guided by the hub's direction. Locations are all within the larger organization. The hub has monthly full staff meetings and weekly meetings with directors.

**Database and Metrics:** Data are collected and reported monthly. The hub uses its own CRM open-source software with the database managed by paid staff. The Village intake form is completed and then members get a “warm welcome.” Spokes typically utilize the same suite of services, but there are some regional differences depending on other available resources and partnerships.

**Marketing and Newsletter:** Both the hub and spokes use a variety of outlets for marketing, including farmers’ markets and social media.

## Villages NW Oregon and Southwest Washington (<https://villagesnw.org/>)

### **General:**

Villages NW was established in 2014 and encompasses 11 Villages primarily within the Portland metropolitan area. The geographic area covers 4 counties – Multnomah, Clark, Clackamas, and Washington – with a combined population of 2.5 million.

### **Staffing:**

There is no paid staff at the hub, but the Village has a contract with a bookkeeper. The hub has a volunteer executive director spends 55 hour/week on hub business. The original business plan called for each village to eventually have a half-time staff person; to date three spoke villages have staff.

### **Financial information:**

The financial model is membership fees supplemented by philanthropy. Members pay a fee. There are 700 members in total for all the spokes. The average membership dues are \$40/month, and \$20/month for an associate membership that offers limited help. Each spoke village chooses its own membership dues amount, so dues vary slightly by village. **Villages NW offers a subsidized fee for members with demonstrated need** across the organization. Each Village may set a cap on the number of subsidized memberships.

The annual cost of the bookkeeper is \$15,000. Total hub budget is \$40,000, the liability insurance is \$3,000. The average spoke village budget is \$12,000 with no staff, and \$50,000 with staff.

Other funding sources include a grant from the Kaiser Foundation, which then gets distributed to the spokes, and an annual fundraising appeal, underwritten by the hub. There are additional private, local foundations that provide funding. The Village continues to look for more grant funding.

The spokes fund the hub, the hub gets 8% of all revenue, plus an annual fee per member household (\$27.60 a year). This model funds current operations but does not yet make it possible to have paid staff at the hub.

**Governance and operations:**

The board of directors is responsible for management and operations of Villages NW. Each village has a Governing Council to manage its day-to-day operations and appoints two representatives to the Circle of Representatives, a forum in which village leaders work with the board of directors to discuss priorities and develop and implement strategic initiatives.

The hub provides fiscal, human resources, marketing, contracts, and other administrative support to the spoke villages as well as bookkeeping services, such as completing the IRS- 990 form, volunteer background checks, DMV reports, and driver training. It also organizes affinity groups for leaders to work on issues (very similar to what Washington Area Villages Exchange offers in the DC area). It also mentors villages in development.

The hub board is primarily comprised of community members. Three positions are reserved for village representatives nominated by village leaders. It has been difficult to get village leaders to join the hub, because of the time already committed to their villages. More than half of the hub board members are now associated with a village spoke. Not all spokes are represented on the board.

Currently the hub executive director is a volunteer. However, the Village is exploring the options for additional staffing to support village and hub operations. The executive director's time is spent on overseeing affinity groups, mentoring new villages, supporting work groups, fundraising, and helping with treasurer functions. There are also volunteers to help with some administrative support in financial management, IT, HR, and other tasks.

A spoke does not have flexibility to choose what to request from the hub. Basically, spokes must agree to the way the hub/spoke relationship is outlined in an MOU.

**Fundraising policies:**

Fundraising is a shared responsibility. The hub oversees the annual appeal and grant writing. Spokes are responsible for their own ongoing fundraising. Funds raised from the annual appeal are allocated to each village, which has been a very successful model.

**Membership database:**

Each spoke village has a dedicated database.

**Communications and marketing:**

Each village controls its own communications and marketing.

**Challenges:**

Leadership succession at all levels of the organization is a challenge. The pandemic hit as villages were transitioning from the start-up to the next phase of development. Finding new leaders to replace founders has been a challenge. Newer villages have shortened the length of time in development, resulting in smaller prospect lists, which has resulted in a shallower pool of leaders. Additionally, COVID dampened the launch of new initiatives.

### **Suggestions for developing a hub-and- spoke Village:**

- Decide ahead of time on a single fee structure; standardize fees
- Databases (each village holds its own section), keep documents on shared Google Workspace. This is currently a work in progress. The spokes will share policies, financials, templates, photos, shared resources, and a master email list. Villages will be able to upload documents on the shared space.
- There can be tension between hub and spokes. Sometimes, new people who join their spoke's leadership are not always aware of the relationship with the hub because they became involved through the local village. The hub needs to provide a lot of education to explain the value of being a spoke.

### **Marin Villages, California** <https://www.marinvillages.org/>

#### **General:**

Marin Villages began operating in 2009 and currently has six villages.

The estimated total population in the service area is about 250,000 and the village serves urban, suburban, and rural populations. The total number of members in all the villages/spokes is 512.

Marin Villages started as a single village called Marin Village 13 years ago and over the years added villages/spokes.

The number of villages/spokes increased in the catchment area within the county, which in some areas is sparsely populated. People are hyper local in their affiliations and loyalties. Sausalito village is autonomous within the Marin Village catchment area, and the hub (Marin Village) has a collaborative relationship with this spoke village.

The hub has three full-time staff positions: executive director, membership and operations manager, and volunteer manager. In addition, there is a part-time member and volunteer support representative (responsible for talking with the members who request rides or other needs), a bookkeeper, and a communications coordinator/media writer/grant writer. There is no paid staff on the spokes level. The spokes have volunteer steering committees.

#### **Financial:**

Total annual budget is \$450,000. Sources of funds are:

- 33% - comes from membership dues (\$450/individual \$600/couple. no social membership. Offer discounts 50-75%)
- 33% Fundraising - direct solicitation, fundraising events
- 33% - grants, family foundations (local)

The spokes have no obligation to fundraise for the hub. Some do a bit of local fundraising to help, for example, to fund discounts for local members.



Each spoke creates a budget for the fiscal year. They are given \$1,000 toward expenses for events plus 5% of the village's member dues. Many of the villages receive in-kind donations for activities for which they don't seek reimbursement.

Cost effectiveness was difficult to gauge since the hub came first, then the spokes. As a result, there is no way to compare the current cost to any prior budget.

### **Governance and operations:**

Each spoke has a Village Steering Committee, with chairs and committees. There is a Local Village Council that meets every other month with representatives from all six villages. There is no requirement in the bylaws that each village be represented on the hub's board – which is the only governing board – yet in practice board members generally are members, volunteers, or donors from one of the “spoke” villages. According to the executive director, overall governance issues for the organization are addressed in writing in the bylaws, but there are no operating agreements between the local village “spokes” and the “home office.”

Spoke villages are the primary source of member and volunteer recruitment which is key to membership growth.

Local village steering committees have different sub-committees (e.g., programs, volunteers) with a point person for each function (e.g., volunteers, members, programs).

Every other month there is a Local Village Council meeting to which each village sends representatives. That is where administrative and programmatic information gets communicated to all the spokes. Board meetings are open to all advisory board members.

Ten people sit on the hub's board. Board members must be village members - board members are asked to donate \$1,000/year and in turn can receive a complimentary membership (though many pay their membership and donate). Most board members were originally a village member or volunteer. The hub is now looking to recruit people from outside of the village circles (business owners/professionals, possible contributors, etc.)

Hub paid staff responds to all member request for services. There is no time allotted for each spoke's needs and so far, there has not been any issues around number of hours staff spends on specific spokes. Spokes are informed of their member's request and fulfillment rates. The hub works together with spokes to make sure issues are resolved.

Some village spokes are more proactive in helping to address administrative issues, like creating events; others let the hub office perform the administrative duties and enter data in the Helpful Village database. Hub staff enters all member request info for all villages.

The hub can help villages at all stages of development. Volunteers in one spoke can help other spokes' members. Volunteers are often willing to accept service requests from other spokes, but most prefer to respond to requests from their village due to logistics and relationship.

New spokes have grown out of existing ones, and all currently are satisfied with the existing structure of the relationship with the hub. One Village (Sausalito) in the same county has chosen to remain separate and independent. Marin Villages and Sausalito Village collaborate and cross promote one another.

The spokes often partner by geography. Self-determination is a key driving force. The hub does not tell spoke villages how to do things.

**Communications and marketing:** The hub publish a monthly newsletter. A communications manager helps the local villages with their local newsletters (editing, formatting, and sending to membership), which are also published each month. Marketing originates in the hub office; however, spoke villages perform marketing activities.

**Database:** The villages use the Helpful Village platform as their database. It is managed centrally. Members are tagged as belonging to a specific village and this helps with matching volunteers and sending communications.

**Fundraising:**

This is a key responsibility of the hub. Each village participates as they are able. There is a recognition in some of the more affluent communities that support for the hub benefits all, including the less affluent areas.

**How many spokes are needed to have a sustainable organization?**

The hub leadership state that it can support six spoke villages. Moreover, they feel they may have the capacity to support more members and or spoke villages.

**Challenges:**

Although some challenges are faced, the Marin Villages clearly believe there is great value in having a hub village. Examples of challenges include actions taken by a spoke that may not align with all the villages.

There also has been a need for education from the hub on nonprofit processes and norms. The hub also helps the villages with recruiting for their steering committees.

## **Village Volunteers** <https://villagevolunteer.org/>

The Village Greater Lewes Community Village was founded in 2013 and has been providing services to those 50 and over for almost ten years. There has been significant growth of older adults in Delaware, which is projected to continue for another three decades, with a particular concentration in Sussex County. Due to this growth and the needs of older adults, Due to the growth beyond the Lewes zip code, Greater Lewes Community Village became Village Volunteers (VV) in 2018.

Village Volunteers began discussions with community leaders about the best way to help this growing demographic in the most cost-effective way. Those community leaders decided to form an exploratory committee, which agreed that working with Village Volunteers would be the fastest way to establish the structure to begin helping older adults. The hub was established in 2020. There are two spokes, Village Volunteers (VV) and South Coastal Village Volunteers SCVV), in operation and two additional spokes in current stages of discussion. The estimated total population size in the service area is 100,000. The villages serve 10 zip codes comprising rural, urban, and suburban communities. The number of members in the two active spokes is 350.

The hub has one executive director and a board of directors. VV has a part-time member services manager (MSM) and one part-time case manager, an active nurse (funded by the state), who handles intake of prospective members and follows up on existing members to see if needs, health, goals have changed.

SCVV has an all-volunteer steering committee (formed from the exploratory committee. SCVV has three part time staff members. One is the member services manager with similar job responsibilities as the VV MSM, and the other two staff members handle the office and fill all open requests, as well as other duties as required. In addition, SCVV also has a care manager. Since the number of members is less than 50, this retired nurse is volunteering her time right now. SCVV is working with the hub to expand the proposal with the state to also fund a part-time staff care manager in 2024.

#### **Financials:**

The total annual budget for GLCV, the hub and the two spokes (or as we refer to them, branches) VV and SCVV is \$290,000. Revenue derives from about a 50/50 split of grants and membership dues. For the spokes, staffing is the biggest expense. The spoke pays 1/3 of the organizations' liability insurance and 20 hours of the hubs' staff time. Lewes County provides discounted office space to SCVV. The hub and the VV branch pay rent for the space they occupy. Each individual member pays \$500 and households pay \$750, with \$250 for a social membership. The village offers \$100 scholarships for people who make less than 200% of the IRS Poverty Level, which in 2022 is \$25,000 per year

Cost-effectiveness of the model was demonstrated during village startup, with the spoke villages using the same technology, same policies, and procedures, sharing the same insurance policies (liability, Directors and Officers insurance, and Workers Compensation), and accounting services. The hub created a joint finance committee to create transparency and coordination of budgets, expenses, etc.

#### **Governance and operations:**

To manage the hub and spokes there is a working group that meets every other week and is comprised of representatives from the two spokes. The hub's executive director serves as the executive director for both villages. She spends 20 hours a month on executive director duties of the one active spoke village, which has 50 members and 80 volunteers.

The relationships and expectations between the hub and the spokes are outlined in a collaboration agreement. Representatives from the SCVV spoke occupy two seats on the hub's board. That may differ

for future spokes. The steering committee leads the spoke organizations and participates on all hub committees.

The hub also helps new startup villages. Currently they are working with two developing villages. The hub does not serve villages with only specific a-la-cart needs. The two spokes in development will have to follow the existing spoke model and comply with the basic set up of the village operations.

**Fundraising:**

The hub is responsible for overall fundraising. Each spoke may fundraise within the geographic area it serves.

**Database:**

The hub owns the database which allows for data separation for each spoke. The hub has access to the spokes' data, but they are responsible for its management.

**Committees**

**Communications and marketing:**

Each spoke is responsible for its communications and marketing plan, outreach, event planning, etc. It is governed by its Steering Committee and receives support from the hub's executive director for these functions. All business plans and budgets are developed based upon the hub's overall strategy.

**Membership and Development Committee:**

Each spoke is responsible for its membership and volunteering plans, setting growth goals, volunteer recruitment, tabling events, and more. The Steering Committee provides oversight and receives support from the hub's executive director for these functions. All business plans and budgets are developed based upon the hub's overall strategy.

**Development Committee:**

Each spoke is responsible for its development plan for its geographic area. The spokes work with the hub to develop broader fundraising plans, government grants, and relationships with large donors. The spokes receive all monies allocated to them according to the terms of a grant. They are governed by their Steering Committee and receive support from the hub's executive director for these functions. All business plans and budgets are developed based upon the hub's overall strategy.

**Challenges**

As spokes develop, one of the most critical challenges is the leadership that comes from the local community. The people matter in this evolving relationship and spokes' leadership must be self-sufficient. To accomplish this, expectations of roles and responsibilities must be clear from the beginning: what can the hub offer and what is the responsibility of the spoke.