The economy has forced many nonprofit organizations to reconsider how to accomplish their goals. Money alone won’t solve the immense social challenges of today. Nonprofits must look more closely at time and talent to supplement — or work hand-in-hand with — treasure resources. In Powered by Pro Bono, the Taproot Foundation shares what it has learned in its 10 years of promoting and using pro bono to help our organizations embrace this important tool for fulfilling our missions.

Nonprofits are complex. As government funding continues to decrease, nonprofits are becoming harder to manage. Professionals from many fields — law, information technology, human resources, accounting, financial planning, marketing, and organizational strategy — have skills to offer our organizations. Indeed, pro bono volunteers are often encouraged by their professional organizations to donate their talents to nonprofit organizations. We must know how to recruit and motivate them, however.

First, this means understanding what we need. Once we know this, we can align our needs with the pro bono skills available. We must then respond to pro bono work professionally, especially being realistic about timelines.

Clear communication with pro bono professionals is critical. It’s important to remember that learning goes both ways: While volunteers demonstrate how we might reach our goals more efficiently, our organizations can inform professionals about our issues. This keeps them involved and makes our organizations more sustainable.

Once an organization successfully engages in pro bono, it can then begin to involve multiple departments, programs, and staff. This is what community building is about — accessing the abilities of supporters and prospective supporters as a core contribution to the civil sector. This builds a more just and inclusive society. It’s why every nonprofit organization should have this book.