

Accomplishments of the Foster Grandparent Program

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Senior Corps is a network of programs that tap the experience, skills, and talents of older citizens to meet community challenges. Through its three programs – Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP (the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) – more than half a million Americans age 55 and over assist local nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based organizations in carrying out their missions. Senior Corps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that also oversees AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America. Together with the USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation is working to build a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility in America.

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Foster Grandparent Program National Accomplishment Report

Executive Summary

About this Report

This report summarizes the community service accomplishments from the Foster Grandparent Program grantees and volunteers for the period of fiscal year 2004. Findings used to develop this report were gathered through a national survey process. The survey asked about ways in which Foster Grandparents serve in the community, the benefits they bring to the organizations where they serve, and other information related to community volunteering and service.

About the Foster Grandparent Program

The Foster Grandparent Program provides a way for limited-income people age 60 and older to serve as extended family members to children and youth with exceptional needs. Foster Grandparents serve from 15 to 40 hours a week, and help children who have been abused or neglected, mentor troubled teenagers and young mothers, and care for premature infants and children with physical disabilities. In return for their service, Foster Grandparents receive a stipend of \$2.65 an hour, accident and liability insurance and meals while on duty, reimbursement for transportation, and monthly training.

Study Overview and Methodology

The Foster Grandparent Program Activities and Accomplishments Survey collected information on FGP community service activities for a one-year period from October 1, 2002 to September 30, 2003. The last Accomplishments Survey, conducted in 2000, recorded information on Senior Corps programs

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during the October 1999-September 2000 period. The Senior Corps Accomplishments Survey conducted in 2004 built upon the 2000 version. This survey addresses two primary topics:

- Volunteer management issues, such as the recruitment, management, use, and evaluation of volunteers; and
- Estimates of how many volunteers spent how much time engaged in what types of service, and how many people benefit.

Volunteer management was not addressed in the 1999-2000 study.

The Accomplishments Survey was distributed in questionnaire form to a sample of 500 volunteer stations, the organizations that manage Senior Corps volunteers. The sample of stations was selected randomly, based on the service activities they offer, and the responses were weighted for nonresponse and nonparticipation to produce national totals. While this procedure gives unbiased estimates of program activities at the national level, the reliability of the data reported here may be greatly affected by the number of respondents to each question. When the sample size is largest (as with the volunteer management questions, which every station answered) the data are most reliable; for the counts of individual activities found in Section 8, they are least reliable, because only a few stations in the sample engage in some types of service. Thus, the results listed here should be interpreted with caution.

FGP Highlights

337 Foster Grandparent Program grantees	\$109.3 million federal funds in FY 2004
31,000 Foster Grandparent Program volunteers	\$36.5 million non-federal funds in FY 2004
28 million hours served	
10,000 Volunteer Stations	
Over 1 million Children and Youth served	

Section 1: Foster Grandparent Volunteers – How and Where They Serve

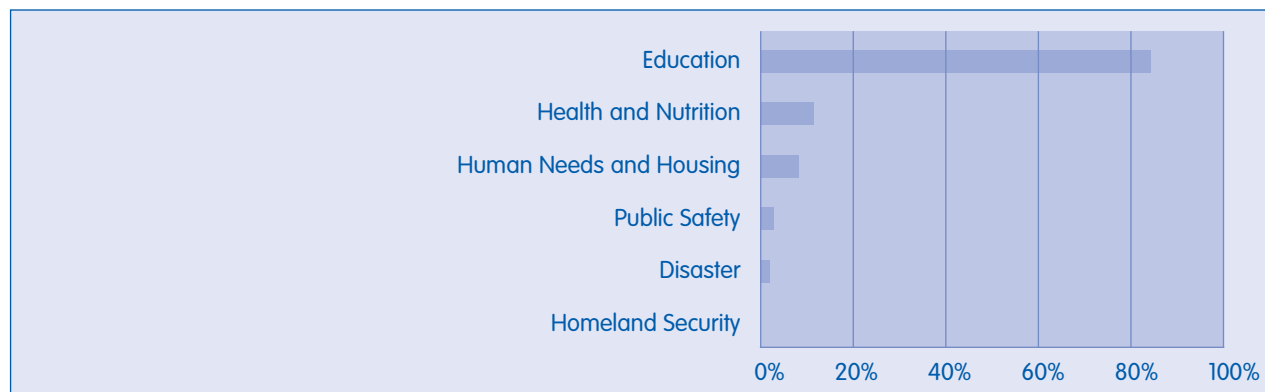
This section presents an overview of Foster Grandparents in service, including the number of volunteers, the hours served, the number of children and youth they served, and information about the faith-based and community-based organizations that serve as placement sites for the volunteers, often known as “volunteer stations.”

Foster Grandparents are placed in a volunteer station network of more than 10,000 individual organizations, including community-based, faith-based, large and small nonprofits, health centers, Head Start Centers, schools, and juvenile correctional facilities. The Foster Grandparent Program grantee develops the relationship with the volunteer stations, and facilitates placement of Foster Grandparents in ways that are helpful to the organization and satisfying to the volunteer.

- Public and private primary schools comprise 41% of all volunteer stations, the largest single percentage by type.¹
- Day care centers are the next largest percentage of volunteer stations, accounting for 20% of all stations.

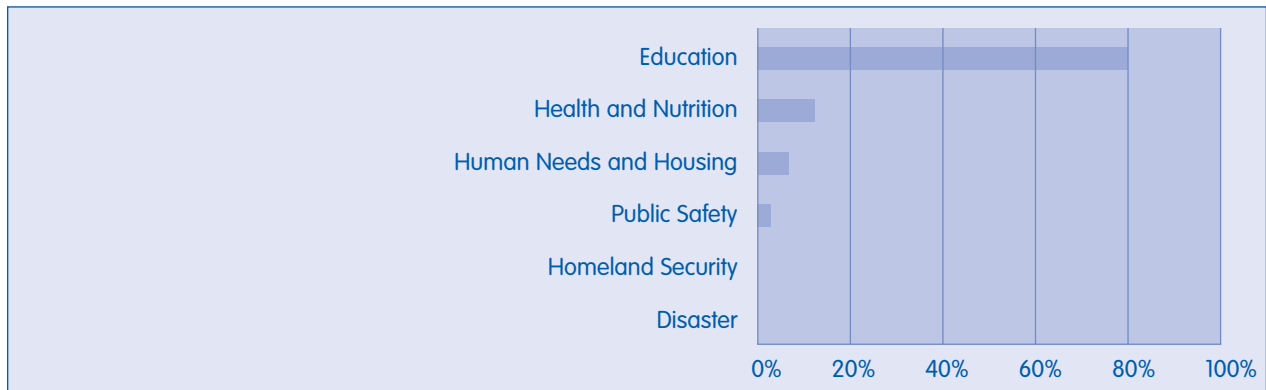
- Head Start Centers represent 19% of volunteer stations and non-Head Start educational preschools compose 16% of volunteer stations.
- By type of geographic community:
 - 55% of volunteer stations are in urban areas
 - 30% of volunteer stations are in suburban areas
 - 16% of volunteer stations are in rural areas
- 10% of Foster Grandparent Program volunteer stations are faith-based organizations. This percentage is smaller than in the other Senior Corps programs, in part because so many Foster Grandparent Program stations are located in public schools.
- Foster Grandparents help their volunteer stations to meet a wide variety of needs in primarily educational settings. In this report, the needs are distributed among several “Issue Areas” as illustrated in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** below.
- When measured by the percentage of Foster Grandparents serving and by the distribution of hours served the “Education” issue area accounts for the single largest block, with 82% of the Foster Grandparents assigned and 80% of the hours served.

Figure 1: Percentage of Foster Grandparents Serving in each Issue Area



¹ All stations were asked to describe themselves using a long list of organizational types. Respondents could choose as many descriptions as they wanted from this list.

Figure 2: Distribution of Foster Grandparent Hours in each Issue Area



Number of Children and Youth Served by Foster Grandparents²

According to volunteer station supervisors, Foster Grandparents serve over one million children and youth.

- In **Education**, Foster Grandparents served

935,000 children and youth

- In **Health/Nutrition**, Foster Grandparents served 234,000 children and youth
- In **Human Needs**, Foster Grandparents served 214,000 children and youth
- In **Public Safety**, Foster Grandparents served 95,000 children and youth

Section 2: Foster Grandparent Volunteers – The Benefits they Deliver

Finding: Foster Grandparents deliver tangible benefits to help the volunteer stations meet their service missions in the community.

According to volunteer station supervisors, Foster Grandparents help the volunteer stations better serve the community “to a great extent” by:

- Improving the quality of services
- Helping to expand the types of services to the children and youth
- Increasing support for the organization and/or improving community relations.

In addition, a majority of station supervisors credited the Foster Grandparents with helping to:

- Increasing the number of children and youth served
- Helping free up the time of paid staff
- Bringing specialized skills
- Reducing the time and effort needed to recruit volunteers.

Figure 4 (below) shows results from a nationwide sample of charities³ that rely on volunteer service. Compared to charities on the whole, most Foster

² Since the same person may receive multiple types of services, it is not accurate to add these numbers to derive an estimate of the total number of individuals served by FGP volunteers.

³ Based on the results of the 2003 Volunteer Management Capacity Study, which surveyed 1,753 charities in the United States on the benefits and challenges of effectively recruiting and managing volunteers. For details, see the final report: Urban Institute, 2004, *Volunteer Management Capacity in America’s Charities and Congregations: A Briefing Report*, Washington, D.C.

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Grandparent Program station supervisors realize at least some value from their volunteers, although not as many station supervisors perceive these benefits “to a great extent.”

Other benefits described by volunteer station supervisors

Foster Grandparents:

- Provide social and emotional support to the children and youth, including nurturing not available at home.

- Are often seen as role models to children who may not have grandparents
- Offer continuity by working with the young service recipients consistently, including one-on-one, which is a great benefit for those in need of individual attention
- Promote intergenerational interaction with children who have had no experience with older people.

Figure 3: How Foster Grandparents Benefit Volunteer Stations as reported by Station Supervisors

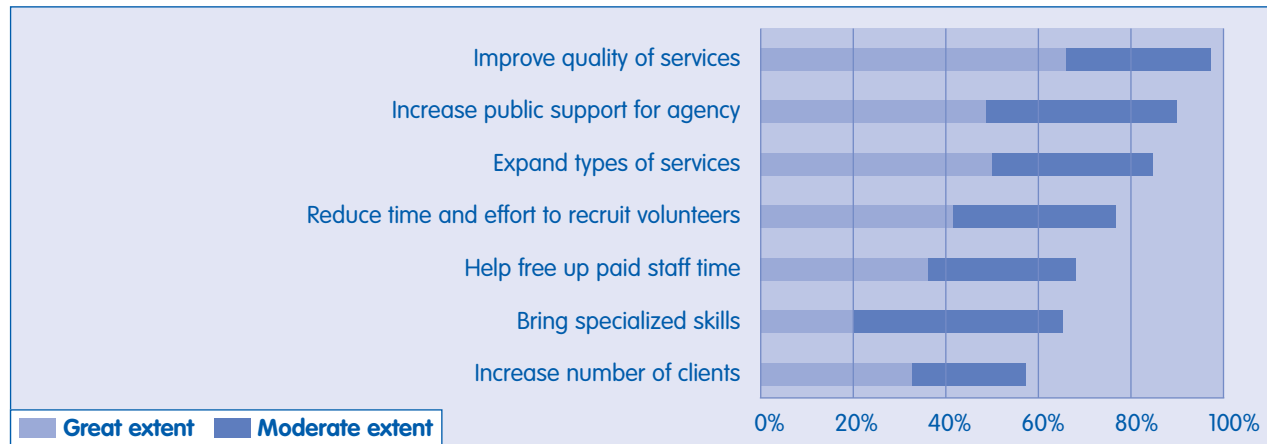


Figure 4: Volunteer Benefits as reported by Charities



Section 3: How Volunteer Stations Use Effective Practices to Manage Foster Grandparent Volunteers

Finding: The majority of volunteer station supervisors follow the “Effective Practices” identified by sector leaders.

Some of the most effective practices of volunteer management are listed in the graph in Figure 5 below along with the percentage of Foster Grandparent Program volunteer station supervisors who reported using these practices.⁴

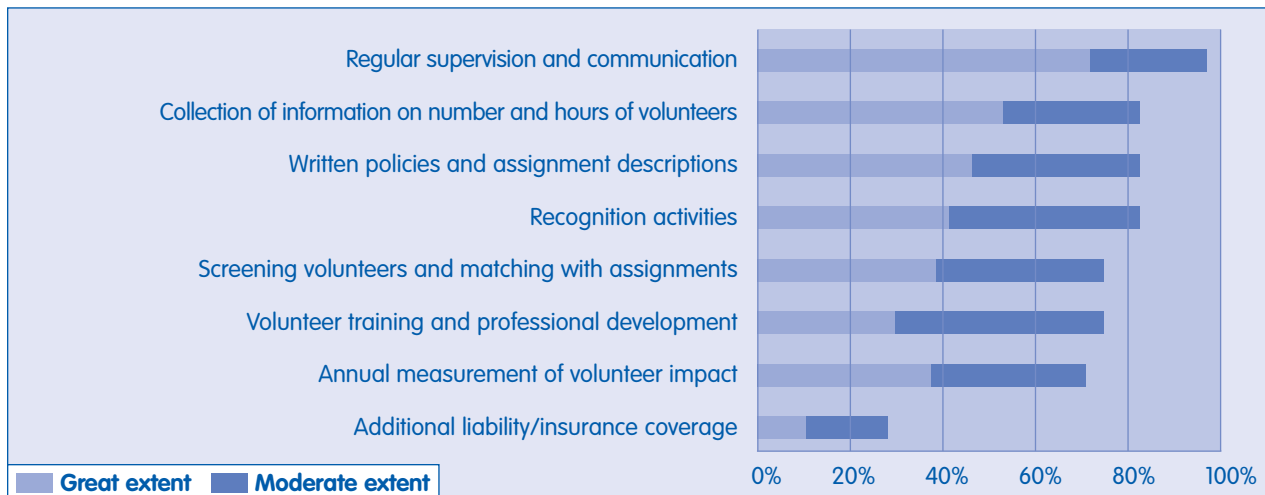
The majority of Foster Grandparent station supervisors report that almost all of these practices are used by their organizations. The practices identified as being used “to a great extent” by a majority:

- Supervision/communication with volunteers
- Collection of information about the volunteer numbers and hours

Figure 6 shows that Foster Grandparent Program station supervisors are about as likely as charities in general are to make use of these management practices. The division of responsibilities between projects and stations probably account for many of the differences, such as for collection of information about volunteer numbers and hours, and the screening and matching of volunteers.⁵

Three practices in particular have been found to be positively associated with volunteer retention: volunteer screening, volunteer training, and volunteer recognition. Compared to charities overall, Foster Grandparent Program stations are a little less likely to use volunteer screening to a great extent, but are slightly more likely to use the second two practices to a great extent.

Figure 5: Management Practices Used with Foster Grandparent Program Volunteers



⁴ Urban Institute (2004). The practices include: written policies and assignment descriptions, liability coverage/insurance protection, recognition activities for volunteers, collection of information on the number of volunteers and the hours they work, annual measurement of the impacts of volunteers, training and development of volunteers, screening to identify volunteers and to match them to assignments, and regular supervision and communication with volunteers.

⁵ In Senior Corps, projects are chiefly responsible for volunteer matching.

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The best prepared and most effective volunteer programs are those with paid staff who dedicate a substantial portion of their time to volunteer management.⁷ The greater the amount of time paid staff spent on volunteer management, the more likely these agencies were to use effective management practices, and the more capable they were of managing more volunteers.

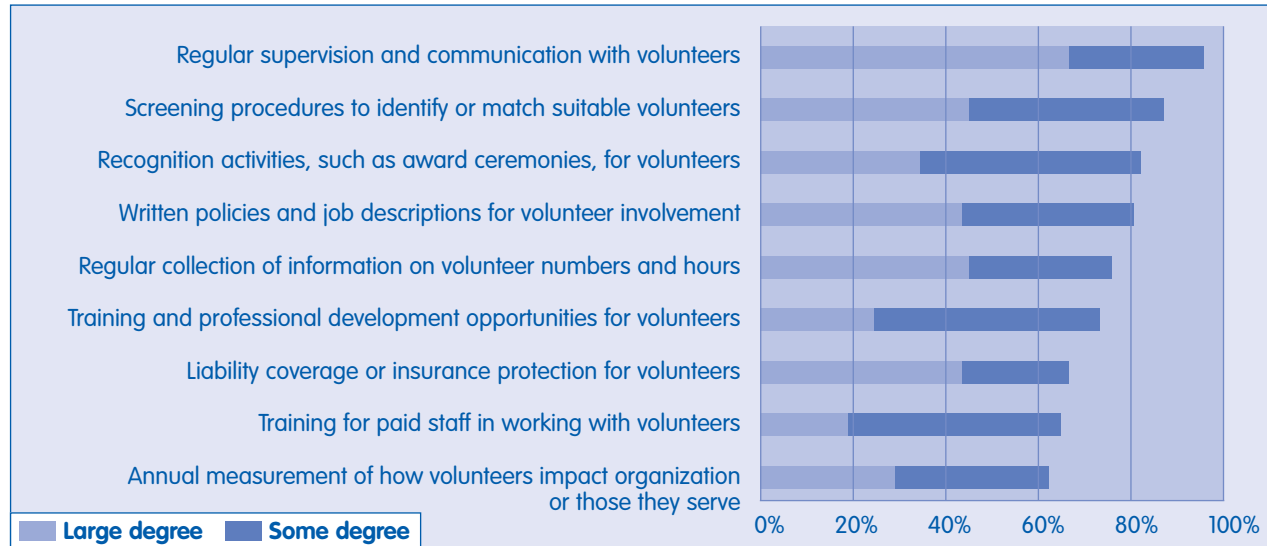
A majority of Foster Grandparent Program station supervisors report that volunteer management in

their organizations is the responsibility of paid staff.

- 65 percent indicate that paid staff manage their volunteers
- 21 percent report that volunteers help manage other volunteers

Both these percentages are higher than in volunteer organizations in general (64 percent of charities have a paid volunteer coordinator, while 21 percent had a volunteer who coordinates other volunteers).

Figure 6: Management Practices among America's Charities⁶



⁶ Based on the results of the 2003 Volunteer Management Capacity Study, which surveyed 1,753 charities in the United States on the benefits and challenges of effectively recruiting and managing volunteers.

⁷ Ibid.

Section 4: How Volunteer Stations Recruit Foster Grandparents

Finding: Volunteer station supervisors generally use personal interactions and other “low-tech” methods to recruit Foster Grandparents.

The most popular method of volunteer recruitment (used by 80% of the stations) is word of mouth.

Between thirty and forty percent of station supervisors also report using:

- Registering with other organizations to receive referrals
- Public speaking before groups
- Special events, such as volunteer fairs and open houses

- Newspapers, trade papers, billboards or fliers

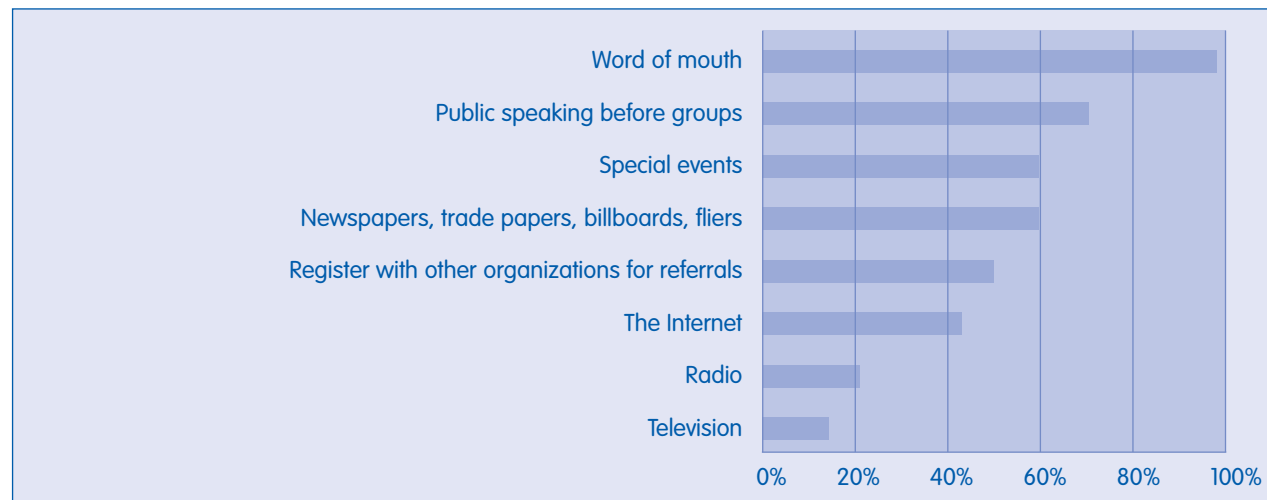
Few station supervisors report using the Senior Corps JASON recruitment system, other internet recruiting systems, radio, or television. Figure 7 presents the results of this question.

Figure 8 shows that word of mouth is the most widely used tactic among all charities. Like FGP stations, few charities use paid media advertising (radio, television), but use of the Internet is more widespread in general than it is among FGP stations.

Figure 7: Methods Used to Recruit Foster Grandparent Program Volunteers



Figure 8: Methods Used by America's Charities to Recruit Volunteers⁸



Section 5: Challenges Faced by Community Organizations Working with Foster Grandparent Program Grantees and Volunteers

Volunteer station supervisors were asked about challenges of working with Foster Grandparent Program grantees and Foster Grandparent volunteers. They were also asked to classify the challenges as “major challenges” or “minor challenges”.

Key findings:

- Eighty-nine percent of volunteer station supervisors indicated no major challenges.
 - Eleven percent cited lack of funds to support volunteers as a major challenge.
 - Eleven percent cited Foster Grandparent Program grantee responsiveness to requests for additional volunteers as a major challenge.
 - Volunteer station supervisors were more likely to report challenges as minor in nature.
- The most frequently minor challenges mentioned by station supervisors include:
 - Finding volunteers with the right skills and experience – 38% percent
 - Increasing the number of volunteers in the program – 31% percent
 - Lack of funds to support volunteers – 27%

Foster Grandparent Program station supervisors are less likely to mention either major or minor challenges, compared to charities in general. This, too, may be because Foster Grandparent Program projects and stations share the responsibility for recruiting volunteers. However, charities nationwide are much more likely to mention the problems caused by volunteers, compared to Foster Grandparent Program station supervisors.⁹

⁸ Based on the results of the 2003 Volunteer Management Capacity Study, which surveyed 1,753 charities in the United States on the benefits and challenges of effectively recruiting and managing volunteers.

⁹ Differences in question wording between the two surveys makes a direct comparison difficult.

Figure 9: Challenges working with Foster Grandparent Program grantees



Figure 10: Challenges Working with Volunteers as reported by America’s Charities¹⁰



Other challenges reported by Foster Grandparent Program volunteer station supervisors:

- Lack of volunteer transportation: many Foster Grandparents do not drive; some stations are located in rural areas and volunteers are not willing or able to travel long distances; and gas price increases are a hardship.
- Health challenges of the most frail and elderly volunteers.
- Personality conflicts among volunteers
- Paperwork – the ability of volunteers to complete on time, finding the staff time for reporting and completing paperwork, helping the volunteers understand the importance.
- Accommodating schedules that call for volunteers to stay late in the day or into the evening.

¹⁰ Based on the results of the 2003 Volunteer Management Capacity Study, which surveyed 1,753 charities in the United States on the benefits and challenges of effectively recruiting and managing volunteers.

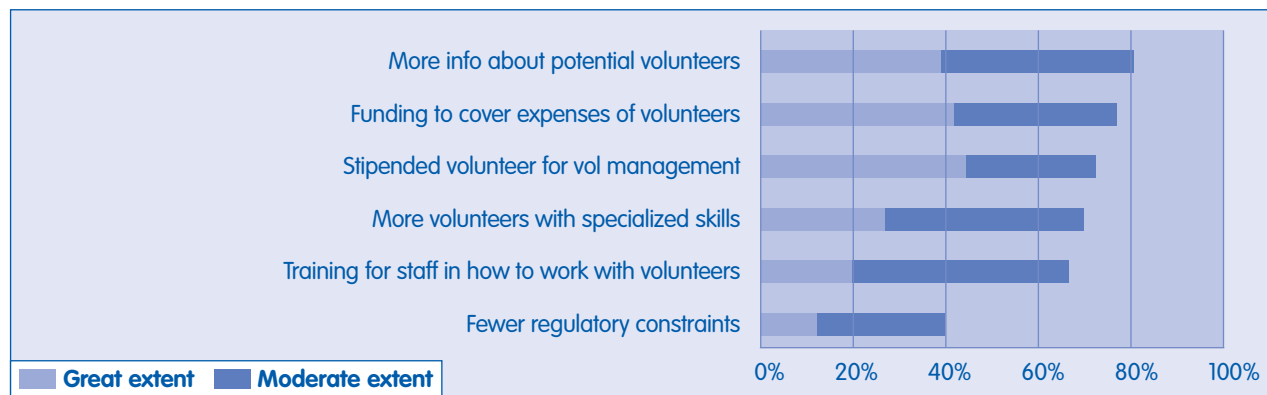
Section 6: Foster Grandparent Program Stations' Ability to Involve More Volunteers

- Several questions in the survey concerned ways in which community agencies could increase their capacities to involve volunteers. Figure 11 presents the results of the analysis of these questions.
- The majority of Foster Grandparent Program station supervisors did not indicate that using any of these methods would increase volunteer involvement “to a great extent.” However, a majority agreed that each of these methods would increase volunteer involvement at least “to a moderate extent.”
- Figure 12 suggests that Foster Grandparent Program stations are typical of American charities in their capacity to involve more volunteers.

Figure 11: Factors for Increasing Agency’s Capacity to Involve Volunteers



Figure 12: Factors Reported by America’s Charities to Increase their Capacity to Involve Volunteers¹¹



¹¹ Based on the results of the 2003 Volunteer Management Capacity Study, which surveyed 1,753 charities in the United States on the benefits and challenges of effectively recruiting and managing volunteers.

Section 7: Differences between Types of Community Agencies Serving as Stations

The survey results were analyzed to see whether the type of organization was related to the volunteer management capacity of Foster Grandparent Program stations. Foster Grandparent Program stations were categorized in three ways: faith-based or non-faith-based affiliations; location in urban or rural areas; and many or few Foster Grandparents.¹²

Differences between Types of Community Agencies

- Station supervisors of faith-based and non-faith-based volunteer stations reported gaining similar benefits from working with the Foster Grandparent Program.
- A higher percent of supervisors of faith-based agencies reported using some managerial tools, such as written policies and assignment descriptions and holding recognition activities “to a great extent” than did supervisors of non-faith-based agencies.
- Station supervisors in urban and rural areas reported about the same benefits, challenges, and volunteer management practices.
- Station supervisors of volunteer stations with more Foster Grandparent Program volunteers reported using more management tools, such as screening procedures to identify suitable volunteers and measuring the impact of the volunteers, “to a great extent” than did supervisors of volunteer stations with fewer Foster Grandparent Program volunteers.

Section 8: Foster Grandparent Program Volunteer Accomplishments

This chapter presents the accomplishments or outputs attributable to Foster Grandparents in the nine Issue Areas covered in the Accomplishments Survey: Education, Health/Nutrition, Human Needs and Housing, Public Safety, Disaster, and Homeland Security.

Education

Eighty-four percent of the Foster Grandparent Program volunteers provided services in the area of Education. They spent 80 percent of the total hours

spent by Foster Grandparent Program volunteers serving in the area.

Pre-Elementary Day Care (not including Head Start)

- 4700 volunteers spent 3,453,000 hours assisting in 9900 pre-elementary learning and day care programs
- 6100 volunteers spent 4,106,000 hours assisting in pre-elementary day care programs serving 5,281,000 children

¹² “Large” stations have a number of Foster Grandparents greater than the sample median (3 volunteers); “small” stations have one or two Foster Grandparents.

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Head Start

- 4300 volunteers spent 3,018,000 hours helping 58,100 children in Head Start to develop social and behavioral skills
- 4400 volunteers spent 3,106,000 hours providing emotional support and nurturing for 59,600 children in Head Start

Elementary Education

- 9800 volunteers spent 6,116,000 hours providing one-on-one assistance for 165,000 elementary school students
- 3800 volunteers spent 2,135,000 hours assisting and supporting child participation in extracurricular activities, clubs, physical education classes, physical fitness or sports programs involving 72,600 elementary school students

Secondary Education

- 690 volunteers spent 410,000 hours providing one-on-one assistance for 8800 students in the 7th through the 12th grade
- 400 volunteers spent 247,000 hours assisting and supporting child participation in extracurricular activities, clubs, physical education classes, physical fitness or sports programs involving 4700 students in 7th through 12th grade

Special Education

- 2100 volunteers spent 1,206,000 hours providing supportive services to 9800 students with learning disabilities in kindergarten through 6th grade
- 1100 volunteers spent 721,000 hours providing supportive services to 9400 students with learning disabilities in the 7th through 12th grade
- 11,000 volunteers spent 898,000 hours assisting in other special education programs involving 4300 students in kindergarten through 12th grade

Tutoring and Child Literacy

- 4200 volunteers spent 2,761,000 hours using evidence-based reading readiness programs

with 85,200 students in pre-kindergarten

- 5500 volunteers spent 3,214,000 hours using evidence-based reading and tutoring programs with 106,000 students in kindergarten through the 6th grade
- 680 volunteers spent 505,000 hours using evidence-based reading and tutoring programs with 14,700 students in the 7th through 12th grade

Job Preparedness/Vocational Education

- 150 volunteers spent 65,700 hours assisting in job skills training for 700 students

ESL

- 500 volunteers spent 231,000 hours helping 3700 ESL students in kindergarten through high school learn English

GED/Dropouts

- 30 volunteers spent 2200 hours assisting 180 students working toward their GED

Health/Nutrition

Eleven percent of the Foster Grandparent Program volunteers provide at least one service in the area of Health/Nutrition. They devote about 12 percent of the total Foster Grandparent Program hours served to activities in this area.

Delivery of Health Services

- 360 volunteers spent 276,000 hours providing nurturing or support at a clinic, hospital, hospice, or mobile unit to more than one million very sick or terminally ill children
- 3760 volunteers spent 310,000 hours feeding, cradling, singing to and rocking 34,000 infants
- 360 volunteers spent 319,000 hours visiting with/nurturing 241,000 hospitalized children

Maternal/Child Health Services

- 200 volunteers spent 164,000 hours helping with pre-natal care and health living assistance to 1600 pregnant adolescence

- 110 volunteers spent 26,400 hours providing support/services for post-natal care and well-child clinics for 14,500 children

Mental Health

- 270 volunteers spent 171,000 hours providing services for 2200 children with mental health impairments who receive non-residential support services

Developmental Disabilities

- 1200 volunteers spent 984,000 hours providing services in residential or non-residential settings for 7900 children with developmental disabilities

Substance Abuse

- 20 volunteers spent 25,400 hours providing services to 150 drug or alcohol addicted infants

Physical Disabilities Programs

- 450 volunteers spent 321,000 hours providing assistance with rehabilitation, therapy or exercise to 2900 children with physical disabilities
- 80 volunteers spent 75,000 hours assisting 200 children with physical disabilities during Special Olympics

Hospice/Terminally Ill

- 3 volunteers spent 4400 hours providing nurturing and support to 1500 terminally ill children (except for those with HIV/AIDS) and their families

HIV/AIDS

- 15 volunteers spent 13,200 hours caring for 300 boarder babies with HIV/AIDS

Human Needs and Housing

Eight percent of the Foster Grandparent Program volunteers provide at least one service in the area of Human Needs. They devote about 6 percent of the total Foster Grandparent Program hours served to activities in this area.

Crisis Intervention

- 190 volunteers spent 130,000 hours participating in crisis intervention programs serving 24,000 children

Child Abuse/Neglect

- 570 volunteers spent 173,000 hours providing aid, assistance and guidance to 22,100 abused/neglected children and their families

Homeless

- 20 volunteers spent 13,400 hours providing services to 4800 homeless children

Mentoring

- 1500 volunteers spent 738,000 providing mentoring by developing relationships, reinforcing prosocial behaviors and providing constructive guidance and feedback to 47,100 children
- 170 volunteers spent 112,000 hours providing mentoring by developing relationships, reinforcing prosocial behaviors and providing constructive guidance and feedback to 1100 children of prisoners
- 770 volunteers spent 334,000 hours providing mentoring by developing relationships, reinforcing prosocial behaviors and providing constructive guidance and feedback to 2900 children in foster care
- 1100 volunteers spent 497,000 hours nurturing and supporting 18,700 children, teens, and young adults

Respite

- 100 volunteers spent 84,000 hours providing respite for 24,900 caregivers of special needs children

Teen Pregnancy/Parenting Support and Education

- 190 volunteers spent 69,000 hours providing one-on-one services on parenting skills, child health, safety and similar topics to 550 teen parents

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Public Safety

Two percent of the Foster Grandparent Program volunteers provided services in the area of Public Safety. They spent 2 percent of the hours spent by Foster Grandparent Program participants volunteering in this area.

Offender/Ex-offender Services/Rehabilitation

- 540 volunteers spent 314,000 hours providing one-on-one support to 28,900 young offenders/ex-offenders
- 460 volunteers spent 261,000 hours mentoring 6100 young offenders/ex-offenders (compared to 15,000 young offenders/ex-offenders in 1999-2000)
- 300 volunteers spent 171,000 hours providing one-on-one support and nurturing to 23,900 children of offenders/ex-offenders

Family Violence

- 50 volunteers spent 29,000 hours supporting 2400 children whose families are in violence prevention programs

Safe Children and Youth

- 130 volunteers spent 92,000 hours helping 23,700 children understand, learn, and practice safety issues

Disaster

One percent of the Foster Grandparent Program volunteers provided service in the area of Disaster. They spent less than one percent of the total hours served by Foster Grandparent Program in this area.

Disaster Preparedness

- 190 volunteers spent 28,000 hours helping 6700 children understand, cope with or prepare for emergencies

Homeland Security

Almost no Foster Grandparent Program volunteers provided service in the area of Homeland Security. They spent less than one percent of the total hours served by Foster Grandparent Program volunteers in this area.

Emergency Preparedness

5 volunteers spent 170 hours helping 40 children understand, cope with, or prepare for emergencies