

# Volunteer Growth in America

## A REVIEW OF TRENDS SINCE 1974



A Research Report in the *Volunteering In America* Series



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The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Each year, the Corporation provides opportunities for more than two million Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America.

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of the United States, Americans have valued an ethic of service. As Alexis de Tocqueville wrote over a century and a half ago, this ethic of service “prompts [Americans] to assist one another and inclines them willingly to sacrifice a portion of their time and property to the welfare of the state.”<sup>1</sup> Today, the ethic remains strong as Americans of all ages donate their time to schools, churches, hospitals, and other local nonprofits in an effort to improve their communities. Every day, people across the country mentor students, beautify neighborhoods, help older Americans to live independently, restore homes after disasters, and much more.



The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. As part of that mission, the Corporation supports schools, colleges, and other nonprofit organizations to help foster a culture of service in communities and on campuses. We work in partnership with schools and nonprofits to help build their capacity to recruit, train, manage and support volunteers. Through these efforts, we continue to work together to achieve a national goal to increase by 10 million the number of American adult volunteers, from 65 million in 2005 to 75 million by 2010.

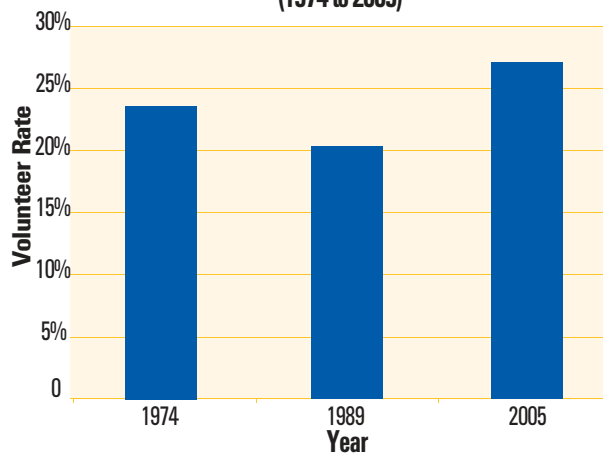
This research brief, *Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends Since 1974*, provides an in-depth look at how volunteering compares by age groups for the period from 1974 to 2005.<sup>2</sup> While previous reports released under our *Volunteering in America* series have looked at volunteering over the past four years<sup>3</sup>, this report presents a historical view of volunteering through an analysis of data collected in 1974, 1989, and 2002-2005 from the Current Population Survey (CPS).<sup>4</sup> The CPS is a comprehensive and scientifically rigorous survey of 60,000 American households conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In addition to the two volunteer surveys administered in 1974 and 1989, the Census Bureau has administered a volunteer survey each year since September 2002 with the Corporation’s support. It is our hope that this report will help us capitalize on Americans’ interest in volunteering and generate more opportunities for people to begin or deepen their commitment to volunteering.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Volunteering is at a 30-year high.

- The adult volunteer rate declined by 15 percent between 1974 and 1989 (23.6% to 20.4%, respectively) but rebounded to a new high today (27%). In fact, the adult volunteering rate increased by more than 32 percent since 1989. (See Figure 1)
- The growth in volunteering has been driven primarily by three age groups: older teenagers (ages 16 to 19); mid-life adults (ages 45 to 64); and older adults (65 years old and over).
- Volunteering that takes place through an educational or youth service organization had the largest increase between 1989 and today. While 15.1 percent of all volunteers served through or with an educational or youth service organization in 1989, 24.6 percent of all volunteers serve through or with an educational organization today, a 63 percent increase.<sup>5</sup> (See Figure 2)

**Figure 1: Adult Volunteer Rate (age 16+)**  
(1974 to 2005)



- The proportion of Americans volunteering through a religious organization decreased slightly between 1989 (37.4%) and today (35.5%). Meanwhile, the proportion of volunteers serving through civic, political, professional, and international organizations dropped substantially between 1989 (13.2%) and today (6.8%).

### Volunteering among teenagers (ages 16 to 19) has dramatically increased since 1989.

- While volunteer rates among teenagers declined between 1974 and 1989 (20.9% and 13.4%, respectively), the percentage of teenagers who volunteer more than doubled between 1989 and 2005 (from 13.4% to 28.4%).
- While the teenage volunteering rate has increased significantly over the last 30 years, teenagers continue to be primarily interested in episodic volunteering (contributing 99 or fewer hours a year). Today, 67.9 percent of teenagers are episodic volunteers.
- Teenage volunteers are significantly more likely to serve with educational or youth service organizations today (34.7% in 2005 vs. 26.8% in 1989). In fact, volunteering with a religious organizations (30.3% in 2005 vs. 34.4% in 1989) was the most common place that teenagers volunteered in 1989 but it is now the second most popular place for teenager volunteering, behind educational organizations.<sup>6</sup>
- More teenage volunteers are also serving with social and community service organizations today (12.9% in 2005 vs. 7% in 1989).

### Baby Boomers are creating the highest mid-life (ages 45 to 64) volunteer rate in 30 years.

- Baby Boomers (who make up 75% of this group) are the primary reason for a 37 percent increase in volunteering among mid-life Americans since 1989 (from 23.2% in 1974 and 22% in 1989 to 30% in 2005.)
- The proportion of volunteers ages 45 to 54 who serve with educational organizations has more than doubled since 1989 (24.4% in 2005 vs. 11.8% in 1989). Likewise, the proportion of volunteers ages 55 to 64 who serve with educational or youth service organizations has nearly doubled since 1989 (12.3% in 2005 from 6.7% in 1989).
- The proportion of American volunteers who serve with or through a religious organization fell among Americans ages 45 to 64 between 1989 and 2005 (from 40.8% in 1989 to 36.5% in 2005 among 45 to 54 year-olds, and 45.7% in 1989 to 40.3% in 2005 among 55 to 64 year-olds). Nonetheless, both age groups are still more likely to volunteer with religious organizations than any other type of organization.



■ Similarly, there was a decline in volunteering with civic, political, professional, and international organizations among the same age group between 1989 and 2005 (from 15.1% in 1989 to 7.3% in 2005 among 45 to 54 year-olds and 16.1% in 1989 to 9.2% in 2005 among 55 to 64 year-olds).

■ The percentage of 45 to 64 year-old volunteers serving episodically (99 or fewer hours a year) has increased by 14 percent in the last 15 years (50.7% in 1989 vs. 57.7% in 2005).

**Volunteering among older adults (ages 65 and older) has increased 64 percent since 1974.**

■ While the overall adult volunteer rate declined substantially from 1974 to 1989, the volunteer rate for adults 65 years old and over actually increased during that period (14.3% in 1974 to 16.9% in 1989). In fact, older adult volunteering has been on an upward

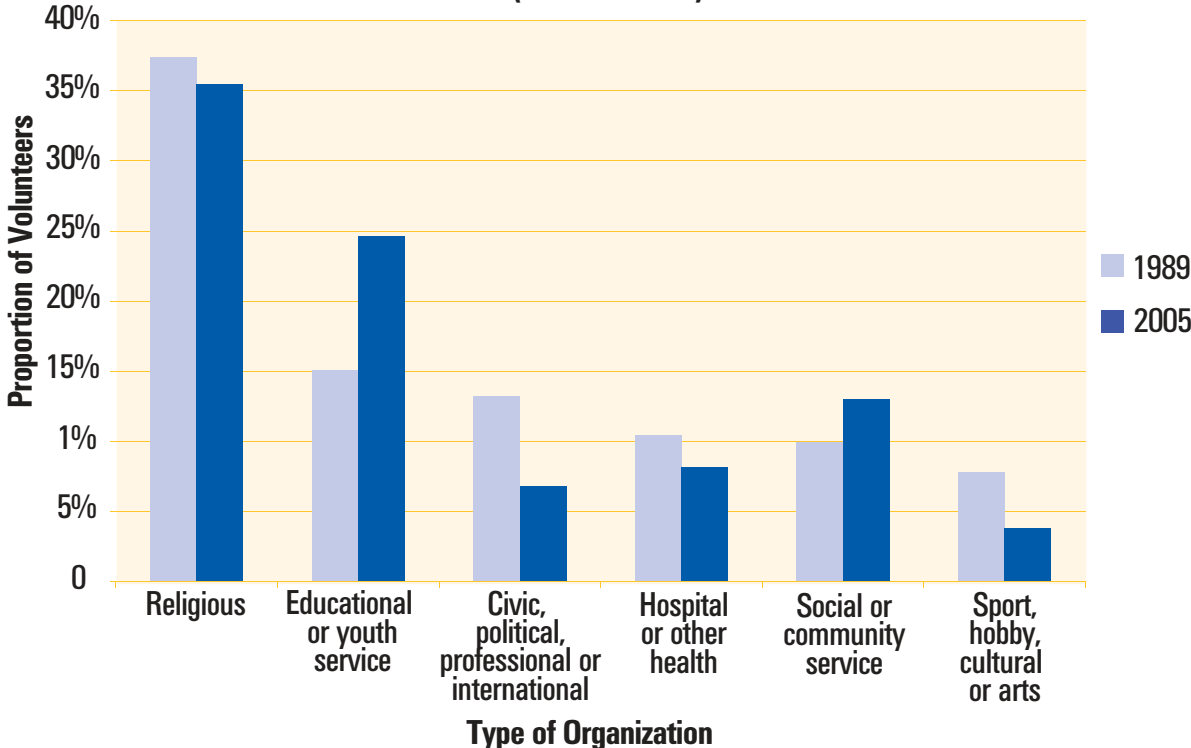
trajectory through the last three decades, going from 14.3 percent in 1974 to 23.5 percent in 2005.

■ The proportion of older adults who volunteer 100 or more hours a year is 46 percent higher today than in 1974. Today, 46.1 percent of older adults volunteer 100 or more hours a year while 31.6 percent of older adults volunteered 100 or more hours in 1974.

■ Today, older adults are the most likely group to serve 100 or more hours a year. This was not the case in 1974 when all volunteers 20 years old and over had virtually the same percentage of volunteers contributing 100+ hours a year.<sup>7</sup>

■ Unlike the general trend, the percentage of older adult volunteers who serve through or with a religious organization did not decline between 1989 and 2005 (43.3% and 45.5%, respectively). Meanwhile, considerably fewer seniors volunteer through a hospital or health-related organization today (from 17.8% in 1989 to 10.9% in 2005).

**Figure 2: Adult Volunteering by Type of Organization<sup>8</sup> (1989 vs. 2005)**



**Episodic volunteering (contributing 99 or fewer volunteer hours in a year) has increased between 1989 and 2005.**

■ The nature of volunteering has changed somewhat since 1989, when the number of Americans volunteering 100 or more hours was at a 30-year high. In 1989, 40.1 percent of volunteers served 100 or more hours in a year, compared to 34.9 percent serving 100 or more hours today and 29 percent in 1974.

■ The increase in episodic volunteering since 1989 is largely driven by teenagers (67.9% are episodic volunteers) and adults ages 45 to 64 (57.7% are episodic volunteers), the two groups with the largest increase in the sheer number of volunteers serving 99 or fewer hours in a year.

*More detailed report results and a fact sheet on 2005 volunteer trends can be found at [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov)*



**Methodological Note on Survey Comparisons**

To enable comparisons across the 1974, 1989, and 2005 Current Population Surveys (CPS) administered by the U.S. Census Bureau, a consistent definition of an “adult volunteer” has been used. For all three survey periods, an adult volunteer is someone age 16 and older who did work through an organization in the previous 12 months for which they were not paid.

This adult definition excludes respondents age 14 and 15 from the analysis, which causes the volunteer rate to differ from the results previously published from the 1974 survey. The results from the 1989 survey match the ones reported in previously published research by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Meanwhile, the 2005 results come from a pooled CPS dataset that combines responses from the 2003, 2004, and 2005 volunteer surveys. For this reason, the 2005 results will differ from some previously published BLS statistics.

To create a fair historical comparison, we have modified the calculation of the 2005 volunteer rate from that of previous reports. For this report, the 2005 volunteer rate is calculated based on responses to the initial volunteer prompt of the volunteer survey instrument (“Since September 1st of last year, [have you] done any volunteer activities through or for an organization?”). This calculation excludes a relatively small number of responses to the second volunteer prompt (“Sometimes people don’t think of activities they do infrequently or activities they do for children’s schools or youth organizations as volunteer activities. Since September last year, [have you] done any of these types of volunteer activities?”). Since the Census surveys of 1989 and 1974 did not include a follow-up question, we excluded those respondents who responded positively to the second prompt in 2005 in order to prevent an over-inflation of the volunteering rate in 2005. As a result, the 2005 volunteer results will be slightly lower than previously reported numbers.

## ANALYSIS

**WHY ARE MORE AMERICANS VOLUNTEERING TODAY?**

One of the key aspects of a strong democracy is volunteering. Its importance has been recognized throughout the history of our country as one of the threads that has held together the fabric of this nation and has strengthened the character of its citizens. Today, millions of Americans—on college campuses, through religious congregations, at schools, and in social service organizations—are participating in a wide range of volunteer activities, from teaching and mentoring children from disadvantaged circumstances, to helping older Americans live independently, to helping their fellow Americans recover from hurricanes and other disasters. Not only is volunteering one way for individuals to help their neighbors and enhance their communities, it also provides opportunities for youth to develop valuable skills, older Americans to remain healthy by being active and connected to their community, and adults to share their professional and work expertise.

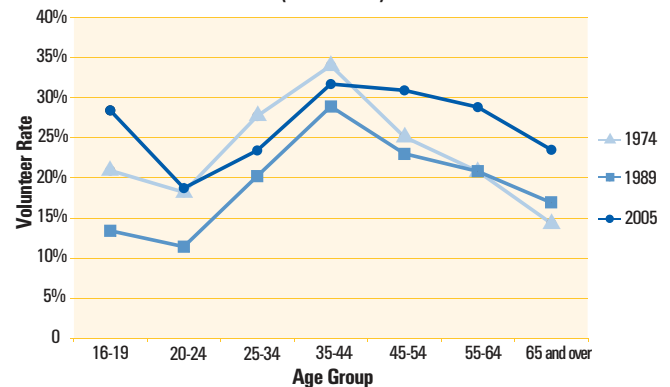
While research in the previous two decades has suggested that individuals' involvement with their community has significantly declined over the last half-century,<sup>9</sup> the findings in this report, and other recent trends, may actually signal that volunteering and some other forms of civic participation in America are beginning to undergo a renewal. In fact, Americans' engagement in politics, like volunteering, is increasing today—with voter participation in presidential elections rising between 1996 and 2004.<sup>10</sup>

Many people speculate that recent events may have helped to boost Americans' interest in service and community engagement. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 shocked the nation, and may have been the catalyst for more Americans to make a contribution to the health and well-being of the nation. Similarly, recent natural disasters, such as Hurricane Ivan, the 2004 tsunami, the wildfires in

the southwestern and western United States, and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, may also have created an increased commitment to volunteering among Americans.

The increase in volunteering may also be driven by an increased demand for volunteers from nonprofit organizations. The Urban Institute's National Center on Charitable Statistics estimates that between 1989 and 2004, the number of operating public charities more than doubled.<sup>11</sup> While many of these new nonprofits may be primarily staffed by professionals, nonprofit organizations continue to rely on volunteers to help them run their internal operations and provide services to the community. A study of nonprofit volunteer management in 2003, sponsored by the Corporation and the UPS Foundation, indicates that 81 percent of nonprofit organizations in America utilize volunteers. These two findings combine to suggest that there has been a large increase in the demand for volunteers.

**Figure 3: Volunteer Rate (all age groups) (1974 to 2005)**

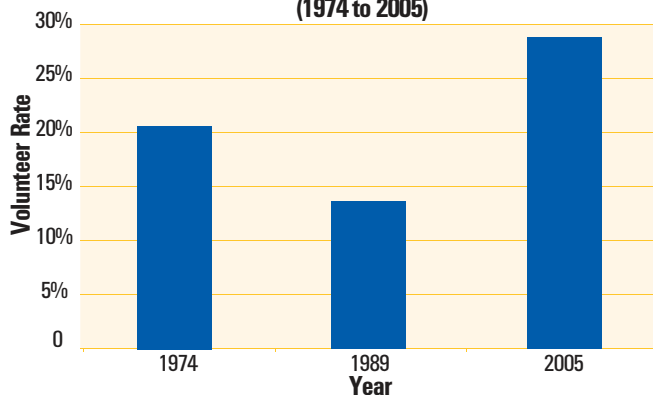


Our research brief suggests that volunteering today is particularly robust among three age groups: teenagers, adults 45 to 64 years old, and adults 65 years and over (see Figure 3). We outline below how a variety of far-reaching changes in the nation over the last 30 years may be connected to the shift in volunteering behaviors among these three age groups and the resurgence in volunteering among Americans today.

## Teenagers

While the volunteer rates of teenagers remained quite low in 1974 and 1989, we find that volunteering rates for individuals aged 16 to 19 actually doubled between 1989 and today—to a rate that exceeds the national volunteer rate (see Figure 4). Increased enthusiasm for volunteering among today's young people is reflected in other research as well. For example, the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) found an all-time high in the percentage of first-year college students who indicated that there was a high probability that they would volunteer or participate in community service sometime during their college careers.<sup>12</sup> The Corporation's *College Students Helping America*<sup>13</sup> report recently highlighted a 20 percent increase in the number of college students volunteering between 2002 and 2005, while the University of Michigan's *Monitoring the Future* study also finds a rising trend in volunteering among teens.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 4: Volunteer Rate for Teenagers (ages 16 to 19) (1974 to 2005)**



What exactly is driving young people's increased enthusiasm for volunteering? One factor seems to be the growth of school-based service and service-learning. There has been a growing trend to include community service and service-learning in America's schools as educators and school administrators realize the value of service for youth academic and personal development. A national survey of school principals by the U.S. Department of Education in 1999 found that 46 percent of public high schools and 38 percent of public middle schools offered service-learning activities for their students, while 83 percent of high schools and 77 percent of middle schools organized community service opportunities. This compares to

only 9 percent for service-learning activities and 27 percent for community service opportunities among public high schools in 1984, an indication that a large and growing number of America's schools today place an emphasis on the value of service<sup>15</sup>.

Another motivator may have arisen out of the nation's reaction to the events of September 11, 2001, as young people expressed an increased desire to serve their community. According to HERI, two out of three (66.3%) students entering college in 2005 believe it to be very important to help others who are in difficulty, the highest percentage reported by entering college students in the last 25 years. Young adults also are increasingly likely to discuss politics—reversing the downward trend in political engagement since 1994.<sup>16</sup> This interest in political events is matched by an 11 percentage point increase in the voting rates among young people in 2004, an increase that is well above the four percentage points in voting among all age groups.<sup>17</sup> Together, our report and other research points to a historic level of community engagement among today's teenagers.

## Mid-Life Adults

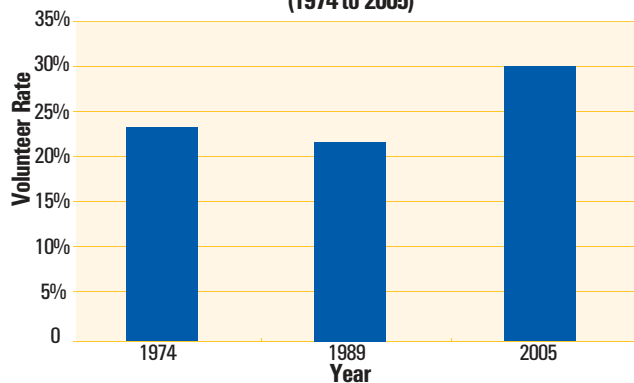
Increases in the rate of volunteering are also found among mid-life adults (ages 45 to 64). Between 1974 and 2005, the volunteering rates of this age group increased by almost 30 percent (from 23.2% to 30% see Figure 5).<sup>18</sup> Because today's mid-life adults were born between 1941 and 1960, they span what is generally considered two different generations—the Silent Generation (born 1931 to 1945) and the Baby Boomers (born 1946 to 1964). However, Baby Boomers comprise 75 percent of this age group today, and appear to be driving the increase in volunteering rates, a finding that challenges the characterization of Baby Boomers as the “Me Generation.”

While this increase in volunteering among Baby Boomers and younger members of the group coined the “Silent Generation” is welcome news, it is challenging to ascertain why 45 to 64 year-olds in 2005 should be more likely to volunteer than adults who were of the same age in 1974 and 1989. Two possible explanations for the increase are higher levels of educational attainment; and delays in marriage and childbearing.



Available evidence suggests that all else being equal, college educated individuals tend to volunteer at a higher rate than non-college educated adults.<sup>19</sup> Between 1989 and 2005, the percentage of adults 45 to 64 years old with a college education increased by 157 percent (11.5% to 29.5%), with an accompanying 108 percent increase in the percentage of 45 to 64 year-old volunteers with a four-year college degree (22.4% to 46.5%). This increase in the proportion of mid-life adults with college degrees is likely to be an important contributor to the higher volunteer rates. While the increase in education among Baby Boomers and other mid-life adults may contribute to the rise in volunteering among 45 to 64 year-olds, the presence of children under 18 years of age in the household is another important predictor of volunteering.<sup>20</sup>

**Figure 5: Volunteer Rate for Mid-Life Adults (ages 45 to 64) (1974 to 2005)**



The connection between the presence of children under the age of 18 and the adult volunteering rate is likely driven by the demand for parents to serve in organizations related to their children's educational and social involvement. In the past, volunteering appeared to peak at around 35 to 44 years old, when adults were most likely to be married with school-aged children, and then decline dramatically starting at around age 45, as children in the household reached adulthood and began leaving the home. However, over the last 30 years, adults have been delaying marriage and childbearing, which likely contributes to the increase in the volunteering rate among mid-life adults. Since 1976, births to women under age 30 have been declining, while births to women over age 30 have been increasing (for example, the rate of births among women ages 35 to 39 and 40 to 44 have almost doubled between 1976 and 2004).<sup>21</sup>

Our analysis of the volunteering data supports the contention that shifts in the timing of marriage and child-rearing helps to explain the increase in volunteering among 45 to 64 year-olds. While we are unable to report on the parental status of respondents to the 1974 survey, we are able to look at changes from 1989 to 2005. Between 1989 and 2005, the rate of adults 45 to 64 years old with children younger than 18 years of age in their household rose by 73 percent. During this period, there was also a 52 percent increase in volunteering by adults between ages 45 and 64 with children under the age of 18.

The rise in the volunteering rate among mid-life adults is further explained by the changes in the types of organizations with which they choose to serve. Over the last 15 years, we see that volunteers between the ages of 45 to 54 who serve with educational and youth service organizations doubled, while adults 55 to 64 years old nearly doubled their volunteering with education organizations. This shift further indicates that these adults are engaging in their communities through the activities of their school-age children.

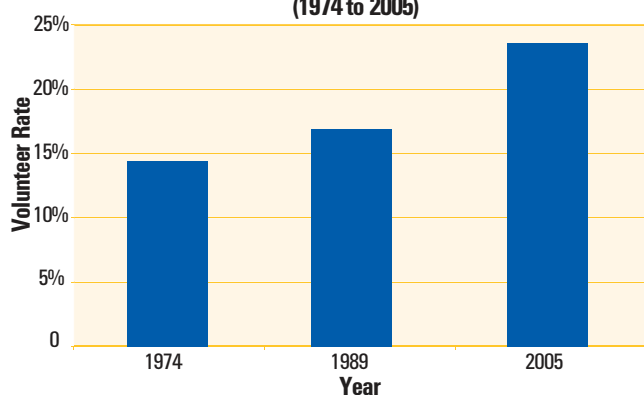
### Older Adults

One of the most notable changes in volunteering came from adults age 65 and over. The volunteer rate for these older Americans increased by 64 percent between 1974 and 2005 (from 14.3% in 1974 to 23.5% in 2005, see Figure 6), while the proportion of volunteers who serve 100 hours or more per year increased by 46 percent. No other age group has seen large increases for both of these volunteer statistics. Why have the volunteering rate and the percentage of adults who volunteer 100 or more hours a year become more popular among people over age 64? We advance several explanations for this increase: generational changes; connections between health and volunteering; and improved education and income levels.

A number of studies have indicated that the Long Civic Generation (born between 1910 and 1930), were unique in their high degree of engagement in civic affairs.<sup>22</sup> These studies showed that members of this group—sometimes called the Greatest Generation—were more likely than previous generations to volunteer once they turned 65. Today, the youngest members of this generation are now 75 years old, and due to health concerns, their contributions to

volunteering have understandably declined. Yet, the volunteer rate among older Americans continues to grow, suggesting that the next generation of older volunteers, the group called the Silent Generation (born 1931 to 1945), who were young children during the Great Depression and World War II and fought the Korean War, is poised to meet the standard the prior generation has set.

While life expectancy in America has increased by 7.1  
**Figure 6: Volunteer Rate for Older Adults (ages 65 and over)**  
 (1974 to 2005)



years since 1970, the position that older Americans are healthier today than they ever have been is more difficult to establish with certitude. In 2002, we found that poor health was the most common reason that older Americans did not volunteer. Yet, research also suggests that volunteering improves physical<sup>23</sup> and mental health,<sup>24</sup> and may even lengthen life expectancy.<sup>25</sup> As researcher John Wilson notes, “Good health is preserved by volunteering; it keeps healthy volunteers healthy”—this may be particularly true for seniors.<sup>26</sup>

Many people also note that today’s older adults have even more resources to bring to volunteering than their predecessors did. Similar to what we found among those volunteers between 45 and 64 years old, increases in volunteering among older adults may be explained, in part, by increases in both education and income. The proportion of adults age 65 and older without a high school diploma has dropped almost 40 percentage points since 1974, and older Americans with college degrees are also volunteering at a higher rate than in the past.<sup>27</sup> Improvement in income levels<sup>28</sup> may also help to explain increases in the rates of volunteering among older Americans, as the portion of seniors in the bottom income quartile for all adults has declined by 17 percent,

while the volunteer rate for seniors in the top income quartile has increased by 93 percent. Shifts in education levels and wealth among older Americans may have also led to increased recruitment by nonprofits, as they recognized the rising potential for volunteering among older adults.

### Episodic Volunteering

While volunteering rates appear to be at a 30-year high today, the last 15 years also suggest some change in how people volunteer. According to our findings, episodic volunteering (serving 99 or fewer volunteer hours in a year) has increased since 1989. While our analysis indicates that the proportion of episodic volunteers increased for all adults age 25 and over in the last 15 years,<sup>29</sup> the overall increase in episodic volunteering since 1989 is largely driven by adults ages 45 to 64 and teenagers. These two groups have the largest increase in the sheer number of volunteers serving 99 or fewer hours a year. The critical role that time constraints have on the potential for people to volunteer may help to explain the reason why episodic volunteering became more common between 1989 and 2005.<sup>30</sup>

Around the same time as the term “episodic volunteer” was coined,<sup>31</sup> a 1989 survey showed that 79 percent of non-volunteers said that they would volunteer if given a short-duration task.<sup>32</sup> While recent events, such as the tragedy of September 11, 2001 and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, may encourage more Americans to serve those in need, a renewal of civic engagement may be challenged by the need to fulfill other obligations. Current trends suggest many of America’s charities and volunteer associations may have taken this reality to heart and made shorter, more flexible volunteering opportunities available to “episodic volunteers”—those who are willing to volunteer, but cannot or will not serve as a regular, ongoing volunteer throughout the year. To foster greater volunteer growth, it will likely be important to remain sensitive to the time constraints and other responsibilities that individuals and families face, particularly baby boomers and teenagers.

## CONCLUSION

Our analysis of volunteering behavior among American adults over the last 30 years indicates that there has been a real increase in volunteering since 1974. While there was a decline in the volunteer rate between 1974 and 1989, the 2005 data indicate that volunteering rates are at a 30-year high. Much of the improvement in volunteering behavior since 1974 seems to be driven by increases in volunteering among three age groups: teens 16 to 19 years old; adults 45 to 64 years old; and adults 65 years old and over.

Hosts of studies and indicators suggest that young people are initiating a renewal in civic and political participation that may manifest in increased rates of volunteering. At the same time, schools are offering service and service-learning opportunities in record numbers. While today's teens may engage in volunteering patterns that differ somewhat from their parents and grandparents, the fact that the rate of volunteering among young people has doubled since 1989 suggests a major shift in the perception of volunteering among America's youth.



Mid-life adults today, composed primarily of Baby Boomers, have also increased their involvement in volunteering over previous generations. The reasons for this change are complex and varied but two possibilities stand out: adults 45 to 64 years old are much more likely to be college educated in 2005 than they were in 1974 or 1989; and adults 45 to 64 years old are more likely to have children under age 18 in the home today. Meanwhile, older adults (age 65 and over) have increased both their volunteering

rates and volunteer hours over the last 30 years. The increased volunteering among older Americans appears to be the result of a commitment to service that crosses generations. While the Greatest Generation has formed a core of older volunteers, the next generation of older Americans is proving to be just as civically engaged. Moreover, these older adults are also living longer today than in the past. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that volunteering itself may increase the health and longevity of older individuals. Moreover, these older adults have more resources to engage in volunteering, as they are better educated and more financially secure than in the past.

Finally, the percentage of episodic volunteers increased after 1989 along with a very substantial rise in the volunteer rate. There does appear to be some relationship between trends in episodic volunteering and the overall volunteer rate. Episodic volunteering may provide opportunities for individuals who are not able to commit extended time to volunteering, but still wish to serve.

This report is the first in a series of research briefs that examine historical trends in volunteering. By highlighting emerging volunteer trends, we hope to better understand how to encourage more adults to volunteer. This research brief indicates several useful findings. First, the data highlights the current and potential contributions that young people, Baby Boomers, and older adults can make in building our nation's culture of service. Second, the findings provide some strategic insights into how to recruit more volunteers based on where they happen to be in life. For example, volunteering efforts that might require substantial investments in time are best aimed at older adults, especially those over 65 years old.

On the other hand, the findings indicate that more teenagers and young adults can be connected to service opportunities through episodic and short-term volunteer opportunities<sup>33</sup>. Finally, because of shifts in marriage and childbearing behavior, there may be an increased opportunity to recruit mid-life adults, most of whom are currently Baby Boomers, into volunteering aimed at the needs of school-aged children.

## ENDNOTES

1 Citation from Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Trans Henry Reeve, London: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1998.

2 We analyzed CPS data from 1974, 1989, and 2005. 2005 is an aggregate of 2003-2005 data. From this point on, the aggregate 2003-2005 data will be referred to as 2005.

3 The *Volunteering in America* series includes: *Volunteering in America: State Trends and Rankings* (2006), which is the first report with detailed information about adult volunteering by state; *College Students Helping America* (2006), which identifies trends in college student volunteering; and the *Youth Helping America Series* (2005), which analyzes teenager volunteering through school and school-based service-learning projects, religious congregations, and community associations, as well as volunteering experiences with their family.

4 The 2002 data include volunteering activities from September 2001 to September 2002, thus capturing volunteering that occurred in the year immediately after the September 11 attacks. 2005 results do not include volunteering activities that might have occurred since Hurricane Katrina. The 1989 and 2002-2005 surveys ask individuals not only if they volunteer, but also where they volunteer, how they volunteer, and how often they volunteer. The 1974 survey does ask some volunteers where they volunteer, and how often they volunteer—but only about volunteering they did during the week the survey was administered.

5 The 1974 survey did not ask all respondents what organization they volunteered with. Therefore, we are not able to compare 1974 to other years.

6 The difference in the proportion of teenager volunteers serving with a religious organization between 1989 and 2005 is not statistically significant.

7 For the data collected in 1974, we found no statistical difference in the percentage of volunteers serving 100+ hours a year for adults 20 years of age and over. Stated another way, the margin of errors for the percentage of volunteers giving 100+ hours for all

of the age groups (adults 20 to 24 years old, 25 to 34, years old, 35 to 44 years old, 45 to 54 years old, 55 to 64 years old, and 65 years and older) all overlapped, meaning that the statistical difference between all these age groups was equal to zero.

8 The categories environmental, animal care, public safety, and not determined were not available to 1989 respondents and are excluded from the table. The “other” category is also excluded

9 Robert D. Putnam (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

10 Compiled by Gerhard Peters from data obtained from the Federal Election Commission, see the American Presidency at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php> See also U.S. Census, Voting and Registration, Detailed Tables, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.html>.

11 See Boris, Elizabeth T. (2006). Organizations in a Democracy: Varied Roles and Responsibilities. In E.T. Boris & C.E. Steuerle (eds.), *Nonprofits and Government: Collaboration and Conflict* (pp. 1-35). Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.

12 See HERI. “American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2005” can be found at <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/PDFs/ResearchBrief05.PDF>

13 See Research Reports at [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov).

14 See *Monitoring the Future* study results in National Conference on Citizenship. America’s Civic Health Index: Broken Engagement. 2006, 9.

15 See Rebecca Skinner and Chris Chapman.; “Service-learning and Community Service in K-12 public schools.” *National Center for Education Statistics: Statistics in Brief*. 1999. Available for downloading at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=1999043>.

16 See HERI. “American Freshman.”

- 17 Mark Hugo Lopez, et al.; "The Youth Vote 2004." Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. July 2005.
- 18 A decline in volunteering among mid-life Americans between 1974 and 1989 means that volunteering among middle age Americans actually increased by 37% between 1989 and today.
- 19 See Wilson, John (2000), "Volunteering," *Annual Review Sociology*. 2000. 26:215-40.
- 20 See Wilson, Volunteering.
- 21 See U.S. Census Bureau, Table H1. Childless and Births per 1000 Women in the Last Year: Selected Years 1978-2004. Available at <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/fertility/tabH1.xls>.
- 22 See Putnam. *Bowling Alone*.
- 23 See Doug Oman E. Thoresen and Kay McMahon. "Volunteerism and Mortality among Community-Dwelling Elderly." *Journal of Sociology*. 1992. 97(6), 1612-1638.
- 24 See Marc A. Musick and John Wilson. "Volunteering and Depression: The Role of Psychological and Social Resources in Different Age Groups." *Social Science & Medicine*. 2003. 56(2), 259-269; and John Judith A. Wheeler, Kevin M. Gorey and Bernard Greenblatt. "The Beneficial Effects of Volunteering for Older Adults and the People They Serve: A Meta-Analysis." *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*. 1998. 47(1), 69-80.
- 25 See Richard G. Rogers. "The Effects of Family Composition, Health, and Social Support Linkages on Mortality." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 1996. 37(4), 326-338; and Marc A. Musick, A. Regula Herzog and James S. House. "Volunteering and Mortality among Older Adults: Findings from a National Sample." *Journal of Gerontology*, 1999. 54(3), S173-S180.
- 26 See Wilson, Volunteering.
- 27 See Wilson, Volunteering.
- 28 See Wilson, Volunteering.
- 29 The increase for groups under 24 was statistically equivalent to zero.
- 30 We should note that there were actually more people volunteering 99 or fewer hours a year in 1974 than 2005 but that is partly due to the fact that older Americans are much more likely to volunteer 100+ hours today.
- 31 Nancy Macduff. *Episodic Volunteering: Building the Short-term Volunteer Program*. Walla Walla, WA: MBA Publishing. 1991.
- 32 Nancy Macduff. (2005). *Societal Changes and the Rise of the Episodic Volunteer*. Jeff L. Brudney (ed.), Emerging Areas of Volunteering. Indianapolis, IN: Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action, 2005, 49-62.
- 33 This reality also seems to be supported Steven M. Farmer, and Donald B. Fedor. "Changing the Focus on Volunteering: An Investigation of Volunteers' Multiple Contributions to a Charitable Organization." *Journal of Management*. 2001. 27 (2), 191-211. They conclude their study with some practical advice for nonprofits interested in recruiting volunteers: "...pay close attention to the needs of your volunteers, and make a wide variety of volunteer assignments available to keep volunteers willing and able to serve your organizations."



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