

EMBARGOED

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New Report: Americans Devote 8.1 Billion Hours to Volunteering in 2010 *Generation X Deepens Commitment, Serves More Than 2.3 Billion Hours in their Communities*

Washington, DC — Volunteers provide a powerful economic and social benefit to communities across the nation, with 62.8 million adults serving almost 8.1 billion hours through organizations in 2010, according to research released today by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

The agency's annual [Volunteering in America](#) research finds that America's volunteers provided services valued at nearly \$173 billion to communities and the nation last year, using Independent Sector's estimate of the dollar value of volunteer time.

Notably, Generation X volunteers (born 1965-1981) devoted more time to service in 2010 than they ever have before, giving more than 2.3 billion hours—an increase of almost 110 million hours over 2009. Generation X members more than doubled their volunteer rate between 1989 and the present day, from 12.3 percent in 1989 to 29.2 percent in 2010. This rise demonstrates a shift that researchers are seeing across the “volunteer lifecycle”—the arc of civic involvement that tends to increase as citizens feel a deeper connection to their communities through personal networks, their workplace, and their children's schools.

While the overall national volunteer rate dipped slightly from 26.8 percent in 2009 to 26.3 percent in 2010, the number of hours volunteers served remained approximately the same at 8.1 billion hours, indicating many volunteers committed more hours to service. The proportion of volunteers who serve 100 hours or more appears to have increased between 2009 and 2010 from 33.2 percent to 33.8 percent, and the median number of hours served per volunteer appears to have increased from 50 to 52 per year.

“Every day, volunteers of all ages are giving their time and talents to solve problems and make our country stronger,” said Robert Velasco II, acting CEO of CNCS. “Whether tutoring at-risk students or providing job training to veterans or responding to natural disasters, ordinary Americans are doing extraordinary things to improve the long-term health and vitality of the nation.”

CNCS produces the annual *Volunteering in America* research to provide elected officials and nonprofit leaders with in-depth information on volunteering trends and demographics to help them develop strategies to mobilize more Americans to address local needs through service. Offering the most comprehensive data on volunteering ever assembled, the report includes a volunteer profile for all states, including the District of Columbia, and hundreds of cities, including data on volunteer rates, rankings, area-specific trends, and analysis.

The research is part of the agency's efforts to expand the impact of America's volunteers on key economic and social challenges facing the nation. CNCS provides critical support to America's nonprofit and voluntary sector through grants, training, research, coordination, and partnerships with public agencies, nonprofits, and businesses. Last year, CNCS engaged more than five million Americans in results-driven service to help communities tackle local challenges.

Other findings about the volunteer lifecycle include:

- Teen volunteer rates have stayed consistently higher between 2002 and 2010 than they were in 1989, possibly reflecting the spread of service-learning in schools across the country, the influence of parental volunteering, and the rise of technology that makes it easier for teens to find volunteer opportunities.
- Volunteer rates for young adults (ages 20 to 24) tend to be lower than teenage volunteer rates, but the national volunteer rate tends to increase with age until mid-life. The peak years for volunteering generally tend to occur between the mid-thirties to early forties.
- The volunteer rate then declines as volunteers grow older, but the decline in volunteer rates in older adulthood has become less severe over time. Some researchers believe this reflects the fact that more Americans are staying healthier longer and that volunteering has become a more recognized strategy for staying healthy in older adulthood.

As volunteers fill critical voids in their community's infrastructure, state and local leaders increasingly recognize the key role volunteers play in addressing economic and social challenges at a time of fiscal constraint. Governors, working through state service commissions and local organizations, promote volunteerism and apply AmeriCorps members and other resources to meet a range of state needs.

"Service continues to be a powerful force for good across the state," said Gov. Gary Herbert of Utah, whose state again ranked number one for volunteerism in 2010. "In devoting time and energy to meet local needs, volunteers provide a model for fellow citizens—fostering lifelong habits of leadership, problem-solving, empathy, and self reliance."

More than 100 mayors across the country recognize the impact of service in their cities and made commitments through the Cities of Service Coalition to foster volunteerism in the areas of greatest local need, and also to support efforts to increase service opportunities locally and nationally.

"I am not surprised to see the volunteerism rate for Nashville increase," said Mayor Karl Dean of Nashville, where the volunteer rate ranking increased by 19 places this year, moving from a ranking of 37 to 18, the biggest gain among all cities. "We are a city that gives and keeps on giving. After the May 2010 flood, thousands came out to help friends, neighbors, and even strangers. This volunteer spirit has remained strong since and is one of the reasons we are a leader in the Cities of Service national movement."

Volunteers fill crucial voids in the community: Across the nation, organizations are serving our country's most vulnerable using fewer resources. In 2010, volunteers worked in a range of critical areas to bridge these gaps.

- Millions of volunteers devoted their time to working with youth through mentoring (17.0%) or tutoring (18.5%).
- More than one-quarter of volunteers (26.5%) participated in fundraising activities or sold items to raise money for an organization.
- Other volunteers collected, prepared, distributed, or served food (23.5%) or contributed much needed sweat hours through general labor or providing transportation (20.3%).

Key Findings and State/City Profiles

- The top five states by volunteer rate are Utah (44.5%), Iowa (37.9%), Minnesota (37.5%), Nebraska (37.4%), and South Dakota (37.2%).
- For the fifth year in row, the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area ranks number one for volunteerism among large cities with a 37.1 percent volunteer rate. Other top serving large cities

include: Portland, Ore. (36.2%), Salt Lake City, Utah (34.1%), Seattle, Wash. (33.9%), and Rochester, N.Y. (33.8%).

- Among 75 mid-sized cities, Provo, Utah led the nation for the fourth year in a row with a volunteer rate of 61%, followed by Ogden, Utah (52.2%), Iowa City, Iowa (50.9%), Boulder, Colo. (44.8%), and Fort Collins, Colo. (42.2%).

To make it easier for Americans to volunteer, CNCS worked with the White House to launch United We Serve and the Serve.gov website. At Serve.gov, potential volunteers can find local opportunities by entering their interest and zip codes. The site includes do-it-yourself toolkits with instructions for finding and filling local needs, and a blog featuring stories of service from people all across the country.

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The *Volunteering in America* report is a partnership between the Corporation for National and Community Service, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Bureau for Labor Statistics to collect volunteering data annually through the Current Population Survey's (CPS) Supplement on Volunteering. The CPS is a monthly survey of about 60,000 households (approximately 100,000 adults), conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Volunteers are defined as individuals ages 16 and over who perform unpaid volunteer activities for or through an organization. The report includes information for all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and 198 cities, including 51 large cities, 75 mid-size cities, and 72 additional cities, based on Metropolitan Statistical Areas. **For state profiles and other data, visit: VolunteeringInAmerica.gov.**

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service each year through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs, and leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. **To find service opportunities in your community including for the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance, please visit: www.Serve.gov.**

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