

# Volunteering in the United States, 2005

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These data on volunteering were collected through a supplement to the September 2005 Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly survey of about 60,000 households that obtains information on employment and unemployment among the nation's civilian noninstitutional population age 16 and older. Volunteers are defined as persons who worked without being paid (except for expenses) through or for an organization at least once during

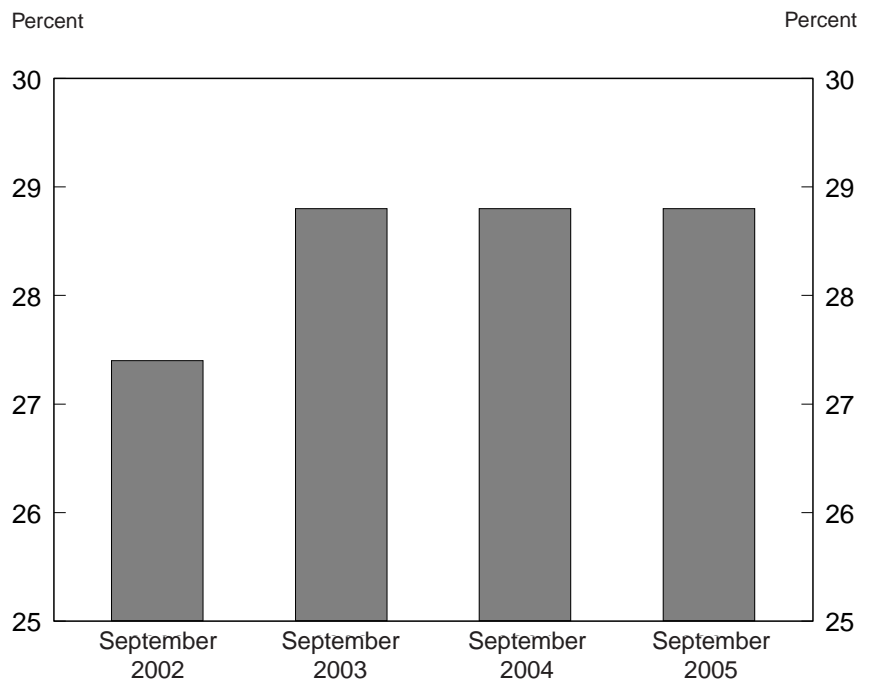
the past year. In this essay, "the past year" refers to the period from September 2004 through September 2005. For more information about the volunteer supplement, see <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/volun.pdf>.

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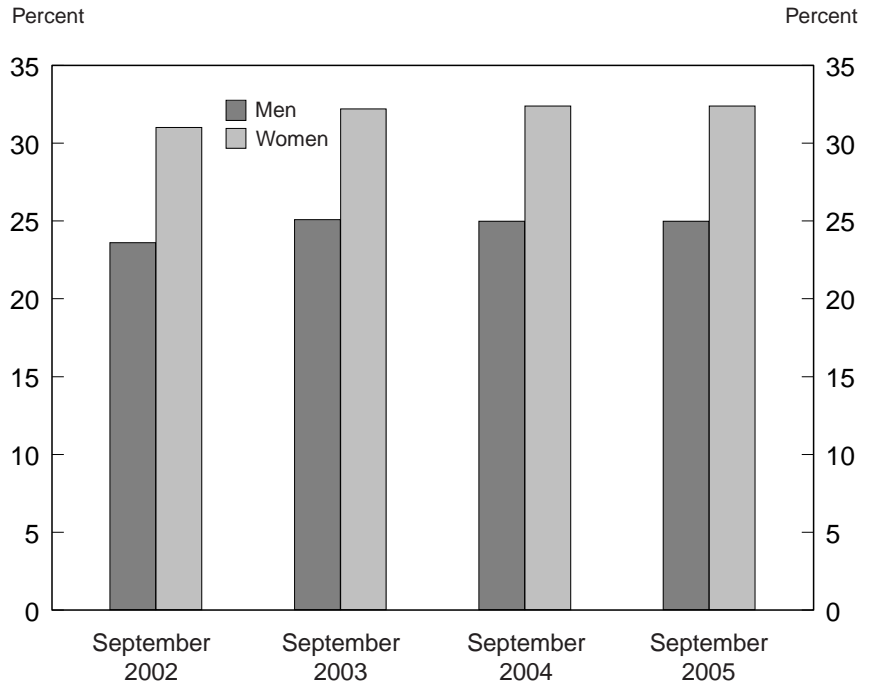
- Over the year ending in September 2005, nearly 3 out of 10 persons in the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years old and older did volunteer work. This was about the same proportion as in 2003 and 2004, but higher than in 2002.
- About 65.4 million people volunteered at least once between September 2004 and September 2005.

## 1. U.S. volunteer rates, 2002–2005



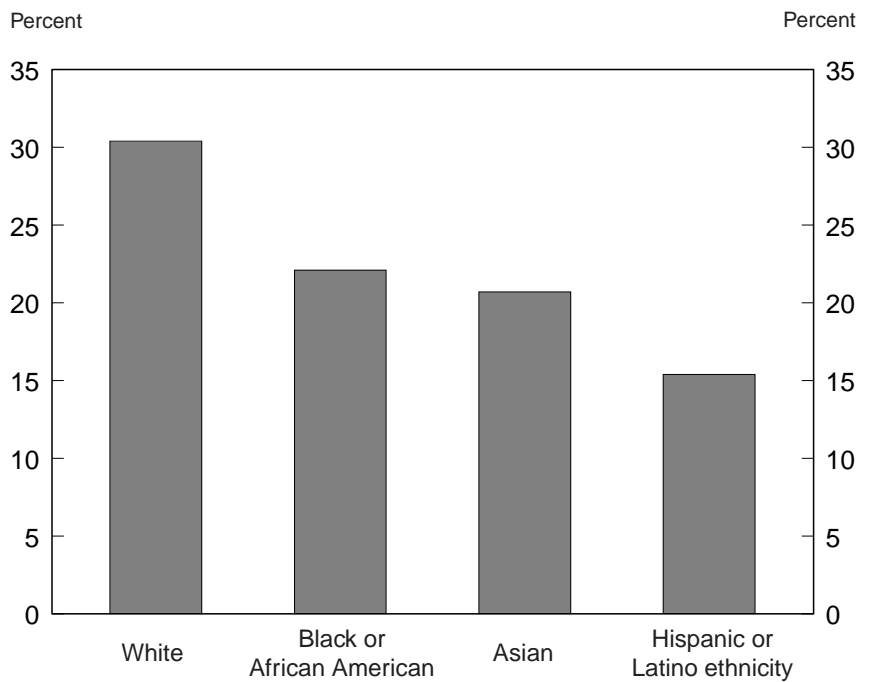
- In each of the past 4 years, nearly 1 in 3 women did some volunteer work, compared with about 1 in 4 men.
- Among all major demographic categories—age, race, marital status, educational attainment, and labor force status—women have been more likely to volunteer than their male counterparts.

### 2. Volunteer rates by gender, 2002–2005



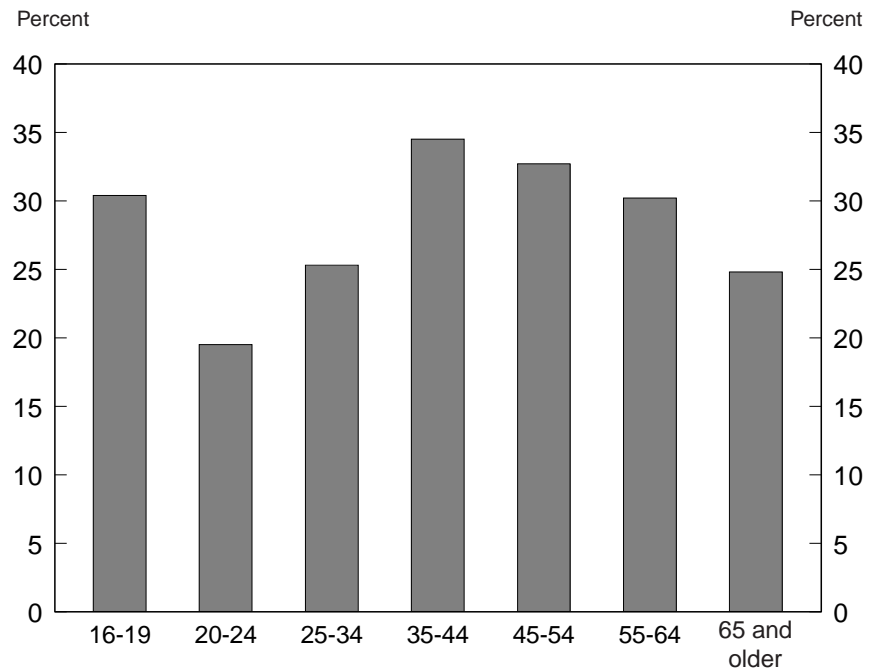
- Whites volunteer at a higher rate than persons in other major racial and ethnic groups. This has been true in each of the past 4 years.
- In 2005, Hispanic men were the least likely to volunteer (12.2 percent), while white women were most likely (34.3 percent).

### 3. Volunteer rates by major race/ethnic groups, September 2005



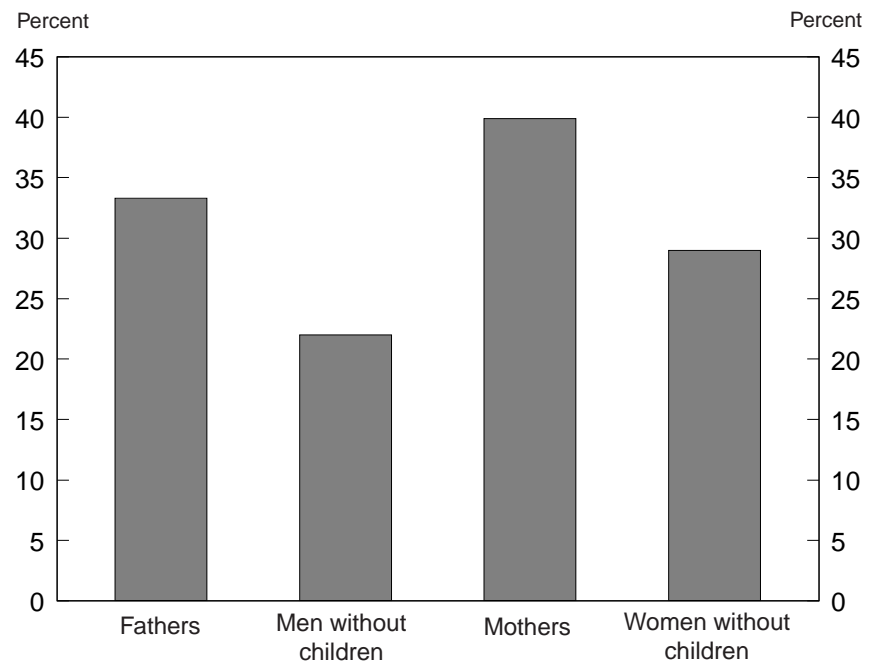
- A little more than one-third of persons age 35–44 did some volunteer work in 2005, the highest proportion of any 10-year age group. Many people in this age group have school-age children, and parents often volunteer for organizations in which their children are involved.
- Although volunteer rates for younger persons tend to be lower than rates for those in the middle age groups, about 3 out of 10 teenagers volunteered in 2005. This may reflect an emphasis on volunteer activities by schools. Individuals age 20–24 had the lowest volunteer rate.

#### 4. Volunteer rates by age group, September 2005



- Parents with children under age 18 were more likely to volunteer than were persons without children. Parents often volunteer for organizations in which their children are involved or from which their children benefit.
- Among volunteers in 2005, parents were more than twice as likely to volunteer for an educational or youth service organization than were persons without children under age 18.

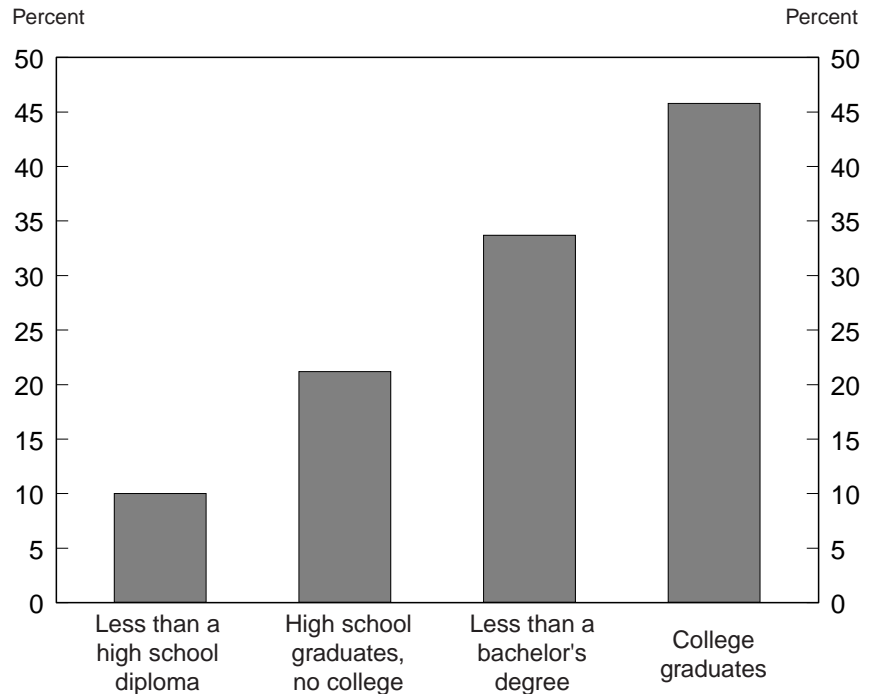
#### 5. Volunteer rates of fathers, mothers, and men and women without children, September 2005



NOTE: "Children" refers to own children under age 18 and includes sons, daughters, adopted children, and stepchildren. Not included are nieces, nephews, grandchildren, other related children, and unrelated children.

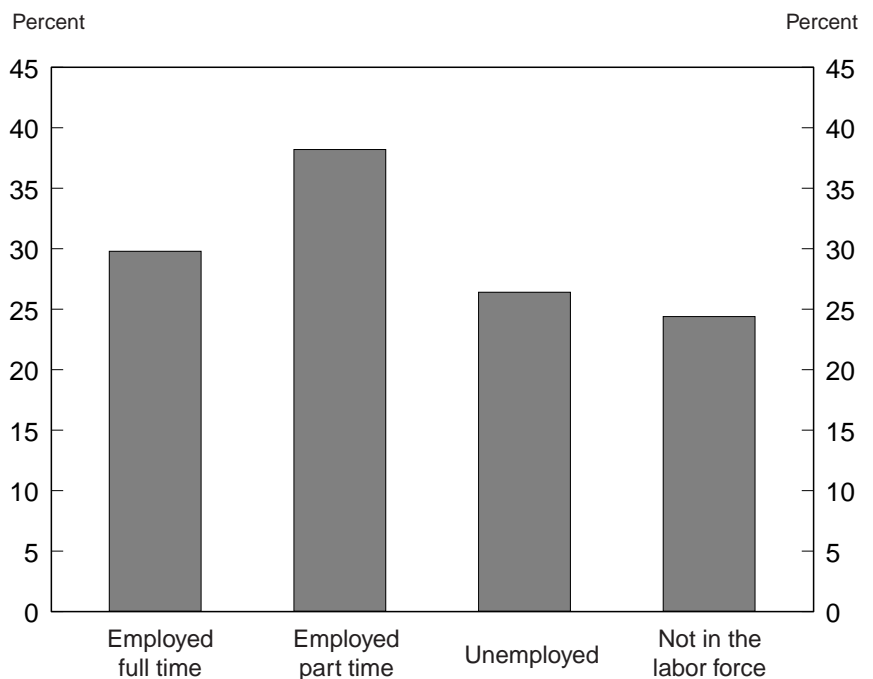
- Volunteering increases with educational attainment. In 2005, almost half of all college graduates age 25 and older volunteered, compared with 10 percent of persons in that age group without a high school diploma.
- Individuals with higher levels of educational attainment were more likely to volunteer for multiple organizations than were less-educated individuals. The types of activities in which volunteers engaged also varied with education. For example, college graduates were more than twice as likely to mentor youth than were people with less than a high school diploma.

**6. Volunteer rates of individuals age 25 and older by educational attainment, September 2005**



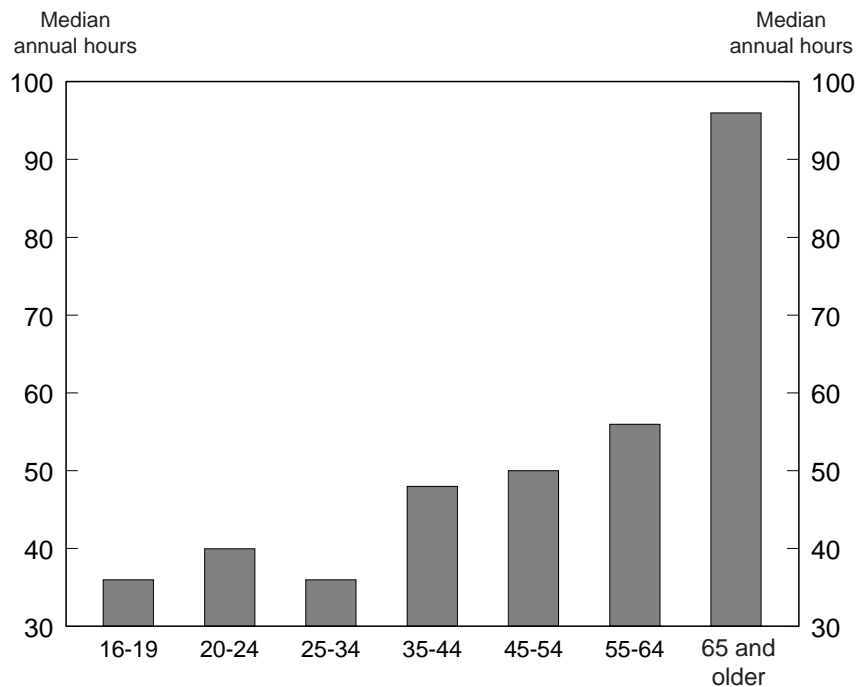
- Almost 4 out of 10 part-time workers did some volunteer work between September 2004 and September 2005.
- Employed persons, regardless of whether they worked full or part time, volunteered at a higher rate than persons who were unemployed or not in the labor force.

**7. Volunteer rates by labor force status, September 2005**



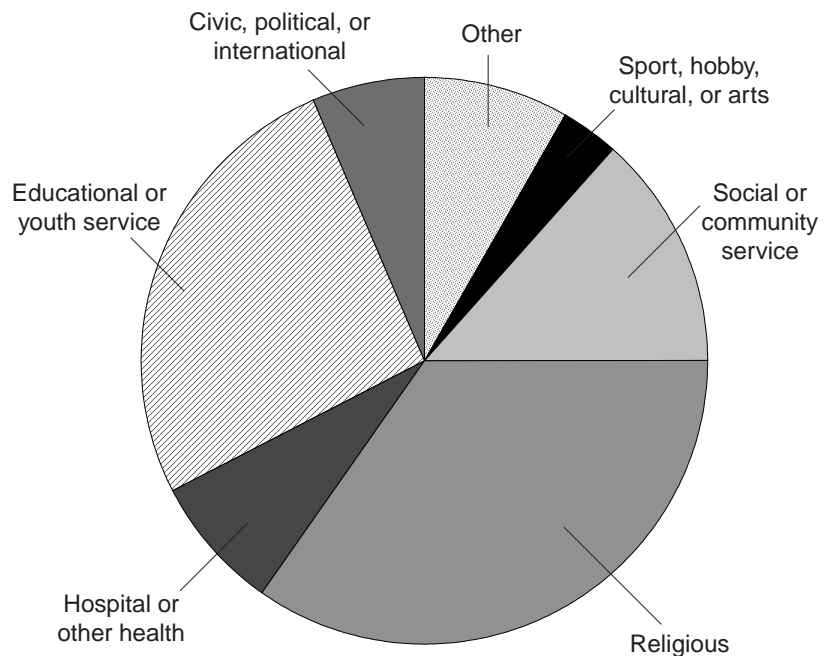
- As a whole, volunteers spent a median of 50 hours doing volunteer activities in the year ended September 2005, down slightly from the prior survey period. In 2005, persons 16–19 and 25–34 years old spent the least amount of time volunteering, while persons age 65 and older spent the most.
- Among volunteers age 65 and older, the amount of time spent volunteering was lower for the older members of the group. This may be due to declines in health or mobility that often accompany advancing age.

### 8. Median annual hours spent volunteering, by age group, September 2005



- About one-third of volunteers reported that a religious organization was the main group for which they performed volunteer work. The main organization is the one for which a volunteer worked the most hours during the reference year. Educational or youth service organizations were the second most frequently reported type.
- At ages when volunteers are likely to have school-age children or be enrolled in school themselves, a higher percentage report education or youth service organizations as their main type. At older ages, the main organization is most often religious. Even for age groups where the predominant main organization is educational or youth service, religious organizations are not far behind.

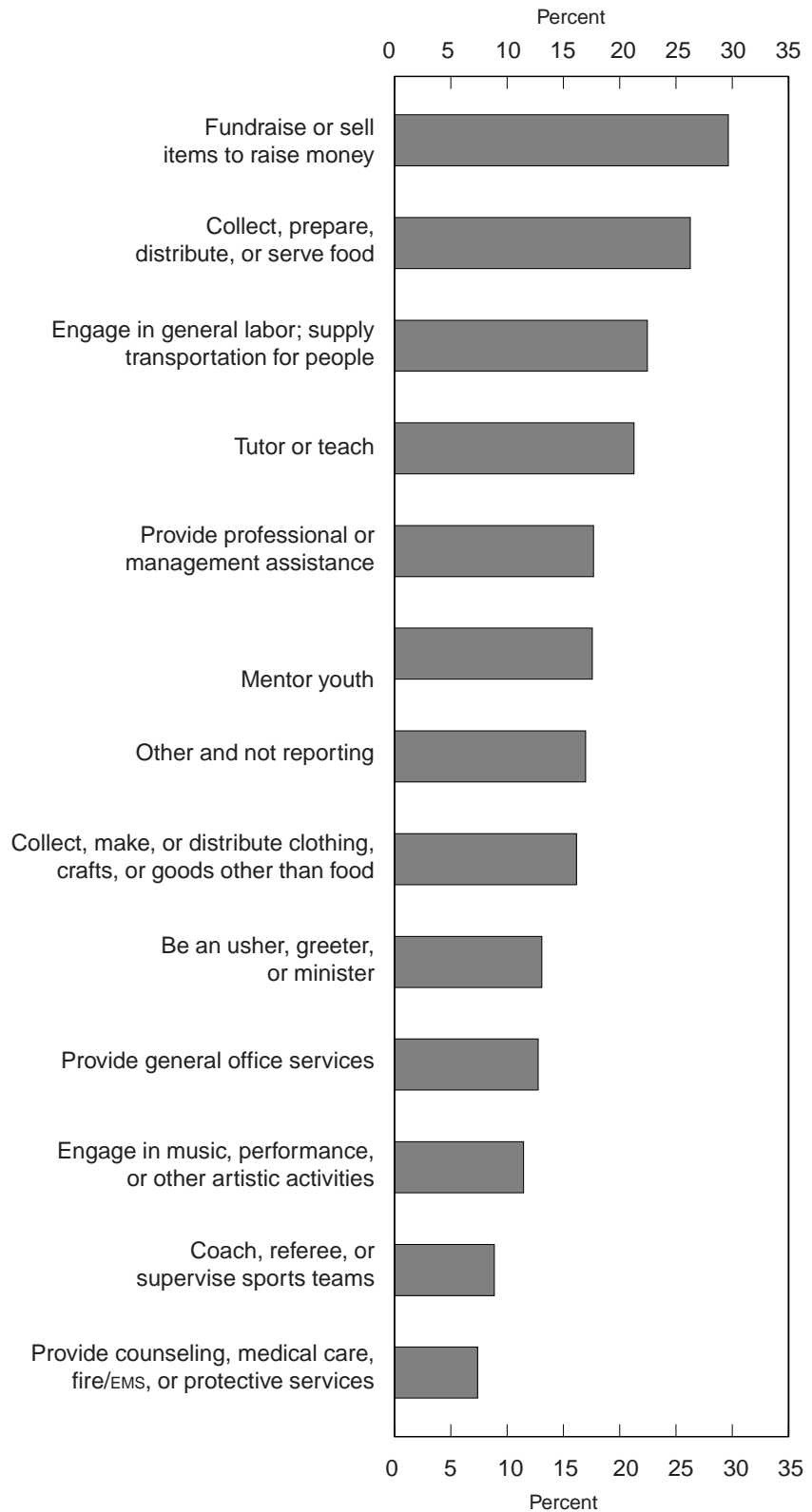
### 9. Volunteers by main organization, in percent, September 2005



NOTE: The "other" category includes some volunteers for whom the type of main organization was not determined.

- Individuals engaged in a variety of volunteer activities for their main organizations. Participation in some activities (such as providing professional or management assistance and tutoring or teaching) increased with educational attainment.
- Women were more likely than men to collect or distribute food and other goods, provide general office services, fundraise, and tutor or teach. Men were more likely than women to coach, referee, or supervise sports teams, engage in general labor, provide professional and management assistance, or be an usher, greeter, or minister.

**10. Volunteers by activity, September 2005**



NOTE: Volunteers may engage in more than one activity.