

Volunteering and Civic Life in America 2012

Key findings on the volunteer participation and civic health of the nation

December, 2012



Volunteering and civic engagement are the cornerstone of a strong nation. Citizens working together and talking to each other help solve problems and make their communities better places to live and work.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) hosts the most comprehensive annual collection of information on Volunteering and Civic Life in America and partners with the National Conference on Citizenship to produce an annual report of our nation's civic health.

The 2012 Volunteering and Civic Life in America www.volunteeringinamerica.gov website provides inclusive information allowing civic leaders, nonprofit organizations, and interested individuals to retrieve a wide range of information regarding demographic trends and rankings for volunteering and civic engagement activities in their regions, states, and metro areas. Data available through the website was collected through two supplements to the Current Population Survey to which thousands of Americans respond: the volunteer supplement and the civic supplement. This document highlights some of the key findings from the new data released in 2011.

Key Findings

Americans are increasing their commitment to volunteering and civic engagement and volunteers have stepped up to support recovery and relief efforts after Hurricane Sandy.

■ In 2011, the number of volunteers reached its highest level in five years. 64.3 million Americans volunteered in a formal organization, an increase of 1.5 million from 2010. The volunteering rate increased nationwide by 0.5 percent-

age points to 26.8%. Altogether, Americans volunteered approximately 7.9 billion hours in a formal organization with a value of \$171 billion.

- Volunteers met crucial needs in the community through their participation in the 5 most popular service activities:
 - Fundraising or selling items to raise money (26.2%)
 - Collecting, preparing, distributing, or serving food (23.6%)

- Engaging in general labor or transportation (20.3%)
- Tutoring or teaching (18.2%)

- Fundraising, food services, general labor and neighbors helping neighbors are some of the most important services citizens can provide in the face of disasters.
- Almost half of Americans (44.1%) actively participated in civic, religious, and school groups. And more families eat dinner together in 2011— with almost 90 percent (89.5%) reporting that they

did so at least several times per week, a 1.4 percentage point increase from 2010.

- Two out of three citizens (65.1%, or 143.7 million citizens) served their communities by doing favors for and helping out their neighbors, an increase of 9.5 percentage points from last year, while more than half (56.7%) trusted all or most of the people in their neighborhood.
- The top five states for volunteering and doing favors for neighbors are:

Volunteering		
Rank	State	Rate
#1	Utah	40.9%
#2	Idaho	38.8%
#3	Iowa	38.4%
#4	Minnesota	38.0%
#5	South Dakota	36.8%

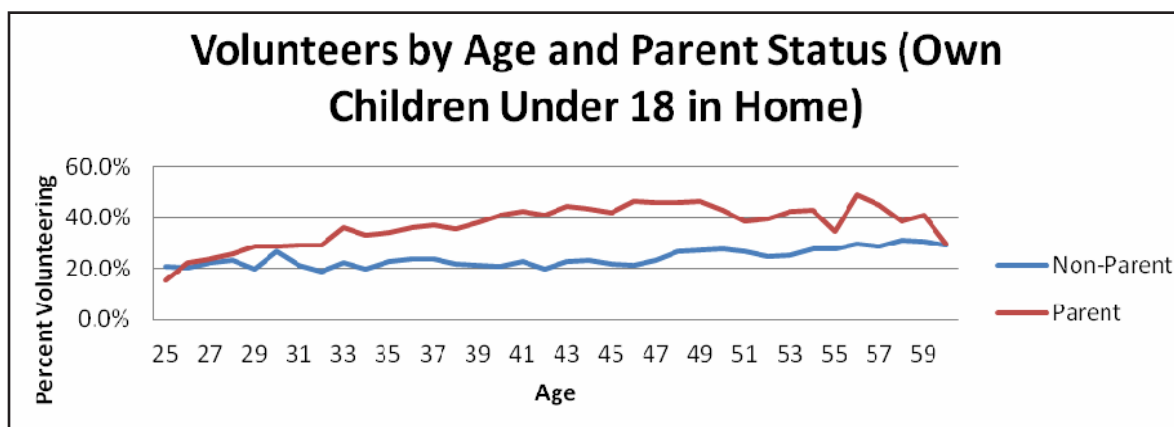
Favors for Neighbors		
Rank	State	Rate
#1	Utah	76.7%
#2	West Virginia	74.5%
#3	New Hampshire	74%
#4	Montana	73.2%
#5	Vermont and Iowa	73%

Parents' volunteer rate is seven percentage points higher than the national average (33.7% compared to 26.8%): making schools a hub for volunteering and civic activity.

- The parent volunteering rate in 2011 was 33.7% nationwide, which is a 0.1 percentage point increase from the prior year. This translates to 22.7 million parents volunteering in a formal organization for approximately 2.5 billion hours with a value of \$54 billion.
- Parents between the ages of 26 and 50 with school-aged children volunteered at a significantly

higher rate than non-parents in this age range, with volunteering rates for parents peaking at nearly 1 in 2 parents (46%) in their late 40's.

- Working mothers are a key part of volunteering parents, as nearly four in 10 (38%) volunteered.
- Schools or other youth service organizations are the most popular places for parents to volunteer. More than 40 percent (43.1%) of parents volunteered at one of these places.
- Parents also expressed some or a great deal of confidence in their public schools, with nine out of 10 parents (90.4%) in 2011 feeling this way.



Top five states for parent volunteers are:

- Utah (52.0%)
- South Dakota (46.2%)
- Iowa (45.9%)
- Minnesota (45.0%)
- Wisconsin (44.3%)

States that had the most significant increase in their state rankings when comparing the rate of parent volunteering to their three year pooled rate of volunteering are:

- Maine (moved from a ranking of 13th overall to 6th for parents);
- Colorado (moved from a ranking of 14th overall to 8th for parents);
- Ohio (moved from a ranking of 25th overall to 18th for parents);
- Pennsylvania (moved from a ranking of 29th overall to 20th for parents);
- Kentucky (moved from a ranking of 44th overall to 26th for parents);
- Louisiana (moved from a ranking of 49th overall to 42nd for parents).

We invite even more Americans to join us in making a difference.

- CNCS is the federal agency that plays a vital role in supporting the American culture of citizenship, service and responsibility.
- We encourage more citizens to join parents in making a difference in schools at all grade levels.
 - Through programs such as AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, citizens have the opportunity to tutor, mentor, and educate more than three million disadvantaged youth, helping our most vulnerable students learn, engage, and achieve.
- In addition to taking advantage of schools as civic hubs, through national service programs or through opportunities in your community, we encourage you to contribute to disaster recovery efforts, help veterans adjust to life after the military, help seniors stay independent.
- If you are looking to make a difference in your community, please visit Serve.gov to find out how you can make a difference in your community.

About the Data and Methodology

Data are collected each year through the Current Population Survey (CPS) Volunteer and Civic Supplements conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Yearly collection for the volunteer supplement began in 2002. Before 2002, some volunteering data was also collected through the Current Population Survey in 1974 and 1989. The Volunteer Supplement collects

data on the volunteering activities of adults aged 16 and older. Volunteers are considered individuals who performed unpaid volunteer activities through or for an organization at any point during the 12-month period, from September 1 of the prior year through the survey week in September of the survey year. The Civic Supplement has been administered each November by the BLS since 2008.

The Corporation for National and Community Service

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages four million Americans in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and the Social Innovation Fund

programs. It also leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.