

RESEARCH ROUNDUP

TRENDS IN YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

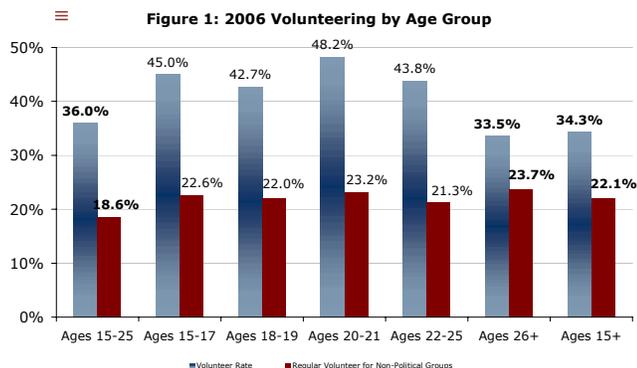
Newly updated with data from the 2006 Civic Political Health of the Nation Survey (CPHS), "Volunteering Among Young People" is a new CIRCLE Fact Sheet showing trends in volunteering—and the organizations for which young people volunteer—utilizing data from many sources.

FREQUENCY OF VOLUNTEERING

Young people generally report greater levels of volunteering than their adult counterparts (See Figure 1); however, their volunteer rates appear to be declining. According to the 2006 CPHS, during the year prior to June 2006, 15-to-25-year-olds reported volunteering at the rate of 36.0 percent compared to 33.5 percent for adults 26 and older. For young people, this volunteering rate, while higher than adults, was down from 40.2 percent in 2002. Similarly, while youth volunteering grew from 2002 to 2005, the Corporation for National and Community Service's analysis of the Current Population Survey (CPS) found a decrease in the volunteer rate from 2005 to 2006 among all respondents ages 16 and older. Also, the Monitoring the Future (MTF) surveys of twelfth, tenth, and eighth graders all show declines in reported volunteering in recent years.

REASONS FOR VOLUNTEERING

Young people volunteer for different reasons. However, regardless of the type of organizations young people volunteer for, the single most common reason cited for volunteering is "to help other people." Young people who volunteer for political and environmental organizations appear to have different motivations from young people who volunteer for other types of organizations.



Source: Author's tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CIRCLE)

Among young political volunteers, 41.2 percent volunteer "to address a social or political problem." Those who volunteer for environmental organizations are the most diverse in their reasons—22.8 percent volunteer "to address a social or political problem" and 24.3 percent volunteer for "some other reason."

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HOW VOLUNTEERS ARE CONTACTED

Overall, the single most common way young people report finding volunteer opportunities is by contacting an organization directly themselves. Political organizations are the most likely to recruit young people to volunteer (35.1 percent). Environmental organizations most heavily rely upon having someone else put the volunteer together with the organization (28.7 percent). Volunteers for civic or community groups and environmental groups are the most likely to report that they contacted the organization themselves (47.0 and 46.7 percent, respectively).

VOLUNTEERING FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Two-thirds of young volunteers volunteer for youth organizations. The next most common venue for youth volunteering is a civic or community group such as a health service organization or social service organization; collectively, they draw 53.9 percent of young volunteers. Compared to their older counterparts, young people are more likely to volunteer at an environmental organization, but are less likely to volunteer at a political organization or for a political candidate.

For more on youth volunteering, including state-by-state volunteering rates, visit <http://www.civicyouth.org/?cat=7>. ■