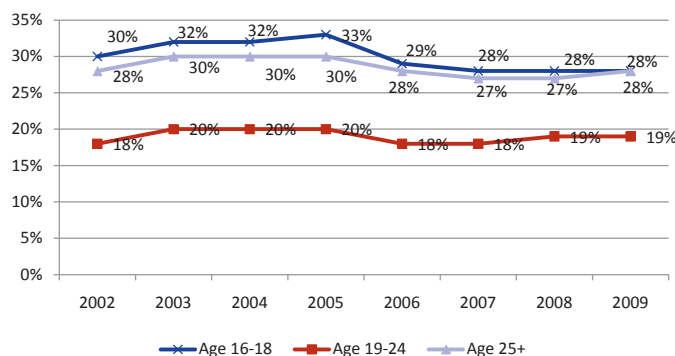


NEW CIRCLE FACT SHEET SHOWS YOUTH VOLUNTEERING RATES ON A DECLINE AFTER 2005 PEAK

After peaking at 33% in 2005, the volunteering rate of 16- to 18-year-olds has been on a decline over the past four years (2006-2009), according to CIRCLE's latest fact sheet, "Youth Volunteering in the States: 2002 to 2009." Sixteen- to 18-year-olds, traditionally the most active age group in regards to volunteering, now volunteer (as of 2009) at a rate similar to those age 25 and above (28%), while 19- to 24-year-olds continue to participate at the lowest rate of the three groups (19%). While the decline is not precipitous, CIRCLE's data indicates a troubling trend: not only is the national volunteering rate of those ages 16 to 18 below the 2005 peak of 33%, but the rates since 2005 have been consistently lower than those from 2002 to 2005. Several states have tried to address lower volunteer rates among young people, with the implementation of community service and service-learning activities; despite these efforts, lower rates may be indicative of declining volunteering opportunities for youth.

Graph 1: National Volunteering Rate by Age Group



Source: Census Current Population Survey (CPS) September Supplement, 2002-2009

YOUTH VOLUNTEERING RATES VARY BY AGE AND STATE: 19- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS PARTICIPATE AT LOWEST RATE

CIRCLE's analysis of youth volunteering rates from 2002 to 2009 shows that participation varies by age group. Teenagers between 16 and 18 have typically led young people in volunteering rates, followed by those age 25 and over. However, the gap between these two groups has narrowed since 2002: 28% of people in each group reported volunteering in 2009.

Conversely, 19- to 24-year-olds typically volunteer at the lowest level of the three groups: 18 to 20 percent of youth age 19 to 24 volunteered between 2002 and 2009, with a current rate of 19%.

SEVERAL STATES HAVE TRIED TO ADDRESS LOWER VOLUNTEER RATES AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE, WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SERVICE-LEARNING ACTIVITIES.

Volunteer rates vary not only among age groups, but also among states. For example, in 2009 there was a 25-point gap between 19- to 24-year-olds in Utah (36%) and in Mississippi (9%) who reported volunteering. The states' civic cultures, the number of universities and nonprofits, and differences in states' general civic infrastructure may account for the variance, though research is needed to confirm these hypotheses.

Table 1: Lowest Volunteer Rates among 19-to 24-year-olds, 2009

Lowest Ranking	State	Volunteer Rate
1	Mississippi	9%
2	Louisiana	10%
3	New York	11%
4	Nevada	12%
5	Massachusetts	13%
5	West Virginia	13%

Source: Census Current Population Survey (CPS) September Supplement, 2009

Table 2: Highest Volunteer Rates among 19-to 24-year-olds, 2009

Top Ranking	State	Volunteer Rate
1	Utah	36%
2	Wisconsin	33%
3	Maine	32%
4	District of Columbia	29%
5	Iowa	27%
5	South Dakota	27%
5	Washington	27%

Source: Census Current Population Survey (CPS) September Supplement, 2009

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BOSTON, TWIN CITIES, AND SEATTLE VOLUNTEERING PATTERNS MIMIC NATIONAL TRENDS

CIRCLE's latest research shows that volunteering rates vary not only among states and age groups over time, but also by locality. To understand these differences, the volunteering patterns in Boston, the Twin Cities region, and the Seattle metropolitan areas were closely analyzed. Boston was chosen because of its high concentration of colleges, universities and non-profit organizations, whereas the Twin Cities region (Minneapolis-St. Paul) was selected because of its high level of overall civic engagement. Seattle was also included, due to its strong youth volunteering base. All three areas indeed have rates of volunteering well above the national averages, but the analysis shows that national trends still apply in these locales as well.

**EVEN IN LOCATIONS WITH ROBUST
SERVICE-RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE,
STRONG CIVIC CULTURES, AND HIGH
RATES OF VOLUNTEERISM, THE GAP
BETWEEN 19- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS AND
BOTH THEIR YOUNGER (AGES 16 TO
18) AND OLDER (AGE 25 AND OVER)
COUNTERPARTS CAN BE SEEN.**

Even in locations with robust service-related infrastructure, strong civic cultures, and high rates of volunteerism, the gap between 19- to 24-year-olds and both their younger (ages 16 to 18) and older (age 25 and over) counterparts can be seen. CIRCLE's research points to the transience of this age group (noted in Boston's sizeable student population) and the decreased likelihood that they will be asked to volunteer (noted in Seattle). Specifically, the data shows that 6.1% of 19- to 24-year-olds in Boston volunteer on a consistent basis, compared to 13.2% of their younger counterparts (those ages 16 to 18) and 12.3% of their older counterparts. According to the data in Seattle, 15.9% of those age 25 and above report being asked to volunteer. Conversely, only 11.9% of youth ages 19 to 24 report being asked to serve.

In the Twin Cities area, which has a strong civic culture and numerous opportunities to serve, 19- to 24-year-olds still volunteer at the lowest rates among all age groups.

A MOVE TOWARD THE INTEGRATION OF VOLUNTEERING INTO K-12 CURRICULA, BUT RESULTS NOT YET CLEAR

As of 2008, 68% of schools offer community service opportunities, up from 64% in 1999. In fact, Maryland and the District of Columbia mandate that all students volunteer or participate in service-learning in order to graduate. Despite the enactment of this policy in 1992, Maryland's average volunteer rate has been lower in the past four years (2006-2009) than in the previous four years (2002-2005) by a difference of ten percentage points. Although community service opportunities are now available in more schools than they were a decade ago, service-learning opportunities are down nearly ten points over the same time period (32% in 1999 to 24% in 2008).

An additional factor that complicates the assessment of initiatives to incorporate service into K-12 curricula is that implementation varies among states and even districts. States may apply their standards differently, and counties and districts within these states sometimes have their own specific policies and implementation procedures. Currently, sample sizes at the district level are too small to draw meaningful and statistically significant conclusions.

CIRCLE and others will be looking closely at the outcomes of such initiatives to assess their impact on youth service and civic engagement in general.

This fact sheet on volunteering can be found at <http://www.civicyouth.org/featured-youth-volunteering-in-the-states-2002-to-2009/> ★

