

research in brief

Americans Volunteer

Data for this report were provided by the joint efforts of the Department of Labor, the Census Bureau, and ACTION in consultation with many additional public and private agencies interested in the magnitude of the volunteer movement. ACTION is interested in wide distribution of the report and will make the computer tapes available to people who wish to analyze them further and add to the knowledge about volunteerism.

Thirty-seven million Americans or 24% of the population over age 13 gave, without pay, part of their time in 1974 for volunteer work. Volunteers averaged 9 hours a week in 1974—which is the equivalent of 3,500,000 people working full-time for 1 year.

Americans between the ages of 25-44 comprised the largest population segment who volunteered—30%. The second largest group (25% of those volunteering) came from the middle years of 45-54. Teenagers from 14-17 were the third largest with 22% of the volunteer rate. Senior citizens 55-64 were fourth with 21%. Young adults from 18-25 were fifth with 18%. Lowest was the elderly, those 65 and older, of whom only 14% volunteered.

More women volunteered than men—26% of women compared to 20% of men. Married people were more inclined to volunteer than those never married or widowed, divorced, or separated—27% to 20%, respectively. Rate of volunteering among whites was nearly twice that of the rate among nonwhites—25% for whites and 13% for nonwhites. Twelve percent of Americans who live below the family income level of \$4,000 a year volunteered.

Religion was the most popular field for volunteering. Nonwhites' rate of volunteering was higher than whites in religion, 54% to 50%, and in civic and community action—24% to 14%.

"American Volunteer—1974: A Statistical Study of Volunteers in the United States." ACTION pamphlet 4000-17. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975: 586-335/17. Available from ACTION, Washington, D.C. 20525.

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