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Civic Learning & Engagement

Volunteering Among Non-College Youth

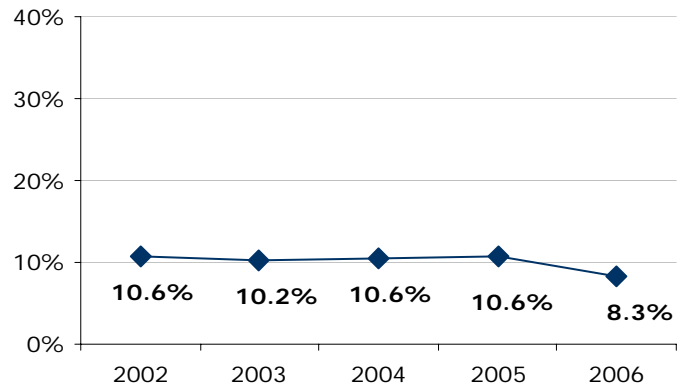
By Karlo Barrios Marcelo¹
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Substantial differences in civic activity exist between young people who attend college and young people who do not attend college. Generally, non-college youth (those youth with no college experience) are among the least engaged.² However, even among non-college youth, there is a substantial amount of civic engagement, and there is some variation within this group.

This fact sheet explores one form of civic engagement, volunteering. Volunteering among non-college youth, ages 19-25, was down slightly in 2006 from 2005.³ Figure 1 shows the volunteer rate among non-college youth from 2002 to 2006. After a few years of remaining steady at 10.6 percent, the volunteer rate in 2006 fell 2.3 points to 8.3 percent. Similar declines in volunteering are evident from other data sources as well.⁴ For example, according to the Civic and Political Health of the Nation (CPHS) surveys (2002 and 2006), the volunteer rate for non-college youth, ages 19-25, was down 13.4 points in 2006 to 14.7 percent from 28.1 percent in 2002.⁵

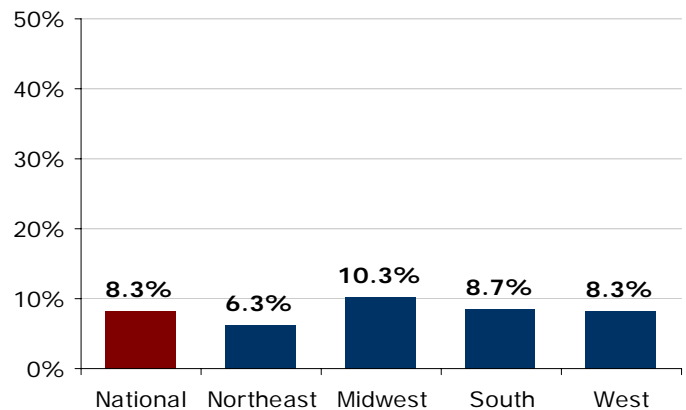
In this fact sheet, the primary source of data for volunteer rates is the September (Volunteering) Supplement of the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey.

Figure 1: Volunteer Rate Among Non-College Young People, Ages 19-25, 2002-2006



Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2002-2006

Figure 2: Volunteer Rate Among Non-College Young People, Ages 19-25, 2006



Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

This fact sheet also presents information on types of volunteer organizations, volunteer activities, and ways that non-college youth get involved in volunteer activities. At the end of this fact sheet is an appendix section featuring the information by college status.⁶

Regional Variation in Volunteering

Volunteering

Volunteer rates vary by region of the country. Figure 2 shows the volunteer rate by region of the country.⁷ Among non-college youth, those who reside in the Midwest region reported the highest volunteer rate, 10.3 percent. This volunteer rate was two percentage points above the national average. In contrast, non-college youth in the Northeast region had the lowest volunteer rate at 6.3 percent.

Table 1 shows the five highest and lowest states in terms of volunteer rates among non-college youth.⁸

Table 1 – Volunteer Rate Among Non-College Youth, ages 19-25, 2006

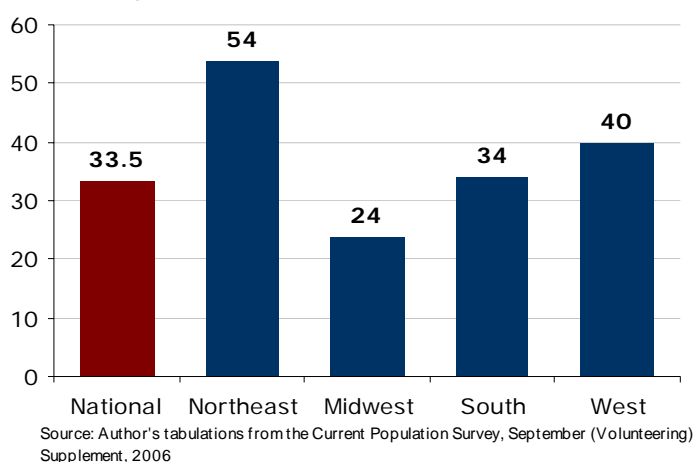
Top 5 States	Volunteer Rate
Montana	25.3%
Wyoming	20.6%
Oklahoma	16.8%
New Hampshire	16.6%
North Dakota	16.5%
Lowest 5 States	
Florida	2.7%
Nevada	3.0%
New Jersey	4.3%
Massachusetts	4.4%
New York	4.5%

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

Median Volunteer Hours

While non-college youth in the Midwest region had the highest volunteer rate among all regions in 2006, the median non-college volunteer in the Midwest region was reported the lowest median hours of volunteering, at 24 hours. In contrast, while volunteering was less prevalent among non-college youth in the Northeast than in the Midwest, the median amount of volunteering among non-college volunteers in the Northeast region was 54 volunteer hours, 20.5 more hours than the national median, and 30 hours more than among non-college youth in the Midwest.

Figure 3: Median Volunteer Hours Among Non-College Young People, Ages 19-25, 2006



Type of Volunteer Organization

Non-college volunteers performed their service for a wide variety of organizations. However, the single most common category of organization volunteered for was religious in nature. In 2006, 41.4 percent of non-college youth reported they had volunteered for a religious organization, 19.2 percent volunteered for children's educational, sports, or recreational organizations, and 13.9 percent for social and community service organizations. Non-college volunteers were least likely to volunteer for an international organization. See Table 2.

Table 2 – Type of Organization Volunteered for by Non-College Youth, Ages 19-25, 2006⁹

Type of Organization	Percentage of Non-College Volunteers
Religious	41.4%
Children's educational, sports, or recreational	19.2%
Social and community service	13.9%
Some other type of organization	5.5%
Civic	4.7%
Public safety	4.5%
Other educational	3.5%
Hospital, clinic, or healthcare	3.4%
Youth services	2.8%
Health research or health education	2.5%
Environmental or animal care	1.7%
Sports or hobby	1.6%
Cultural or arts	1.6%
Labor union, business, or professional	0.9%
Immigrant/refugee assistance	0.5%
Political party or advocacy	0.5%
International	0.0%

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

Type of Volunteer Activity

There are many ways volunteers can perform their service. Non-college volunteers were most likely to “engage in general labor, supply transportation for people” (23.4 percent), tutor or teach (23.2 percent), and collect, prepare, distribute or serve food (21.8 percent). Non-college youth were least likely to “provide professional or management assistance including serving on a board or committee.” See Table 3.

Table 3 – Type of Volunteer Activities among Non-College Volunteers, Ages 19-25, 2006¹⁰

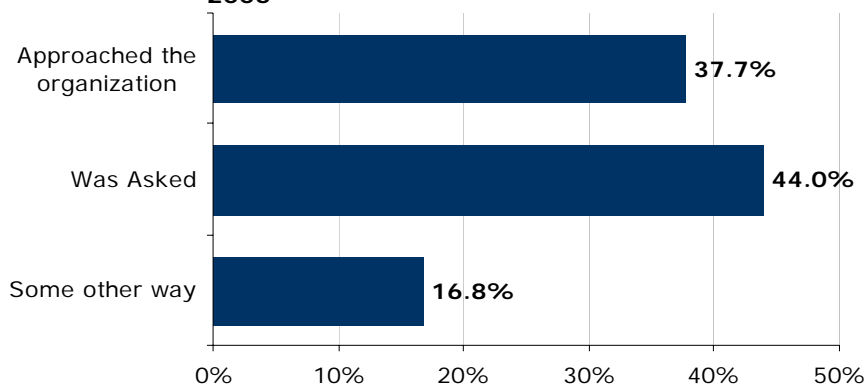
<i>Volunteer Activity</i>	<i>Percentage of Non-College Volunteers</i>
Engage in general labor, supply transportation for people	23.4%
Tutor or teach	23.2%
Collect, prepare, distribute, or serve food	21.8%
Fundraise or sell items to raise money	19.8%
Other activity	18.6%
Mentor youth	17.0%
Engage in music, performance, or other artistic activities	15.2%
Be an usher, greeter or minister	10.8%
Collect, make, or distribute clothing, crafts or goods other than food	10.5%
Provide general office services	7.5%
Coach, referee, supervise sports team	6.9%
Provide counseling, medical care, fire/EMS, or protective services	6.7%
Provide professional or management assistance including serving on a board or committee	4.9%

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

How Non-College Youth Become Involved in Volunteering

The plurality of non-college youth volunteered their time with an organization because they were asked (44.0 percent). Also, a significant percentage reported approaching the organization as the way they became involved (37.7 percent).

Figure 4: How Non-College Volunteers, ages 19-25, Become Involved with an Organization, 2006



Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

Table 4 shows who asked non-college volunteers to volunteer. The plurality of the time someone in the organization reached out to these volunteers (47.8 percent), while relatives and friends were also persons who asked these non-college volunteers to become involved.

Table 4 – Who Asked Non-College Volunteers to Become Involved with an Organization in 2006

Someone in the organization	47.8%
Relative	25.9%
Friend	13.9%
Someone else	4.7%
Boss or employer	4.3%
Co-worker	3.5%

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

Of those non-college volunteers who reported that they became involved with an organization through "some other way," Table 5 shows that the plurality of these high school volunteers became involved with an organization through a "family member's involvement in the organization/school."

Table 5 – Other Ways Non-College Volunteers Become Involved with an Organization in 2006

Family member's involvement in the organization/school	48.3%
Own involvement in the organization/school	21.4%
Other	7.9%
Responded to public appeal in newspaper/radio/TV/flyer/Internet	5.4%
Friend's, co-worker's, or roommate's involvement in the organization	5.2%
Court-ordered community service	4.5%

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

Appendix

Table A – Volunteer Rates Among 19-25 year olds by College Status and Region of the Country, 2006

	Current College students	College Graduates, not enrolled	College experience, not enrolled	No College Experience
National	26.0%	30.9%	22.7%	8.3%
Northeast	18.2%	26.5%	20.4%	6.3%
Midwest	29.2%	34.5%	24.2%	10.3%
South	27.0%	32.8%	23.2%	8.7%
West	26.0%	28.4%	22.0%	8.3%

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

Table B – Median Volunteer Hours Among 19-25 year olds by College Status and Region of the Country, 2006

	Current College students	College Graduates, not enrolled	College experience, not enrolled	No College Experience
National	30	36	33	33.5
Northeast	32	24	30	54
Midwest	24	40	30	24
South	30	40	32	34
West	37	39.5	40	40

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

Table C – Type of Volunteer Organization Among 19-25 year old Volunteers by College Status, 2006¹¹

	Current College students	College Graduates, not enrolled	College experience, not enrolled	No College Experience
Children's educational, sports, or recreational	17.2%	23.6%	21.5%	19.2%
Civic	5.0%	2.5%	3.5%	4.7%
Cultural or arts	2.3%	2.1%	2.0%	1.6%
Environmental or animal care	3.0%	4.9%	3.4%	1.7%
Health research or health education	6.3%	6.4%	6.1%	2.5%
Hospital, clinic, or healthcare	6.2%	9.3%	7.6%	3.4%
Immigrant/refugee assistance	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
International	1.1%	1.1%	2.1%	0.0%
Labor union, business, or professional	0.6%	1.1%	0.8%	0.9%
Other educational	15.9%	9.8%	7.7%	3.5%
Political party or advocacy	1.2%	1.0%	1.1%	0.5%
Public safety	1.1%	0.6%	1.5%	4.5%
Religious	28.1%	30.9%	32.9%	41.4%
Social and community service	20.9%	21.8%	18.1%	13.9%
Some other type of organization	6.5%	4.2%	5.1%	5.5%
Sports or hobby	2.8%	0.8%	1.1%	1.6%
Youth services	3.8%	4.9%	3.6%	2.8%

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

Table D – Type of Volunteer Activity Among 19-25 year old Volunteers by College Status, 2006¹²

	Current College students	College Graduates, not enrolled	College experience, not enrolled	No College Experience
Be an usher, greeter or minister	8.9%	7.0%	7.0%	10.8%
Coach, referee, supervise sports team	10.5%	9.8%	10.6%	6.9%
Collect, make, or distribute clothing, crafts or goods other than food	12.3%	12.4%	12.1%	10.5%
Collect, prepare, distribute, or serve food	16.1%	20.4%	18.8%	21.8%
Engage in general labor, supply transportation for people	23.0%	18.1%	19.0%	23.4%
Engage in music, performance, or other artistic activities	14.9%	12.4%	12.9%	15.2%
Fundraise or sell items to raise money	19.9%	18.8%	18.7%	19.8%
Mentor youth	22.6%	25.2%	22.6%	17.0%
Other activity	15.4%	13.8%	15.0%	18.6%
Provide counseling, medical care, fire/EMS, or protective services	7.5%	7.3%	8.4%	6.7%
Provide general office services	11.7%	7.9%	7.2%	7.5%
Provide professional or management assistance including serving on a board or committee	7.4%	9.8%	8.0%	4.9%
Tutor or teach	26.8%	23.3%	19.1%	23.2%

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

Table E – How 19-25 year old Volunteers Got Involved by College Status, 2006

	Current College students	College Graduates, not enrolled	College experience, not enrolled	No College Experience
Some other way	13.9%	15.2%	15.9%	16.8%
Was Asked	36.7%	41.1%	41.8%	44.0%
Approached the organization	44.9%	40.5%	39.5%	37.7%

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

Table F – Who Asked 19-25 year old Volunteers to Get Involved by College Status, 2006

	Current College students	College Graduates, not enrolled	College experience, not enrolled	No College Experience
Boss or employer	2.1%	10.8%	7.3%	4.3%
Co-worker	1.9%	9.4%	7.6%	3.5%
Friend	17.0%	15.5%	15.8%	13.9%
Relative	18.1%	11.6%	17.1%	25.9%
Someone else	5.5%	1.0%	1.9%	4.7%
Someone in the organization	53.1%	51.6%	50.2%	47.8%

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

Table G – Other Ways 19-25 year old Volunteers Got Involved by College Status, 2006

	Current College students	College Graduates, not enrolled	College experience, not enrolled	No College Experience
Court-ordered community service	0.3%	2.8%	5.2%	4.5%
Family member's involvement in the organization/school	18.5%	8.5%	15.0%	48.3%
Friend's, co-worker's, or roommate's involvement in the organization	9.9%	4.3%	11.0%	5.2%
Other	7.3%	31.7%	26.1%	7.9%
Own involvement in the organization/school	40.4%	33.8%	27.0%	21.4%
Public housing requirement	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.6%
Referred by volunteer organization	N/A	N/A	2.5%	N/A
Responded to public appeal in newspaper/radio/TV/flyer/Internet	4.8%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
School requirement	18.9%	7.7%	6.8%	3.5%

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, September (Volunteering) Supplement, 2006

Notes

¹ Research Associate. I thank Mark Hugo Lopez and Peter Levine for comments on earlier drafts of this fact sheet. All errors in fact or interpretation are my own.

² For more on differences between non-college youth and youth with college experience, see the fact sheet “College Attendance and Civic Engagement among 18 to 25 year olds” by Mark Hugo Lopez and Brent A. Elrod, from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). www.civicyouth.org

Also, see the fact sheet “College Experience and Volunteering,” by Karlo Barrios Marcelo for information on volunteering among youth, ages 19-25, with some type of college experience. www.civicyouth.org

³ I define non-college youth as young people, ages 19-25, who have no college experience and are not currently enrolled in college. This definition includes two-year and four-year institutions.

⁴ Difficulties with measuring volunteering rates stem from two measurement issues. First, survey participants often have difficulty remembering or classifying activities as volunteer activities. Second, surveys employ different methods to acquire information on volunteering rates from survey participants. For more information and discussion of issues surrounding the measurement of volunteering, see the following:

Toppe, C. “CIRCLE Working Paper 43: Measuring Volunteering: A Behavioral Approach,” (2006) Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. www.civicyouth.org

Toppe, C. and Galaskiewicz, J. “Measuring Volunteering: Committee Report.” (2006) The Points of Light Foundation. <http://www.pointsoflight.org/downloads/pdf/resources/research/CommitteeReport.pdf>

Steinberg, K., Rooney, P., and Chin, W. “Measuring of Volunteering: A Methodological Study Using Indiana as a Test Case,” in the *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Volume 31, Issue 4, 2002.

⁵ See *The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation* report (CIRCLE) for more information about the survey: http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/2006_CPHS_Report_update.pdf

⁶ In the appendix of this fact sheet, there are four mutually exclusive categories for college status, ages 19-25:

1. Current College Students—current college and graduate students.
2. College Graduates, not enrolled—young people with a bachelor’s degree or more who are not currently enrolled in college or graduate school.

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3. College Experience, not enrolled—young people with some type of college experience (some college or bachelor’s degree or more) who are not currently enrolled in college or graduate school.
 4. No College Experience (non-college)—young people with no college experience, whatsoever.

⁷ Geographic regions are classified by the Current Population Survey as following: Northeast Region—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont; Midwest Region—Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin; South Region—Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia; and West Region—Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

⁸ For state rankings of the volunteer rate, see “Volunteering in the States: 2002 to 2006,” by Sara E. Helms and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. www.civicyouth.org

⁹ Percentages in Table 1 do not add up to 100 percent, because volunteers could select more than one organization.

¹⁰ Percentages in Table 2 do not add up to 100 percent, because volunteers could select more than one volunteer activity.

¹¹ Percentages in Table C do not add up to 100 percent, because volunteers could select more than one organization.

¹² Percentages in Table D do not add up to 100 percent, because volunteers could select more than one volunteer activity.