

# A SURVEY OF CHICAGO AREA VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

by  
RICHARD GLASSER  
and  
JEAN E. BEDGER

## BACKGROUND

This is a report of a survey conducted by the Council for Community Services in Metropolitan Chicago in the Spring of 1973. The purpose of the survey was to investigate the use of volunteers by Chicago area agencies so that the Council might have an informed basis for planning its own activities in the area of volunteer services.

In the Spring of 1972 staff and board members of the Voluntary Action Center, Council for Community Services in Metropolitan Chicago<sup>1</sup> began deliberations which ultimately resulted in the current investigation. These deliberations concerned the long-term role and direction of the Voluntary Action Center, and were prompted by certain imminent changes in funding and administration which would affect the Center's operations. It became increasingly clear that intelligent discussion of these matters would require an explicit and comprehensive picture of volunteering in the Metropolitan Chicago area. As one board member stated:

Many of those who have thought at length about the Council's possible longer term role (with respect to volunteerism) have come to the conclusion that such a role should—as in other fields—depend in substantial part upon what are the community's needs and opportunities for voluntary service, and what is the present form and range of fulfillment of these needs and opportunities. . . . There is little hard data on the subject and thus there is the need for research.

Discussion about what form this research should take was held in several further meetings of Voluntary Action Center staff and board, who, by this time, had formed an *ad Hoc* research committee. The initial proposal submitted to the committee by the Council's Research Department in November, 1972, called for three separate but related projects: 1) an internal evaluation of the Voluntary Action Center; 2) an assessment of the demographic characteristics and experience of volunteers; and 3) a survey of agencies which use volunteers to uncover trends and needs in volunteer service. In the face of limited time and resources,

Richard Glasser is a Research Associate and Jean E. Bedger is Research Director at the Council for Community Services in Metropolitan Chicago.

the Committee selected the third of these as the immediate task and tabled the other two.

## METHODOLOGY

The Research Department adapted and modified a questionnaire developed by the Health and Welfare Council of Hennepin County (Minnesota)<sup>2</sup> for use in a similar investigation. The questionnaire covered the following areas:

1. Number of volunteers, age and sex characteristics of volunteers, in each agency
2. Sources of volunteers
3. Volunteer assignment
4. Volunteer training
5. Reward and recognition of volunteers
6. Evaluation
7. Turnover
8. Expansion and development of the agency's volunteer program
9. Strengths and weaknesses of the agency's volunteer program
10. Use of, and attitudes toward, the Voluntary Action Center
11. Advantages and disadvantages of volunteer service

The questionnaire was pilot tested in March, 1973. Respondents were taken from the Voluntary Action Center's mailing list, which included agencies in the Metropolitan Chicago area known to use volunteers. Twelve agency executives participated in face-to-face interviews, and an additional ten were requested to complete and return the questionnaire by mail. On the basis of pilot interviews, certain modifications were effected in the questionnaire. If sufficient staff, time, and financial resources had been available, it would have been preferable to conduct all the interviews in a face-to-face situation. Due to time and personnel limitations, and the encouraging results from the pilot testing, it was decided to conduct the survey by mail. In recognition of the two major problems of mail surveys—low returns and ambiguous responses—follow-up telephone calls were made as needed.

In April, 1973, questionnaires were sent to the remaining 457 agencies on the Voluntary Action Center's mailing list. If an agency was known to have a volunteer director, the questionnaire was addressed to that individual, otherwise, it was sent to the executive director. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter explaining the purpose of the investigation, and a postpaid envelope for returning the questionnaire. The respondent was asked to complete and return the questionnaire within seven days.

## SURVEY RETURNS

One hundred fourteen agencies responded by May 31, 1973, the cut-off date for accepting questionnaires. Agencies which had not responded

within 30 days were contacted by telephone, but this did little to improve the return rate. Through these telephone calls, however, it was discovered that some agencies had closed. Others had opened too recently to contribute meaningful information, and still others had discontinued their volunteer program. On the basis of this discovery, it is estimated that the 114 respondents constitute approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the Chicago area agencies that used volunteers in 1972. This compares favorably with the 20% return rate characteristic of mail surveys. One reason for this relative success is that a number of respondents (65, or 57%) are clients of the Voluntary Action Center, and thus more strongly motivated to cooperate in this investigation than would normally be expected.

There was conflicting evidence regarding the representativeness of the participating agencies. It may be inferred from the follow-up telephone calls that systematic differences exist between agencies that returned the questionnaire and those that did not. Among the latter are certain large agencies whose size and complexity would have made it difficult to assemble the information requested: certain small agencies that could not afford the staff and time to complete the questionnaire; and others that were not favorably inclined toward the Council. Moreover, there are probably additional agencies—especially those run by non-professionals—that were excluded from the study because they were not known to the Council. Considered together, these factors would tend to bias the sample in favor of established agencies, of moderate size, that have either neutral or favorable attitudes toward the Council.

On the other hand, when one shifts his attention from the characteristics of agencies as survey respondents to the characteristics of agencies as social and health care service institutions, a different picture emerges. When sample agencies are classified by the type of work they perform (Table 1 below) the resulting distribution is fairly representative of social service agencies in the metropolitan Chicago area. Moreover, this appears to be a *stable* distribution, insofar as it is almost identical to the one obtained on the basis of the first two-thirds of the responses, upon whose receipt a preliminary report was written. In addition to the distribution of agencies, the findings themselves almost uniformly proved reliable between the preliminary and final reports. When findings are reliable across successive subsamples, there is more reason to believe them valid.

To summarize these considerations, there is no clear answer to the question of whether the 114 agencies included in this study adequately represent the population of Chicago area agencies which use volunteers. For the Council's purposes—and considering that the normal client load of the Voluntary Action Center is approximately 125 agencies—the responses of 114 agencies are of interest in themselves, whether or not they represent a larger population. In view of the extremely limited number of research studies of volunteerism to date, they should also be of interest to the general social service community. Whether or not findings can be considered definitive, they can provide a general picture of

**TABLE 1.**  
**SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY TYPE, NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE**

Type of Agency	No.	Percent
Health Care—Direct Service	35	30.7
Neighborhood Centers	16	14.0
Multi-Service Centers	9	7.9
Youth Services	8	7.0
Institutional Care—Children	8	7.0
Family Services	7	6.1
Day Care	5	4.4
Services for Handicapped	5	4.4
Education/Training	5	4.4
Health Care—Non-Direct Service	3	2.6
Vocational Services	3	2.6
Home Care/Aged	2	1.8
Prisoners' and Ex-Prisoners' Aid	2	1.8
Correctional Services	1	0.9
Legal Assistance	1	0.9
Model Cities—Chicago Com. on Urban Oppor. (22 delegate agencies)	1	0.9
Volunteer Coordinating Agency	1	0.9
Emergency Shelter	1	0.9
Referral	1	0.9
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>100.1</u>

volunteering in the Chicago area, as well as generate hypotheses for further research in other communities.

A description of the 114 agencies which participated in this investigation is presented in Table 1.

## FINDINGS

A complete description of the findings is beyond the scope of this article. Only the highlights will be presented here. Agencies were initially divided into three groups based on the size of their volunteer program in 1972. (Size was measured by number of volunteer hours given to the agency in 1972, a more valid measure than number of volunteers themselves.) It seemed likely that agencies with volunteer programs of different sizes would utilize volunteers in different ways, and report different experiences and problems. This turned out not to be the case. With only one major exception, which will be noted below, size of an agency's volunteer program was unrelated to other characteristics of the program or to attitudes about, or problems in, the use of volunteers. This is, itself, a significant finding, as will be clear in examining some of the tables below.

The questionnaire asked how many volunteers the agency had used in 1972 (excluding fund raisers and board members), as well as two and five years ago. Responses are summarized in Table 2.

**TABLE 2. VOLUNTEERS OVER TIME**

<b>Response</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>% Change Over Last Period</b>
Volunteers in 1972	50,952	+23.2
Volunteers 2 Years Ago	41,372	+2.6
Volunteers 5 Years Ago	40,339	—

There has been an increase of 26% in the use of volunteers by sample agencies over the last five years. National and local emphasis on voluntary action and the required in-kind (non-federal share) may be partially responsible for this growth. The most spectacular growth has occurred in small agencies (those which received less than 2,500 hours of volunteer service in 1972) where the five-year growth rate has been over 500%.

In addition to the total number of volunteers used by sample agencies, the questionnaire inquired about the age and sex characteristics of the volunteers in 1972. These are as follows:

It should be noted that the total number of volunteers in 1972 given in Table 3 is almost 4,000 less than the number presented in Table 2. This is a common research finding, i.e., that estimates tend to shrink when precise information is requested. On account of this phenomenon, attention should be focused on the percentages, rather than the numbers of volunteers shown in Table 3.

**TABLE 3. VOLUNTEER AGE AND SEX CHARACTERISTICS**

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>MEN</b>		<b>WOMEN</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	
	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Teen-agers	1,495	12.1	4,237	12.1	5,732	12.1
Young Adults (in their 20's)	2,877	23.4	10,275	29.5	13,152	27.9
Older Adults (30-60)	6,944	56.4	16,115	46.2	23,059	48.9
Senior Citizens (Over 60)	994	8.1	4,263	12.2	5,257	11.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,310</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>34,890</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47,200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

To deal with more substantive matters, it is significant, although hardly surprising, that women volunteers outnumber men by almost 3:1. However, the percentage of volunteers in each age groups is very similar in the two sexes. In both men and women volunteers the modal age category is Older Adults, 30-60. There is currently much talk about the new interest in volunteering among both the young and the elderly. It cannot be determined from these data whether or not there has been an increase in volunteering among these two groups over the last several years. But it is clear that the young and the elderly remain the least represented age groups among the volunteer population; and, it is still the case, as has often been noted, that the typical volunteer is a woman in her middle adult years.

A supplementary correlational analysis was conducted on the volunteer age and sex data. It was discovered that the number of volunteers in any age or sex group is highly related to the number of volunteers in any other such group ( $r$  ranges between .91 and .99). This implies, for example, that the more teen-age boys an agency has, the more senior citizen women; the more teen-age girls, the more older adult men. This finding is somewhat unexpected, as one would not intuitively assume that an agency which ranks high in the number of middle-aged women volunteers would also rank high in the number of teen-age boys, as one case in point.

The assignments which volunteers held in 1972 are presented in Table 4. Regular assignments are defined as those in which a volunteer reports

**TABLE 4. VOLUNTEER STAFFING CHARACTERISTICS**

Volunteer Position	REGULAR		ON-CALL		TOTAL	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Clerical and administrative	1,360	5.4	102	1.5	1,462	4.6
Education and child care	10,280	40.7	2,998	44.2	13,278	41.5
Legal services	260	1.0	12	0.2	272	0.8
Medical services	3,620	14.4	1,267	18.7	4,887	15.3
Psychotherapeutic services	86	0.3	10	0.2	96	0.3
Social services	2,717	10.8	754	11.1	3,471	10.8
Skilled and unskilled labor	417	1.7	177	2.6	594	1.8
Troop leader, scouting organizations	4,800	19.0	0	—	4,800	15.0
Other	1,701	6.7	1,460	21.5	3,161	9.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,241</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,780</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>32,021</b>	<b>100.0</b>

on a definite schedule. On-call assignments are filled on an "as needed" basis. Data in Table 4 are based on the responses of 98 agencies, as the remaining 16 agencies were unwilling or unable to provide the information requested.

One would expect that data on volunteer assignments would be extremely sensitive to sampling error. One agency and its delegates alone, for example, account for 9,000 Education and Child Care volunteers; if this one agency were not included in the sample, a different picture of volunteer assignments might emerge. However, the distribution of volunteer assignments presented in Table 4 is similar to the one obtained in the preliminary report, before the agency in question had responded. In the latter, for example, Education and Child Care was also the leading category of volunteer service, although by a smaller margin. If one can generalize, the numbers of volunteers in different assignments are not reliable; numbers increase with each questionnaire received. The corresponding *percentages* do appear reliable, however, and an even more stable finding is probably the *ranking* of volunteer assignments, i.e., which type of work involves the largest number of volunteers, second largest, etc.

As mentioned, Education and Child Care is the largest area of volunteer service. Next largest—although at a considerably lower level—are Medical and Health Services, and Scout Work. Some of the differences between numbers of volunteers in various categories may be attributed to the differential generality of the categories themselves. Legal Services, for example, is a narrower service area than some of the others. It subsumes only three types of work, for example, as opposed to 14 for Education and Child Care. Differences in numbers of volunteers in these respective categories may rest partially on this fact. This point should be kept in mind in interpreting other differences in numbers of volunteers which appear in Table 4.

Another finding is that regular workers outnumber on-call workers by almost 4:1. Overall, there are few differences between the types of work the two groups respectively perform. Two exceptions are that scout leaders tend to be regular workers, and athletic instructors and aides, on-call workers. The reasons for these exceptions should be clear to anyone familiar with the types of work involved. The Hennepin County study, which was mentioned earlier, found systematic differences between regular and on-call workers. It discovered that on-call workers tend to hold clerical positions or to have special skills—especially professional skills—which are not needed on a regular basis. Clerical volunteers are often needed for one-time projects like annual meetings, and this accounts for the fact that they are frequently on-call workers.

Volunteer work and paid employment are traditionally regarded as separate domains, with little movement from one situation to the other. In order to determine the validity of this belief, agencies were asked if they have paid positions filled by former volunteers. Responses are given in Table 5.

**TABLE 5. AGENCY EMPLOYMENT OF FORMER VOLUNTEERS**

Response	TOTAL	
	No.	Percent
Agency has paid positions filled by former volunteers	66	57.9
Agency does not have paid positions filled by former volunteers	48	42.1
TOTAL	114	100.0

Almost 60% of the agencies report that some of their positions are filled by former volunteers. While the questionnaires, unfortunately, did not ask how many such positions are involved, it did inquire about the types of positions. It would appear that most paid positions filled by former volunteers are either clerical or medical assignments. In most cases, it was the position itself, and not the volunteer, that was upgraded. It was common to find that a former volunteer position had been changed to a paid position with no change in personnel. It was less common to find a volunteer who had actually changed assignments.

High turnover has often been cited as a major problem in volunteer service. Data on turnover among sample agencies are presented in Table 6.

**TABLE 6 AVERAGE LENGTH OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

Avg. Length of Volunteer Service	No.	Percent
1 Month—5 Months	3	2.6
6 Months, but less than 1 Year	12	10.5
1 Year, but less than 2	22	19.3
2 Years, but less than 3	20	17.6
3 Years, but less than 4	10	8.8
4 Years, but less than 5	3	2.6
5 Years and up	9	7.9
No response	35	30.7
TOTAL	114	100.0

The median length of volunteer service is approximately 2.5 years, according to these data, while the modal length of service is 1.5 years. In view of the high no response rate of 30.7 percent—which probably results from lack of agency records on this subject—these figures must be interpreted with caution. They do suggest, however, that the problem of volunteer turnover might be overemphasized. Indeed, 61.4% of the respondents stated that they were satisfied with the length of time volunteers serve in their agency, and only 10.5% identified turnover as a major difficulty in their program. The median length of volunteer ser-



vice, 2.5 years, would seem to compare favorably with length of service in paid positions.

When respondents were asked about important reasons for volunteer turnover, they cited the following:

**TABLE 7. REASONS FOR VOLUNTEER TURNOVER**

Reason	Agencies Which Consider Reason of Major Importance	
	Total	
	No.	Percent
Job completed	18	15.8
Time conflict	42	36.8
Returned to school	45	39.5
Moved out of town	57	50.0
Illness	30	26.3
Obtained paying job	45	39.5
Became disinterested	25	21.9
Family responsibilities	39	34.2
Not suited to job	11	9.6
Personality conflict	6	5.3
Other	13	11.4
Reason unknown	11	9.6

It is significant that respondents generally indicate "neutral" reasons for turnover which do not adversely reflect on themselves or the volunteer. For example, the most common reason they cite is *moved out of town*, and the least common, *personality conflict*. Findings from the Hennepin County study, in which volunteers themselves were interviewed, suggest that almost 30% of the volunteers who leave do so on account of dissatisfaction with their work, supervisor, and/or agency. It is likely that volunteer dissatisfaction is a more important reason for turnover than respondents in the current investigation suggest. If respondents do, indeed, underestimate the role of volunteer dissatisfaction, they may do so either on account of "social desirability" factors, or a genuine unfamiliarity with the volunteer's perspective. Since dissatisfied volunteers, unlike paid workers, can leave an agency without explanation, it is sometimes difficult to learn of their grievances.

Respondents were given a list of ten components of a volunteer program, and asked to choose two in which they were particularly successful, and two in which they need to make improvements. Results are presented in Table 8.

What is most significant here is that percentages are generally low; only 3 out of 20 are greater than 30%. The implication is that no component is

**TABLE 8. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF  
AGENCY'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

Area	Successful		Needs Improvement	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Recruitment	35	30.7	37	32.5
Screening	15	13.2	13	11.4
Training	24	21.1	31	27.2
Supervision	19	16.7	13	11.4
Assignment	32	28.1	12	10.5
Evaluation	4	3.5	23	20.2
Turnover	5	4.4	12	10.5
Relations between volunteers and paid staff	43	37.7	16	14.0
Budget	5	4.4	10	8.8
Public Relations	15	13.2	13	11.4

inherently easy or difficult to handle; what is easy and what is difficult varies from agency to agency.

One question asked was whether respondents would like to expand their volunteer program. The overwhelming majority said yes, as Table 9 indicates.

**TABLE 9. AGENCY INTEREST IN  
EXPANDING VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

Response	Total	
	No.	Percent
Would like to expand program	95	83.3
Would not like to expand program	15	13.2
No response	14	3.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It would be valuable to know if agencies were interested in expanding current services, adding new services, or both. Unfortunately, the questionnaire did not address this issue. Elsewhere, however, the questionnaire did ask respondents if they could think of possible volunteer assignments that go beyond the scope of their current activities. Most respondents listed assignments which were supportive to their current operations, and which did not involve their agencies in new areas of service. If this finding can be transposed to the current discussion, it is likely that most agencies, in expressing an interest in expanding their volunteer program, have in mind the expanding of current services, rather than the addition of new ones.

The barriers to expansion, as perceived by agency executives, are presented in Table 10.

The principal barrier is the supply of volunteers themselves. In the light of Table 8 responses, it is probable that the major difficulty here is recruitment, rather than retention. The next two most important barriers—supervision and space—concern agency management capability. The unwillingness of volunteers to work in the agency's neighborhood, although a distinct fourth in the list of barriers, is a problem that should not be underestimated. This barrier is perhaps the least amenable to agency control; and since changing neighborhoods are the rule, rather than the exception, in urban life, the problem might become more serious in future years. Almost no agencies claim not to need more volunteers.

A final matter of interest is how a central agency like the Council's Voluntary Action Center can best serve local volunteer programs. With regard to this point, respondents were asked which VAC services they had actually used (or benefitted from) and which services they might find helpful. Responses are given in Table 11.

While recruitment and referral of volunteers is the major VAC service used by sample agencies, there is apparently a market for other services. For each of the other services listed, at least 25% of the agencies stated that, although they had not used the service, they might find it helpful. The fact that agencies express interest in services which they do not use, even though the services are available, is a paradox which may be explained in one of two ways: either the agencies suffer from inertia, bureaucratic lethargy, etc., in which case more aggressive outreach is desirable; or their interest in other services, as expressed in the questionnaire, is not genuine. In support of the latter supposition is the fact that it is easy to express an interest when one is not forced to act on it. Which of these hypotheses is correct can only be determined through further discussion with the agencies.

The Voluntary Action Center sent 2,000 volunteers to various agencies in 1972. Survey data indicate that the 114 sample agencies alone took on 26,000 new volunteers during this period. There is clearly a role for the Voluntary Action Center in the area of recruitment and referral of volunteers, judging from agency responses. But the most effective utilization of the VAC's limited staff might involve consultation in this area, rather than direct service. One extremely profitable activity, in cost-benefit terms, is the design and implementation of general publicity campaigns on behalf of agencies which use volunteers.

The survey included information about the costs and financial benefits involved in operating volunteer programs. In the pilot test, as predicted, it was found to be very difficult to obtain hard figures on the costs of operating volunteer programs and their imputed values to the agencies.

**TABLE 10. OBSTACLES TO EXPANSION OF  
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

<b>Obstacle</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No need for more volunteers	7	6.1
Limited number of supervisory personnel	31	27.2
Limited space	31	27.2
Limited funds	22	19.3
Volunteers unwilling to work in agency's neighborhood	21	18.4
Difficulty in procuring and/or retaining volunteers (other than above)	32	28.1
Professional resistance	9	7.9
Other	25	21.9

**TABLE 11. AGENCY INTEREST IN AND USE OF SERVICES  
OF VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER**

<b>VAC Service</b>	<b>Actually Used</b>		<b>Might Find Helpful</b>	
	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Recruitment and referral of volunteers	60	52.6	31	27.2
Consultation concerning agency's volunteer program	9	7.9	34	29.8
Development of new areas of volunteer service	7	6.1	39	34.2
Encouragement of high standards for volunteers	8	7.0	36	31.6
Workshops, institutes, or seminars for agency staff	13	11.4	39	34.2
Personal follow-up of volunteers	9	7.9	28	24.6
Inter-agency training of volunteers	11	9.6	29	25.4

In a rough analysis of operating costs and imputed values, it was determined that it cost \$937,686 to operate fourteen volunteer programs (recruiting, training and placing 22,006 volunteers). Based on the imputed value (basic wage \$1.60 per hour) and the average of 100 hours per volunteer, a cost-value was derived. The total value to the fourteen agencies at \$1.60 per hour per volunteer would be \$3,520,960. Deducting the operating costs of \$937,686 leaves a \$2,583,274 benefit to the agencies.

One large agency in the sample conducted a cost-value study of its volunteer program and made the results available to the Council. This study

is of interest because it illustrates the techniques involved in a cost-value comparison. It cannot be generalized to other agencies, but illustrates the possibilities of cost analysis.

This agency had 242 volunteers in 1972, each volunteer contributed an average of 128 hours during the year. (The average for the 114 sample agencies was 100 hours.) A time study indicated that the volunteers spent approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of their time on paraprofessional counseling, and the remaining  $\frac{2}{3}$ , on miscellaneous tasks including secretarial work, fund-raising, and providing basic information to clients. In terms of hours of service, the 128 volunteers contributed a total of 30,976 hours, equivalent to approximately 18 full-time staff, based on a work-year of 1,750 hours. Of the total volunteer hours, 10,325 were given to counseling and 20,650 to miscellaneous tasks. If one assumes that a paraprofessional salary is \$5.00 per hour (\$8,750 per year) and a secretarial salary is \$3.50 per hour (\$6,125 per year), the imputed value of the volunteer service is approximately \$125,000. It varies depending on whether calculations are based on hours or number of staff, since the latter was rounded to the nearest whole number.

$$10,326 \text{ hours} \times \$5.00/\text{hour} = \$ 51,625$$

$$20,650 \text{ hours} \times \$3.50/\text{hour} = \underline{\$ 72,275}$$

OR

$$6 \text{ full-time staff @ } \$8,750/\text{year} = \$ 52,500$$

$$12 \text{ full-time staff @ } \$6,125/\text{year} = \underline{73,500}$$

$$\underline{\$126,000}$$

In addition to time contributed, volunteers were responsible for raising \$15,000 in contributions for the agency, bringing the imputed value of their service up to \$140,000. If the agency wished to replace the volunteers with paid workers, it would require another 15% of \$125,000, or \$18,750 for fringe benefits.

The expenses charged against the volunteer program in 1972 were \$22,436. The net value of the volunteer program was \$140,000 — \$22,436, or \$117,564. This works out to \$486 per volunteer. Volunteers were responsible for handling 50,217 clients in 1972, either directly or indirectly. Excluding the \$15,000 which resulted from fund-raising efforts from the net imputed value of volunteer service, it may be concluded that volunteers made service contributions equivalent to \$2.04 per client.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This article reports the results of a survey conducted by the Council for Community Services in Metropolitan Chicago in the Spring of 1973. The purpose of the survey was to investigate the use of volunteers by Chicago area agencies in order to decide on future programs and directions for the Council's Voluntary Action Center. The survey found that:

1. There has been a 26% increase in the number of volunteers used by sample agencies over the last 5 years, with a 500% increase in small agencies.
2. Whatever the trends have been, the young, the elderly, and men in general remain minority groups in the volunteer population. The typical (modal) volunteer is still a woman in her middle adult years.
3. Within a given agency, the number of volunteers in any age or sex group is highly related to the number of volunteers in any other such group.
4. The most common area of volunteer service is Education and Child Care.
5. It is not uncommon for an agency to hire its volunteers as paid workers, most often by converting the volunteer position itself to a paid position.
6. Volunteer turnover might not be as critical a problem as is commonly believed.
7. The kinds of problems and successes which agencies report in administering their volunteer programs are probably not "epidemic", but vary from agency to agency.
8. Most agencies are interested in expanding their volunteer program, but perceive the supply of volunteers and their management capability as significant barriers.
9. A central agency, such as the Voluntary Action Center, does appear to have a legitimate role in the volunteer community. In cost-benefit terms, the most effective role involves consultation rather than direct service.
10. A cost-value comparison in one agency indicated that each of 242 volunteers contributed an average of \$486 in service in 1972 or \$2.04 per client.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The Council for Community Services in Metropolitan Chicago is the health and welfare council for the metropolitan Chicago area. The Council's Voluntary Action Center assists other agencies by recruiting and training volunteers, as well as providing consultation on establishing, expanding, or improving volunteer programs.

<sup>2</sup>Volunteer Service Bureau Evaluation Committee: *Evaluation of the Volunteer Service Bureau*. Minneapolis: Community Health and Welfare Council of Hennepin County, Inc., 1972. Irreg. pp.