

The Investigator™

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Encouraging research in volunteerism and the management of volunteers

VOLUNTEERING BY STATES

Until the advent of large data sets,¹ empirical understanding of volunteering behavior across states was limited. The recent 2002, 2003, and 2004 Current Population Survey (CPS) September Supplements provide a large number of observations that allow researchers to consider volunteering trends by individual states and even selected counties and cities. In this issue of *The Investigator*, we explore the differences in volunteering rates between states.

The CPS is a monthly survey of about 150,000 individuals or 60,000 households. The survey is conducted by the Census Bureau and disseminated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In September 2002, 2003, and 2004 the Census asked a representative of each household about the household's volunteering activity, including the number of hours and weeks volunteered, and the type of organization served.

With the help of this information, *The Investigator* considers the affects of different variables on state volunteering rates, including voting, age, sex, marital status, and hours worked. The following is preliminary information about each variable and the relationships between them.

State Volunteering Rates

In spite of being geographic neighbors, Utah has the highest rate of volunteering and Nevada has the lowest. Other states with high rates of volunteering are Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, and Montana.² Many of the states with high volunteering rates are geographically large and located in the northwestern part of the United States.³ States with low rates of volunteering are typically in the southeastern part of the United States. Low volunteering rate states include New York, Tennessee, and Georgia.

Effects on State Rankings

Religious Volunteering The most common organization to volunteer with is a religious organization. If the data are adjusted to exclude individuals who only volunteer for religious organizations, Utah's volunteer ranking falls nine positions to 10th and Nevada advances four positions to 45th. Other states that fall in the rankings are Mississippi, Georgia, and South Carolina – traditional "Bible Belt" states. States that rise in the rankings when religious volunteering is excluded are Hawaii, New Hampshire, and New Jersey. With this religion-free definition of volunteering, Montana, Alaska, and Wyoming are the top three volunteering states.⁴

Citizenship and Voting It is generally known that citizens are more likely to volunteer than non-citizens are. In addition, native citizens volunteer more than naturalized citizens. Volunteers in South Dakota, Minnesota, and North Dakota are more likely to vote than volunteers in other states. Volunteers in Virginia are the least likely to vote, however, the percentage of eligible voters is also low.

Age Age is often negatively correlated with volunteering rates. However, the correlation between the age of volunteers and state volunteering rates is small. This suggests that young people across all states are most likely to volunteer.

Gender Nationwide, women are more likely to volunteer than men, however, Arizona has the highest concentration of male volunteers, with South Carolina having the lowest.

Some experts question if men identify with the term "volunteer." When asked about service men frequently respond with the function of their non-monetary service such as 'coach,' 'firefighter,' or 'trustee,' while women are more likely to identify service as 'volunteer work'.⁵ Could an issue such as this affect the data?

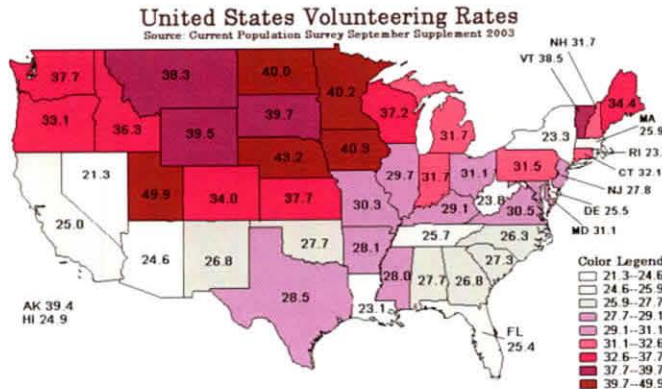
Volunteer Hours The average number of hours volunteers serve per year is misleadingly large. Because a small fraction of people serve more than 1,200 hours a year, their service skews the distribution of hours to the right⁶ and brings the annual service average to more than 100 hours. The median, or most frequent number of volunteer hours, is 52.

The Data

The table on page 2 lists states with their respective volunteering rates and related information about volunteers.⁷

The table is sorted by volunteering rates, showing the state with the highest volunteering rate, Utah, first, the state with the second highest volunteering rate, Nebraska, second, and so forth. Each additional column presents more information about volunteers in a given state. For example, column 3 shows that Utah's volunteerism rank is 10th when religious volunteering is excluded. The percent of Utah volunteers that are employed is 67 and the percent of Utah volunteers that are unemployed is 3. (Note that the sum of employed, unemployed, and not in the labor force equals 100%. Thus, the percent of volunteers that are employed does not represent the employment rate of volunteers.⁸)

The top 5 and bottom 5 in each column are denoted by ^ and * respectively, displaying trends in the volunteering rate with respect to volunteers' characteristics. The correlation of volunteering characteristics with the volunteering rate is at the bottom of each column. For example, 0.60 at the bottom of the employment column says that volunteering rates and employment are positively and strongly correlated.



¹See *The Investigator* #1, *Data Sets: A Research Primer* for an explanation of data sets and their significance.

²See table on page 2, columns 1 and 2.

³See map, inset.

⁴See table on page 2.

⁵"Where Are the Men?" by Susan J. Ellis and Steve McCurley, e-Volunteerism, Vol. 1, Issue 3, Spring 2001 <http://e-volunteerism.com/quarterly/01spr/gender.php>

⁶See <http://rgkcenter.utexas.edu/investigator> for a graph illustrating this statistic.

⁷The data in the table are from the 2003 September Current Populations Survey with the exception of column 10. The *Percent of Citizens that Voted* variable in column 10 is from the 2002 September and November Volunteering and Voting Survey Supplements. Volunteering rates for 2002 differ slightly.

⁸The employment rate is roughly defined as (the number of employed persons)/(the number employed + the number of unemployed persons) and not as (the number of employed persons)/(the number employed + the number of unemployed + the number of persons not in the labor force).

VOLUNTEERING BY STATES

^ indicates top 5 * indicates bottom 5		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
State		Labor Market							Political Participation		Characteristics		
		Volunteering Rate	Rank excluding religious volunteering	Employed	Unemployed	Not in Labor Force	Work Hours (Average)	Volunteer Hours (Average)	% Citizens	% Voted (from 2002 Current Population Survey)	Age (Average)	% Two Spouse Households	% Male Volunteers
Utah	UT	49.88^	10	67.97	3.14	28.89	36.6*	174.2^	98.12	66.08	40.81*	81.24^	44.43^
Nebraska	NE	43.24^	4^	73.57^	2.14	24.29*	41.3^	129.0	98.71	65.33	43.53	81.31^	41.00
Iowa	IA	40.33^	6	71.93	2.05	26.02	39.3	101.2*	98.68	71.08	43.78	75.83	42.40
Minnesota	MN	40.24^	7	72.51	2.42	25.08	39.3	128.4	98.19	83.65^	43.54	74.87	41.09
North Dakota	ND	40.01^	16	74.15^	1.60^	24.24*	41.3^	83.2*	99.64	79.87^	45.75^	80.37^	41.71
South Dakota	SD	39.72	13	73.96^	1.49^	24.54*	40.7	110.6*	99.67^	87.95^	45.13^	78.88^	42.29
Wyoming	WY	39.46	3^	70.24	2.03	27.73	41.9^	132.4	99.45	70.51	43.52	76.32	45.29^
Alaska	AK	39.39	2^	72.67^	3.49	23.84*	40.5	137.0	98.84	77.52^	42.83	71.49	41.67
Vermont	VT	38.48	5^	71.69	2.72	25.59	39.7	125.3	98.37	73.36	44.25	69.34	42.83
Montana	MT	38.33	1^	72.04	3.32	24.64	40.1	136.4	98.34	71.60	44.49	74.19	42.18
Washington	WA	37.67	12	63.78	5.26*	30.96	39.0	167.5	96.59	75.39^	43.77	74.91	44.74^
Kansas	KS	37.66	14	70.39	2.43	27.18	40.1	101.9*	97.90	68.91	43.44	75.33	40.45
Wisconsin	WI	37.19	8	73.01^	3.27	23.72*	40.4	108.4*	99.15	71.15	44.27	74.12	42.19
Idaho	ID	36.29	17	64.00	2.22	33.78^	38.6	220.6^	98.89	67.43	42.01*	78.72^	41.56
Maine	ME	34.42	11	67.85	2.89	29.26	38.4	115.1	98.55	74.31	46.08^	73.62	40.03
Colorado	CO	33.97	22	68.81	3.98	27.22	39.5	139.3	98.32	73.49	42.30	74.69	41.74
Oregon	OR	33.14	18	65.19	5.58*	29.23	38.0*	134.4	98.46	71.04	43.99	74.72	40.96
Connecticut	CT	32.09	20	64.42	2.81	32.77	39.1	126.9	98.13	67.97	44.86	69.93	38.39
Indiana	IN	31.70	26	65.54	1.95^	32.50	40.6	124.6	99.64^	60.46*	45.04	74.85	44.40^
Michigan	MI	31.66	19	66.47	4.03	29.50	39.1	120.7	97.63	74.23	43.72	73.17	41.94
New Hampshire	NH	31.65	9	66.91	3.58	29.52	38.1*	132.1	97.67	68.68	43.18	74.07	40.61
Pennsylvania	PA	31.54	25	64.59	2.74	32.66	38.8	134.7	99.54	61.04*	44.48	73.17	40.16
Maryland	MD	31.12	15	64.39	2.35	33.26	39.8	140.0	98.29	73.48	44.64	75.06	38.38*
Ohio	OH	31.06	23	65.08	3.59	31.33	38.3	128.1	98.63	68.98	42.43	69.88	40.51
Virginia	VA	30.45	30	63.31*	2.01	34.68^	38.4	155.1	96.20	55.29*	44.77	73.40	42.51
Missouri	MO	30.32	21	64.68	4.19	31.13	39.6	134.4	99.34	72.22	44.10	69.23	41.72
Illinois	IL	29.66	33	64.29	4.04	31.68	39.5	128.6	97.20	65.97	44.15	71.41	39.86
Kentucky	KY	29.13	32	66.67	2.56	30.77	39.7	115.0	99.74^	70.83	43.56	76.63	40.51
Texas	TX	28.45	34	66.52	4.22	29.26	40.6	148.0	95.33*	60.25*	42.22	75.05	43.36
Arkansas	AR	28.07	31	63.84	4.09	32.08	41.1^	150.5	98.43	70.65	43.29	74.18	43.40
Mississippi	MS	28.04	48*	64.26	2.66	33.08	38.3	160.0	100.00^	63.51	44.03	67.56*	38.02*
New Jersey	NJ	27.81	28	67.77	3.90	28.34	38.5	153.3	93.85*	62.61	43.50	75.13	39.43
Oklahoma	OK	27.69	39	64.16	4.22	31.63	38.7	162.0	98.80	73.64	44.70	78.67	43.98
Alabama	AL	27.69	38	67.67	2.26	30.08	38.9	159.5	99.50	66.92	43.12	76.45	43.11
South Carolina	SC	27.28	36	60.79*	3.04	36.17^	39.6	178.0^	99.39	66.33	45.03	71.93	36.78*
Georgia	GA	26.80	47*	67.54	2.63	29.82	38.8	120.5	93.86*	64.63	40.70*	67.72*	39.77
New Mexico	NM	26.79	27	63.90	4.33	31.77	39.4	125.2	97.83	63.40	41.18*	60.43*	43.68
North Carolina	NC	26.25	43	67.57	3.80	28.62	39.3	128.8	96.92	72.73	43.80	73.60	41.12
Massachusetts	MA	25.92	35	66.99	4.66*	28.35	38.1*	141.4	93.98*	71.81	44.18	69.09	40.19
Tennessee	TN	25.66	50*	69.97	4.79*	25.24	39.4	116.5	98.72	75.17	42.06*	70.50	38.98
Delaware	DE	25.53	29	64.51	3.09	32.41	39.5	134.4	98.77	61.50	47.12^	70.13	40.12
Florida	FL	25.43	46*	64.12	4.36*	31.52	39.6	150.6	96.23	69.25	44.22	69.71	42.62
California	CA	25.04	37	64.61	4.35	31.05	39.2	136.1	90.37*	62.56	42.06	67.79*	40.37
Hawaii	HI	24.85	24	66.44	3.02	30.54	39.9	193.1^	95.97	73.65	44.50	71.76	37.58*
Arizona	AZ	24.61	41	61.13*	2.51	36.36^	39.8	134.0	96.55	59.28*	43.16	73.90	46.71^
West Virginia	WV	23.77*	42	56.50*	2.82	40.68^	38.8	130.3	100.00^	61.69	45.65^	75.48	37.57*
New York	NY	23.30*	44	63.41*	3.91	32.68	39.1	175.2^	96.37	62.05	44.18	66.09*	40.50
Rhode Island	RI	23.17*	40	72.10	0.74^	27.16	38.2*	126.5	95.80	73.30	44.80	69.48	39.26
Louisiana	LA	23.06*	49*	63.60	2.80	33.60	40.9^	151.6	98.80	72.26	44.22	70.37	43.20
Nevada	NV	21.30*	45	67.33	1.49^	31.19	39.1	164.7	99.01	70.43	42.57	74.85	43.07
Correlations with the column 2 volunteering rates			-0.86	0.60	-0.18	-0.58	0.14	-0.22	0.33	0.36	-0.08	0.56	0.28