

1975 CENSUS OF THE  
PROFESSION OF VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

by

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## INTRODUCTION

There is at least a suspicion that the popularity of volunteering has moved roughly in thirty-year cycles in the twentieth century. Carrying this cyclical hypothesis further would predict a plateau at the present time, presaging a decline in the popularity of volunteering. As yet, this decline is not evident. One explanation may be in the growth of a group of mid-management level professionals who have come to provide leadership to volunteers.

The National Learning Resource Center at the National Information Center On Volunteerism is designed to serve the education and training needs of this volunteer leadership, the principal catalyst of progress in the volunteer movement. Therefore, for purposes of this estimate, the term volunteer leader refers to all people who identify as leaders of volunteers. Job titles such as volunteer administrator, volunteer director, volunteer manager, volunteer coordinator, and volunteer supervisor are typical for people who identify with their role as leader of volunteers. Because volunteer leadership is the client group for the National Learning Resource Center, and because the effect of this group on volunteerism is thought to be so strategic at this point in the cycle of the volunteer movement, the National Learning Resource Center has conducted studies on the active leadership of volunteers in the United States during 1975.

Two aspects of these studies combine to form a census of volunteer leadership. The first is an estimate of the number of volunteer leaders active in the United States during the year 1975. The second is the demographic data obtained from a study of the education and training needs of American volunteer leadership during that same period. Neither an estimate nor a census of this population has ever been thoroughly attempted before. Lack of this information has made planning for the profession of volunteer leadership nearly impossible.

This report explains the derivation of this national estimate and contains basic demographics of the volunteer leadership.

## METHODOLOGY

Brief questionnaires\* were mailed to the directors of approximately 260 Voluntary Action Centers or Volunteer Bureaus. This list of VAC's and VB's was obtained with the help of the National Center for Voluntary Action and Association of Volunteer Bureaus and was the most comprehensive listing available. The questions covered information on the geographic area served, such as city, county,

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\*See Appendix A

or other; total population in area served; and approximate size, in square miles, of geographic area served. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they worked full or part-time as leaders of volunteers.

The questionnaire requested that the respondents return a copy of the most complete address list of directors, coordinators, and supervisors of volunteer programs in the area served, and estimate the percentage of the total number of volunteer leaders in that area that was represented by that list.

#### A. The Census Estimate

Thirty-eight percent of the surveys were returned with mailing lists attached. For each survey and mailing list returned, the number of volunteer leaders per population unit was determined. Both the highest and lowest percentage of volunteer leaders per population were dropped, then the arithmetic mean of volunteer leaders per population was determined to be 1 volunteer leader for every 3,000 people living in the area served.

The mailing lists received contained over 6,000 names and addresses of volunteer leaders as well as information on the availability of computerized lists containing names of 4,000 additional volunteer leaders. A variety of calculations were undertaken to determine the national estimate of volunteer leaders for 1975.

One simple estimate was made by multiplying the arithmetic mean number of volunteer leaders per capita reported by the areas returning the survey, by the total population. (Average number of volunteer leaders per person) (total population) = total number of volunteer leaders:  $(1/3,000) (215,000,000) = 71,666$  volunteer leaders. The number obtained, 71,666 volunteer leaders, is expected to be too large since the ratio of volunteer leaders per capita was calculated from areas being served by VAC's and VB's. It is thought that areas with VAC's and VB's would have a higher ratio of volunteer leaders per capita than areas without VAC's or VB's. Therefore, an attempt was made to compensate for the effect of VAC's and VB's in the ratio of volunteer leaders per capita.

- (A) The ratio of volunteer leaders/person was determined for each area from which a survey was returned.
- (B) The total population was broken down into segments of 50,000 people (i.e. 1-50,000; 50,001-100,000; 100,001-150,000; on up to 7,000,000 people).
- (C) Each survey returned was placed in the appropriate segment of the population, and the number of volunteer coordinators reported in each of those areas was

averaged, yielding an arithmetic mean number of volunteer leaders per person in each segment of the population (i.e. in the population range of areas with 650,001-700,000 people, there is an average of 250 volunteer leaders which is a ratio of 1 volunteer leader/2,700 people).

- (D) In the manner described above, ratios of volunteer leaders per capita were applied to all areas with VAC's or VB's that did not return the survey.
- (E) It was determined that VAC's and VB's serve areas representing approximately 74,000,000 people, or 35% of the total population.
- (F) That means that 65% of the total population, or approximately 140,000,000 people, is not served by VAC's or VB's.
- (G) At the rate of 1 volunteer leader per 3000 people; there are approximately 46,666 volunteer leaders serving the 65% of the population living in areas not served by VAC's and VB's, and 24,666 volunteer leaders serving the 35% of the population living in areas served by VAC's or VB's.
- (H) Adding 46,666 volunteer leaders serving areas without VAC's and VB's  
plus 24,666 volunteer leaders serving areas with VAC's and VB's  
 Total 71,332 volunteer leaders serving the nation
- (I) Since areas without VAC's and VB's are expected to have a lower ratio of volunteer leaders per capita, the number of volunteer leaders per capita, serving areas without VAC's or VB's is expected to fall within 1/2 to 3/4 of the number per capita serving areas with VAC's and VB's.
- (J)  $46,666 \div 1/2 = 23,333$  = lower estimate of volunteer leaders in areas without VAC's or VB's  
 $46,666 \div 3/4 = 34,998$  = upper estimate of volunteer leaders in areas without VAC's or VB's

24,666	volunteer leaders in areas with VAC's or VB's
<u>+23,333</u>	lower estimate of volunteer leaders in areas without VAC's or VB's
47,999	total lower estimated number of volunteer leaders
24,666	volunteer leaders in areas with VAC's or VB's
<u>+34,998</u>	upper estimate of volunteer leaders in areas without VAC's or VB's
59,664	total upper estimated number of volunteer leaders

A variety of other calculations were carried out which made adjustments for such variables as incomplete Voluntary Action Center and Volunteer Bureau mailing lists and different ratios of volunteer leaders to population units for rural versus urban areas.

All calculations from whatever bases fell between 48,000 and 71,000, converging on 60,000. Therefore, the National Learning Resource Center thinks that the most accurate estimate of the number of volunteer leaders in the United States during 1975 is 60,000. It must be understood that this is only an estimate and must be refined in subsequent studies. However, it is believed to be the best estimate available today.

It is important to note that many people actually provide leadership for volunteers without identifying themselves as volunteer leaders, coordinators, directors, etc. People such as heads of paternal or associational organizations (i.e. Kiwanis, Junior Chamber of Commerce) do not ordinarily identify with their actual role as volunteer leader. These types of non-identifying volunteer leaders do not consistently appear on the VAC and VB mailing lists, and therefore, are not included in this estimate. The largest group of non-identifying volunteer leaders is probably the clergy and all other people involved in leading volunteers for church related activities. This group alone has been estimated by members of the Alliance Task Force on Religious Involvement in Volunteerism to be at least 160,000 people.\*

The estimated population of 60,000 people who identify with their roles as primarily leaders of volunteers is not intended by any definition to depict the entire population of people providing leadership for volunteers. However, if the definition of a profession has evolved to include concepts such as a common function performed by a number of skilled individuals in society who identify that function as their principal occupational role in life, then it would seem acceptable to contend that this group of approximately 60,000 volunteer leaders comprise, by definition, the profession of volunteer leadership.

#### BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE PROFESSION

The following demographic profile was developed from a National Learning Resource Center study on educational needs of the profession of volunteer leaders. It is reported in full in "Report on an Educational Needs Survey for the Leadership of Volunteers," available from the National Information Center On Volunteerism, P. O. Box 4179, Boulder, Colorado.

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\*December Religious Involvement Task Force Meeting, Boulder, Colorado, 1975.

Demographic Information

N=173 for all demographic data

A total of 838 people received surveys. Three hundred and twelve people returned the survey. Therefore, the total return was 37 percent. This is an acceptable survey return. Whenever survey returns are less than 100 percent, which is nearly always the case, some bias is introduced into the data through the self-selectivity of the respondents. Moreover, due to the homogeneity of the respondents, if any subgroup were un-, under-, or over-represented, indications are that the results would not have been skewed.

The sample of 312 is considered a fairly large representation of the total estimated population of 60,000 volunteer administrators, in fact the sample represents .5 percent of the total estimated population. (60,000 does not include volunteer administrators in the religious sector, nor does the sample.) Finally, from available, alphabetical mailing provided by VAC's, the sample was drawn in a random manner. It is hoped that in future studies, time and resources will permit more rigorous sampling procedures, however; for purposes of this study, this sample is adequate.

Age:

- 27% of volunteer directors are between 21 and 30 years of age.
- 25% of volunteer directors are between 31 and 40 years of age.
- 22% of volunteer directors are between 41 and 50 years of age.
- 14% of volunteer directors are between 51 and 60 years of age.
- 4% of volunteer directors are over 60 years of age.
- 8% blank

The mean age of volunteer directors is 36.

Ethnic Background:

- 74.0% of volunteer directors are Non-Minority.
- 3.0% of volunteer directors are Black.
- 1.8% of volunteer directors are Chicano, or Spanish/American
- .6% of volunteer directors are Jewish
- .6% of volunteer directors are American Indian
- 18.0% other and blank

Comment: A common impression is confirmed here; the proportion of minority people in the population is under-represented in the profession of volunteer leadership.

This is particularly of concern since one accepted principle of involving more minority volunteers, is to provide more minority leaders of volunteers.

Sex:

74% of volunteer directors are women.

26% of volunteer directors are men.

Comment: The Americans Volunteer - 1974 study and background data indicate that today almost as much total volunteer time is provided by men as women. Significantly this balance is not yet reflected in on-line leadership. Perhaps this fact relates to low salaries or the stereotyping of this position as a female role.

Geographic Area of Employment:

72% of volunteer directors work in agencies serving an urban area.

28% of volunteer directors work in agencies serving a rural area.

Human Service Area Served:

28% of volunteer directors serve the health and hospital system.

21% of volunteer directors serve the community service system.

18% of volunteer directors serve the criminal justice system.

15% of volunteer directors serve the educational system.

7% of volunteer directors serve the RSVP and/or programs for the elderly.

11% other

Level of Education

5% of volunteer directors have 12 years of education.

15% of volunteer directors have 13-14 years of education.

43% of volunteer directors have 15-16 years of education.

24% of volunteer directors have 17-18 years of education.

7% of volunteer directors have 19 or more years of education.

6% blank

Level of Education

30% of volunteer directors have majored in social sciences.

18% of volunteer directors have majored in humanities.

4% of volunteer directors have majored in business administration.

2% of volunteer directors have majored in physical sciences.

13% other (i.e. languages, education)

29% blank

This profession is a relatively highly educated group with diverse educational background, though centering in the humanities and social sciences.

Number of Years in Volunteer Leadership:

- 56% of volunteer directors have been in roles as leaders of volunteers for 0- 5 years.
- 22% of volunteer directors have been in roles as leaders of volunteers for 6-11 years.
- 11% of volunteer directors have been in roles as leaders of volunteers for 12-17 years.
- 4% of volunteer directors have been in roles as leaders of volunteers for 18-23 years.
- 7% of volunteer directors have been in roles as leaders of volunteers for more than 23 years.

Fifty-six percent of Directors falling in the 0-5 years category probably indicates growth of the profession, but also may be attributed in part to high turnover in the first few years of service, and therefore, a high number of vacancies to be repeatedly filled. The data are at least consistent with that assumption. They also indicate that, at least in some service areas this is not a brand new profession, perhaps that volunteer leaders move frequently from one position to another within the profession.

Yearly Salary: (All salaries for part-time work were converted to full-time salary equivalents.)

- 11% of volunteer directors are volunteers (\$0 per year).
- 5% of volunteer directors receive \$ 5,001 - 7,000 per year.
- 14% of volunteer directors receive \$ 7,001 - 9,000 per year.
- 29% of volunteer directors receive \$ 9,001 - 11,000 per year.
- 12% of volunteer directors receive \$11,001 - 13,000 per year.
- 9% of volunteer directors receive \$13,001 - 15,000 per year.
- 1% of volunteer directors receive \$15,001 - 17,000 per year.
- 4% of volunteer directors receive \$17,001 - 19,000 per year.
- 3% of volunteer directors receive \$19,001 - 21,000 per year.
- 12% Blank

Arithmetic mean is \$9,675.00. Only 17% report salaries of more than \$13,000 per year.



Titles:

27% of volunteer directors have the title, Coordinator of Volunteer Services.

18% of volunteer directors have the title, Executive or Program Director.

18% of volunteer directors have the title, Director of Volunteer Services.

28% of volunteer directors have "other" programmatic titles such as "social worker," "child protection worker," "project manager," etc.

9% Blank

Harriet Naylor's work with Department of Labor, recommends that the title of "Director" is the professional title, Coordinator is not. Apparently, the field has a way to go in responding to this need for title change.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The total estimated number of people actively participating in the profession of volunteer leadership in the United States during the year 1975 was 60,000.

The modal member of the profession of volunteer leadership is a 36-year-old white woman employed by the human service area of health and hospitals in an urban setting. She has completed 16 years of education, with a major in the social sciences. Having been a leader of volunteers for just over seven years, she now has the title of Coordinator of Volunteer Services and receives an annual salary of \$9,675. She has previously participated in educational opportunities for volunteer leaders which she considered worthwhile. However, if she decides to attend graduate school she would prefer to obtain a generic degree in administration to a specialized degree in volunteer administration.

In addition to the approximately 60,000 people who comprise the profession of volunteer leadership, there are a great many other people who provide leadership for volunteers. There is much to be learned about the size and character of this vast group. Perhaps the newly-formed Alliance for Volunteerism will provide a vehicle with sufficient outreach to all corners of the volunteer movement, to allow for the further identification and study of this group. The Research Task Force of the Alliance and the task force on Religious Involvement might find this group of special interest.

The field of volunteerism would learn much about itself if this study were to be repeated with a larger sample in the near future. A parallel study would show whether the population characteristics change or remain static and would also measure the growth of the profession. A comparative study of this 1975 census to a census of other similar professions, such as the social work profession, would also provide valuable information as to the place of volunteer leadership in the helping professions.

## NATIONAL SEARCH AND REQUEST FOR RESOURCE ASSISTANCE: DIRECTORS OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

NATIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER  
The National Information Center on Volunteerism  
P. O. Box 4179  
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- A. How long has your VAC or Volunteer Bureau been in existence? Since \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_  
(month)
- B. Did any other organization of similar purpose exist previous to that date in your community? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- C. If yes, for approximately what time period? From \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_
- D. Describe the geographical area you serve. A city \_\_\_\_\_ A county \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- 1) Total population (latest estimate) in this area \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Approximate size of geographical area in square miles \_\_\_\_\_ sq. mi.
- E. Please attach your latest, most complete address list of directors, coordinators, supervisors of volunteer programs in your area (indicate at top, date on which this list was prepared).
- F. What percent of the people actually serving in this capacity, in your area, do you think this list covers? (anywhere from 100% to 1%) \_\_\_\_\_%
- G. Now, separately from the address list requested above (E), would you please make the best estimate you can as follows: In the geographical area served by VAC or Volunteer Bureau, the number of people who call themselves directors, coordinators, supervisors or facilitators of volunteer programs, and/or who are so thought of by others, is: \_\_\_\_\_ total.
- 1) Of these \_\_\_\_\_ (total: same as above)
- a) \_\_\_\_\_ work full-time in job
- b) \_\_\_\_\_ work more than half-time, but less than full-time
- c) \_\_\_\_\_ work less than half-time
- 2) Of these \_\_\_\_\_ (total)
- a) \_\_\_\_\_ are paid
- b) \_\_\_\_\_ are unpaid

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3) I estimate the average yearly wage for those who work full-time and are paid, is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year.

For those who work approximately half-time, I estimate the average amount is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year.

H. This question is about any educational organization in your community which may have offered a course for directors, supervisors, coordinators or facilitators of volunteer programs.

1) Educational organizations which have done so in the past in my community, or are doing so now:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(Use additional sheet if required)

2) Other educational organizations which have expressed some interest in doing so:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(Use additional sheet if required)

Can the NATIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER offer you any resource help in stimulating the offering of educational opportunities concerned with volunteer program direction, supervision, coordination or facilitation? If so, please tell us how.

(Use additional sheet if required)

Is there any other organization facilitating volunteerism in your community: e.g. FISH, a college volunteer clearinghouse, or the like? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please give names and addresses of these:

(continued on next page)