

Advocacy

Dollar Value of Volunteer Time

(The following report was released in January by INDEPENDENT SECTOR, which also commissioned the 1981 Gallup survey on volunteering (see report in winter '82 VAL. IS used these reference materials in preparing its analysis: "Americans Volunteer—1981," the Gallup survey on volunteering; supplemental reports of the 1980 Census of the Population; "Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1980," from Consumer Income, Current Population Reports, 1981; Giving USA, 1981, the annual report of the American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel; and "Toward a Quantitative Profile of the Nonprofit Sector" by Gabriel Rudney, from Research Reports of the Program on Nonprofit Organizations at Yale University, September 1981.)

ABOUT HALF OF ALL AMERICANS over age 13—47 percent—took part in some form of organized volunteer activity in 1980, according to the Gallup survey. If these volunteers had been paid for their time at rates corresponding to the median incomes, as shown in preliminary 1980 census data for persons of their age, sex, and educational levels, the total payroll would have been \$64.5 billion.

This total is the sum of the following components:

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|--|------------------|
| Teenagers, 14 through 17, both sexes | \$ 2,223,478,000 |
| Men over 17 | |
| Grade-school ed. | \$ 687,556,000 |
| High-school ed. | \$ 6,809,138,000 |
| Post high-school ed. | \$23,520,977,000 |
| Women over 17: | |
| Grade-school ed. | \$ 383,821,000 |
| High-school ed. | \$ 8,673,150,000 |
| Post high-school ed. | \$22,169,166,000 |
| Total, all volunteers | \$64,467,286,000 |

IS computed this dollar value of volunteer time on the basis of the number of persons involved in volunteer activity, the hours of volunteering done per year and the dollar value of the hours by education level.

Of the 52 percent of American adults who volunteered in the one year-period from March 1980 to March 1981, the Gallup Organization included not only those who were engaged in a more structured pattern of volunteering, but

also those who volunteered informally or alone in such activities as helping neighbors. When IS subtracted those who volunteered only in this informal way, the remaining total was 47 percent. It was on this lower figure that the dollar estimates were based.

Eighty-four million Americans volunteer an estimated total of 8.4 billion hours a year in the typical categories of volunteering, such as advocacy, direct services or fundraising. Of this total, 76 million adults contribute an average of 102 hours each, or an estimated total of 7.8 billion hours a year.

The total for adults was broken down by education level as follows: Adults having a grammar school education volunteer 206.3 million hours per year;

Cost Equivalent of Volunteer Time by Service Category (Adults and Teens)

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------|------|
| Health | \$ 8.7 | 14% |
| Education | 8.4 | 13 |
| Justice | .7 | 1 |
| Citizenship | 4.7 | 7 |
| Recreation | 5.3 | 8 |
| Social/Welfare | 3.2 | 5 |
| Community | 4.3 | 7 |
| Religion | 13.7 | 21 |
| Political | 4.6 | 7 |
| Arts and Culture | 2.2 | 4 |
| Work Related | 4.0 | 6 |
| General Fund Raising | 4.7 | 7 |
| Total | \$64.5 Billion | 100% |

high school educated adults, 2.4 billion hours; and those with a college education, 5.2 billion hours. The number of hours volunteered multiplied by the average hourly wage for these three groups (from "Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1980," *Consumer Income, Current Population Reports*) equals \$62.2 billion, the estimated dollar value of adult volunteer time.

Teenage volunteering provides the balance of the dollar value of volunteer time. A total of 7.7 million persons between the ages of 14 and 17 volunteer. This figure, when multiplied by the minimum wage and the average number of hours volunteered, sets the dollar value for youth volunteer time at \$2.2 billion a year.

Adding Philanthropic Activity

This total of \$64.5 billion is 50 percent higher than the amount individuals contribute in actual dollars to the causes of their choice. In 1980, for example, giving by individuals was \$40 billion. Thus, the combination of contributed time and dollars by individuals was approximately \$105 billion.

To gain an even fuller picture of the size of philanthropic and voluntary activity in this country, we can add to that total the amounts contributed through bequests and by corporations and foundations, and the total of other income received by voluntary organizations, such as government grants and tuition fees.

In 1980, bequests totaled \$2.86 billion, corporate contributions were \$2.55 billion, and foundations were \$2.40 billion. On that basis, the total of all contributions, including individuals, was \$47.74 billion. All other income to voluntary organizations, such as user fees and government grants, was approximately \$80 billion.

Taking all categories into consideration, the figures are as follows:

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|---|------------------|
| Total contributions from all sources | \$ 47.74 billion |
| Dollar value of contributed time | \$ 64.50 billion |
| User fees, government grants, other income. | \$ 80.00 billion |
| Total | \$192.24 billion |

Thus, the total income of voluntary organizations in 1980, including the dollar value of volunteer time, was \$192 billion. ♥