

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, July 28, 2008

Phone: 202-606-6707

Email: sdugan@cns.gov

CONTACT: Siobhan Dugan

Volunteering 61 Million Strong; Need and Momentum Grow

New web site gives most detailed information ever on how and where Americans volunteer in over 160 cities; Utah is top volunteer state, Provo and Twin Cities lead metro areas

Washington D.C. – The most comprehensive research on U.S. volunteering ever assembled shows volunteering in America is strong and poised for growth, as momentum for service grows across the sectors and the need for volunteers is heightened by the economic downturn.



Nearly 61 million Americans volunteered in their communities in 2007 giving 8.1 billion hours of service worth more than \$158 billion to America's communities, according to the Volunteering in America report released today by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Announced today in partnership with USA Freedom Corps at the White House, the report reveals an increase of one million volunteers over five years, as Americans answer President Bush's 2002 national call to service.

The Volunteering in America report contains six years of data on volunteering, rankings of states and cities, and volunteer trends and demographic information for every state and 162 large and mid-sized cities at a new interactive website www.VolunteeringInAmerica.gov.

The research comes at a time of growing economic pressures and unprecedented opportunity for America's volunteer sector. Cross-sector support for service has never been stronger, as corporations expand social responsibility programs, colleges adopt service-learning, and political leaders from both parties embrace citizen service.

Baby Boomers will double the number of older American volunteers in the coming decades and young people are volunteering at higher rates than the last generation. "We have an unprecedented opportunity to seize this moment and usher in a new era of service in America," said David Eisner, CEO of the Corporation. "By giving us a look under the hood of U.S. volunteering, this research shows what we need to do to recruit and retain tomorrow's volunteers."

Volunteering in U.S., States and Cities

On the national level, 60.8 million or 26.2 percent of Americans age 16 and older volunteered through organizations in 2007. After a 6 percent decline in total volunteers between 2005 and 2006, volunteering levels stabilized in 2007. There were one million more volunteers in 2007 than 2002.

In the first-ever look at volunteering in 75 mid-sized cities, Provo, Utah, led the nation with a whopping 63.8 percent volunteer rate, followed by Iowa City, Iowa, Madison, Wis., Greenville, S.C. and Ogden, Utah. For the third year in a row Utah was the top volunteer state with a

volunteer rate of 43.9 percent, followed by Nebraska, Minnesota, Alaska and Montana. Minneapolis-St. Paul once again ranked number one among large cities at 39.3 percent, with Salt Lake City, Portland, Oregon, Seattle and Austin rounding out the top five.

“Government at all levels is more effective when it partners with community groups and citizens to solve problems,” said Stephen Goldsmith, former mayor of Indianapolis and board chair of the Corporation for National and Community Service. “By providing a better understanding of how Americans volunteer, this report can help city leaders increase service and civic engagement.”

Findings on Volunteering’s Leaky Bucket, How Volunteers Spend Time, and Voluntourism

In a repeat of last year’s findings, the report underscored the continuing challenge of volunteering’s leaky bucket with an estimated 22 million or than one in three American volunteers dropping out between 2006 and 2007. This finding points out how important it is for organizations that use volunteers to treat them as valuable assets, give them meaningful assignments and use best practices in volunteer management. Tools and resources, including webinars, for strengthening volunteer management are available at the Corporation’s Resource Center website at www.NationalService.gov/resources/via2008.

The report includes a first–ever analysis of the differences between volunteers and non-volunteers in how they spend their time, using data from the Census Bureau’s American Time Use Survey. The largest difference is how much television they watch. In a typical week, volunteers spend approximately 15 hours watching television, compared to 23 hours for non-volunteers. That eight-hour difference adds up to more than 400 hours over the course of a year.

“The research shows that volunteering isn’t as much about having the time to volunteer but creating volunteering opportunities that people want to make the time for,” said Dr. Robert Grimm, the Corporation’s Director of Research and Policy. “If millions of Americans traded in one hour of TV a week to volunteer, they could make a profound difference in some of the big problems facing our nation and potentially accrue personal health benefits.”

The report also includes an analysis of the emerging phenomenon of voluntourism. In 2007, more than 3.7 million Americans volunteered more than 120 miles from their home. Voluntourism is especially strong in areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina – at least one-quarter of Mississippi’s volunteers and one-fifth of Louisiana’s volunteers last year were out-of-state residents. Additionally, 1,056,000 volunteers served with organizations located overseas in 2007.

Other Key Findings

- **Intensive volunteering is on the rise:** The percentage of volunteers giving over 100 hours of service per year reached its highest level since 2002, with 35.6 percent of all volunteers contributing at this “intensive” level.
- **College towns are hot spots for volunteering:** College towns are home to students with strong volunteer habits and many highly educated adults. For example, the high rankings of college towns like Provo, Utah, Iowa City, Iowa, and Madison, Wis., reflect the known positive correlation between higher levels of education and volunteering.
- **Women volunteer more than men, and working mothers have the highest volunteer rate.** About 29.3 percent of women volunteered in 2007, compared to 22.9 percent of men. Women with children and women who work have higher volunteer rates than other women.

“At home and abroad, in our big cities and small towns, every day millions of Americans are making a difference through volunteering. This report shows the American spirit of compassion is strong and vibrant across our nation,” said Alison Young, Deputy Director of USA Freedom Corps at the White House. “Americans are continuing to answer the President's call to service, and their compassion is bringing hope and help to communities across America.”

The Volunteering in America research is produced by the Corporation for National and Community Service to help national, state and local leaders better understand volunteering trends and demographics and use the data to develop effective strategies for recruiting and retaining volunteers. The website that houses the report includes detailed information on volunteering by regions, states, and cities; historical and trend data; links to other volunteering research, and interactive features including customizable reports and a volunteer search engine. Find out more at www.VolunteeringInAmerica.gov.

Background

“**Volunteering in America: 2008 State and City Trends & Rankings**” is based on data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics through a “volunteering supplement” to the Current Population Survey (CPS) from 2002 to 2007. The CPS is a monthly survey of about 60,000 households (100,000 individuals). Volunteers are defined as persons who did unpaid work through or for an organization. The Census Bureau administers the CPS volunteer supplement. The report includes information for all states and 162 cities, using Metropolitan Statistical Areas. This information includes the volunteer rate compared to the average rate for MSAs and the nation; the types of organizations through which residents serve; their main volunteering activities, the average hours per year and volunteer rates for age and gender demographic groups, and key trends and highlights.

The **Corporation for National and Community Service** improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Each year the Corporation engages more than four million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service to meet local needs through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs. Working through state service commissions and thousands of national and local nonprofits, the Corporation promotes volunteering through grantmaking, research, recognition, and training and technical assistance. Last year the Corporation's programs and grantees engaged nearly two million community volunteers, making it one of the country's largest drivers of volunteer service. For more information, visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

USA Freedom Corps: In his 2002 State of the Union address that came shortly after the 9/11 attacks, President Bush called on all Americans to give 4,000 hours or two years over their lifetime in volunteer service. USA Freedom Corps has promoted the President's call through expanding national service programs, launching a Citizen Corps for emergency response, coordinating federal agency volunteer efforts, and creating a volunteer search engine at <http://www.volunteer.gov> where Americans can find service opportunities in their local communities.

###