



Every two years, AmeriCorps conducts the most robust longitudinal survey about volunteerism and other forms of civic engagement in the United States in partnership with the US Census Bureau. The data informs Volunteering and Civic Life in America, AmeriCorps' comprehensive research about civic engagement trends in the United States. The latest research examines organizational volunteering, helping others informally, and other civic behaviors from September 2020-2021, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

What did Volunteering Look Like during COVID-19?

Despite the devastating impact of the pandemic, Americans continued to serve one another and their communities. They helped neighbors by doing favors like watching each other's children, running errands, and more. Americans also helped their communities by supporting COVID-19 testing and vaccination, conducting wellness checks on isolated seniors, supporting food banks, assisting other public health efforts, and helping students stay on track in school.

Formal Volunteering and Informal Helping

Although the national rate of volunteering through organizations declined from 2019 to 2021, Americans continued to help each other informally.

Uniting Americans Through Service

AmeriCorps is the federal agency for national service and volunteerism. AmeriCorps provides opportunities for Americans of all backgrounds to serve their country, address the nation's most pressing challenges, improve lives and communities, and strengthen civic engagement.

Formal Volunteering

Formal volunteering involves helping others through organizations.

An estimated **23.2 percent** of Americans or **60.7 million people** formally volunteered with organizations between September 2020 and 2021. In total, these volunteers served an estimated **4.1 billion hours** with an **economic value of \$122.9 billion**.

The formal volunteering rate dropped seven percentage points—from 30 percent in 2019 to 23 percent in 2021. This is the largest change since AmeriCorps and the US Census began collecting this data in 2002.

National Demographics:

- The formal volunteering rate for women dropped eight percentage points—for men it dropped five percentage points. Still, women continued to volunteer at a higher rate than men.
- Generation X (aged 41 to 56 in 2021) had the highest formal volunteering rate out of all generations (27 percent).
- Parents with children under 18 formally volunteered at a higher rate (30 percent) than those without children in their household (21 percent).

Informal Helping

Informal helping involves assisting others outside of an organizational context, including doing favors for neighbors.

The rate of Americans informally helping others remained stable between the 2019 and 2021 surveys. Nearly **51 percent** of Americans or **124.7 million people** exchanged favors with their neighbors between September 2020 and 2021.

National Demographics:

- Baby boomers had the highest informal helping rate (59 percent) of all generations.
- Veterans helped their neighbors at a rate of 59 percent, eight percentage points higher than non-veterans.
- People with children under 18 informally helped their neighbors at a higher rate (58 percent) than those without children in their household (49 percent).

The table shows the 10 states with the highest 2021 formal volunteering rates in the country.

State	2021 Formal Volunteering Rate
Utah	40.7%
Wyoming	39.2%
Minnesota	35.5%
Maine	34.9%
District of Columbia	34.2%
South Dakota	34.2%
Nebraska	33.9%
Kansas	31.5%
Montana	31.1%
Missouri	30.5%

The table shows the 10 states with the highest 2021 informal helping rates in the country.

State	2021 Informal Helping Rate
Montana	68.8%
Nebraska	66.4%
Maine	65.0%
Delaware	63.9%
Vermont	63.9%
Minnesota	61.9%
Utah	61.6%
West Virginia	60.5%
Iowa	60.3%
Pennsylvania	60.1%

Metropolitan Areas – Formal Volunteering and Informal Helping Rates

View formal volunteering and informal helping rates for the 12 largest metropolitan areas in 2021.

Metropolitan Area	Formal Volunteering Rate	Informal Helping Rate
New York Metro Area	19.4%	43.6%
Los Angeles Metro Area	15.1%	41.7%
Chicago Metro Area	27.6%	54.6%
Dallas Metro Area	18.8%	43.0%
Houston Metro Area	20.1%	48.5%
Washington, DC Metro Area	27.9%	46.8%
Philadelphia Metro Area	28.7%	57.8%
Atlanta Metro Area	19.6%	40.8%
Miami Metro Area	14.0%	35.5%
Phoenix Metro Area	25.4%	47.4%
Boston Metro Area	25.4%	57.9%
Riverside Metro Area	9.0%	44.2%

Learn more about Volunteering and Civic Life in America and explore the 2021 Current Population Survey Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplement data at [AmeriCorps.gov/VolunteeringInAmerica](https://www.americorps.gov/VolunteeringInAmerica).