

This report provides some insight into the economic and demographic trends related to members of California's workforce that volunteer their time and skills to nonprofit organizations across the state.



California's Volunteers in the Workforce

The Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, reported that more than 62 million Americans volunteered time to, or for, a civic organization in 2013.¹ Californians represented roughly nine percent (5.4 million volunteers) of the nation's total. Current Population Survey of Households (CPS) data suggests that roughly one in five (19.9 percent) Californians volunteered at least once in 2013. This report provides an overview of the demographic and workforce characteristics of volunteers in California.

The 2012 and 2013 volunteer supplements to the CPS were the primary sources of data for this report. The CPS is a monthly survey of households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It provides a comprehensive body of data on the labor force, employment, unemployment, persons not in the labor force, hours of work, earnings, and other demographic and labor force characteristics. All references to 2012 and 2013 reflect the year ending in September of both years.

Workforce Characteristics

In 2013, there were more than 17 million employed persons and 1.5 million unemployed persons in the state's civilian labor force.² Among the state's 5.4 million volunteers, 60 percent were employed (3.6 million people); 5 percent were unemployed; and about 30 percent were not in the civilian labor force (see Table 1). Each of these figures had declined between 2012 and 2013, with employed volunteers experiencing the largest net decrease (219,000). In 2012 and 2013, more than 70 percent of volunteers were working full-time, with more than 20 percent working part-time.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved from: [Volunteering in the United States 2013](#).

² Civilian labor force: All persons in the civilian non-institutional population classified as either employed or unemployed. CPS data: 17,140,000 employed persons; 1,562,000 unemployed persons in California (Sept 2013).

California Labor Market Trends

Demographic Characteristics

Gender - Women made up the majority of the state's population and its total number of volunteers in 2012 and 2013. During both years, women accounted for more than 51 percent of the state's population³ and nearly 60 percent of the state's volunteers.

Age - In 2012 and 2013, more than two million people between the ages of 35 and 54 were volunteering at various organizations across the state. During these years, roughly one in five volunteers was between the ages of 35 and 44 (see Table 1). In general, volunteer numbers declined across all of the age groups studied. The steepest declines occurred among individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 (98,000), or 55 and 64 (90,000).

Table 1

California Volunteers by Selected Characteristics, September 2012 through September 2013					
Characteristics*	September 2012		September 2013		Net Difference (2012-2013)
	Number	Percent Share	Number	Percent Share	
California Population	29,364,000	-	29,750,000	-	
Total Number of California Volunteers	5,833,000	19.9%	5,436,000	18.3%	-397,000
Total Number of California Non-Volunteers	19,041,000	64.8%	18,943,000	63.7%	-98,000
Other**	4,490,000	15.3%	5,370,816	18.1%	880,816
Employment Status by Number of Volunteers	Number	Percent Share of Volunteers	Number	Percent Share of Volunteers	
Total Number of California Volunteers	5,833,000	100.0%	5,436,000	100.0%	-397,000
Civilian Labor Force	3,897,000	66.8%	3,639,000	66.9%	-258,000
Employed	3,575,000	61.3%	3,356,000	61.8%	-219,000
Full-Time	2,743,000	76.7%	2,452,000	73.1%	-291,000
Part-Time	831,000	23.2%	904,000	26.9%	73,000
Unemployed	322,000	5.5%	283,000	5.2%	-39,000
Not in the Labor Force	1,936,000	33.2%	1,797,000	33.1%	-139,000
Gender by Number of Volunteers	Number	Percent Share of Volunteers	Number	Percent Share of Volunteers	
Total Number of California Volunteers	5,833,000	100.0%	5,436,000	100.0%	-397,000
Men	2,517,000	43.2%	2,252,000	41.4%	-265,000
Women	3,316,000	56.8%	3,184,000	58.6%	-132,000
Age by Number of Volunteers	Number	Percent Share of Volunteers	Number	Percent Share of Volunteers	
Total Number of California Volunteers	5,833,000	100.0%	5,436,000	100.0%	-397,000
16-24 years old	940,000	16.1%	842,000	15.5%	-98,000
25-34	794,000	13.6%	787,000	14.5%	-7,000
35-44	1,153,000	19.8%	1,109,000	20.4%	-44,000
45-54	1,098,000	18.8%	1,016,000	18.7%	-82,000
55-64	976,000	16.7%	886,000	16.3%	-90,000
65-74	508,000	8.7%	476,000	8.8%	-32,000
75 years and older	364,000	6.2%	320,000	5.9%	-44,000
Educational Attainment by Number of Volunteers	Number	Percent Share of Volunteers	Number	Percent Share of Volunteers	
Total Number of California Volunteers	5,833,000	100.0%	5,436,000	100.0%	-397,000
Less than a high school diploma	542,000	9.3%	551,000	10.1%	9,000
High school graduates, no college	793,000	13.6%	785,000	14.4%	-8,000
Some college, no degree	1,230,000	21.1%	1,147,000	21.1%	-83,000
Associate degree	531,000	9.1%	575,000	10.6%	44,000
Bachelor's degree or higher	2,737,000	46.9%	2,379,000	43.8%	-358,000
Volunteer's Main Organization	Number	Percent Share of Volunteers	Number	Percent Share of Volunteers	
Total Number of California Volunteers	5,833,000	100.0%	5,436,000	100.0%	-397,000
Religious org.	1,625,000	27.9%	1,770,000	32.6%	145,000
Children's educational, sports, or recreational group	1,241,000	21.3%	1,138,000	20.9%	-103,000
Social and community service group	867,000	14.9%	668,000	12.3%	-199,000
Other educational group	291,000	5.0%	236,000	4.3%	-55,000
Health research or education org., including public health	231,000	4.0%	226,000	4.2%	-5,000
Environmental or animal care org.	218,000	3.7%	218,000	4.0%	0
Hospital, clinic, or healthcare org.	245,000	4.2%	185,000	3.4%	-60,000
Some other type of org.	217,000	3.7%	183,000	3.4%	-34,000
Cultural or arts org.	147,000	2.5%	154,000	2.8%	7,000
Sports or hobby group	100,000	1.7%	127,000	2.3%	27,000
All Other	653,000	11.2%	530,000	9.7%	-123,000

* Totals may not sum due to rounding and statistical weighting.

** Data are not available.

Source: Current Population Survey of Households, Volunteers Supplement (2012,2013)

³ State population figures (Source: CPS): 2012 (29.3 million statewide; 15.0 million women; 14.3 million men); 2013 (29.7 million statewide; 15.2 million women; 14.5 million men).

California Labor Market Trends

Where Volunteers Donated Time

In California, the main organizations—the organization for which the volunteer worked the most hours during the year—were as follows: religious organizations; children’s educational, sports, or recreational groups; and social and community service groups had the largest shares of California volunteers (see Table 1). Nearly one in three volunteers donated their time and services to a religious organization in 2012 and 2013. Close to one-third of all volunteers donated their time to a children’s educational, sports or recreation group; or a social and community service group. Organizational groups focused on health research; environment or animal care; cultural arts; or sports were the main organization for less than five percent of volunteers.

Volunteers provide a dual benefit to organizations by providing not only their time, but their knowledge and skills as well. Volunteers often serve in a variety of areas including, but not limited to: food distribution; fundraising; and tutoring. The data suggest that volunteers that had a bachelor’s degree or higher focused a majority of their time providing highly-skilled services including: professional or management assistance; counseling; or medical care (see Table 2). Volunteers with less than an associate’s degree were less likely to perform these highly-skilled tasks. These individuals were more likely to provide services (e.g., clothing/food distribution, general labor, or greeter) that required less technical training, but still provided high value to an organization.

Table 2

California: Volunteer Activities and Educational Attainment					
	Less than a high school diploma	High school graduates, no college	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
Coach, referee, or supervise sports teams	13.6%	7.8%	12.0%	4.0%	62.6%
Tutor or teach	4.4%	12.4%	14.9%	14.4%	54.0%
Mentor youth	4.5%	11.2%	17.7%	6.7%	59.9%
Be an usher, greeter, or minister	16.8%	16.2%	31.5%	10.2%	25.2%
Collect, prepare, distribute, or serve food	10.6%	17.9%	24.0%	16.2%	31.3%
Collect, make or distribute clothing, crafts, or goods other than food	8.2%	14.5%	39.4%	16.9%	21.0%
Fundraise or sell items to raise money	14.8%	11.6%	24.4%	2.1%	47.2%
Provide counseling, medical care, fire/EMS, or protective services	0.0%	5.1%	0.0%	27.9%	66.9%
Provide general office services	8.7%	4.3%	26.9%	12.8%	47.3%
Provide professional or management assistance	0.0%	12.6%	12.6%	3.9%	70.9%
Engage in music, performance, or other artistic activities	18.2%	18.8%	12.1%	14.9%	36.0%
Engage in general labor; supply transportation for people	21.0%	15.8%	25.7%	2.6%	34.9%

Source: Current Population Survey of Households, Volunteers Supplement (2013)



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