



Spotlighting the CEV Series: Formal Volunteering Intensity

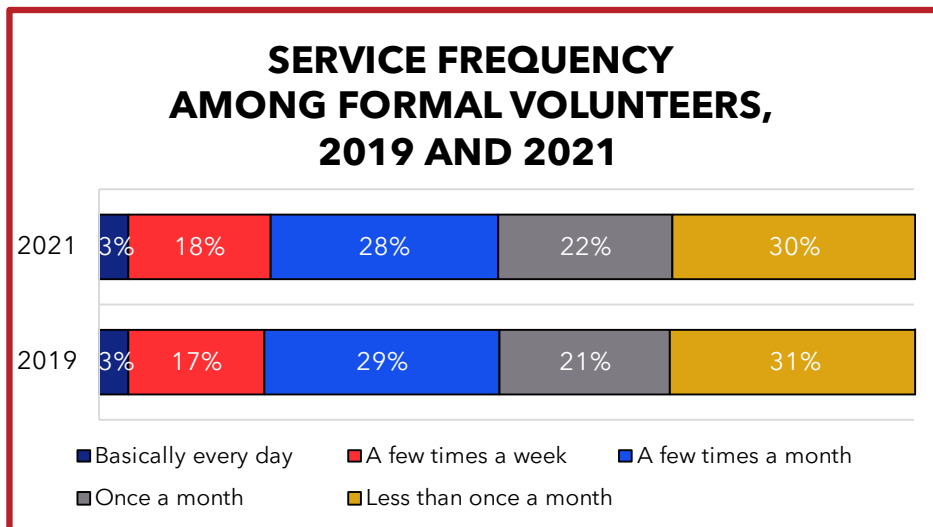
Although substantially fewer Americans volunteered through an organization in 2021 than 2019, those who continued to formally volunteer did so at similar levels of intensity.

People vary in how much time they spend formally volunteering through an organization. Whereas some give a few hours of their time once a year, for other people volunteering is part of day-to-day life. Volunteering intensity can be measured in terms of both frequency and number of hours served. Data on these metrics provide important benchmarks for understanding the nation's civic health. Although national rates of volunteering declined by [seven percentage points](#) from 2019 to 2021, volunteers who continued to serve during the pandemic did so at similar levels of intensity.

As part of the "Spotlighting the CEV" series, this key findings brief explores national trends in volunteering intensity from 2019 to 2021.

Frequency of formal volunteering remained constant.

Trends related to the frequency of formal volunteering were similar in 2019 and 2021. In both years, approximately 20 percent of American volunteers gave their time to help others through an organization a few times a week or more. About half of formal volunteers gave their time a few times a month or once a month; about thirty percent volunteered less than once a month. Organizations that rely on volunteers should consider these varied volunteering frequencies to design opportunities and recruitment strategies that accommodate this range of availability.



Source for figure: Analysis conducted by the Office of Research and Evaluation, AmeriCorps, Civic Engagement and Volunteering (2019-2021) Supplement data, U.S. Census Bureau.

About the Series

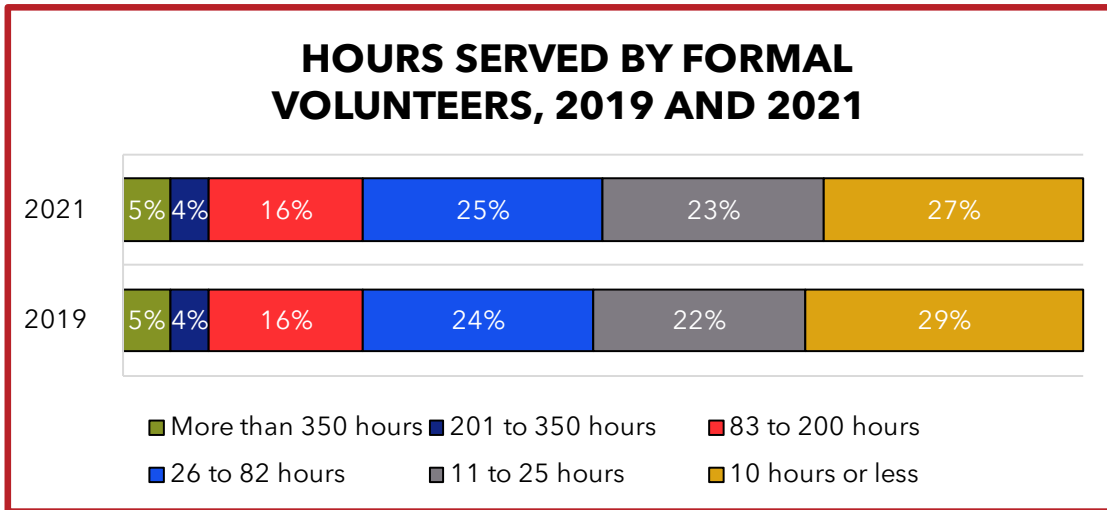
Spotlighting the CEV Series explores important findings from the Civic Engagement and Volunteering (CEV) Supplement of the Current Population Survey. Conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in partnership with AmeriCorps, the CEV is a nationally representative, valuable resource for understanding various types of civic engagement over time. It has been administered biennially since 2017 with related datasets going as far back as 2002. CEV data can support actionable insights and data-driven decision making.

This series will explore six key constructs from the 2021 CEV: Organizational Engagement, Informal Helping and Conversation, Local Collective Action, Engaging with Issues, Economic Engagement, and Political Engagement.



Hours served per volunteer was roughly the same before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Similar to volunteering frequency, the overall distribution of hours served per formal volunteer was almost identical in 2019 and 2021. In both waves of the CEV survey, about half of formal volunteers gave 25 hours of their time or less in the previous year (approximately two hours per month or less). About forty percent of formal volunteers served between 26 and 200 hours (approximately two to 16 hours per month), and about a tenth gave 201 hours or more (approximately 17 hours per month or more).



Explore the Data

The CEV data is available for public use. Visit the AmeriCorps Open Data portal at <https://data.americorps.gov>. For more information about the CEV data and findings, please reach out to the AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation at AmeriCorpsCEV@americorps.gov.

What's Next?

The AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation and its partners are exploring the CEV data's implications for AmeriCorps programming and civic engagement in America more broadly. Ongoing research is exploring whether formal volunteering intensity varies by demographic subgroups and why formal volunteering frequency and hours volunteered has changed over the past two decades (for example, median hours served was 52 in 2002 compared to 25 in 2021).

About the Office of Research and Evaluation

The [AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation](#) assists AmeriCorps and its partners in collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data and insights about AmeriCorps programs and civic life in America.

About AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism, provides opportunities for Americans to serve their country domestically, address the nation's most pressing challenges, improve lives and communities, and strengthen civic engagement. Each year, the agency places more than 200,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in intensive service roles; and empowers millions more to serve as long-term, short-term, or one-time volunteers. **Learn more at [AmeriCorps.gov](https://www.americorps.gov).**