Volunteering and Today’s Woman
Giving Back: Attitudes and Behaviors Across the Lifespan

Women have a strong connection to their communities and want to give back but are strapped for time with family obligations. They are interested in finding ways of volunteering that work with their busy schedules. Young women, in particular, are influencing today’s volunteer force by relying on technology and looking for the mutually beneficial aspects of giving back. Their sense of duty and motivation to contribute to their communities is influencing the future of volunteering.

For some age groups, women lead men in the frequency of volunteering, but trail behind men in the number of hours they volunteer.

For some age groups, women are leading the volunteer effort. Women ages 18 to 34 are more likely than men their age to volunteer formally with an organization (67% vs. 48%) or to have volunteered either formally or informally (on their own) over the past year (65% vs. 44%). Among the more mature volunteers, women ages 65 and older are more likely than men in their age group to volunteer on at least a monthly basis (64% vs. 41%).

A new study examines how and why American adults are giving back through volunteering or contributing to charities.

Volunteering Among Volunteers
Ages 65 and Older (On A Monthly Basis or More)

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Among just those who volunteer, however, the men take the lead in the number of hours they volunteer (10 hours per month for men vs. 7 hours for women). When men do volunteer, they do so for more hours at a time. Men may be volunteering larger chunks of time because they tend to do more projects, like construction, that require more time at each session (10% helped to maintain, repair, or build facilities in the past year vs. 4% for women).

Young women use technology as a tool to help them find opportunities to give back to their communities.

When it comes to volunteering, the younger generation (and specifically younger women) is more comfortable using technology to help them give back to their communities. A majority (68%) of women ages 18 to 34 say that technology helps them connect with the right volunteer opportunities, compared to less than half (44%) of men the same age. These younger women are more likely to be interested in using an app or a website to match their skills with volunteering opportunities (women: 59%, men: 37%) and to schedule those opportunities (women: 63%, men: 35%).

Using technology to connect with the right volunteer opportunity

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Women look for ways to fit volunteering and giving back into their busy schedules.

Although finding time to volunteer is a challenge for everyone, women are more likely than men to say that family obligations keep them from volunteering (at all or more often than they currently do; women: 26%, men: 18%). Women are more interested in opportunities that allow them to volunteer from home (women: 58%, men: 46%) and, among the younger age group, women more often prefer to volunteer virtually using technology from anywhere at any time (women 18 to 34: 62%, men 18 to 34: 36%). With their full schedules, they were also more likely over the past year to

Women are more likely than men to say that family obligations keep them from volunteering.
take part in some alternative forms of contributing to the community by reducing their use of plastics (women: 32%, men: 23%) and seeking out ethical products to purchase (women: 12%, men: 6%).

A sense of responsibility, as well as personal and professional benefits drives young women to volunteer.

Young adults, especially the women in the group, feel a sense of duty to their community to volunteer (women 18 to 34: 60%, men 18 to 34: 39%) and believe that society would suffer without this effort (76% vs. 44% respectively). These young folks also see a variety of professional benefits as important perks of volunteering. On top of these work-related extras, young women (and to a lesser extent, young men) are motivated by seeing an immediate impact of their volunteer efforts (56% vs. 37%) and the idea of receiving rewards in exchange for volunteering (71% vs. 40%).

60% of Women feel a sense of duty to their community to volunteer (vs. 39% of men).

Implications

As time becomes an increasingly precious commodity, volunteering opportunities will need to adjust to accommodate motivated volunteers’ needs. For modern women, volunteer opportunities will have to allow them the flexibility to fulfill their family commitments and keep up with their busy schedules. Additionally, incorporating technology and highlighting the benefits of volunteering will help attract the younger generation and especially younger women.

Perks of volunteering

![Graph showing perks of volunteering]

Learn new skills and experience new things: Women 18-34 (68%), Men 18-34 (47%)

Develop leadership skills: Women 18-34 (63%), Men 18-34 (43%)

Improve job opportunities: Women 18-34 (58%), Men 18-34 (39%)

Source: Giving Back: Attitudes and Behaviors Across the Lifespan, 2019. www.aarp.org/givingback
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