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Volunteer Value Hits \$23.07 An Hour

By Mark Hrywna - April 14, 2015

The value of a volunteer hour was up 52 cents to \$23.07 last year, about 2.3 percent more than 2013, according to the latest estimate released today by Independent Sector (IS).

The Washington, D.C.-based advocacy coalition for nonprofits updates the figure annually, including a state-level breakdown for the previous year. The values ranged from a low of \$19.31 in Arkansas to a high of \$39.86 per hour in the District of Columbia:



The top five among all 50 states and Washington, D.C., were:

- Washington, D.C., \$39.86
- Massachusetts, \$27.82
- Washington, \$27.54
- California, \$26.87
- New York, \$26.86

The bottom five were:

- Montana, \$19.89
- Nevada, \$19.81
- South Dakota, \$19.65
- Mississippi, \$19.60
- Arkansas, \$19.31

The median value was Indiana, at \$22.34. Texas saw the biggest increase from 2013, up 5.4 percent, to \$24.66. Only two states saw the value decline last year, and both were down 0.3 percent: Delaware, to \$20.22, and Rhode Island, to \$23.45.

For the first time, IS created an interactive map and table showing data for each state, where the value of a

volunteer hour is highest and lowest, and how much the figure has risen or fall since the previous year. There also is a complete data set for the value of volunteer time for all 50 states and Washington, D.C., from 2001 to 2014.

The value of a volunteer hour crossed the \$20 mark in 2008, at \$20.25, and in 2001 was estimated at \$16.27.

The latest Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data show nonprofits employ about 11.4 million workers, roughly 10.3 percent of the American private sector, and account for 5.4 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The value of volunteer time provides one way to measure the impact millions of individuals make each hour they dedicate to making a difference, according to IS, which released the figures during National Volunteer Week, April 12-18.

“For more than 40 years, National Volunteer Week has recognized the value of volunteers to nonprofits, to the people they serve, to society, and to life on this planet,” according to Independent Sector President and CEO Diana Aviv. “Though we could never truly put a price tag on what volunteers mean to their communities, we are proud to offer this figure to attempt to frame the immense value of the time and effort they give,” she said via a press statement.

About 62.6 million Americans, or 25.4 percent of the adult population, gave 7.7 billion hours of volunteer service worth \$173 billion in 2013, according to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

The value of volunteer time is based on hourly earnings, approximated from yearly values, of all production and non-supervisory workers on private non-farm payrolls average, based on yearly earnings provided by the BLS, for the national average. IS indexes the figure to determine state values and increases it by 12 percent to estimate for fringe benefits. Charities often use the value of volunteer time for recognition events or communications to show the amount of community support it receives from volunteers.



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