



A National Survey of Characteristics of Drivers and the Agencies That Employ Them

By Thomas C. Hood and George L. Segebade

ALTHOUGH TRANSPORTATION IS recognized as extremely important in insuring the ability of persons to participate in the regular activities of the typical American community, very little published information is available about the use of volunteers in the provision of these services. Therefore, in 1980, the University of Tennessee's Transportation Center performed a nationwide survey of 406 agencies thought to have at least one active volunteer driver. They received replies from 186 agencies located in 44 cities in 20 states and

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the District of Columbia. The respondents provided the following information on 865 volunteer drivers:

Personal Characteristics of Volunteer Drivers

Almost 70 percent of the drivers about whom information was given were described as not employed or retired (see Table 1). In addition, more than 13 percent were employed in part-time jobs.

Of the 17 percent who were employed, many held the sorts of jobs that seemed conducive to their availability as volunteer drivers. Almost 45 percent fell into either the "professional and technical" category or the "managers, officials and proprietors" category. Such persons seem likely to have flexible work schedules. Another 17.6 percent fell under the "service, not private household" grouping, a category that could include some persons with flexible schedules. Others, such as the 15 percent under the "clerical" heading, might be expected not to

have much freedom of scheduling. Thus, this group would be the most likely to be constrained in its availability for volunteer work as a driver.

Dependent children at home also limited the availability of the volunteer drivers. Seventy-five percent of the sampling had no children at home. One dependent child was attributed to 9.5 percent of the volunteers, and 9.6 percent had two dependent youngsters. Less than 6 percent of the volunteer drivers sampled had three or more dependent children living at home.

The survey revealed some personal characteristics that could put constraints on volunteer drivers, such as a variety of physical handicaps of which hearing problems and arthritis were the most common. In addition, over 53 percent of the drivers in the survey wore glasses. However, vision problems should prevent very few volunteers from driving.

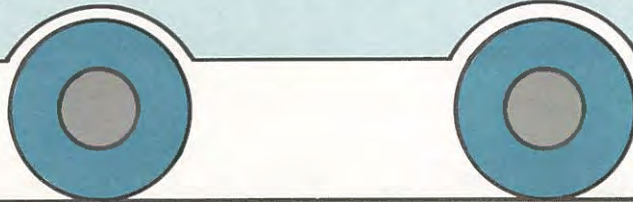
Other personal characteristics of

Table 1—Volunteer Driver Profile

Employment Status	% of Sampling
Full-time	17.1
Part-time	13.2
Not Employed	65.7
Retired	4.0

Career Background	% of Sampling
Professional, Technical Managers, Officials, Proprietors	34.7
Clerical	10.0
Sales	15.1
Operatives	7.1
Service, Not Private Household	7.1
All Other	17.6
	8.4

Dependent Children At Home	% of Sampling
0	75.0
1	9.5
2	9.6
3 or more	5.9



these volunteer drivers included married (69 percent) and a volunteer "employment" rate with their agency of three or more years (53 percent).

Driving-Related Characteristics of Volunteer Drivers

While all drivers held a regular license, over four percent held either a chauffeur's or bus driver's license. Over half of the volunteer drivers had 31 or more years of driving experience. The positive safety record of volunteer drivers is evidenced by the over 91 percent who had no accidents during the previous three years, and the almost 92 percent who had received no traffic citations during the past three years.

Comparing the Volunteer Driver Survey to the Gallup Survey

While the Gallup survey of volunteers and the general public found that adult volunteers were slightly younger than the adult general public, the volunteer drivers of the University of Tennessee survey were considerably older than the members of either of the other categories. While adult women outnumber adult men by four percent, and adult female volunteers outnumber adult male volun-

teers by 12 percent, among the volunteer drivers surveyed, women exceeded men by 16 percent.

Gallup found that adult volunteers have considerably more education than the general public. The volunteer driver survey found that this type of volunteer was more educated than either of the other groups, regardless of whether the indicator is completion of high school, attendance at college or graduation from college.

Agency Characteristics

Services Offered. Among the 186 responding agencies, transportation was provided by volunteer drivers for at least 22 types of trips. As Table 4 illustrates, the most common types of trips involved medical treatment, shopping, senior nutrition programs and attendance at church or other meetings.

Numbers of Volunteer Drivers. For purposes of analysis, the survey divided the agencies into the following categories on the basis of how many drivers were utilized: small (1 to 5 drivers); medium (6 to 30 drivers); and large (31 or

Table 2—Driving Related Characteristics of Volunteer Drivers

Driver License Status	% of Sampling
Regular	95.7
Chauffeur	3.0
Bus	1.3

Years of Driving Experience	% of Sampling
0-15	18.1
16-30	29.9
31 and over	52.0

No. of Accidents in Last 3 Years	% of Sampling
0	91.1
1	7.6
2	1.0
3 or more	0.3

No. of Traffic Citations in Last 3 Years	% of Sampling
0	91.9
1	7.2
2	0.6
3 or more	0.3



Table 3—Comparisons of Volunteer Driver Characteristics with Gallup Survey of Volunteers and General Public

Age	% of Vol. Drivers	% of Adult Vols.	% of Adult Gen. Public
18-34	16	42	38
35-49	17	27	24
50-Older	67	31	38
Sex			
Male	42	44	48
Female	58	56	52
Education			
College Grad.	36	21	14
College Incomplete	16	21	16
Tech. or Bus. School	6	6	**
High School Grad.	41	35	34
High School Incomplete	4	9	15
Grade School or No School	3	8	15

**Not ascertained

more drivers called on volunteer centers to help recruit drivers.

Referral by current volunteers was the most common technique used by agencies to recruit drivers, and this method tended to become more popular as the agencies increased in size. Seventy-two percent of small agencies used such referrals, while more than 85 percent of large organizations followed suit.

Recognition. We found 17 different means by which agencies recognized the contributions made by their volunteer drivers. Leading techniques included ceremonies, personal reinforcement, certificates and publishing of accomplishments. (See Table 4.)

Training. Of all agencies surveyed, 17.2 percent reported that no training was given to their volunteer drivers. An additional 11.3 percent did not respond to the question, and some of these probably did not arrange for training for their drivers. Thus, somewhere between 71.5 and 82.8 percent of all agencies did see that their volunteer drivers received some sort of training. Of those who did provide training for their volunteers, about 45 percent used combinations of types of training.

For example, 39 percent of the sampled organizations educated their volunteer drivers about the programs they provided; 36.8 percent provided or arranged for general, unspecified training; 12.8 percent had their drivers receive first aid or cardio-pulmonary resuscitation lessons; nine percent of agencies provided special information on client(s) with whom each would be dealing; and smaller percentages of agencies provided six other types of training.

Among responding agencies, almost one-third did not specify when their volunteer drivers received training. Nearly 60 percent provided at least some of the training when the volunteer first became involved with the agency. Other agencies gave "on-the-job" or "in-service" training.

Among agencies who provided training, 56.1 percent did not specify how often that training was given. Training was administered only once by 16.7 percent of the agencies. Over 28 percent offered at least some of their training at only one time. About 25 percent of responding agencies provided at least some of their training on a periodic basis.

The responding agency provided all of the training for volunteers in 55.6 per-

more). The medium category encompasses over half of the surveyed agencies, while nearly one-third fell into the large grouping.

Recruitment, Recognition, Training. Agency respondents reported 19 different means by which they recruited new volunteer drivers. Leading aids included referrals by current volunteers, presentations to groups, assistance from the local volunteer center and use of newspapers. Volunteer respondents reported that the most effective recruitment techniques included referrals by other volunteers, presentations to groups, personal contacts and assistance from volunteer centers.

Small and medium-sized agencies overwhelmingly did not use displays or posters in recruiting volunteers. Among large agencies, almost half did use recruitment displays.

A different pattern appeared in the relationship between number of drivers and recruitment of drivers by means of presentations to groups. Small agencies used presentations only 44 percent of

the time; medium and large agencies used presentations almost 78 percent of the time. Agencies with fewer drivers tended to make less use of brochures to recruit drivers than did agencies with a greater number of drivers. For example, only 12 percent of small agencies employed this technique. From another view, less than 30 percent of small and medium agencies recruited their volunteers from a brochure, while more than 50 percent of large agencies did so.

The biggest difference appeared in the use of newsletters to recruit volunteer drivers. Only 12 percent of small agencies employed this technique, while over 55 percent of medium and large agencies used newsletters to help recruit volunteers.

Volunteer centers were used to recruit volunteer drivers by a majority of agencies in almost every size category, but small agencies tended to employ the centers more frequently. Seventy-two percent of these agencies with the fewest drivers used volunteer centers, while only about 58 percent of agencies with

Table 4—Agency Characteristics

Types of Trips Provided by Vol. Drivers*	% of Agency Providers
Medical	68.3
Shopping	43.7
Senior nutrition program	23.5
Attend church meeting	22.5
Visit friends or relatives	17.5
Gather/deliver material aids	16.1
Welfare, housing	12.9
Social activities	10.2
Attend daycare/school	10.2
Eat at restaurants	9.3
Agency programs/projects	9.1

*Other types of trips are provided by less than 5% of agencies surveyed.

No. of Vol. Drivers	% of Agencies Utilizing
Small (1-5 drivers)	17.4 (median = 17.25)
Medium (6-30 drivers)	53.6 (mean = 80.57)
Large (31 or more)	29.0

Recognition of Vol. Drivers	% of Agencies Utilizing
Ceremonies	67.4
Personal reinforcement	66.3
Certificates	60.7
Publishing of accomplishments	52.2
Pins	39.9
Vol. of Year/Month awards	26.0

Recruitment Methods	% of Agencies Utilizing
Referral by volunteers	77.3
Presentations to groups	69.9
Volunteer center	60.0
Newspapers	51.1
Newsletters	45.5
Radio and TV	36.9
Brochures	31.3
Displays and Posters	25.0
Personal Contacts	11.3

cent of the cases, and part of the training in an additional 16.6 percent. Slightly over 25 percent of responding organizations did not specify who educates their volunteer drivers for agency-related tasks.

Over 81 percent of responding agencies did not specify whether their volunteer drivers received training in oral or written form; 8.3 percent provided exclusively oral training; 2.3 percent provided only written training. The remainder gave combinations of oral, written and unspecified training.

Use of Volunteer's Own Vehicle

In over 80 percent of all agencies, at least some volunteer drivers drove their own vehicles when doing agency-related traveling. All volunteers drove their own vehicles exclusively in more than 65 percent of the agencies.

Turnover among volunteer drivers was a problem for just over one-third of the responding agencies. Turnover appeared to be more of a problem for small agencies than it was for medium- or large-sized agencies.

The relationship between turnover and the number of volunteer drivers who drove their own vehicles was a rather complex one. Agencies for whom either (1) no volunteer drivers drove their own vehicles or (2) six to 30 volunteers did so, overwhelmingly reported that turnover was not a problem. But agencies for whom either (1) one to five volunteers drove their own vehicles or (2) 31 or more drove, reported turnover problems in about half of the cases.

Table 5—No. of Volunteer Drivers Who Drive Own Cars*

None	20.4%
1-10	34.2%
11-20	13.8%
21-30	10.8%
31-50	9.0%
More than 50	1.8%
TOTAL	100.00%

*Four agencies responded "all," and 15 agencies did not respond to the question, "How many volunteer drivers use their own vehicles when carrying passengers or goods for your agency? Please estimate actual number."

The
Volunteer
Driver