

**THE STATE OF SERVICE-RELATED RESEARCH**

# Opportunities to Build a Field

*The Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service*

# THE STATE OF SERVICE-RELATED RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD A FIELD

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GRANTMAKER FORUM  
ON COMMUNITY &  
NATIONAL SERVICE

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# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to learn more about citizen service—its impact on society and on the individual, its best practices, and its pitfalls—the Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service contracted with a team of researchers from Indiana University, led by James L. Perry, co-director of the Institute for the Study of Government and the Nonprofit Sector, to create a bibliographic database of service-related research.

The Indiana University team (IU team) submitted the database and its final report to the Grantmaker Forum in August of 1999. The IU team's report underwent two reviews by two different panels of experts, consisting of both researchers and practitioners in the field of service and volunteerism. This publication, *The State of Service-Related Research: Opportunities to Build a Field*, was created by the Grantmaker Forum. It represents a synthesis of the IU team's work and findings about the research on service and volunteerism, incorporating the feedback offered by the experts who reviewed the previous work.

## THE IU TEAM'S METHODOLOGY TO COMPILE THE DATABASE

The IU team scanned and analyzed the literature about citizen service published since 1990. The citizen service database was developed in several stages between July 1998 and June 1999. Its development involved five tasks: (1) creating search terms and selecting bibliographic databases from which to extract relevant works; (2) constructing the database of service-related research; (3) cleaning the database; (4) assigning keywords to each record; and (5) developing a mechanism to sort the records by methodology.

At the conclusion of the fifth step, the comprehensive database on service consisted of 2,559 records. Finally, the IU team conducted a literature review using the new database to examine the relationship of service and citizenship.

## DETOUR: THE FINDINGS

Originally, the Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service expected to emerge from this project with knowledge about citizen service—its impact on society and on the individual, its best practices, and its pitfalls. In essence, the Grantmaker Forum's original question was "What is known about service as a result of the research that has been done since 1990?"

However, as the landscape of the service research was mapped by the contents of the database, it became apparent that the research was not yet at a stage where it could answer this question. Conclusions about service drawn from the contents of the studies in the database would have been premature. Instead, the question that could be answered was "What is known about the service-related research as a result of the creation of this database on service research?"


The Grantmaker Forum and the IU team saw this as an opportunity to assess the research itself and determine the next steps necessary to forward the research on service to reach the point where it can offer reliable conclusions about citizen service—such as its impact on society and on the individual, its best practices, and its pitfalls, as originally intended.




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THIS MAY BE DUE  
IN PART TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
COST AND CONFIDENCE;  
MORE RIGOROUS STUDIES  
COST MORE MONEY.**



## **FINDINGS ABOUT THE SERVICE RESEARCH**

In brief, the research on service was found to be lacking in both quantity and quality, as follows:

- 1) **Quantity.** Both the Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service and the IU team underestimated the breadth and overestimated the depth of the studies that have been conducted on the many aspects of service. It turned out that there were far more studies than the Forum had anticipated, that they reached across many disciplines, and they lacked standard definitions, language, and common expectations. As a result, there simply was not a critical mass of research on comparable topics upon which to base firm conclusions about service.

In fact, the IU team found that breadth was one of the main characteristics of the research. The research comes from a variety of distinct academic and professional disciplines—such as education, political science, public affairs, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and business—that were not in conversation with one another on the subject of service. Even works that came from the same discipline often employed exclusive, incomparable definitions of terms, focal points, and theoretical frameworks.

- 2) **Quality.** Much of the research that has been done lacks rigorous scientific methodology in studying service. Only 996 or 39% of the 2,559 records in the database on service were associated with even a low level of methodological rigor. Even among those 996 studies associated with some systematic methodology, a minority contained research conducted with the higher standards of scientific rigor, such as experimental and quasi-experimental design.

Other observations about the research on service include the following:

- As the amount of research published annually increased throughout the 1990s, and as a variety of different academic disciplines and professional fields focus on service, service is a program and policy area that appears to be emerging as a field in its own right;
- The literature on service suffers from terminological problems and fragmentation;
- Three interrelated issues form a barrier to the development of service as a field of study—lack of infrastructure, lack of interdisciplinary dialogue, and lack of rigorous methodology.

## **DOES SERVICE AFFECT CITIZENSHIP?**

At the request of the Grantmaker Forum's Research Task Force, the IU team used the database to explore the relationship between service and citizenship. This was formulated into the question, "Does service affect citizenship?" in order to perform a literature review.

However, as with the database as a whole, the literature review on service and citizenship was unable to offer a body of evidence upon which to base conclusions about the impact of service. While the main reasons for this lie with the state of the research on service, the methodology used may have also contributed to the lack of firm conclusions about the relationship of service to citizenship skills and/or behaviors. The literature review compared studies that were using different definitions and different methodologies, making it impossible to reach reliable conclusions about the relationship of service to citizenship.



The literature review did provide a useful survey of the existing research on the relationship of service to citizenship. The effort also offered insight into the ways to effectively use the database on service research, and helped clarify the limitations of using the database for a literature review.

### **PURPOSE AND INTENDED AUDIENCE**

This publication is intended to alert interested parties to the challenges facing the research on service, toward the ultimate goal of enabling the study of service to develop to the point where the research can offer reliable data and analysis about the impact and value of service.

The intended audiences include researchers and academics, practitioners, philanthropy, and policy makers. Each has a role to play in building the field of service research. For example:

- Researchers can insist on rigorous methodological standards in the studies they perform, and can begin a dialogue about the terminological and methodological challenges facing the field.
- Practitioners can develop specific theories of change and structure programs and evaluation activities accordingly.
- Philanthropists can tie funding to rigorous methodology and research that builds upon past works.
- Public policy makers can frame their questions about service and then support studies that utilize rigorous methodology and begin to answer those questions, such as its impact on citizenship skills and behaviors.

### **NEXT STEPS**

**Next Steps for the Grantmaker Forum.** The Grantmaker Forum is taking the following steps to address the challenges facing the research on service and volunteerism including:

- Convene Discussions on the Challenges Facing Research on Service
- Maintain and Improve the Database
- Develop Priorities for Research
- Encourage Funding of Research

**Collective Next Steps to Encourage the Field's Development.** The following suggestions are steps that should be taken collectively to allow the nascent field of service research to bloom. The Grantmaker Forum welcomes thoughts, reactions and discussion about ways to encourage the development of service as a field of study.

- *Strengthen the Research Infrastructure.* Form a committee on service through the National Academy of Science or National Research Council; develop a professional association; develop an interdisciplinary journal; improve research and dissertation funding.
- *Create an Interdisciplinary Dialogue.* Create journal symposia; create edited volumes; and conduct further literature reviews and meta-analyses.
- *Improve the Methodology of the Research.* Promote longitudinal research; tie funding to scientific research methodology; move away from anecdotal evidence; avoid success bias.



**THE LITERATURE  
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THE IMPORTANCE OF  
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## II. INTRODUCTION

In 1993, coinciding with the amendment of the 1990 National and Community Service Trust Act, a small group of grantmakers began to meet informally to discuss ways to complement federal funding of community and national service programs. That group became the Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service, with a mailing list of over 1300 private, corporate, and family foundations. Its active members are bound together by a belief that service is a core value of American democracy, best achieved through a partnership between the public, private, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. The Forum's mission is to encourage philanthropic investment in citizen service and volunteerism in order to strengthen communities and build a healthy democracy.

One of the Grantmaker Forum's objectives is to better understand citizen service—its best practices and its pitfalls, its impact on society and on the individual—in order to disseminate this knowledge to grantmakers, policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and the general public. In examining the field of service, the members of the Forum realized that there was no repository of information that would describe the range of the field, the different ways it is organized, and what it has to offer. There was no place to turn to understand what service is, and what impact performing service has on the server and the served, despite the recent growth in interest in service and volunteerism.

The decade beginning in 1990 was a period of extraordinary growth in the study and discussion of service, spurred by the passage of the 1990 National and Community Service Trust Act. This act was President George Bush's initiative that established the Points of Light Foundation, as President Bush advocated that every American volunteer time to improve the nation. Three years later, under the Clinton Administration, this legislation was amended to establish AmeriCorps, President Clinton's initiative to especially encourage young people to engage in full-time service at the community level, and provide a stipend to facilitate their participation.

While service has a long history in the United States—including everything from barn raisings to Settlement Houses—these two initiatives under Presidents Bush and Clinton created a call to action that inspired the formation of organizations throughout the country to encourage and facilitate acts of service, including the Grantmaker Forum in 1993. However, during this explosion of interest in service and volunteerism, the field remained difficult to define, and its value and impact were not yet documented and quantified through empirical, scientific research.

The Grantmaker Forum's leadership decided not only to learn more about service, but to establish a repository of research on service that could inform decision-making by grantmakers, policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and the general public. In order to accomplish these goals, the Grantmaker Forum contracted with a team of researchers from Indiana University, led by James L. Perry, co-director of the Institute for the Study of Government and the Nonprofit Sector, to create a bibliographic database of service-related research.

## **CREATING A DATABASE ON SERVICE RESEARCH**

The Indiana University team (IU team) scanned and analyzed the literature about citizen service published since 1990. The work progressed in three phases. The preliminary phase consisted of a scan of nine bibliographic databases from fields related to citizen service, such as education, sociology, public administration, and psychology. This preliminary scan produced a distinct and comprehensive bibliography of service-related research.

The second phase involved “cleaning” and organizing the database. The “cleaning” consisted of the removal of irrelevant records and the addition of relevant records not captured in the first literature scan.<sup>1</sup> Next, the IU team analyzed and coded the abstracts associated with each of the records in the service database. By coding each citation, the IU team enabled the database to be searched by keywords found in the title and abstract of each piece, including terms that identify the methodology used in the research, where applicable. The end result was a coded, searchable database on service with 2,559 records, and a series of generalizations about citizen service research based on an assessment of those records. The third and final phase was to utilize the database to perform an in-depth analysis of the literature associated with the specific question, “Does service affect citizenship?”

The IU team submitted the database and its final report to the Grantmaker Forum in August of 1999. The IU team’s report underwent two reviews by two different panels of experts, consisting of both researchers and practitioners in the field of service and volunteerism. This monograph, created by the Grantmaker Forum, represents a synthesis of the IU team’s work and findings about the research on service and volunteerism, incorporating the feedback offered by the experts who reviewed the original report.

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- Researchers can insist on rigorous methodological standards in the studies they perform, and can begin a dialogue about the terminological and methodological challenges facing the field.
- Practitioners can develop specific theories of change and structure programs and evaluation activities accordingly.
- Philanthropists can tie funding to rigorous methodology and research that builds upon past works.
- Public policy makers can frame their questions about service and then support studies that utilize rigorous methodology and begin to answer those questions, such as its impact on citizenship skills and behaviors.

## DEFINING SERVICE AND CITIZENSHIP

As one of the challenges facing the research is the definition of terminology, the Grantmaker Forum offers the following operating definitions of service and citizenship. Both definitions are broad and encompassing for the purposes of this publication, and have many areas of overlap.<sup>2</sup>

**Service.** Many activities fall under the rubric of service in the view of the Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service. Service includes those actions performed on behalf of others with the goal of improving someone else's condition or situation, contributing one's time and energy to improve the lives of others, where the indirect personal benefit is satisfaction, not personal gain. This includes stipended service—as the financial component is limited, it is enough to enable service, but does not enrich the server. This also includes volunteering, school-based service-learning, service in national federally-funded programs, community-based service, faith-based volunteerism, and more.

**Citizenship.** Citizenship is also conceived of broadly by the Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service. Citizenship or civic participation consists of behaviors, attitudes, and actions that reflect concerned and active membership in a community. This includes the more traditional electoral citizenship activities, such as voting, serving on nonprofit boards or school boards, as well as less traditional forms of political participation, such as community organizing and social activism. It includes participation in small neighborhood-based efforts and the largest national and international movements.

**Table 1****LIST OF TERMS USED TO SEARCH THE SOURCE DATABASES****VOLUNTEER**

- Voluntarism
- Volunteerism
- Volunteer and Corporation
- Volunteer and Employee
- Volunteer and Religion
- Volunteer and School
- Volunteer and Student

**SERVICE PROGRAMS**

- National Service Trust Act
- National and Community Service Act
- Youth Corps
- AmeriCorps
- VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)
- Learn and Serve America
- America Reads
- Foster Grandparent Program
- Senior Companion Program
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
- Youth Development
- Service Program
- Public Service Program
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Employee and Service and Community

**SERVICE**

- Service-learning
- Voluntary Service
- Volunteer Service
- Citizen Service
- Service and Faith
- Service and Religion
- Service and Corporate

**CIVIC PROGRAMS**

- Civic Engagement
- Character Education

### III. METHODOLOGY TO COMPILE THE DATABASE

The IU team developed the database in several stages between July 1998 and June 1999. The methods or approach they used involved five tasks in an iterative, or overlapping process where advances made in one step would be employed to improve both earlier and later steps. The five tasks included: (1) creating search terms and selecting the bibliographic databases to scan for service-related research; (2) assembling the extracted service-related research into a distinct database; (3) cleaning the database; (4) assigning keywords to each record; and (5) assigning methodological keywords to each record and screening records by those keywords. At the conclusion of the fifth step, the comprehensive database consisted of 2,559 records.

**COMPILING RESEARCH ON SERVICE**

To construct a database on service research, the IU team created a method to extract research on service from bibliographic databases in fields related to service, such as education, and public affairs. They developed a list of terms relating to volunteerism, service, service programs, and civic programs, to be used to search these databases for service-related research. The complete list of search terms is listed in Table 1.

To select the databases from which the service research would be extracted, the IU team reviewed various bibliographic databases available on the Internet at Indiana University and selected the nine databases listed in Table 2. The databases were searched in their CD ROM versions and filtered to create separate databases for each search. The end result of this process were nine mini-databases on service with varying numbers of relevant citations, as shown in Table 2.

**CREATING A DISTINCT DATABASE ON SERVICE**

These nine mini-databases on service from the various fields and sources were then merged to create the distinct database of research on citizen service. The database is housed on ProCite bibliographic database computer software, which accepts thousands of references in different formats (e.g., books, journal articles, government documents, conference proceedings) and can import electronic records from other online or CD-ROM databases.<sup>3</sup> The database can be searched and sorted by keyword, format, author, methodology, and more.

While the database was being created, a simultaneous effort was underway to identify service-related research publications that might not be in the database. Key researchers, members of the project's advisory committee, and members of the Grantmaker Forum Research Task Force worked to identify important research on service to check against the citations found by searching the nine selected databases. The references and reports that were identified were added to the database if they were not already present.

For the most part, the added references—though small in number—were not indexed in the searched databases. This finding highlights the need for an ongoing panel to review the database annually to ensure that the current year's key works on service are included in the service database.



## CLEANING THE DATABASE

The next task was to clean the database. Each record was reviewed in some detail to eliminate (1) duplicates, (2) records dated prior to 1990, and (3) references in languages other than English. Service-related research on countries other than the United States was eliminated, although research comparing the United States to other countries was retained.

Next, each record was examined to see whether it appeared to actually constitute service-related research. Due to the broad nature of the search categories, many records included in the original database had to be removed. During this process, a broad definition of service-related research was used and if there were any doubts, the record was retained. Records were also retained if they appeared to contain any substantive information about a service-related program. Thus, the database includes journal articles, conference proceedings, books, book chapters, evaluations, reports, guidance manuals, training materials, trade journals, and other miscellaneous materials.

## ASSIGNING KEYWORDS AND DEFINING GROUPINGS

Once the database was cleared of irrelevant works, the IU team assigned keywords to each record based on the abstract and title associated with each citation, creating defined sub-groupings within the ProCite database software. The vast majority of the records in the database contained detailed abstracts and other information about each reference. For the small percentage of citations that did not have an abstract, the IU team acquired the citation and wrote an abstract.

By assigning keywords and using them to sort the database, generalizations could be made about the research, for example, about the particular subject areas that received the most attention, or the most common research methods employed. This approach also helped identify where future research may appear to be warranted, and shed light on the overall methodological quality of the research.

## MANAGING ISSUES OF TERMINOLOGY

The IU team did not seek to superimpose common definitions or terminology for the keywords used in the abstracts. For example, no effort was made to reconcile references to "voluntarism" and "volunteerism" into a single keyword. Some of the literature uses these terms as distinct concepts, while other literature uses the terms interchangeably. The decision not to reconcile or standardize terminology, but rather to allow the contents of an abstract to dictate the keywords chosen, produced classifications that may appear to overlap. Further discussion of issues relating to terminology can be found in the conclusions section of this document.

## CREATING A METHODOLOGY SCREEN

The service database contains a variety of formats, including books, reports, academic and trade journal articles, conference papers, curriculum materials, and guidance manuals. Some materials—such as newspaper articles or guidance manuals—do not necessarily constitute research per se, though they do offer valuable content on service. Other materials—such as books, academic journal articles, and reports—are more likely to constitute service research, evaluating the impact of service or its best practices, for example.

Of the materials that seem to constitute research, there is a range of different methodologies used—that is, systematic approaches to the examination of their

**Table 2**

### SOURCE DATABASES AND NUMBER OF SERVICE-RELATED CITATIONS

SOURCE DATABASE	NUMBER OF CITATIONS
ERIC (Education)	2,480 records
Book Where	960 records
SocioFile (Sociology)	878 records
Academic Search Elite	872 records
PsychINFO (Psychology)	634 records
PAIS (Public Affairs)	625 records
Dissertation Abstracts International	500 records
Government Publications	100 records
IPSA (Political Science)	70 records



subject matter. Examples of different methodologies might include qualitative methods, such as case studies and key informant interviews or quantitative methods, such as surveys, which lend themselves to more objective analysis. Quantitative methodologies are considered to be more rigorous, accurate, and reliable by many academics, researchers, and policy-makers.<sup>4</sup>

Given the variety of materials and research methodologies stored in the database, the final step in organizing the database was to identify those records that were likely to contain research, and to be able to sort and search for different types of methodologies among those records that do seem to constitute research.

In order to accomplish these goals, the IU team created a methodology keyword screen to sort and search the database by methodology. This methodology keyword screen (or methods-screen) functions in much the same way as the other search terms in the database. It allows users to select those records that contain the desired methodology keyword. The process of assigning the methodology keywords was similar to the process used to assign the other database search terms. The IU team read the abstracts for each record and attached the appropriate methodology code words to records that indicated use of some type of systematic methodology. Citations that did not appear to involve research, such as newspaper articles, guidance manuals, or other non-evaluative materials, were not assigned any methodology keyword.

Erring on the side of inclusion, the IU team included methodology keywords for a variety of systematic research methods—from the more qualitative attitude surveys to the more quantitative experimental design. This allows users of the database on service research to select the level of methodological rigor that they prefer. It also allows for more variety and depth in the database than would be allowed if the database were limited to only research studies of the highest level of methodological rigor.

### **DOES SERVICE AFFECT CITIZENSHIP?**

The Grantmaker Forum's Research Task Force asked the IU team to use the database to explore the relationship between service and citizenship. The IU team undertook a literature review that focused on the question, "Does service affect citizenship?" Recognizing the need to structure their search, the IU team, in collaboration with the Grantmaker Forum, formulated a six-part definition of citizenship and a theory of change, both of which were very broad. The IU team then conducted the literature review, searching the database for relevant records. They then reviewed studies that emerged and attempted to analyze the results. This effort is discussed in detail in section VI, Case In Point.

## IV. THE LANDSCAPE: A DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE RESEARCH

The landscape of the research on service can be viewed through the lens of the newly assembled database on service research. The systematic coding of each abstract in the database allowed for the identification of areas of research, the questions asked, methods employed, and a variety of other attributes about research on service. The analysis of the abstracts, keywords, and the process as a whole permit a variety of generalizations about the field of service. They include:

- The methodology used in 39% of the citations in the service database can be described as meeting at least a low threshold of rigor. Of the 2,559 records, 996 were associated with one or more keywords referring to the methodology used in creating the works, including a range of standards for scientific rigor, from case studies, to surveys, to experimental design.
- The database is comprised primarily of citations in the form of journal articles, followed by thesis dissertations, and non-governmental organization publications.
- Education is by far the dominant field or discipline in which research about citizen service has been focused, and service-learning is the dominant focus of education research;
- Research about the outcomes of service is largely focused on the server, with the primary themes being academic performance, attitudes, career development, personal development, and self-esteem; and
- The amount of research published annually increased throughout the 1990s.

### THE METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH THAT HAS BEEN CONDUCTED

As outlined above, the IU team created a methodology screen through which the citations in the database could be sorted by whether or not they employed a systematic methodology. The IU team read each citation's abstract and attached appropriate methodology keywords to records where applicable. The complete list of the methodology-screen keywords is contained in Table 3, below. The entire database of 2,559 records was sorted, or screened for at least one methodology keyword.

Of the total 2,559 records in the service database, the methodology screening selected 996 records that were created with some sort of systematic methodology—from focus groups to experimental design. These 996 records formed a subset of the larger citizen service database that was then referred to as the “methods-screen” database.<sup>5</sup> In other words, approximately 39% of the citations in the service database were associated with some sort of methodological standard to study service.

The 996 records in the methods-screen database included a wide range of research methods. Among the most common approaches to studying service were surveys (333), evaluations (304), and case studies (237). A modest number of the abstracts also referred to literature reviews or meta-analyses (131). A smaller number of the abstracts were associated with the more rigorous scientific methods of experimental, quasi-experimental, or longi-

Table 3

#### SEARCH TERMS FOR METHODS-SCREEN

METHOD TYPE/TERMINOLOGY	NUMBER OF CITATIONS
Empirical	460
Method - Survey	333
Evaluation	304
Method - Case Study	237
Method - Interview	171
Method - Literature Review	123
Method - Longitudinal	42
Method - Experimental or Quasi-Experimental	34
Method - Cost-Benefit Analysis	23
Method - Content Analysis	17
Method - Focus Group	16
Method - Panel Study	12
Method - Meta-Analysis	8
Method - Simulation	4
Method - Census Data	4
Method - Game Theory	1

**Note:** Numbers do not sum to 100% as some records indicate use of more than one method.



tudinal panel research designs (76). It should be noted that the “methods screen” was a superficial scan, based on the abstracts and titles of the citations, and that no further analysis of the methodologies of these 996 records was performed.

**Table 4**

**TYPES OF PUBLICATIONS IN THE METHODS-SCREEN DATABASE**

TYPE OF PUBLICATION	NUMBER OF CITATIONS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Journal Articles	474	47.6%
Dissertations	194	19.5%
Non-governmental Organization Documents	180	18.1%
Books	76	7.6%
Conference Papers	40	4.0%
Government Documents	30	3.0%
Book Reviews	1	0.1%
Newspaper Articles	1	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**TYPES OF PUBLICATIONS IN THE METHODS-SCREEN DATABASE**

The 996 records that make up the methods-screen database represent a variety of types of publications, listed in Table 4, below. Journal articles form the largest number of bibliographic records, with 474 or nearly 48% of the total.<sup>6</sup> The second most frequent type of publication in the methods-screened database on service is the dissertation, with 194 dissertations representing 20% of the total database. Following in third place are non-governmental organization documents, encompassing 18% of the total. The remaining roughly 18% of the methods-screen database is made up of books, conference papers, government documents, and to a very minor extent, book reviews and newspaper articles.

**Table 5**

**CITIZEN SERVICE CATEGORIZED BY POLICY AREA**

POLICY AREA	NUMBER OF CITATIONS
Education	414
Community Development	178
Human Needs	100
Youth Development	63
Health Care	60
Environment	37
Military	26
Public Safety	21
Restitution	9

**Note:** Community development includes community-based volunteer programs. Youth development includes youth corps programs.

**FOCUS ON EDUCATION**

While the research on citizen service focuses on a wide range of policy areas, as summarized in Table 5, the dominant arena by far is education. The second most frequent focus in service research is the field of community development (e.g., community building, youth involvement in communities). Human needs (e.g., substance abuse prevention, child neglect intervention) ranks third.

The remaining research focuses on service in a variety of fields or contexts, such as the environment (e.g., conservation corps, volunteer environmental stewardship groups); health care (e.g., serving mentally disabled homeless, addressing at-risk pregnancies through a service program); youth development (e.g., youth corps, youth mentoring); military (e.g., attitudes of soldiers towards their missions); and public safety. Public safety research is focused primarily on the use of volunteers for crime fighting, fire fighting, and disaster relief. Restitution refers to the use of service as an alternative sentencing strategy.<sup>7</sup>



## SERVICE-LEARNING

Within the research on education, the focus is mainly on three areas: character education; experiential learning; and service-learning. The largest of these three categories is service-learning, which is cited in 237 entries in the database—however, there is some overlap between these categories, and the numbers do not sum to 100%.

The research on education focuses on students at all education levels, and on both the servers and the served. As shown in Table 7, higher education is the level most heavily represented in the research on servers in service programs, with 172 citations. High school, middle, and elementary school are also well represented, with 71, 65, and 46 citations, respectively. However, this count is complicated by the fact that these citations do not sum to 100%. The abstracts of many citations may list more than one education level, or include the education levels of both the server and the served indiscriminately.

Nevertheless, some basic trends are still observable. The literature tends to be more explicit about the education level of the server than of the served. The distribution of education level of those served is much less spread out than for the server. This is logical given that many service-learning or mentoring programs emanate from universities or high schools, and target middle and elementary school children. In other words, the servers tend to be older students, with some variation in age, while those served tend to be younger students, with less variation in age. This can be seen in the fact that only two of the citations identified the served as students at the higher education level.

Table 6

### CITATIONS TO SERVICE PROGRAMS IN EDUCATION

TYPE OF EDUCATION	NUMBER OF CITATIONS
Service-Learning	237
Experiential Learning*	83
Character/Moral Education	79

\* Does not include a systematic search for the experiential learning literature.

Table 7

### CITATIONS TO SERVICE PROGRAMS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	NUMBER OF CITATIONS
<b>SERVER</b>	
Education - Total	249
College and Graduate School	172
High School (10 - 12)	58
Middle School (7 - 9)	45
Elementary (pre K - 6)	21
<b>SERVED</b>	
Education - Total	55
Elementary (pre K - 6)	26
Middle School (7 - 9)	20
High School (10 - 12)	13
Adult (GED, continuing education, etc.)	10
College and Graduate School	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	
Education - Total	414
College and Graduate School	174
High School (10 - 12)	71
Middle School (7 - 9)	65
Elementary (pre K - 6)	46
Adult (GED, continuing education, etc.)	10
Bilingual	7

**Table 8****CITATIONS TO VARIOUS  
NATIONAL SERVICE  
PROGRAMS**

<b>NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM</b>	<b>NUMBER OF CITATIONS</b>
AmeriCorps	61
Military	26
VISTA	14
Conservation Corps	13
Learn and Serve America	10
America Reads	7
Foster Grandparent Program	6
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program	6
Senior Companion Program	4
Job Corps	1
<b>Total Unique Citations with National Service Search Terms</b>	<b>130</b>

**NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS**

National service programs refer to service supported by federal government funding through the Corporation for National Service. There were 130 citations that referred to some form of national service in the methods-screen database, including

programs such as AmeriCorps, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), and federal programs for the elderly (e.g., Retired and Senior Volunteer Program). Table 8 presents a summary of the references to national service programs. There was no research found that synthesizes what is known about national service programs.

However, the volume of research on national service is likely under-represented in the service database, because the database did not systematically include the studies and evaluations of national service programs funded by the Corporation for National Service and state commissions on service.

The military service studies in Table 8 include assessments of recruitment, motivation, retention and impacts of mandatory vs. voluntary service. These studies were more likely to be associated with rigorous methodology, which may reflect the resources invested by the

Department of Defense to monitor and implement voluntary military service.

These studies may prove to be a valuable resource for the study of service in general. For example, they may offer the opportunity to learn about the motivation to serve and the long-term effects of service.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

There are a variety of types of community service programs studied in the database, as represented in Table 9, below. A large portion of the literature in Table 9 is associated in some way with volunteering, as reflected in the frequency of references to volunteer programs (180) and nonprofit organizations using volunteers (75). A relatively large number of citations (50) refer to corporate social responsibility. Although corporate social responsibility is multifaceted, many of these sources address aspects of corporate service efforts.

**Table 9****CITATIONS TO  
DIFFERENT TYPES OF  
COMMUNITY/CITIZEN  
SERVICE PROGRAMS**

<b>COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM</b>	<b>NUMBER OF CITATIONS</b>
Community/Citizen Service - General	204
Volunteer Program	180
Volunteerism – General	111
Nonprofit Organizations Using Volunteers	75
Voluntarism – General	64
Youth Development Programs	53
Corporate Social Responsibility	50
Community-Based Programs	44
Mentoring Volunteer Programs*	39
Philanthropy	29
Faith-Based Programs	27
Corporate-Based Service Programs	17
Community Service – Restitution	9
Points of Light Foundation	7

\* Does not include a systematic search of the mentoring literature.



## VOLUNTEERS

There is also a great deal of research focused on volunteers themselves (e.g., demographic characteristics, motivations) and on volunteer programs that have a service component. Table 10 provides a more detailed breakdown of the types of programs included in the volunteer program category in Table 9.

Education research at the college level is most common, followed by education research about K-12, tutoring, mentoring, and environmental programs. At the other end of the spectrum, there appears to be little research on faith-based service programs. Similarly, little recent attention has been given to the service programs mediated by civic associations (e.g., Rotary) or corporations.

Faith-based programs have expanded and have received increased attention in recent years—and have received federal funding under the “devolution” of federal programs, for example under the 1996 welfare reform act. Likewise, programs that utilize service as restitution have increased in recent years. Study of these and other growing programs would inform decision-making in the allocation of both public and private funds.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

A portion of the literature examines aspects of civil society, most of which comes from the field of political science. Citations addressing civil society, including community development, citizen participation, and social capital, are listed below in Table 11. The majority of these citations refer to citizen participation, a term that has a long history in fields such as public administration and political science.

Research that documents and quantifies the link between community and national service and civic participation is needed to replace the assumptions that currently make up the commonly held view that service leads to civic participation and benefits society as a whole.

**Table 10**

### CITATIONS TO DIFFERENT TYPES OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

TYPE OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAM	NUMBER OF CITATIONS
Education – College	172
Education – K - 12	83
Tutoring	51
Mentoring	39
Environment	37
Faith-based	27
HIV/AIDS	25
Corporate	17
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	5

**Table 11**

### CITATIONS TO CIVIL SOCIETY AND RELATED CONCEPTS

CONCEPT	NUMBER OF CITATIONS
Citizen Participation *	83
Civil Society	12
Social Capital	11

\* Civic Engagement is included within Citizen Participation



Table 12

**DEMOGRAPHIC  
CHARACTERISTICS  
STUDIED IN THE  
METHODS-SCREEN  
DATABASE**

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	NUMBER OF CITATIONS
Age server – Total	353
Age server – 6 - 18	133
Age server – 18 - 23	189
Age server – 23 - 35	15
Age server – 35 - 50	7
Age server – 50+	48
Age served – Total	143
Age served – 0 - 6	9
Age served – 6 - 18	105
Age served – 18 - 23	7
Age served – 23 - 35	3
Age served – 35 - 50	1
Age served – 50+	31
Gender	88
Male	13
Female	25
Race	64
Black	32
White	18
Hispanic	11
Asian	1
Native American	4
Minorities – General	8
Income	40
Culture	44
Disabled	24
Demographic Characteristics – General	175
<b>Demographics – Total</b>	<b>608</b>

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

The demographic characteristics of both the servers and the served are addressed in 608 of the citations in the methods-screen database on service research. Age is one of the key interest areas, as is gender, and race/ethnicity. Table 12 summarizes the frequency of references to age, gender, race, income, and other demographic characteristics. The age of the server is mentioned in 350 abstracts. The age of the served is referred to in 156 references. The groups most frequently addressed in the research on servers are those age 6-18 (133 studies) and 18-23 (189 studies). Adults aged 50 years or older (48 studies) form the age group of servers next most frequently mentioned in the abstracts. Among populations served, children and adolescents 6-18 years of age (105 studies) are by far the most frequently cited group.

Most of the research (32) that consciously addresses race focuses on African-Americans. Only 11 of the abstracts referred directly to Hispanics, and one to Asians, while eight look at minority populations in general. Given the desire to engage members of disenfranchised communities, including minority groups, in service and civic participation, more study may be necessary in this area to inform such efforts.

There are only 40 studies that appear to address the issue of income. It is not clear whether these studies are examining income as it relates to the server to the served. This may represent a gap to the extent that one wants to understand issues of motivation and capacity to serve.

## OUTCOMES OF SERVICE

Of the abstracts in the methods-screen database, 409, or roughly 41% refer to outcomes of service. As shown in Table 13, the outcomes investigated in the research are diverse, but for the most part, focus on the server. Among the outcomes associated with the server in the research citations are attitudes (60), academic performance (55), personal development (50), self-esteem (47), and career development (37). Less frequent research attention appears to be given to outcomes of service associated with the institutional sponsor, the served, and the community. Only 20 of the abstracts refer explicitly to institutional sponsors. Community is an outcome referred to in 31 of these abstracts, society in seven, and corporations in two.

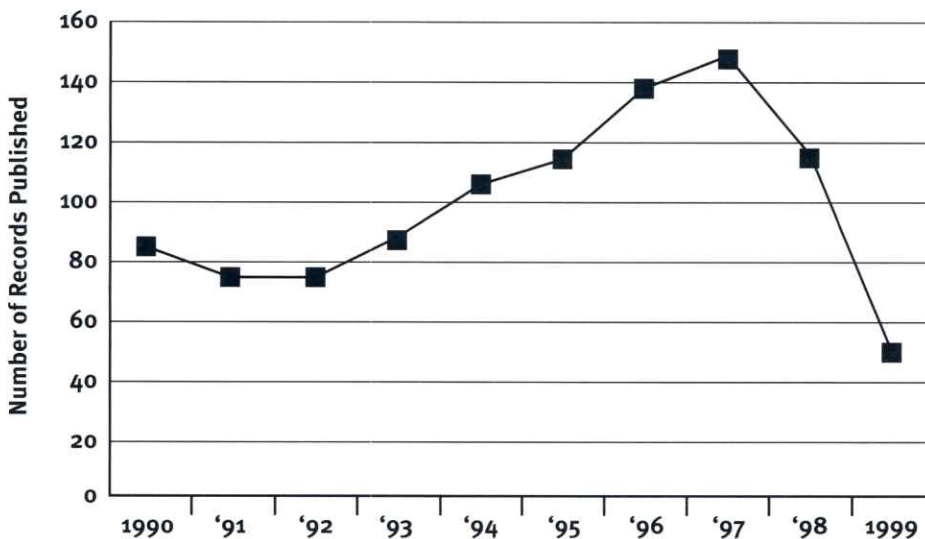
There is an intense interest in civic participation as an outcome of service. The Corporation for National Service is in the process of implementing a longitudinal study aimed at understanding this relationship.

## RESEARCH OUTPUT OVER TIME

The coding procedures also allowed the examination of the distribution of records by year of publication. Figure 1 indicates the number of records published by year. The trend in recent years is clearly towards increased attention to citizen service, which is one of the findings that leads to the conclusion that service is becoming a field in its own right. Researchers and funders can build upon this momentum and use the database on service to consolidate and advance knowledge about various facets of service.

Figure 1

### NUMBER OF CITATIONS EACH YEAR



\* **Note:** The drop-off in research in 1998 is likely a function of the lag time in indexing sources by the abstracting services. The drop-off in 1999 is because this is where the updating of the database left off.

Table 13

### REFERENCES TO OUTCOMES OF SERVICE

IMPACTS/ OUTCOMES OF SERVICE OF SERVICE ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF CITATIONS
Attitudes	60
Academic Performance	55
Citizenship	51
Personal Development	50
Self-esteem	47
Behavior	40
Career Development	37
Community	31
Leadership	26
Interpersonal Relations	25
Job Satisfaction	24
Social Responsibility	23
Civic Responsibility	23
Skill	22
Substance Abuse	20
Institutional Sponsor	20
Ethics	19
Satisfaction	19
Awareness	18
Responsibility	16
Attendance (at school)	15
Altruism	13
Violence	12
Self-awareness	12
Crime	11
Empathy	11
Stress	9
Respect	8
Society	7
Well-being	7
Character	5
Health	4
Depression	3
Boredom	2
Corporate	2
Racism	1
<b>Total Unique Citations Containing Outcomes Search Terms</b>	<b>409</b>



**Table 14****CITATIONS TO OTHER  
RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	NUMBER OF CITATIONS
Motivation	170
Implementation Methods/ Strategy/Structure	127
Collaboration/Coordination/ Partnerships	109
Leadership	66
Recruitment	60
Rural vs. Urban – Program Delivery	33
Retention	24
Job Satisfaction	24
Stipended vs. nonstipended	16
Multicultural Attitudes	15
Funding Issues	14
Legal Issues	10
Stress	9
Ethics	9
Capacity Building	6
Risk Management/Liability	3

**OTHER ISSUES EXAMINED IN THE RESEARCH**

Much of the research addresses issues encompassed by the categories discussed above. The abstracts also refer to other issues that are not as easily categorized.

The keywords depicting these issues are presented in Table 14. The largest segment of references in this group is to motivation (170). Other keywords that are mentioned frequently in this group are collaboration, implementation, funding, leadership, and recruitment—thus, many of the citations refer to administration or implementation issues.



## V. OBSERVATIONS & ASSESSMENTS OF THE STATE OF SERVICE RESEARCH

The original question that the Grantmaker Forum set out to answer was “What is known about service as a result of the research that has been done since 1990?” As the landscape of the service research was mapped by the contents of the database, it became apparent that the question that was actually being answered was “What is known about the service-related research as a result of the creation of this database on service research?”

The reasons for this discrepancy are two-fold:

1. The Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service, as did the IU team, underestimated the breadth of the studies that have been conducted. The original assumption was that the research would be sufficiently narrow to allow for an in-depth analysis. In fact, the breadth of the research made an in-depth analysis impossible, in part because the interdisciplinary nature of the work that has been done does not lend itself easily to the tools of meta-analysis.
2. Much of the research that has been done lacks depth and/or quality. As a result, even when attempts are made to segment the research according to a specific question, as attempted with the relationship of service and citizenship, it remains challenging to reach conclusions with confidence.

The following observations fill out the picture of the challenges facing those who approach service as a field of study:

**Observation 1** – The first observation from the analysis of the service database is that service is a program and policy area that appears to be emerging as a field of study in its own right.

The number of studies and analyses on service have increased steadily throughout the 1990's. Academics, practitioners, and researchers from a variety of academic disciplines and professional fields are studying, implementing, evaluating, and writing about service, volunteerism, and civic engagement. This is a positive step for those who wish to learn more about service and volunteerism. Viewing service through the perspective of many different fields offers a richness of information on the subject.

However, there are complications and contradictions that result from this ad-hoc, multi-pronged approach to studying service. The research on service is found in a wide variety of academic disciplines and professional fields—including education, political science, public affairs, sociology, psychology and business. This is both an asset and a detriment to the development of service as a field of study, as detailed in the next observation.

**Observation 2** – The literature on service suffers from terminological problems and fragmentation.

A core issue facing those examining service research is the question of the meaning of “service” (Bates 1996; and, Coles 1993). Some argue that true service can only be unpaid voluntary action. Others feel that service includes stipended community service through national programs such as AmeriCorps. Similarly, some feel that mandatory service is valuable and rewarding, while others feel it is an oxymoron. Just as there is no agreed upon definition of what constitutes service, there is no one definition of what constitutes “service-related” literature.

**OBSERVATION 1**  
**THE FIRST**  
**OBSERVATION FROM**  
**THE ANALYSIS OF THE**  
**SERVICE DATABASE IS**  
**THAT SERVICE IS A**  
**PROGRAM AND POLICY**  
**AREA THAT APPEARS TO**  
**BE EMERGING AS A**  
**FIELD OF STUDY IN**  
**ITS OWN RIGHT.**



**OBSERVATION 2**  
**THE LITERATURE ON**  
**SERVICE SUFFERS**  
**FROM TERMINOLOGICAL**  
**PROBLEMS AND**  
**FRAGMENTATION.**



**OBSERVATION 3**  
**THREE INTERRELATED**  
**ISSUES FORM A**  
**BARRIER TO THE**  
**DEVELOPMENT OF**  
**SERVICE AS A FIELD**  
**OF STUDY—LACK OF**  
**INFRASTRUCTURE, LACK**  
**OF INTERDISCIPLINARY**  
**DIALOGUE, AND LACK**  
**OF RIGOROUS**  
**METHODOLOGY.**



**OBSERVATION 4**  
**WHILE THE DATABASE**  
**ON SERVICE APPEARS**  
**TO INCLUDE MOST OF**  
**THE KEY RESEARCH**  
**CONDUCTED SINCE**  
**1990, THERE ARE**  
**SOME GAPS IN WHAT**  
**WAS CAPTURED**  
**THROUGH THE NINE**  
**SOURCE DATABASES.**

Further complicating the definition of service-related research is the fact that it is a moving target. For example, stipended service, mandatory service-learning programs, and community service as restitution are all relatively new types of “service” programs that have only recently generated interest among researchers. Moreover, it is unclear where the boundaries lie between volunteerism and service. Volunteering has traditionally been associated with unpaid service, but more recently it has also come to be viewed in broader terms to include stipended service (Cnaan, et al.1996).

These terminology problems are exacerbated by the interdisciplinary nature of the research. For example, a psychologist’s definition of service may not coincide with that of an educator, sociologist, or a political scientist.

Academics from different disciplines also seem to be interested in different questions. Educators and psychologists seem to focus on the individual (i.e., the server) whether it be the server’s motivations or the impact that the service activity has on the server. Educators, public administrators, and sociologists appear to be interested in how to implement effective programs (i.e., service delivery). Political scientists and sociologists seem most concerned with the impact on society (i.e., those served).

**Observation 3** – Three interrelated issues form a barrier to the development of service as a field of study—lack of infrastructure, lack of interdisciplinary dialogue, and lack of rigorous methodology.

The first of these three interrelated issues is a lack of infrastructure for the study of service. There is no professional association for researchers interested in service; there are few journals in which research about service may be published; and there is a lack of funding for research and dissertation work on service.

The second issue is the need to improve the interdisciplinary cross-fertilization of research. While there is a great deal of citizen service research in the traditional disciplines, researchers tend to focus on a limited subset of issues. There are few cross-disciplinary attempts to synthesize this literature. For the most part, it seems that work done by researchers in one discipline is often neglected in other disciplines. The works do not build upon each other.

The third of these interrelated issues is methodology. As seen above, a relatively small proportion of the total research (39%) was associated with a methods-screen keyword, linking them to some type of systematic or scientific methodology. Even among the 996 records in the methods-screen subset of the database, there are a limited number of the more rigorous types of methodologies. This tendency away from scientific approaches is probably due in part to the lack of a well-developed infrastructure for the study of service. Another likely reason is that high quality research, whether it is qualitative or quantitative, requires substantial financial resources that seem to be lacking in the study of service.

**Observation 4** – While the database on service appears to include most of the key research conducted since 1990, there are some gaps in what was captured through the nine source databases.

The service database that was assembled in this project is the most complete collection of research on service. While it appears to include most of the key research on service conducted since 1990, there are some limitations. The nine databases used as the sources of related research for the most part include only research



published in journals, books, or dissertations. These databases do not reliably include government publications (particularly non-federal government) or ad hoc publications from foundations and nonprofits.

Fortunately, the panel of experts that reviewed the database captured the few influential works not gathered through the mechanical processes to assemble the database.

**Observation 5** – The landscape of the database reveals that there are gaps in the content of the research that leave room for future researchers to explore a variety of facets of service, from the impact of service beyond the individual level to effective implementation strategies.

These gaps include:

- **Level of Analysis.** Most of the research is focused on the individual, particularly on the server. A smaller cluster of research is concerned with the impacts of the service-related activity on the larger community, institutional, or societal level.
- **Specific Types of Programs.** There appears to be little research on faith-based service programs, service programs mediated by civic associations (e.g., the Rotary Club) or corporations.
- **Demographics.** A substantial portion of the research focuses on specific demographic groups. For example, older volunteers have been the subject of many studies about volunteers (Fisher and Schaffer, 1993). As the research illuminates the behavior and orientations of some demographic groups, it neglects other demographic groups. For example, relatively little research has been conducted about African-Americans, and even less has been done about other racial and ethnic minorities, such as Hispanics, and about minorities in general. Very few studies have been conducted on issues related to income.

A small percentage of research focuses explicitly on gender and service, in which there is a tendency to focus more on females. As with minorities and people of varied socio-economic status, more research might be used to broaden service participation.

- **Implementation Structures.** There is a limited body of research on implementation structures used to deliver service. Many service-related programs are collaborative efforts requiring coordination of different individuals and organizations (i.e., inter-organizational networks). A wide range of variables, such as financial resources, staff training and expertise, and organizational leadership, can affect whether a service program is implemented successfully. High quality research is needed to better understand the collaborative processes and the other factors that influence the effectiveness of service programs.



**OBSERVATION 5**  
**THE LANDSCAPE OF**  
**THE DATABASE REVEALS**  
**THAT THERE ARE GAPS**  
**IN THE CONTENT OF THE**  
**RESEARCH THAT LEAVE**  
**ROOM FOR FUTURE**  
**RESEARCHERS TO**  
**EXPLORE A VARIETY**  
**OF FACETS OF SERVICE,**  
**FROM THE IMPACT OF**  
**SERVICE BEYOND THE**  
**INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**  
**TO EFFECTIVE**  
**IMPLEMENTATION**  
**STRATEGIES.**







**THE LITERATURE  
REVIEW HIGHLIGHTED  
THE IMPORTANCE OF  
ARTICULATING A SPE-  
CIFIC THEORY OF  
CHANGE AND TIGHTLY  
DEFINING ALL TERMI-  
NOLOGY BEFORE USING  
THE DATABASE – AND  
THEN EMPLOYING THE  
THEORY AND DEFINI-  
TIONS TO LIMIT ONE'S  
SELECTION OF THE  
RESEARCH.**



## VI. CASE IN POINT: DOES SERVICE AFFECT CITIZENSHIP?

At the request of the Grantmaker Forum's Research Task Force, the IU team used the database to explore the relationship between service and citizenship. The IU team formulated this into the question, "Does service affect citizenship?" in order to perform a literature review.

### THE LITERATURE REVIEW

In collaboration with the Grantmaker Forum, the IU team defined a theory of change and developed definition for "citizenship," in order to structure the literature review. The team searched the database for works on service and citizenship, yielding 556 sources. The team then used the methodology keyword screen to eliminate non-empirical works, such as Op-ed pieces. This methodology screen whittled the studies on service and citizenship to 219.

Next, each of these 219 citations was examined by hand to determine if it met the following two criteria: 1) Did the study match the theory of change? 2) Did the study in fact utilize empirical methods? This narrowed the studies down to 23 that addressed a variety of aspects of the relationship of service to citizenship and employed a range of definitions—examining everything from school-based service-learning to community-based service, from school children to seniors.

### THE RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF SERVICE ON CITIZENSHIP

This literature review yielded no body of evidence upon which to base conclusions about the impact that service has on citizenship. The main reasons for this lie with the state of the research on service as outlined in the previous section. Similar limitations held true for the research on service and citizenship as well. There were fewer studies than expected on the relationship of service to citizenship. In particular, there were few studies with rigorous scientific methodology. The research on service and citizenship also exhibited a serious lack of agreement about terminology. Thus the results of the literature review reflected, in part, the lack of consensus or even an evolving discussion among the studies.

### THE METHODOLOGY

In collaboration with the Grantmaker Forum, the IU team formulated a six-part definition of citizenship and a theory of change—but did not define "service." Both the definition of citizenship and the theory of change were broad and included all discussions of citizenship, regardless of conflicting or incompatible definitions. The literature review culled research on a wide array of service models, from school-based service-learning to community-based service, and on a wide range of servers, from school children to seniors.

Many of the studies reached different and sometimes conflicting conclusions, and as a result, the literature review compared apples with oranges rather than apples with apples. Because of this—and because there were so few studies—it was impossible to reach firm conclusions about the relationship of citizenship to service based on the research that has been done.



## **THE SILVER LINING: WHAT WAS LEARNED**

While the literature review did not answer the question, "Does service affect citizenship?" it did provide useful information as a survey of the existing research on the relationship of service to citizenship, as follows.

Most research on the relationship of service to citizenship, broadly defined, was focused on citizenship attitudes (28 studies). The next most common focus in the research was on philanthropic and citizenship behaviors (10 studies), followed by citizenship-related cognitive understanding (6 studies) and institutional change (6 studies). Citizenship skills and political behavior were the least-studied subjects with 4 and 3 studies each, respectively.

These findings highlight the extent to which there remains a great deal of research yet to be done to understand how service impacts citizenship behaviors including civic participation. While there is a great deal of discussion and debate about service and citizenship, there is little research to guide decision-making.

## **LESSONS LEARNED FOR USERS OF THE DATABASE**

The literature review also offered insight into the ways to effectively use the database on service research. The effort underscored the importance of defining a specific and fairly closed-ended theory of change and definitions for all terminology before using the database. This will restrict the scope of studies that are examined to those that share common assumptions.<sup>8</sup> The relevant research may validate or negate one's theory, but regardless, in order to offer reliable findings, the research selected must align with a specific set of definitions and theory of change.

## **LIMITATIONS OF USING THE DATABASE FOR LITERATURE REVIEW**

Finally, the literature review also helped clarify some of the limitations of the database. The first limitation is that the construction of the database on service research was driven by service-related search terms, not citizenship terms, that were applied to abstracts. So abstracts of studies on citizenship that don't contain service terms won't be found in the database. The second limitation is that the database contains no literature from before 1990. Third, the keywords alone don't necessarily capture all relevant citations on a subject. Fortunately, however, the database also has a search engine that does not rely on keywords, which should be used in conjunction with a keyword search to be sure to find as many relevant studies as possible in the database. Fourth and lastly, it was still necessary to examine the references in useful citations found in the database for further literature on the subject of interest.

## VII. NEXT STEPS

### NEXT STEPS FOR THE GRANTMAKER FORUM

The Grantmaker Forum is taking the following steps to address the challenges facing the research on service and volunteerism including:

- Convene Discussions on the Challenges Facing Research on Service. In presenting these findings, the Grantmaker Forum will work with other leaders in service, volunteerism, and civic engagement to convene conversations about the key issues confronting the emerging field of service. The issues include: the lack of common terminology, the apparent lack of rigorous methodology in many studies; the gaps in the content of the research on service; and the need for greater communication across disciplines, perhaps through journals or other formal mechanisms.
- Conduct Literature Reviews. The Grantmaker Forum will use the bibliographic database on service to conduct literature reviews on pertinent service-related subjects, using the lessons learned from the literature review of the relationship of service to citizenship described in this publication.
- Maintain and Improve the Database. The Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service is in the process of finding a host for the database on service research. The host must be able to maintain and update an online, searchable database that is accessible to the public, as well as actively solicit new works from a variety of experts and bibliographic sources. The Grantmaker Forum, in conjunction with the eventual host of the database, will bring together a panel of experts to review the database annually to ensure that the current year's key works are incorporated. The Grantmaker Forum will also strive to include research done by the Corporation for National Service in the database on service research.
- Encourage Funding of Research on Service. The Grantmaker Forum will continue to encourage foundations to invest not only in planning and implementing service programs, but also in research about all facets of service programs, from the impact on individual servers, to the effect of different implementation structures.

### COLLECTIVE NEXT STEPS TO ENCOURAGE THE FIELD'S DEVELOPMENT

The following suggestions are steps that should be taken collectively to encourage the continued development of service research. The Grantmaker Forum welcomes thoughts, reactions and discussion about ways to encourage the development of service as a field of study.

- Strengthen Research Infrastructure. The first requirement for enhancing research about service is to strengthen the research infrastructure to allow the field to grow, flourish, and mature. Some actions that might be taken to improve the research infrastructure include:
  - Commission a committee on service research through an existing institution such as the National Academy of Science, National Research Council or The Aspen Institute;
  - Develop a professional association;
  - Develop an interdisciplinary journal;
  - Improve research funding; and
  - Improve dissertation research funding.



- Create an Interdisciplinary Dialogue. Many of the suggestions above about research infrastructure can help overcome the current lack of interdisciplinary dialogue. For example, the development of a professional association and the creation of a new interdisciplinary journal for citizen service research would help. Foundations and other funders of research and dissertation support could place greater attention on these transdisciplinary questions and encourage interdisciplinary research. Other steps might include:
  - *Create journal symposia;*
  - *Create edited volumes; and,*
  - *Conduct further literature reviews and meta-analyses.*
- Improve the Methodology of the Research. The methodological quality of the research would be improved by strengthening the infrastructure of the field, as outlined above. For example, a new journal with high standards for methodology would help create a greater awareness of the importance of using scientific design in research methodologies. Other steps that can be taken to improve the quality of the research include:
  - *Promote longitudinal research;*
  - *Tie funding to scientific research methodology;*
  - *Move away from anecdotal evidence; and,*
  - *Avoid success bias.*

## VIII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Grantmaker Forum would like to acknowledge the following people for their contributions to the creation of the database on service research and all related publications.

### THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY TEAM

The Grantmaker Forum wishes to heartily thank the team of researchers at the Institute for the Study of Government and the Nonprofit Sector at Indiana University, led by James Perry, Ph.D., co-director of the Institute. Their creativity and intelligence in developing the database is greatly appreciated. Also appreciated is their commitment and hard work in documenting their creative process and writing up their findings. They have created a database for an entire field of study, enriching and facilitating the work of those interested in what the research has to say about service, volunteerism, and civic engagement.

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### GRANTMAKER FORUM RESEARCH TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The Grantmaker Forum thanks the members of its Research Task Force, past and present, who themselves served as expert reviewers and guided the process of creating the database and all related publications. Research Task Force Members attended regular meetings to discuss the challenges of creating the database, the findings on the service research, and the criteria necessary in a potential host for the database. They planned, problem-solved, and read version after version of the report on service research. Their dedication was invaluable, without which this publication and the database on service research would not have been possible.

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Peter Kleinbard  
*DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund*

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## EXPERT REVIEWERS

On June 28, 1999, 18 experts in the field were brought together in New York City to review and discuss the IU team's draft report. Based on this review, the IU team revised their report.

In December of 1999, this next iteration of the report was edited for grammar, not content, by Grantmaker Forum staff, and mailed to a new group of eleven experts in the field of service, including practitioners and researchers. The input of the second review was combined with the first and used to guide the creation of this monograph on service research by the staff of the Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service.

The Grantmaker Forum would like to thank the following people for their participation in the review process.

Susan Anderson  
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*RMC Research Corporation*

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*Life Cycle Institute*  
*The Catholic University*

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 While the scan of the nine bibliographic databases provided a strong foundation, it was not exhaustive. The Grantmaker Forum found other sources of research in the field of service, which have since been incorporated. This informal process will need to continue in order to maximize the completeness of the database.
- 2 For the purpose of conducting a literature review or meta analysis, however, more narrow definitions are recommended.
- 3 This was accomplished by saving the results of a search and using a filter (i.e., configuration files) to import selected information into a database. ProCite includes filters for some databases and the software Biblio-Link was used to create others. The software Book Where was used to import records from library card catalogs.
- 4 One of the highest standards for methodological rigor is experimental design, which includes a subject group (those who participate in the program) as well as a control group (those who do not participate in the program, but who are like the participants in all important aspects). Eligible individuals must be randomly assigned to the subject and control groups. Later, the two groups are compared. If changes are observed only in the subject group, the changes are assumed to be a result of the program. If similar changes (or no changes) occur in both groups, the changes cannot be assumed to be a result of the program, but rather to other factors affecting these groups. This is a basic standard for experimental or scientific design, but other layers and levels exist.
- 5 Most of the records that identified a methodology in the abstract identified only one method, and were thus tagged with only one methodology code word. However, some abstracts indicated that more than one methodological approach had been taken. In this case, the record was tagged with two or more code words, to give the most accurate representation of the contents of the research. Because of this, the numbers in the citation column of Table 3 are duplicative and sum to 1,789, rather than 996, the actual number of citations contained in the methods-screen database.
- 6 Many journals are peer-reviewed and therefore meet one quality threshold. However, individual articles appearing in peer-reviewed journals are not always subject to peer review. In addition, some journals that are peer-reviewed may have high acceptance rates, suggesting that peer review by itself is not a highly reliable indicator that the research is of high methodological rigor. The IU team was unable to code individual articles for the presence or absence of a peer review.
- 7 There may be some public safety citations that study restitution, but do not list it explicitly in the abstract.
- 8 A theory of change explains the interaction between phenomena—between the act of service and a participant's citizenship skills and behaviors, for example. Beyond these two key elements, a holistic theory of change would also explain the impact of factors such as the type of service performed, participant's age, economic status, and type of citizenship skill or behavior sought.



# *The Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service*

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METHODOLOGY

CITIZENSHIP

TERMINOLOGY



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