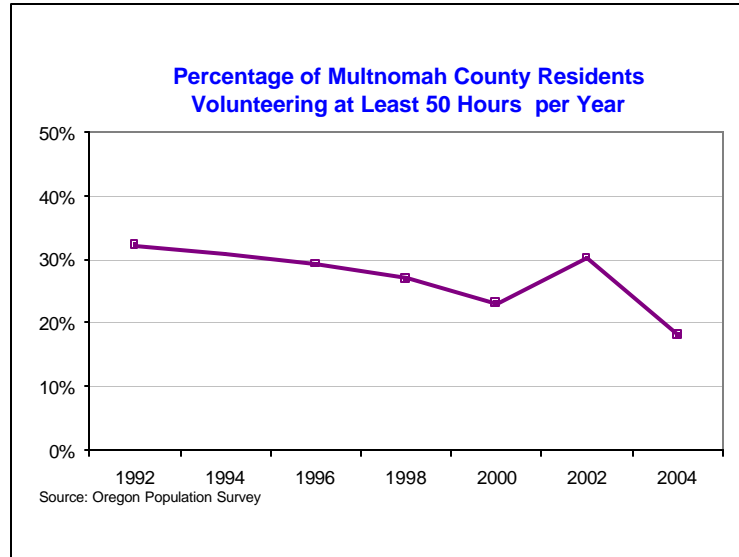


Volunteerism in Multnomah County jumped after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, but then declined, according to an analysis of Oregon Population Survey data by the Portland Multnomah Progress Board.

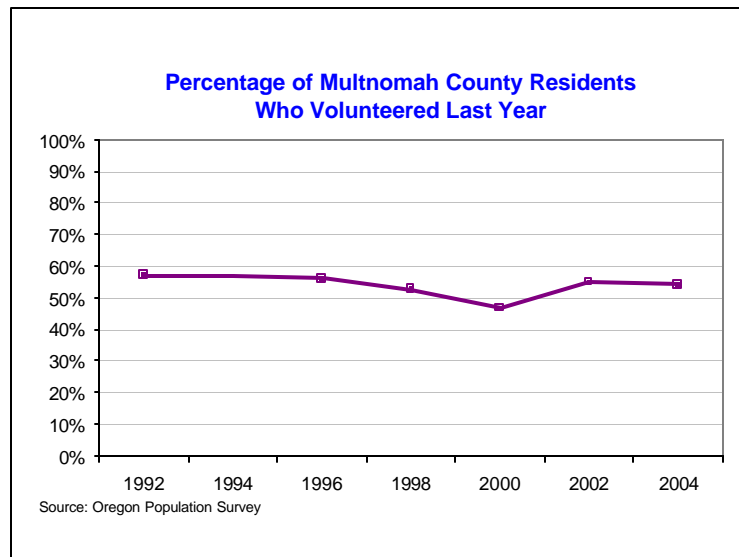
After rising in 2002 to its highest level (30%) since the early 1990's, the percentage of Multnomah County residents volunteering at least 50 hours per year returned in 2004 to its long-term downward trend, hitting its lowest point (18%) since the survey's inception.



Fifty-four percent reported volunteering “any hours” during the year, 3 times as many as those reporting at least 50 hours. Those volunteering any hours per year also showed a 1990's decline and 2002 increase. They did not show the same strong decline after 9/11 as those volunteering at least 50 hours, losing only 1 percentage point.

“Those who volunteer at least 50 hours are often ‘leadership’ volunteers: persons who organize projects or serve on community boards.” Said Jason McKain of SOLV, an Oregon non-profit which encourages volunteerism.

Those volunteering less hours are sometimes characterized as “episodic” volunteers, likely participating in specific, one-time projects like beach cleanups.



In a recent national survey former volunteers were asked why they stopped volunteering. Over 45% reported “not enough time,” by far the most common response. The next largest reason was “medical or health problems” at 14%.

“People’s lives have become much busier with increased job demands and other responsibilities,” said McKain. “Many want to volunteer, but the opportunities must fit within already tight schedules. This is one reason we see more episodic volunteering; people are better able to work it in.”

The 9/11 effect was also apparent for the State of Oregon overall.