

**OPTIMISTIC, TOLERANT, AND INVOLVED:
YOUNG AMERICANS SPEAK OUT ON SERVICE, RACE RELATIONS,
AND THE EFFECTS OF SEPTEMBER 11**

CONDUCTED FOR PUBLIC ALLIES

JUNE 1, 2002

Peter D. Hart Research Associates
1724 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009

From April 19 to 29, 2002, Peter D. Hart Research Associates conducted a national survey on behalf of Public Allies among 814 randomly selected young Americans age 18 to 30, including 132 African Americans, 121 Hispanics, and 113 Asian Americans. The margin of error is $\pm 3.5\%$ for results based on the entire sample; for subgroup populations, the margin of error is higher.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Despite recent events, young adults are optimistic, tolerant, and involved. Instead of finding young Americans downtrodden about the implications of the nation's recently declared "War On Terror" in the wake of September 11, and their seemingly diminished employment prospects due to the poorly performing economy, the findings from this survey suggest that young Americans remain positive and quite optimistic about the future in a number of areas. Young adults not only perceive their personal futures to be bright, but they also are actively engaged in helping to make their communities better places through various service activities, and they are sanguine about the state of race relations in America.

The majority of young adults participate in community service, which is making them more tolerant and civically engaged young adults. While few have heard the President's recent call to service, most young people are already engaged in some type of service and are interested in serving more. The wide variety of community service activities being undertaken by this group are having wide-ranging and significant effects on them, transforming them into the tolerant and civically engaged adults most Americans hope every generation becomes. Through their service activities they have become more interested in following the news; more tolerant of people from different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds; and better informed about politics, government, civics, and the issues of the day.

Young adults inclined to serve continue to say that they prefer to try to make a difference at the local level rather than be a part of a larger state or national movement. As we found in a Hart Research poll conducted for Public Allies in 1998, this age group believes that "volunteering to help individuals in a direct way" is the most effective means of bringing about needed changes in America. They want to have a direct influence on the lives of people in their local communities, particularly the lives of youth. In addition, we see some modest growth in the number of young adults who see political engagement as an effective way to bring about needed changes in America.

The majority of young adults believe that race relations in America are good, and they wish to have more diverse relationships. They believe that there has been progress in race relations during the past decade and that America's increasing racial diversity is more of a good thing than a bad thing. A slight majority still think that integration is very important, though many young people believe that integration is less important than ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and has the same opportunities. Young adults continue to see building relationships with people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds as one of the most effective ways to bring about needed changes in our country.

The terrorist attacks and their aftermath have had an enlightening effect on this

generation, while also causing them to become more fearful of immigrants. Much as Vietnam and the activism of the 1960s had a profound effect on their parents' generation, the events of September 11 have made a large impact on America's youngest adults. Since September, 18- to 30-year-olds say that they have become more likely to get involved politically with their communities and with people of different races and cultures. They recognize that certain groups are being systematically discriminated against due to the attacks, yet their fears of another attack outweigh their desire to protect immigrants and other minorities from such discrimination. Although this generation maintains a positive outlook and appears more committed to service and racial tolerance, much remains to be done to increase civic activity and tolerance among these young adults.

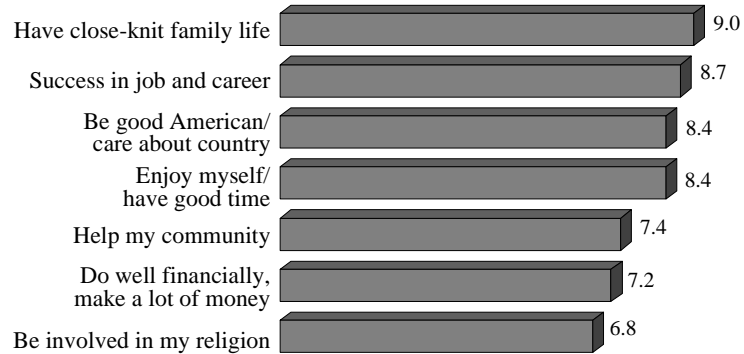
YOUNG ADULTS VALUE FAMILY, CAREER, AND COUNTRY

When today's young adults consider what is most important to them, having successful families and careers are at the top of the list, but being a good American is also an important priority. We asked young people to rate a number of goals on a 10-point scale, on which "10" means the goal is extremely important and "1" means it is not that important. Having a close-knit family life emerges as their most important goal (mean rating=9.0), followed by being successful in their job and career (8.7). While having a close-knit family is important to both young men and young women, it is more important to women: 93% of women (9.3) rate having a close-knit family as either an "8," a "9," or a "10," compared with just 77% of men (8.6). Hispanic women in particular strongly value the importance of having a close-knit family: 81% rate this goal a "10," resulting in a mean of 9.7. Among women of other origins, Asians average a 9.0, African Americans a 9.1, and whites a 9.3.

Being successful in one's job and career, while important to all, is most important to African Americans, Hispanics, and the youngest group of youths polled. At least nine in 10 African-American (91%) and Hispanic (95%) young adults rate this measure either an "8," a "9," or a "10," while 78% of whites and 83% of Asians rate it as highly. Eighty-nine percent of 18- to 21-year-olds and 87% of 22- to 25-year-olds rate job success as highly, but only 71% of 26- to 30-year-olds follow suit. Thus, the means for 18- to 21-year-olds (9.1) and 22- to 25-year-olds (9.2) are much higher than that for 26- to 30-year-olds (8.2).

Life's Priorities

(Mean score on a 10-point scale)



Young adults feel that being a good American who cares about the good of the country is also an important goal for their generation (mean=8.4). Two in five (43%) give this value a “10,” and a majority (57%) rate it either a “9” or “10.” This ideal is particularly important to young adults living in the South (mean=8.9) and those who have not been to college (8.8).

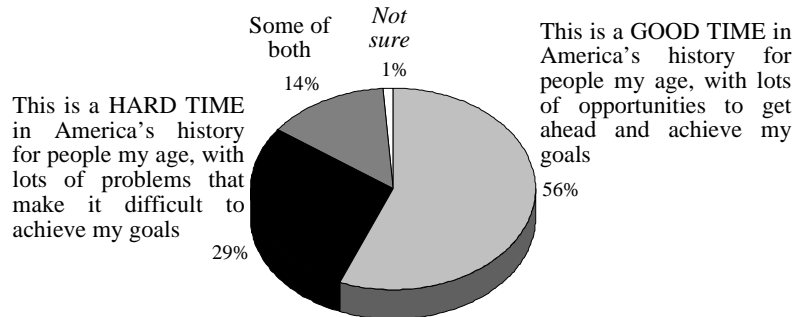
Almost universally, young adults believe that enjoying yourself and having a good time is an important goal in life (mean=8.4), but it appears that even among the youngest Americans, one expects to have less and less fun as one gets older. Among 18- to 21-year-olds, enjoying life garners a mean score of 8.7 on the 10-point scale, and 22- to 25-year-olds tally a mean of 8.5; among the oldest members of this age cohort (26 to 30), however, the mean falls to 8.1.

Notably, another important goal for young adults is being involved in helping their community be a better place (mean=7.4). Young women (7.6) in general place more importance on helping improve their community than do men (7.2), but African-American women (8.4) especially value this goal. Less important goals include doing well financially and making a lot of money (7.2) and being involved in religion and living up to their religious principles (6.8).

FOR MOST, THE GLASS IS HALF FULL

Rather than focusing on the seriousness of national security concerns and a sputtering national economy, young Americans are optimistic about the future on a number of fronts. A majority (56%) of 18- to 30-year-olds say that this is a good time in America’s history for people their age, a time with lots of opportunities to get ahead and achieve their goals; only 29% believe the opposite, resulting in a 27-percentage-point differential between those saying this is a good time and those believing this is a hard time. Another 14% say it is some of both.

Is This A Good Time Or A Hard Time For Young People?



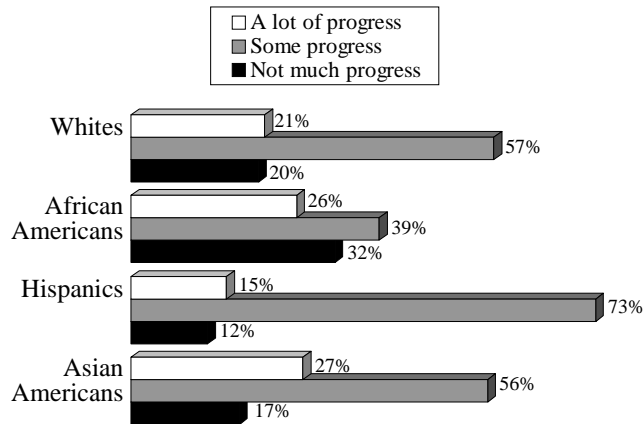
Hispanics and Asian Americans, along with current college students, are the most likely to believe that this is a good time for people their age, while African Americans and those who have not attended college are the least likely to say so. At least six in 10 Hispanics (62%), Asian Americans (61%), and current college students (68%) believe this is a good time, compared with only 22% of each of these groups who say it is a hard time—approximately a 40-point differential for all three groups. When one considers the results by sex, interesting differences emerge among Hispanics and Asian Americans. Among Hispanics, men (69%) are much more likely than women (56%) to say this is a good time, resulting in a differential of 48 points among Hispanic men and a 32-point differential among Hispanic women. Among Asian Americans, however, women (65%) are more likely than men (57%) to say this is a good time for them and their peers, which yields a 47-point differential among women versus a 30-point differential among men.

A slight majority (53%) of African Americans say this is a good time, as opposed to 34% who say this is a hard time (19-point differential); yet, the differential among African-American men (9 points) is much smaller than the differential among women (27 points). African-American men and young adults who have not attended college are the only two demographic groups in the survey whose differential between a good time and a hard time is in the single digits (9 points and 4 points, respectively), which suggests that African-American men and non-college-educated young adults are having the toughest time getting ahead these days.

OPTIMISM ABOUT RACE RELATIONS AND A MORE DIVERSE NATION

Most young adults are also feeling good about the current state of race relations across the nation as well as the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of America. A majority (55%) say that race relations in the United States are good (4% very good, 51% fairly good), and a third (32%) say that they are bad (6% very bad, 26% fairly bad). One in 10 (11%) give race relations a mixed review.

Perceived Progress In Race Relations Over The Past Ten Years



Three-quarters (77%) say that the nation has made progress in improving race relations in the past 10 years (21% a lot, 56% some), while only one in five (21%) believe that we have not made much progress during that time. African Americans (65%) are less likely to have noticed progress in race relations than are whites (78%), Hispanics (88%), and Asian Americans (83%). One-third (32%) of African-American 18- to 30-year-olds say that there has not been much progress at all.

Young Americans are divided over the amount of attention the nation pays to dealing with the race issue in America. Four in 10 (38%) say that we devote too much attention to dealing with race relations in our country, and the same proportion (39%) say that we spend too little time on the issue. One in five (17%) say that we pay the right amount of attention to this matter. A plurality (42%) of young white adults believe that we give too much attention to race, while majorities of African Americans (59%) and Asian Americans (51%) and a plurality of Hispanics (40%) think that we spend too little time on the issue.

Nonetheless, today's young adults are much more likely to say that the growing number of African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and other minorities is more of a good thing for the nation than a bad thing. Overall, a plurality (46%) believe that the browning of America is more of a good thing, while only 8% believe it is more of a bad thing. Four in 10 (40%) say it doesn't make a difference. This reflects a slightly more positive attitude about the country's increased diversity since our 1998 poll, when 40% said it was more of a good thing, 13% said it was more of a bad thing, and 42% said it didn't matter.

Young adults in the West and Midwest are more likely than their counterparts in the South and Northeast to believe that race relations in the country are good. Six in 10 young adults in the West (62%) and Midwest (59%) say that race relations are good, while 53% in the South and 49% in the Northeast say the same. A majority (53%) of Northeasterners, however, say that America's increasing diversity is more of a good thing—this is the only region of the country where this sentiment garners a majority. In the Midwest 38% agree, as do 45% in the South and 49% in the West.

The older young adults become, the less likely they are to view race relations as good. Two-thirds (64%) of 18- to 21-year-olds, six in 10 (60%) 22- to 25-year-olds, and fewer than half (45%) of 26- to 30-year-olds believe that race relations are good. Following this trend, the younger cohorts within each race or ethnic group are more positive about race relations than are the older ones in their group. For example, among 18- to 23-year-olds, 72% of Asians, 69% of Hispanics, 65% of whites, and 54% of African Americans say that race relations are good; among 24- to 30-year-olds, 68% of Asians, 51% of Hispanics, 48% of whites, and 43% of African Americans agree. Overall, Asian Americans and Hispanics view the state of race relations differently than do whites and African Americans: 69% of Asians and 60% of Hispanics say that race relations are good, compared with 56% of whites and 49% of African Americans.

Not surprisingly, Asian Americans (54%), Hispanics (51%), and African Americans (50%) all believe that the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of America is more of a good thing than a bad thing. Young whites are about as likely to say this is a good thing (44%) as to say it doesn't make a difference (40%). Still, 10% of whites say that America's increasing diversity is a bad thing, compared with only 5% of African Americans, 4% of Asians, and 2% of Hispanics.

Interestingly, when the increasing diversity of America is framed in another way, the proportion of young adults who say that this is more of a good thing drops substantially. Only one in four (24%) 18- to 30-year-olds say the fact that African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, Arabs, and other minorities are expected to make up more than half the population of the United States by the middle of the 21st century is more of a good thing. A majority (56%) believe that this will not make a difference, and 15% say that this is more of a bad thing. More than a third of the minority groups polled—37% of African Americans, 36% of Hispanics, and 35% of Asians—believe that this will be more of a good thing, compared with only a fifth (20%) of whites who say the same. One-fifth (19%) of whites say that this will be a bad thing, while only 1% of African Americans, 8% of Hispanics, and 7% of Asian Americans agree. Majorities of whites (56%), African Americans (57%), Hispanics (55%), and Asians (53%) say that it won't make a difference one way or the other.

Young adults are somewhat divided over the importance of fairness and equity of opportunity for all versus the goal of integration at home, work, and school. A small majority (54%) of young Americans believe it is more important that people of different races and ethnic groups live, go to school, and work more closely together, while a large minority (42%) say it is not important that people of different races and ethnic groups interact more closely so long as everyone is treated fairly and has the same opportunities. Young Americans who have been exposed to college are much more likely than those who have not to believe in the goal of greater integration. Six in 10 current college students (60%) and young adults who have spent time on a college campus (59%) say that this goal is more important. Conversely, a majority (53%) of young Americans who have not attended college say that this is not important so long as everyone is treated fairly and has the same opportunities.

ENLIGHTENED BUT CAUTIOUS—THE EFFECTS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Most observers assume that the events of September 11, 2001, left an indelible mark on the psyche of almost every American. The results of this poll suggest that September 11 has substantially changed America's young adults in a number of important ways, some of which no one could have reliably predicted immediately following the attacks.

The terror attacks have had what some might describe as contradictory effects on America's youngest adults. The survey results suggest that young people have become somewhat more grateful for the myriad opportunities represented in America, and they are planning to take advantage of these opportunities to help improve the country and themselves. Significantly, September 11 has had an enlightening effect on young people, causing them to want to get more involved in the political process and in their local communities. They also express a desire to personally embrace the diversity of America by reaching out and becoming more familiar with people different from themselves.

Yet, at the same time that they have become more grateful for what they have, they have also become more careful. They recognize that certain groups in this country are likely to be discriminated against in the wake of the events of September 11, but to some extent they appear willing to tolerate a somewhat heightened level of discrimination to help prevent the occurrence of more attacks.

The largest impact of the terrorist attacks on young people has been a greater tolerance, which builds upon the optimistic views they hold about race relations and increasing diversity. Nearly half (45%) of all 18- to 30-year-olds polled say that compared with one year ago—before September 11—their willingness to learn more about and build friendships and relationships with people different from themselves has grown. Only 3% say that their willingness has decreased, resulting in a 42-point differential, the largest differential among all the measures tested. Still, a majority (52%) say that their willingness to learn about people different from themselves has remained about the same.

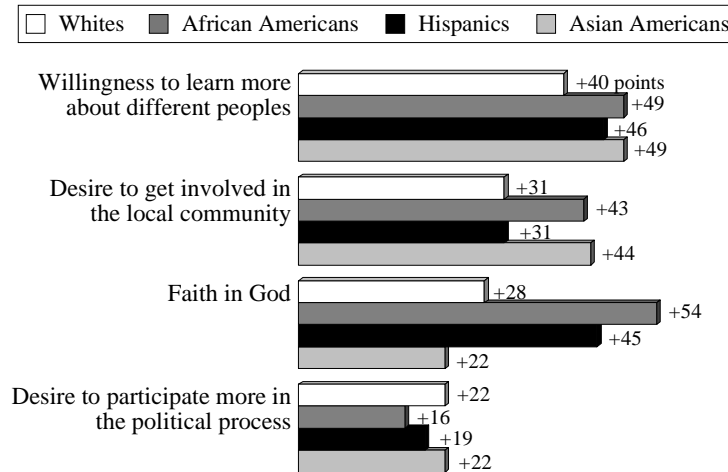
Young women (49%) are more likely than young men (41%) to say that their willingness to build a diversity of relationships has increased; the differential among females is 48 points compared with 37 points among males. A majority of African and Asian Americans (52% each) say their willingness has increased, both resulting in differentials of 49 points. The differential among Hispanics is 46 points, and among whites it is 42 points, although white males are significantly less likely than any other group to say their willingness has increased since September 11. Among young white men, the differential on this measure is 34 points, significantly lower than the differentials among white women (47 points), African-American men (47 points), Hispanic men (43 points), and Asian men (46 points).

More than a third (36%) of young adults say their desire to get involved in their local community has increased since September 11; only 3% say their desire has decreased (33-point differential), and 61% say it has stayed the same. The desire to get more involved is most pronounced among African Americans and Asians, with 45% of each group saying their desire has increased, resulting in differentials of 43 points and 44 points, respectively. The events of

September 11 are more likely to make young women (38-point differential) want to get involved than young men (27-point differential); this is especially true among African-American and Hispanic women. A majority (52%) of African-American women say their desire to get involved in their local community has increased (52-point differential), while 38% of African-American men say the same (33-point differential). Among Hispanics the same trend emerges: 40% of Hispanic women have experienced an increased desire to get involved in their community since 9/11 (38-point differential), while a third (33%) of Hispanic men feel the same (21-point differential).

9/11's Impact On Young Americans

(Differential: % saying has increased minus % saying has decreased)



The poll results also show that young adults have tended to become more spiritual in the wake of the terrorist attacks last year. About a third (35%) of all young Americans report that their faith in God has increased since September 11. Only 2% say that their faith has decreased (33-point differential), and 61% say their faith has stayed about the same. A majority (56%) of African Americans (54-point differential) and about half (48%) of Hispanics (45-point differential) report a greater faith in God in the last year, compared with 30% of whites (28-point differential) and 27% of Asians (22-point differential).

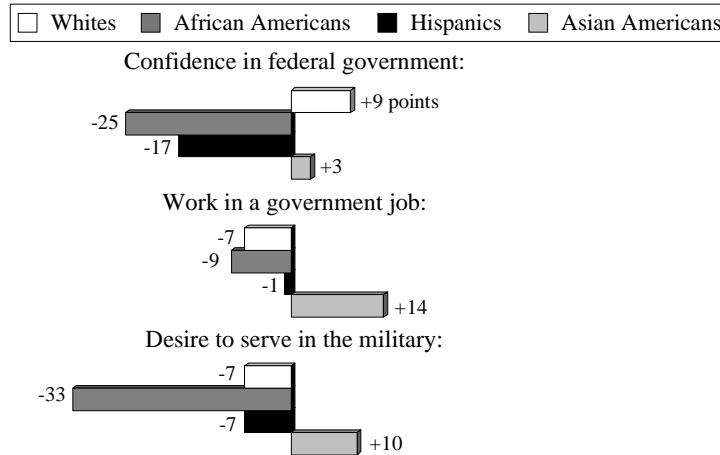
It appears that last year's tragic events have also served as a political wake-up call for many young adults across the country, a third (32%) of whom say their desire to participate in the political process has increased since last September. This notwithstanding, one in ten (11%) young Americans say that their desire to participate politically has decreased since last year (21-point differential). While current college students (41%) are the most likely to say their interest in getting involved politically has increased, African Americans (16%) and Hispanics (14%) are the demographic groups most likely to report a diminished desire to participate politically since September 11.

But among these two minority groups, age plays an important role on this measure. Among African Americans, the youngest adults—age 18 to 23—express much more passion to get involved in the political process than do older young adults—age 24 to 30. Four in ten (39%) 18- to 23-year-old African Americans say that their political interest has increased (25-

point differential), while only a quarter (25%) of African Americans age 24 to 30 say the same (six-point differential). Among Hispanics the trend is reversed: Almost four in 10 (37%) 24- to 30-year-olds say that their political interest has increased (29-point differential), while 30% of Hispanics age 18 to 23 agree (11-point differential).

9/11's Impact On Young Americans

(Differential: % saying has increased minus % saying has decreased)



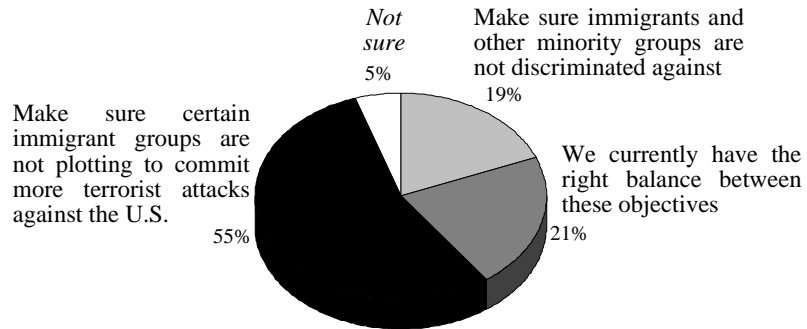
At the same time, confidence in the federal government has remained static. One in four young adults say that their confidence in the federal government has increased (25%), while the same proportion say that it has decreased (23%) since September 11 (two-point differential). Half (49%), however, say that their confidence in Washington has stayed about the same. Among whites (nine-point differential) and Asian Americans (three points), there has been a small net increase in confidence in the federal government, while among African Americans (-25 points) and Hispanics (-17 points), there has been a significant net decrease in confidence.

Perhaps as a result of young adults' attitudes toward the federal government, we find few who want to work in a government job or serve in the military. Only about one in ten (13%) say their desire to do either has increased, and one in five say their desire to work in a government job (19%) or serve in the military (22%) has decreased since last year. Asian Americans are the only racial group in the survey who display a greater desire to either work in a government job (14-point differential) or serve in the military (10 points). Working in a government job is unattractive to whites (-7 points), African Americans (-9 points), and Hispanics (-1 point), while attitudes toward serving in the military are decidedly negative among whites (-7 points), Hispanics (-7 points), and especially African Americans (-33 points). In spite of this, a majority (56%) of young adults believe that at some point during their lives there will be a time when young Americans will be required to serve in the military to defend the country; 37% do not believe there will be a draft in their lifetime.

While many of the changes among young Americans since September 11 imply an enlightening effect, we also find that they are willing to sacrifice certain protections for immigrants and minorities to prevent other attacks from happening again. Specifically, a majority (55%) of young adults across America say that the United States should place a higher priority on making sure that certain immigrant groups are not plotting to commit more terrorist

attacks against the United States, while only one in five (19%) believe a higher priority should be placed on making sure that immigrants and other minority groups are not discriminated against. One in five (21%) think we currently have the right balance between the two objectives.

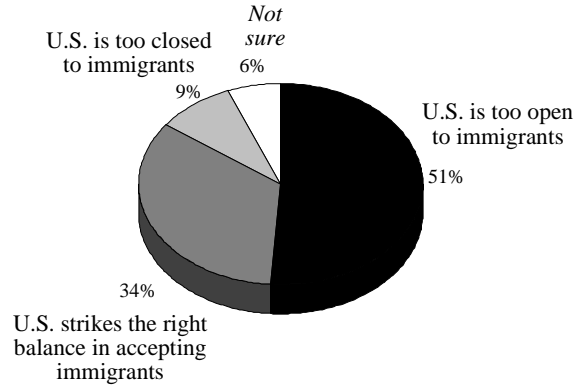
Which Should Be The Higher Priority When It Comes To Immigrants?



Young adults with no prior exposure to college are the most likely young Americans to believe a higher priority should be placed on ensuring that certain immigrant groups are not planning more attacks. Almost two-thirds (63%) of those who have not been to college hold this view, compared with 56% who have attended college and 46% of current college students. The one racial group that is evenly divided on this issue is Asian Americans: One-third (32%) say making sure that certain immigrants are not plotting more terror attacks should be the priority, one-third (31%) say making sure that immigrants are not discriminated against should be given higher priority, and another third (34%) say the U.S. currently has the right balance between the two. Larger proportions of whites (58%), Hispanics (53%), and African Americans (48%) believe that protecting the country against immigrant terror plots is the more important priority.

At the same time, they think that Arabs, Arab Americans, Muslims, and immigrants have been discriminated against more often since September 11. Three-quarters of young people believe that Arabs and Arab Americans (77%) and Muslims (74%) have experienced more discrimination since last September, and a majority (57%) say that immigrants have also been the victims of more discrimination in the months following the attacks. Most believe that African Americans (70%), Hispanics (70%), and Asian Americans (64%) are being discriminated against about the same amount today as they were one year ago; a majority of each of these groups—African Americans (63%), Hispanics (68%), and Asian Americans (74%)—feel that this is the case with their own group.

Perceptions Of United States Immigration Policies



Underscoring young adults' attitudes about the importance of making sure that certain immigrant groups are not planning more attacks is the view that the United States is too open to immigrants: A majority (51%) of young Americans say the country is too open to immigrants from other countries. Only one in ten (9%) believe our borders are too closed, and a third (34%) say the U.S. has struck about the right balance in accepting immigrants from other countries. This is a notable shift from a poll conducted for NBC and the *Wall Street Journal* in 2000, when 41% of 18- to 29-year-olds believed that we were too open, 12% thought we were too closed, and 45% believed we were striking the right balance. Once again, education is an important predictor of the strength of attitudes around this issue. Two-thirds (64%) of young adults who do not have any college experience say the country is too open to immigrants. Half (49%) of those who have been to college share this view, and four in 10 (43%) current college students agree. Interestingly, a majority (51%) of young people who believe race relations in the United States today are good also believe that our borders are too open.

Although majorities of young African Americans (56%) and whites (55%) agree that our borders are too open, Hispanics and Asian Americans disagree. Only a third (35%) of Hispanics and three in 10 (28%) Asian Americans believe that our country is too open to immigrants. A plurality (44%) of Hispanics and a majority (58%) of Asian Americans say that the nation strikes the correct balance in accepting immigrants from abroad. About one in ten in both groups (14% of Hispanics and 11% of Asian Americans) say that U.S. borders are too closed to immigrants.

ACTIVE AND INVOLVED: THE IMPACT OF SERVICE ON A GENERATION

Implicit in President George W. Bush's recent national call to service—that all Americans during their lifetime give 4,000 hours, or the equivalent of two years, to volunteer service—is an understanding that with greater voluntary community service, America will get closer to solving its most intractable social ills. Yet, according to the survey results, community service also leads to a more tolerant, accepting, and civically engaged citizenry.

With only a quarter (25%) of all young adults having heard the President's call to service (including only 8% who report hearing a fair amount or more about it), and less than half (44%)

of those who have heard about it saying that it makes them at least somewhat more likely to get more involved in service activities, it seems the call may not have been loud enough. Nonetheless, a strong majority (65%) of young adults say they have already been involved in activities to help their community, such as volunteering their time, belonging to an organization, or advocating on a public issue within the past three years. This is especially true of young adults who have been exposed to college. Three-quarters (76%) of current college students and almost three-quarters (72%) of those who have attended college say that they have been involved in service activities over the past three years. Fewer than half (46%) who have never been to college say the same.

These young people who have participated in voluntary service to their communities are looked upon very favorably by their peers. Indeed, young people who participate with organizations such as Public Allies are considered to be role models by some and ideal candidates for friends by many others. When asked about someone who devoted a year or more of their life to community service, more than half (54%) of all young adults across the nation say that they would look up to and admire (23%) or would want to make friends with (31%) this person. Another 22% say it would satisfy them knowing that such an individual were part of their community, while only 3% say that this would not be their type of person.

Among those who have been active in community service activities, the frequency of their participation varies from several times a year (41%) to about once a month (17%), several times a month (13%), or once a week or more (18%) in the past year or two. Only one in ten (8%) young Americans say that they have participated in community activities just once in the past one or two years. Women tend to participate in community service activities more frequently than men, with 21% of women (compared with 14% of men) saying they participate once a week or more. In addition, about a quarter (23%) of young African Americans say that they participate in service activities once a week or more, while among whites (18%), Asian Americans (16%), and Hispanics (11%), fewer participate this often.

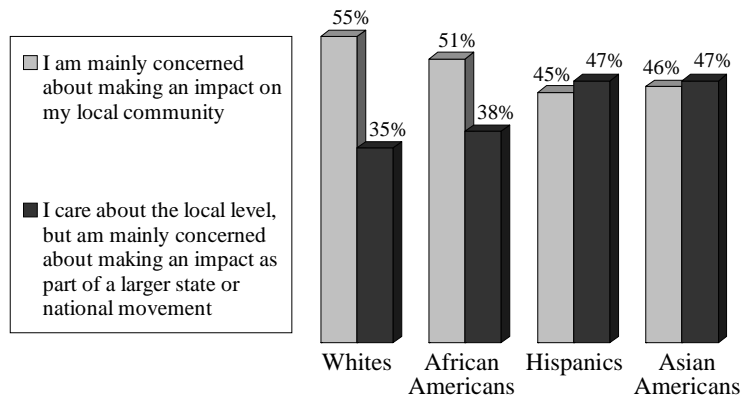
Influences On Desire To Participate In Community Service



The motivation for many young people to participate in service activities comes directly from home, while others are inspired by personal experiences or their faith. Almost a third (30%) of those who are active in service say their parents and family members are the single greatest influences on their desire to participate in activities to improve their community. One in five (22%) point to a personal experience or issue they care about as their greatest influence, while another 14% gain motivation from their spiritual or religious faith. Others say that their single greatest motivators are friends who are involved (7%); a teacher, pastor, or other community leader (7%); a service program at school or college (7%); a community organization to which they belong (5%); or a service program at their place of employment (5%).

Those who have been involved in service, civic, or community activities over the past three years indicate that they have participated in a diverse set of activities. A majority say they have volunteered with an organized group or association at a school, hospital, or neighborhood center (56%), or that they have participated in a charity event or fundraiser, such as a walk or social event to benefit a charitable cause (52%). Half say they have participated by helping others in need directly, but not through an organized volunteer group (50%), or by acting as a tutor or mentor to a younger person (49%). One in five (22%) have contacted an elected official to express views, and 17% have participated in efforts to promote a political or social cause. Only about one in 20 (4%) have served in AmeriCorps or another formal service program.

Local Versus National Impact Of Young Adults' Participation

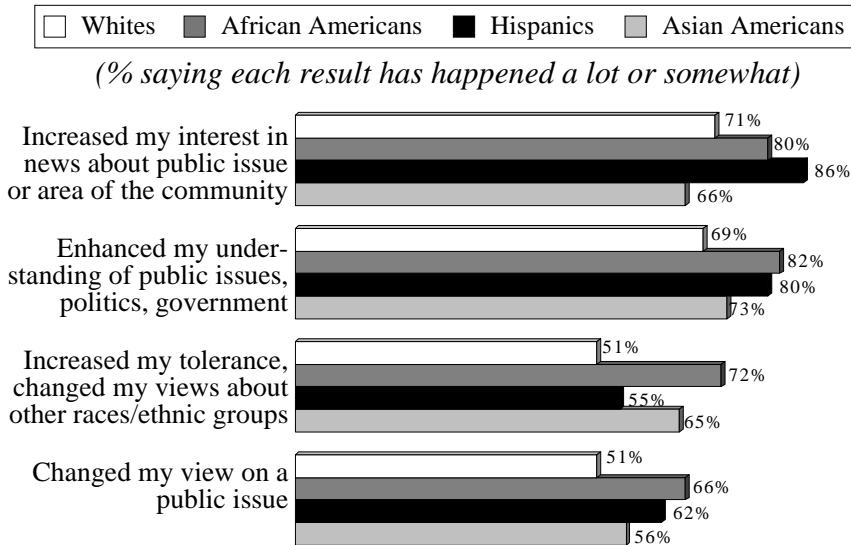


Indeed, young adults say they would rather make an impact on the local level in their own community (52%) than on a larger state or national movement (39%). This is especially true among whites and African Americans. Majorities of both young whites (55%) and young African Americans (51%) say that they mainly care about making an impact in their local community, while 35% of whites and 38% of African Americans are mainly concerned about making an impact as part of larger movements. Hispanics and Asian Americans are more evenly divided on this matter. Among Hispanics, 45% are mainly concerned about having an impact on their local community, and 47% are mainly interested in becoming part of a state or

national effort. Similarly, 46% of Asian Americans want to devote their volunteer efforts mainly to their local community, compared with 47% who want to be part of a larger movement.

As evidenced by the 49% serving as tutors and mentors, **young adults want to have a direct influence on someone in their community, particularly youth.** Eighty-five percent say that volunteering to help individuals directly is a very (58%) or fairly (27%) effective way for them personally to bring about needed changes in our country. These views are held by nine in 10 (92%) young adults in the South, more than eight in 10 in the Midwest (85%) and Northeast (82%), and three-quarters (77%) in the West. Two-thirds (66%) of young adults involved in regular service—once a month or more—believe that volunteering in a direct way is a very effective strategy for change.

Impact Of Participation In Service Activities On Young Americans



These activities, young adults say, have had a number of wide-ranging and significant effects on them. Three-quarters (73%) say that their participation in service activities has heightened either a lot or somewhat their interest in following news about a public issue or area of the community in which they were not interested before. A majority (55%) of Hispanics and half (49%) of African Americans say that their participation has increased their interest in following news about a public issue a lot. Seven in ten (72%) young adults say that their service activities have enhanced their understanding of public issues, politics, government, or civics. Again, Hispanics (38%) and African Americans (38%) are more likely than either whites (30%) or Asian Americans (28%) to say that their understanding of public issues has been enhanced a lot through their service.

Significantly, a majority (55%) of all young adults say that their activities have increased their tolerance or changed their views about people of different racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds. Although increased tolerance through service is more likely to be experienced by African (72%) and Asian Americans (65%), 55% of Hispanics and 51% of white Americans who have volunteered have also had this revelation. (Young white women [56%] are more likely

than young white men [47%] to indicate that volunteering has increased their tolerance.) A majority of youth also say that their volunteering has changed their view on a public issue. Service, therefore, seems to not only help transform those being served, but it also helps turn those doing the serving into engaged, enlightened, and tolerant members of society.

Furthermore, the types of service opportunities and service organizations young adults say they are most interested in getting involved with help explain why some of these personal changes may have occurred. Beyond tutoring and mentoring youth (75%), young adults display a great deal or fair amount of interest in helping build affordable housing options for low-income families (65%), helping community residents gain access to health care and other social services (60%), educating people about environmental conservation (54%), and assisting with homeland security by helping communities prepare for threats of terrorism (53%). Least appealing among those tested is volunteering as part of a religious organization that provides social services—only 46% of all young adults have a great deal or fair amount of interest in this.

African Americans (86%) and Hispanics (80%) are more interested in tutoring and mentoring than are whites (72%) or Asian Americans (65%). Volunteering to help build affordable housing options for low-income families is also of most interest to African Americans and Hispanics: Eight in ten African Americans and three-quarters of Hispanics say that they have a great deal or fair amount of interest in helping build housing for low-income families, whereas among whites (61%) and Asians (52%), this option is received less enthusiastically. Similarly, African Americans (67%) and Hispanics (73%) display more interest in helping community residents gain access to health care and other social services than do whites (57%) and Asian Americans (43%). In addition, African Americans are far more interested in faith-based services than are other groups.

FAITH-BASED STRATEGIES HOLD STRONG APPEAL FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS

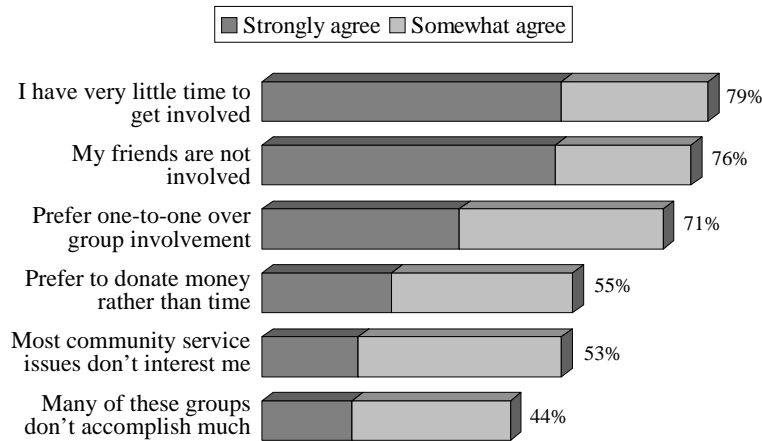
Overall, the intersection between service and faith-based institutions is among the least appealing venues for community service among young adults. For young African Americans, however, working through religious organizations holds a significant amount of appeal—the most among any other demographic group in the poll. For example, 69% of African Americans say that they have a great deal or fair amount of interest in getting involved with a service or community organization that is part of a religious organization. African-American women are particularly interested in volunteering through a religious organization, with three-quarters (75%) saying they have a great deal or fair amount of interest compared with two-thirds (63%) of African-American men.

Indeed, African Americans place much more faith in the entire range of religion-inspired goals and strategies for change that we tested. When asked to rate a number of goals that young people might have on a 10-point scale (“10” is extremely important, “1” is not that important), 71% of African Americans rate being involved in religion and living up to religious principles as either an “8,” a “9,” or a “10” (mean=8.2). Overall, this goal garners a mean rating of 6.8 among the entire sample. Additionally, three-quarters (73%) of African Americans say that participating in religious activities is a very or fairly effective way to bring about needed changes, 20 points higher than the result among the entire sample.

THE NON-PARTICIPATING: IF ONLY MY FRIENDS WERE INVOLVED

Young Americans who choose not to participate in service, civic, or community activities are less likely to point to service organizations for their lack of motivation than to other more individual reasons. When presented with six common reasons why people do not volunteer their time for service activities, young adults say that a lack of time and their friends' lack of involvement are the two most discouraging factors for them personally.

Reasons For Not Being Involved With Service/Community Organizations



Eight in 10 (79%) young adults who do not participate agree that they have little time in their lives these days to get involved with service or community organizations. This sentiment is shared by nine in 10 non-participating Asian Americans, more than eight in 10 non-participating whites, and about two thirds of non-participating Hispanics (67%) and African Americans (63%). A contributing factor for three-quarters (76%) of young Americans is the fact that most of their friends are not involved in service activities. Peer involvement is especially important for current college students, 86% of whom say that their lack of service is due to their friends' not being involved. Having friends to volunteer with is slightly more important for young women (80%) than for young men (71%)—87% of African-American women and 82% of white women who do not volunteer cite this as a reason, compared with 62% of young African-American men and 72% of young white men.

Similar to many young people who are active in volunteer service, 71% of non-participating young adults say that if they were to serve their local community, they would rather get involved with individuals on a one-to-one basis than volunteer through a service or community organization. Only a slight majority (54%) of non-participating young adults who live in the Northeast agree with this sentiment, while three-quarters of those living in the Midwest (76%), the South (74%), and the West (75%) say the same.

A smaller majority (55%) of young adults who do not volunteer say that they would prefer to donate money instead of volunteering their time though a service or community

organization. As one travels from east to west across the country, one finds a growing number of non-participating young Americans who are more inclined to give money than time. In the Northeast fewer than half (46%) of young adults who are not engaged in community service agree with this reason for non-participation, compared with 53% in the Midwest, 56% in the South, and almost two-thirds (64%) in the West. Those who have been to college (68%) and Asian Americans (62%) are also among those most likely to opt for monetary donations over volunteering their time.

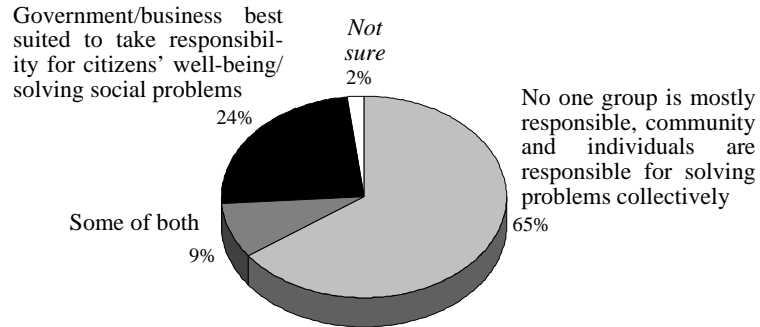
Some young Americans readily admit that they are simply uninterested in the options for service presented by most service and community organizations. A majority (53%) of non-participating 18- to 30-year-old Americans say that most issues that community service organizations deal with do not interest them—17% strongly agree and 36% somewhat agree. About two-thirds (64%) of civically unengaged young men hold this view, while just 42% of similarly disinclined young women agree. Asian Americans (61%) and whites (55%) are more likely to be uninterested in the issues championed by most community service organizations than are Hispanics (48%) or African Americans (42%).

The reason least likely cited by young Americans not involved in service is that a lot of community and service organizations do not accomplish enough to make a real difference. Four in 10 (44%) agree with this statement, while a majority (53%) disagree. Minorities are far more likely to hold this belief than are young white Americans: Just over a third (36%) of young whites agree that service organizations do not make a real difference, whereas majorities of African Americans (63%), Hispanics (59%), and Asian Americans (54%) share the sentiment.

FOUR YEARS LATER, A CONSISTENT VISION OF LEADERSHIP

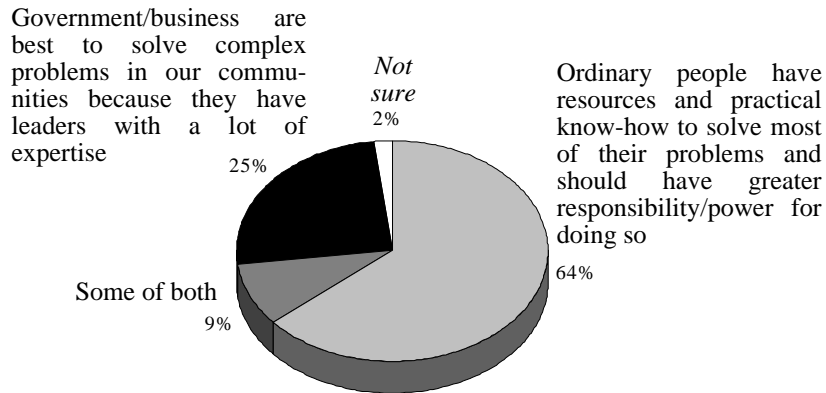
When thinking about leadership in our country and the types of organizations that will be important in solving our communities' problems, young Americans continue to embrace the idea that individuals must take an active role in addressing these problems. Similar to the results of a comparable poll conducted among this age group in July 1998, a large majority (65%) of young adults today believe that no one group is mostly responsible for solving social problems and that communities and individuals are responsible for solving their problems collectively; in 1998, 78% of 18- to 30-year-olds expressed this view. Only one in four (24%) young Americans believe that big institutions such as government and business are best suited to take responsibility for the well-being of citizens and to solve social problems (17% in 1998). One in 10 (9%) say that a hybrid of these two approaches is the best way to solve our social ills.

Who Should Be More Responsible For Solving Social Problems?



Although majorities of all racial and ethnic groups agree, minorities are more likely than whites (21%) to say that large institutions should be responsible for solving social problems. Thirty-eight percent of Asian Americans, 35% of African Americans, and 30% of Hispanics hold this opinion.

Who Is Best At Solving Our Problems?



In addition, two-thirds (64%) of all 18- to 30-year-olds across the country believe that ordinary people have the resources and practical know-how to solve most of their own problems and should have greater responsibility and power for doing so. One in four (25%) say that big institutions, such as government and business, are best suited to solve the complex problems in our communities because they employ leaders with a lot of expertise. One in 10 (9%) have a foot in both camps, believing that we need some of both. A third (32%) of young adults who mainly care about making an impact as part of larger state or national movements say that big institutions are best suited to solve problems, while only one in five (20%) who are mainly concerned about making an impact on their local community say the same.

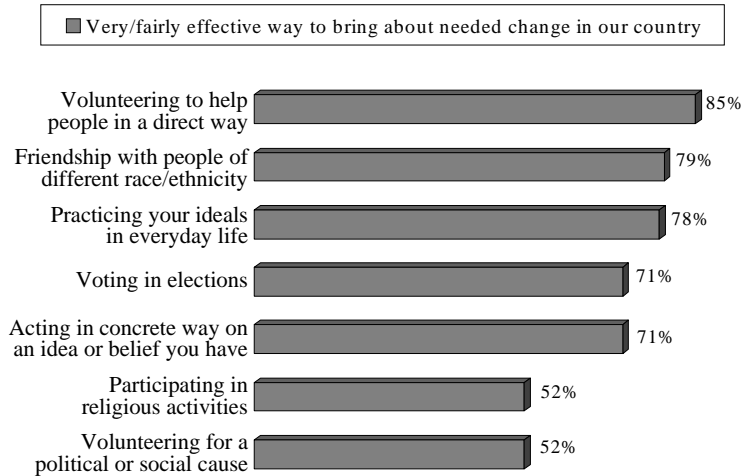
In fact, as in 1998, young people say that one of the top reasons why leadership in our country is falling short is because we tend to rely too much on government to solve our problems (24% today, 23% in 1998). Furthermore, they continue to feel that special interests and the interests of the wealthy have too much influence in our country (23% today, 24% in 1998). One in five (19% today, 20% in 1998) say that today's leaders are too focused on short-term gains and do not look out for our long-term concerns. And about one in seven (14%) each say that leaders today do not do enough to encourage and involve average people and that not enough women and minorities occupy positions of leadership in our country. This is the belief of a plurality (26%) of African Americans and one in five Hispanics (21%) and women (17%).

MAIN CONTRIBUTOR TO THE LEADERSHIP IN OUR COUNTRY FALLING SHORT

	<u>Whites</u> %	<u>African Americans</u> %	<u>Hispanic</u> %	<u>Asians</u> %
We rely too much on government to solve our problems	24	21	28	22
Special interests and the interests of the wealthy few have too much influence	25	16	19	23
Today's leaders are too focused on short-term gains and do not look out for our long-term concerns	21	12	12	21
Leaders today do not do enough to encourage and involve average people	14	18	13	14
There are not enough women and minorities in positions of leadership in our country	10	26	21	15

Beyond the general notion that ordinary people in local communities are best suited to solve our collective problems, young Americans have clear ideas about the methods that would effect change the most. As previously mentioned, 85% believe that volunteering to help individuals directly is a very or fairly effective way to bring about needed changes in our country. Yet, they firmly believe that building friendships and relationships with people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds (79%) and practicing one's ideals in everyday life (78%) are very or fairly effective strategies for effecting change. In the 1998 Public Allies survey, these methods were also the top three chosen.

Best Ways To Effect Change



And as in 1998, volunteering for a political or social cause (52%) and participating in religious activities (52%) are at the bottom of the list. Since 1998, the proportion believing that volunteering for a political or social cause is effective rose from 40%, while the proportion believing that religious participation is effective dropped slightly from 56%.

CONCLUSION: MOBILIZING A GENERATION'S ENHANCED CIVIC POTENTIAL

Young adults are involved in community service and displaying more tolerant attitudes toward America's increasing diversity. September 11 seems to have heightened their interest in both serving their communities and building diverse relationships. In January, the President attempted to mobilize the civic potential of the nation by calling on every American to provide 4,000 hours of community service during their lifetime and by proposing to expand service opportunities, especially through AmeriCorps. While few young people have heard the President's call, this generation appears ready to answer it through their actions. Indeed, young Americans indicate that their involvement in service activities benefits them as individuals and society as a whole by increasing their civic engagement and racial tolerance.