



Civic Engagement By Nonprofit Executives And Staff

April 2011

About SVCN

The Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits (SVCN) champions the interests of 200 health and human service nonprofits in Silicon Valley. SVCN works to ensure the nonprofit sector's voice is heard and that solutions are developed in way in which Everybody Wins. SVCN focuses its attention on systems of influence such as: social services, health care, mental health, outpatient programs, juvenile intervention, senior care and more.

As advocates for the nonprofit sector, The Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits (SVCN) recognizes the importance of being a voting constituency. To assess nonprofit staff voting patterns and community involvement, SVCN initiated a study of nonprofit executives, senior managers, and line staff. The survey conducted in April, 2011 was completed by 114 Executive and Senior Managers and 446 Line-Staff personal*.

Survey Findings confirmed our initial assumptions that staff within the nonprofit community follow up their dedication to their clients by voting and civic engagement. These survey findings will help guide SVCN's future efforts to increase civic engagement.

FINDINGS

Nonprofit Staff are more likely to vote and volunteer in the community beyond their work.

Nonprofit Staff are Voters

100% of all Nonprofit Executive and Senior Managers and 92% of Line-Staff are registered to vote.

Nonprofit staff are 49% likelier to be registered to vote compared to the Santa Clara county population.**

In the 2010 Governor Race, voter turnout for nonprofit staff was 21% higher than the overall Santa Clara County turnout.**

For the 2008 Presidential election, voter turnout for nonprofits staff was 12% higher than the overall Santa Clara County voter turnout.**

97% of Nonprofit Executive Directors and Senior Managers describe themselves as always voters.

73% of line nonprofit staff*describe themselves as always voters.

- However, in major elections line-staff increase their turnout, **80%** for the 2010 Governor race and **90%** for the Presidential election.

Ethnic trends observed

Asian/Pacific Islander were about 12% less likely to be *registered to vote* when compared to other ethnic groups within the survey.

African/African-American/Black were about 29% *less likely to have voted* in the 2010 Governor election compared to the other ethnic groups within the survey.

Nonprofit Staff are Engaged in the Community

90% of Executive Directors and Senior Managers state they volunteer in the community outside of their workplace compared to 72.5% of Line-Staff.

Top 3 places for volunteering.

Executive Directors and Senior Managers

61.5% Community Activities
57.3% Nonprofit Board
31.3% School

Line-Staff

57.6% Community Activities
32.6% School/Scouting
28.3% Religious/Spiritual Group

Nonprofit Staff are Informed

Overall, 82% of nonprofit executives read the newspaper, but as we include typically younger line staff we find that only 58% read the newspaper for news and information.

Top 3 resources utilized for civic engagement and elections.

Executive Directors/Senior Managers

82% Newspaper
73% On-line Sources
71% Radio

Line-Staff

63% On-line Sources
61% Television
60% Family and Friends

Top utilized resources vary by age group.

Executive Directors and Senior Managers

50-Over 60 report Newspapers
40-49 report On-line resources
30-39 report Newspapers and On-line resources
21-29 report Newspapers
18-20 report Newspapers and On-line resources

Line Staff within organizations

Over 60 report T.V
50-59 report T.V and Newspapers
40-49 Newspaper
30-39 On-line Sources
21-29 On-line Sources
18-20 On-line and Family & Friends

Data Collection Methods

Two survey's were sent out, one of which was sent to mostly Executive Directors and Senior managers, in which about a 1/3 responded, while the second survey was given to 15 organizations representing all demographics within SVCN, in which (1/3-1/2 of the organizations line-staff responded), giving us a whole organization outlook into their civic engagement. A total of 560 people responded to these surveys.

Survey data was analyzed by A. Kazimir Brown, Public Policy Intern graduating from Santa Clara University with a degree in Political Science and Sociology in conjunction with Patricia Gardner Executive Director of SVCN.

The survey consisted of questions that gathered demographic information, voting habits, and community involvement.

*Line-Staff is defined as mid managers, caseworkers, program staff, clerical etc

**population data for Santa Clara county election results were found on the County of Santa Clara registrar of voters website <http://www.sccvote.org/portal/site/rov>

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