



MISSISSIPPI HOMEMAKER VOLUNTEERS STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

Challenges

- Community-level volunteerism strengthens social and community connections and helps residents identify and understand community problems.
- Volunteering increases people's confidence in their ability to work with governments to address community needs and to help young people understand the governance process.
- Community volunteerism in both urban and rural places has been on the decline, with evidence suggesting that global and local economic challenges may have a dampening effect on rural volunteerism.

EXTENSION RESPONSE

The Mississippi Homemaker Volunteers (MHV) program was established in 1918 to strengthen families through education and community involvement. Much of this community involvement takes the form of community volunteerism.

- MHV clubs are small, local organizations whose members serve as volunteer leaders to strengthen individuals, families, and the entire community through education and civic involvement.
- Community service typically makes volunteers more aware of community issues and enhances their ability to address them in a community spirit.
- MHV leaders address local issues in areas such as nutrition, diet, exercise, food safety, literacy, family budgeting and finance, and personal development.
- In addition, MHV volunteers support state-level charities while keeping traditional crafts alive. They make pillow cases, blankets, and Santa bags for patients at Children's of Mississippi Hospital in Jackson. Members also lead fundraising efforts for items needed by Ronald McDonald House families in Jackson. These efforts continue each year.
- From 2023 to 2024, membership increased by **97.2%** to **1,012** members, even as volunteerism and civic engagement declined across the nation. In 2024, members volunteered **63,022** hours of service to individuals, families, and charities across the state.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- Independent Sector, a nationally recognized research organization, values an hour of volunteer time in Mississippi at \$27.01 for 2024. This suggests that the estimated value of volunteers' time is **\$1.7 million**.
- This significant contribution by volunteers strengthens community programs and represents a substantial cost savings to local organizations delivering needed services.
- This contribution of time represents a real cost to volunteers. Rather than spending time on themselves or another cause, MHV members recognize the effectiveness of this program.



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TAKING CARE OF WHAT MATTERS