



# CURRENT ECONOMIC IMPACT #2

## VOLUNTEERS PLAYING A VITAL ROLE IN KEEPING TRIANGLE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE NONPROFIT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO NEED THEM MOST

*A UNITED WAY OF THE GREATER TRIANGLE CHARTICLE  
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United Way  
of the Greater Triangle

# RESURGENCE OF VOLUNTEERISM

## OFFSETS INCREASED DEMAND FOR HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### DURING THE PAST 90 DAY PERIOD (JUNE 1- SEPTEMBER 1, 2009)

#### ACCORDING TO UNITED WAY OF THE GREATER TRIANGLE'S 2009 ECONOMIC IMPACT SURVEY.

It found that, on average, nonprofit revenue decreased twice as much in the last three months than it did during the entire previous year, while demand for nonprofit services spiked 34% during the same period, quickly outpacing the nearly 30% increase for the six months prior.

Many executive directors surveyed stated that a big issue of concern they are seeing on the ground remains the wide-reaching impact of unemployment on their beneficiaries. With the Triangle's unemployment rate still hovering near 10%, jobs, especially for those in, or at risk for poverty, remain very hard to come by. Jean Williams, executive director of the Women's Center of Wake County elaborates, "Clients are not able to find employment; jobs they might normally get are being taken by folks with bachelors degrees who have been laid off from higher paying jobs."

One poignant reminder that, at least for the region's most vulnerable populations, economic uncertainty still prevails comes from an executive director whose agency's programs serve all four Triangle counties. "We have seen a large increase in calls from individuals struggling financially and seeking financial assistance. We have also seen an increase in calls from individuals considering suicide due to job loss and financial stress."

Yet, in the face of despair, it may well be civic engagement from the Triangle's citizens playing a significant role in keeping its health and human service nonprofits from completely eliminating or cutting back programs during these tough economic times. The survey found that a full one-third of nonprofits indicated that they are utilizing volunteers much more as a strategy for keeping their services and programs intact.

"Whereas we have seen a notable decrease in the amount of individual and corporate financial contributions in the last 10 months, the spirit of volunteering and civic duty seems to be making a resurgence," notes Dolly R. Sickles, associate director of public affairs and grants administration at Alliance of AIDS Services – Carolina. "Our administrative office has seen an increase of volunteers from the community who either want to help out and volunteering is what they can offer at this time, or they've been laid off and simply have the time and interest to try something new."

Indeed, this resurgence of volunteering comes not only at a time when it is needed most, but when many throughout the country are answering President Obama's call to action to get involved in their communities. This is allowing nonprofits the invaluable opportunity to recruit volunteer talent that they may not necessarily have had access to in the past. As several executive directors noted in the survey, those who take advantage of this should explore ways in which they can improve or increase recruitment and, importantly, provide an infrastructure where volunteer training can be offered on a continuous basis.

One tool that may help the Triangle's nonprofits build up this infrastructure is the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act ([http://www.nationalservice.gov/help/serve\\_america\\_act/Serve\\_America\\_Act.ht](http://www.nationalservice.gov/help/serve_america_act/Serve_America_Act.ht)) signed recently into law. It provides much-needed capacity building and other grant support to nonprofits wishing to expand their volunteer pools thereby improving the nation's volunteer infrastructure. It also targets Americans age 55+ by providing incentives for those who perform 350 hours of service.

This is important as Triangle nonprofits, such as Girl Scouts – North Carolina Coastal Pines, look to harness new volunteers. Leigh Duque, chief development officer explains, "[One of] our current focuses is on identifying and involving more non-traditional volunteers..."

From donors to beneficiaries, the eyes of the Triangle are watching the choices and strategies that its health and human service nonprofits implement closely. Ralph Capps, executive director of the Boys & Girls Club of Wake County explains, "The volunteer and professional leadership understands that our organization will be remembered by the decisions we make during these tough times."

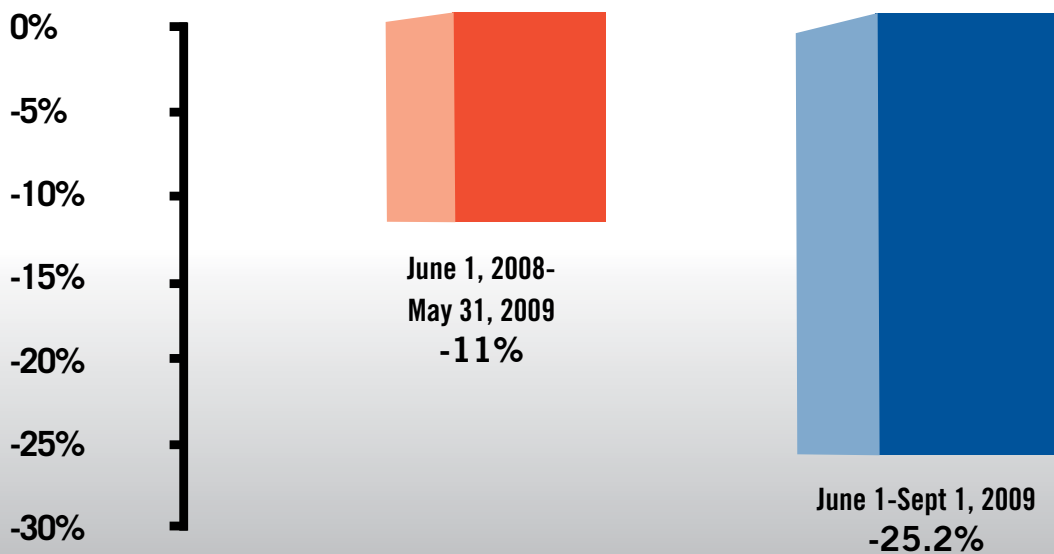
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**LOSS OF REVENUE BY TRIANGLE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE NONPROFITS  
JUNE 1, 2008-MAY 31, 2009 VS. JUNE 1-SEPTEMBER 1, 2009**

SOURCE: UNITED WAY OF THE GREATER TRIANGLE





## HELPFUL COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE ON PARTNER AGENCIES SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Results of the survey conducted in September 2009 that is reported in this charticle. To access this document, please visit: [www.unitedwaytriangle.org/news/charticles.asp](http://www.unitedwaytriangle.org/news/charticles.asp)

### “HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR UNCERTAIN TIMES”

As a community partner, United Way of the Greater Triangle understands the difficult economic time many of our friends and neighbors are facing while living or working in the Triangle region. We value sharing some of the key resources that may help our fellow citizens who are experiencing a transition or are in need of extra support.

### CALL 2-1-1

United Way’s free resource puts you in touch with information about critical health and human services available in the community.