

Results of a Survey of Points of Light
Foundation's Constituents: Engagement
of Low-income Communities and
Awareness of the Concept of
Neighboring

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INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the results of a survey that was conducted in November 2004 of Points of Light Foundation (POLF) constituents. The purpose of the survey was to measure the general awareness of POLF's initiative, *Building Connections: Transforming Neighborhoods and Strengthening Families*, which is funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. One of POLF's goals in this initiative was to integrate the message of volunteering as a method of transforming neighborhoods and strengthening families into all existing programs where and when appropriate. This survey measures whether constituents have or are planning to have strategies to engage low-income communities in their work and if they are familiar with the concept of neighboring.

METHODOLOGY

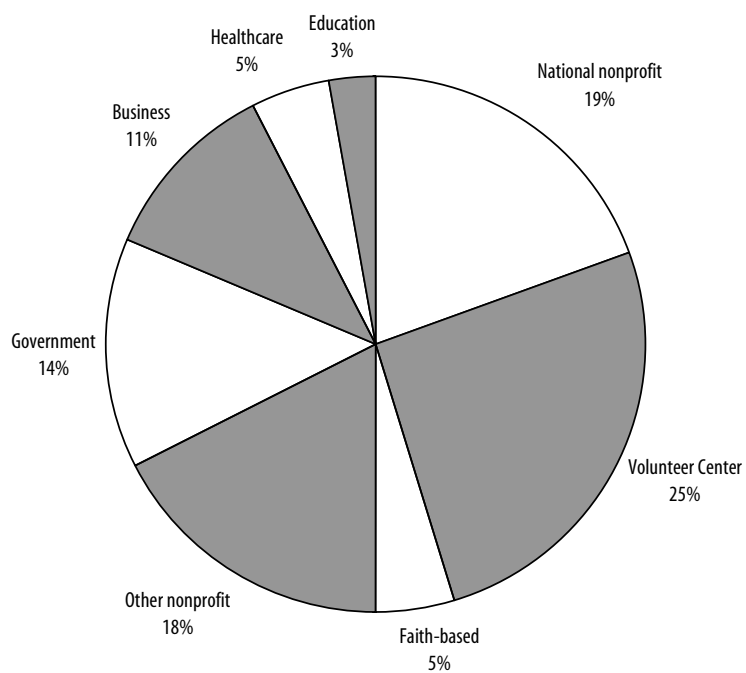
A survey instrument (Attachment A) was developed in cooperation with POLF's staff, using an on-line survey package. From a list of approximately 1600 constituents, a random sample was chosen, using a random number generator. For those constituents who had not listed e-mail addresses, we attempted to obtain e-mail addresses. During this process, if we determined that the person chosen was no longer working in the capacity listed, we chose another constituent from the list. In addition, if our first e-mail to the constituent was returned, we attempted to verify the e-mail address, and again, if the person was no longer with the program, we made a substitution. A total of 204 e-mails were sent to constituents. Of those, 107 people completed the surveys, a response rate of 52 percent.



RESULTS

As Figure 1 illustrates, the responses came from a wide variety of POLF constituents, with the highest percentage (25 percent) from volunteer centers.

Figure 1: Representation of Constituent Groups among Survey Respondents





Strategies to Engage Low-Income Communities and Residents

As Table 1 illustrates, almost half the respondents say that the strategies most often currently used to engage low-income communities and residents in their work is through “policies in place to actively involve the community being served as a partner.” While 11 percent say they do not engage low-income communities, another 10 percent of the “other” responses could be categorized as not engaging low-income communities, with responses such as:

- No specific strategies used. Our services are advertised equally to all and offered equally to all without identifying their income status.
- We do not discriminate on the basis of income.
- We are open to any income group as clients or volunteers.

Table 1: Strategies Current Used to Engage Low-income Communities and Residents

Response	All respondents	Volunteer Centers	National nonprofits	Other local or community-based nonprofits
Hiring and volunteer recruitment	35%	20%	47%	41%
Policies in place	48%	40%	53%	41%
Communications materials	35%	32%	41%	35%
Training for leaders	22%	32%	18%	29%
Increase presence of offices	14%	28%	6%	12%
Representation of residents	9%	8%	6%	12%
None	11%	16%	12%	6%
Other	13%	20%	0%	18%



Of the 21 percent who say they do not currently engage low-income communities, approximately half plan to engage low-income communities and residents in their work in the future, using strategies that include training for community-based leaders, appropriate communications materials, and hiring and volunteer recruitment (including targeted outreach within low-income communities). As Table 2 illustrates, respondents in all categories have plans to use appropriate communications materials and hiring and volunteer recruitment (including targeted outreach within low-income communities), as well as putting policies in place to actively involve the community they serve.

Table 2: Strategies Planned to Use to Engage Low-Income Communities and Residents

Response	All respondents	Volunteer Centers	National nonprofits	Other local or community-based nonprofits
Hiring and volunteer recruitment	37%	28%	47%	43%
Policies in place	37%	20%	40%	50%
Communications materials	39%	36%	40%	50%
Training for leaders	29%	28%	13%	50%
Increase presence of offices	15%	12%	7%	21%
Representation of residents	20%	16%	27%	7%
None	9%	12%	13%	7%
Other	7%	12%	0%	0%

Neighboring

As Table 3 illustrates, more than one-third (35 percent) of all respondents have heard of the term “neighboring,” with almost half of the representatives of volunteer centers (44 percent) indicating that they have heard the term.

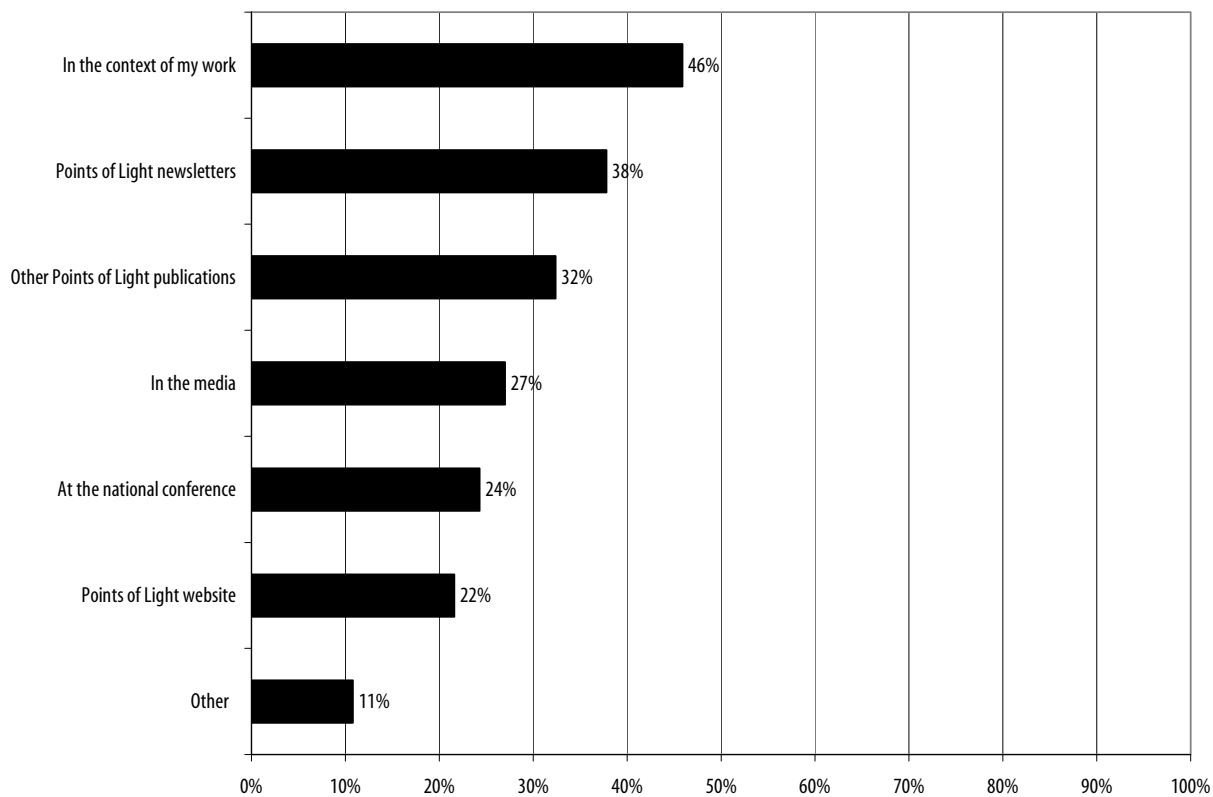
Table 3: Percent of Respondents Who Have Heard of the Term “Neighboring”

Organization type	Yes	No	Not sure	No answer
National nonprofit	29%	24%	10%	37%
Volunteer Center	44%	22%	26%	7%
Faith-based organization	40%	40%	20%	
Other local or community-based nonprofit	42%	21%	16%	21%
Government	27%	33%	27%	13%
Business	33%	33%	25%	8%
Healthcare	20%	40%	40%	
Education	0%	67%	33%	
Total	35%	28%	22%	15%



As Figure 2 illustrates, most people who have heard the term heard it either in the context of their work or in a Points of Light newsletter or other publications. Responses to the “other” category included workshops and the Volunteer Management Training Series.

Figure 2: Answer to the question, “Where have you heard the term ‘Neighboring’?”





ATTACHMENT: SURVEY INSTRUMENT



1. Which of the following categories BEST describes your organization?

- National nonprofit
- Volunteer Center
- Faith-based organization
- Other local or community-based nonprofit
- Government
- Business
- Other (please specify)

2. Which of the following strategies (if any) do you CURRENTLY use to engage low-income communities and residents in your work? (choose all that apply)

- Hiring and volunteer recruitment practices that include targeted outreach within low-income communities
- Policies in place to actively involve the community being served as a partner
- Communications materials appropriate for the community you are partnering with
- Training for community-based leaders
- Increase presence or satellite offices in low-income communities
- Representation of low-income residents on boards and councils
- None, we do not engage low-income communities
- Other (please specify)

3. Which of the following strategies (if any) do you PLAN use to engage low-income communities and residents in your work? (choose all that apply)

- None, we have no plans to engage low-income communities
- Hiring and volunteer recruitment practices that include targeted outreach within low-income communities
- Have policies in place to actively involve the community being served as a partner
- Communications materials appropriate for the community you are partnering with
- Training for community-based leaders
- Increase presence or satellite offices in low-income communities
- Representation of low-income residents on boards and councils
- Other (please specify)

4. Have you heard of the term “neighboring”?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

5. Where have you heard the term “neighboring” used? (choose all that apply)

In the media

- In the context of my work
- At the National Conference
- Points of Light website
- Points of Light newsletters
- Other Points of Light publications
- Other (please specify)