

**A DECADE OF SERVICE-RELATED RESEARCH:
A MAP OF THE FIELD**

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Passage of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 marked the beginning of an expansion of service as a problem-solving instrument in American society. The increased attention to citizen service brought with it an exponential increase in the scholarly and professional literature devoted to service. This paper seeks to map the attributes of recent research about service. It presents the results of an inventory of service-related research that has been conducted since the adoption of national service legislation in 1990.

This research was conducted under the auspices of the Research Task Force of the Grantmaker Forum on Community and National Service. Our inventory of the literature was designed to be inclusive. We developed a list of search terms that allowed us to search points of entry to service as well as different national service programs. We also searched a variety of databases covering the fields of education, sociology, business, public affairs, and psychology. The inventory reveals that a considerable amount of service-related research was published since 1990.

The paper is organized into two parts. The first seeks to draw generalizations about the field of service based upon analysis of keywords associated with research-oriented publications in the bibliographic database. The second part presents recommendations about ways for strengthening and expanding research about service. For readers who may be interested in the process of developing the database, we provide an extensive appendix with details about its development.

Developing the Database

This paper reports on the generalizations that were drawn from an analysis of a database containing 2,558 bibliographic records and abstracts to service-related research published between 1990 and 1999. The database was constructed by searching nine databases using a variety of search terms related to service-related activities. The databases were: Academic Search Elite; Book Where; Dissertation Abstracts International; ERIC (Education); Government Documents; PAIS (Public Affairs); IPSA (International Political Science Abstracts); SocioFile (Sociology); and PsycINFO (Psychology). The individual searches were then cleaned to remove unwanted records and then merged into one database. The remaining records were then coded and assigned key words. The final step involved further review of the database to identify those records that were research oriented and appeared to be scientific research by examining the methods employed by researchers. This produced a subset of 997 records. The precise manner in which the database was created is much more complex than is suggested above. Readers are referred to Appendix A for a detailed discussion of how the database was developed. The numbers reported in the tables that follow are based on the data set containing 997 records.

Summary of Parameters Defining the Database

Before discussing the generalizations about service-related research, it is useful to have some familiarity with the contents of the database.

Table 1. Database Parameters

What Is In the Database?	What Is Not in the Database?
Research about service published since 1990 that appears in one or more of the nine databases searched and refers to one or more of our search terms	Research about service published before 1990 Ad hoc, state government, and small-scale evaluations are not likely to be included
Research that was not in the bibliographic databases but was nominated	No explicit search on the terms “mentoring” and “experiential education”
Abstracts provided by the bibliographic services and keywords developed by the research team	Comparative studies that do not include the U.S. or samples of subjects from the U.S.
Use of index services means the contents are largely journals, dissertations, and reports from major nonprofits and federal agencies	
Research about military service was retained but it was not explicitly an object of the search.	
Comparative studies that include the U.S. or samples of subjects from the U.S.	

What is in the database? The defining parameters for the database are summarized in Table 1. The citations in the bibliography were drawn from nine bibliographic databases. A citation was included if one or more of the search terms (see Appendix A, Table 16) was included in its title or abstract and it was published in 1990 or later. The use of indexing services means that the contents of the database are largely dominated by journal articles, dissertations, and reports from federal agencies and major nonprofit organizations. Accordingly, an effort was made to identify other service-related research that might not have been indexed by the nine databases.

What is not in the database? The database excludes some research by virtue of the goals of the project and choices that have been made to limit the size of the database. The most significant exclusion is service-related research published before 1990. Although 1990 is the year in which national service legislation was passed, high quality and influential research clearly preceded this date. We also excluded explicit searches on mentoring and experiential education to limit the size of the database. The database nevertheless contains a large number of sources whose abstracts refer to mentoring and experiential education. We also removed all non-English sources and comparative research that did not have an empirical component focusing on the U.S.

In addition to the systematic restrictions we placed on the scope and size of the database, there are likely to be other, less predictable exclusions of research. For example, non-serial reports and documents issued either by smaller organizations or by sources that do not regularly issue reports are probably less likely to appear in the database.

Generalizations About Service-Related Research

During a July, 1998 meeting with the Grantmaker Forum Research Task Force, one of its members suggested an interest in knowing what the field of service is, what are its organizing components, and how would the field be defined? Others with whom we have spoken about our efforts on this project expressed similar interests. While conducting the preliminary scan it also became evident to the project team that a field does exist, albeit fragmented and disjointed. Accordingly, it seemed to us that an effort to link the seemingly disparate service-related research in different disciplines would be beneficial for both practitioners and academicians engaged in the service enterprise.

The systematic coding of each abstract in the database allows us to identify areas of research, the questions asked, methods employed, and a variety of other attributes about research on citizen service. The analysis of this information provides the foundation for developing a comprehensive framework for examining service-related research. This part of the report discusses attributes of the service-related research inferred from analysis of the keywords.

Fragmented Literature with Terminology Problems

Service-related research is found in a wide variety of academic disciplines and professional fields, including education, political science, public affairs, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and business. When viewed from this broad interdisciplinary perspective, we were left with the impression that a distinct field of research may be emerging. However, the literature is fragmented and disjointed and suffers from the terminology problems common to an interdisciplinary field of research. At the core, there is a question of the meaning of “service” (Bates 1996; and, Coles 1993). Consequently, there is some question of what constitutes “service-related” literature. This problem is compounded by the tension between modern perspectives of service as contrasted with the traditional views of public work and community activism that are found in the literature. Moreover, it is unclear where the boundaries lie between the research on volunteerism and service. Volunteering has traditionally been associated with unpaid service, but more recently it has come to be viewed in broader terms to include stipended service (Cnaan, et al. 1996). There is also a great deal of research focused on volunteers (e.g., demographic characteristics, motivations) that is clearly of interest to a practitioner developing or implementing a service program. A great deal of the research on volunteering also focuses on programs that have a service component. Further complicating the definition of service-related research is the fact that it is a moving target. There are a host of new forms of “service” such as stipended service, community service as restitution, and mandatory service-learning programs that are receiving growing attention by researchers.

The terminology problems are further exacerbated by the interdisciplinary nature of the research. For example, a psychologist's definition of service may not coincide with that of an educator, sociologist, or a political scientist. Moreover, our impression is that academics from different disciplines appear to be interested in different questions. Psychologists and educators seem to be interested in the individual (i.e., server) whether it be their motivations or the impacts that the service activity has on the individuals. Educators, public administrationists, and sociologists appear to have interests in how to implement effective programs (i.e., service delivery) and the impacts of these programs. Sociologists and political scientists seem most concerned with the impacts on society (i.e., served). Accordingly, a complete picture of the service-related research would require examining all aspects of the service process [Figure 1]. However, our impression is that there are few cross-disciplinary attempts at synthesizing this literature. For the most part, it appears that the work done by researchers in one discipline is often neglected in other disciplines.

Composition of the Database

The database of bibliographic citations screened for whether they used some type of scientific method contains 997 records representing a variety of types of publications [Table 2]. The largest number of bibliographic records, 475 or 48 % of the total, are journal articles. Although many of these records are peer-reviewed, and therefore meet one quality threshold, we were unable to code individual articles for the presence/absence of this quality attribute. The status of a journal as peer-reviewed masks the fact that some articles appearing in peer-reviewed journals may not have been subjected to peer review. At the same time, some journals that are peer reviewed may have high acceptance rates, suggesting that peer review, by itself, is not a highly reliable indicator of quality. The second most frequent type of publication in the database is dissertations. The 194 dissertations in the database represent 20% of the total. The next most frequent type of publication is non-governmental organization documents, encompassing 18% of the total.

Policy Areas

The research literature about citizen service has focused on a wide range of policy contexts, as summarized in Table 3. The dominant arena by far is education. The count for education may overstate the actual emphasis on research in this policy area because education is an arena in which service is an instrument for transforming raw materials (i.e., the objects of the education process, as in tutoring) and a process for learning (as in service learning). Community development (e.g., community building, youth involvement in communities) and human needs (e.g., substance abuse prevention, child neglect intervention) policy contexts are frequent, but less prominent, foci.

Lesser amounts of research focus on service in the context of environment (e.g., conservation corps, volunteer environmental stewardship groups), health care (e.g., serving mentally disabled homeless, addressing at-risk pregnancies through a service program), youth development (e.g., youth corps, youth mentoring), military (e.g., attitudes of soldiers towards their missions), and public safety. The public safety research is focused primarily on the use of volunteers for crime, fire fighting, and disasters. Because we did not search explicitly for the use

Figure 1: Framework For Organizing Service-Related Research

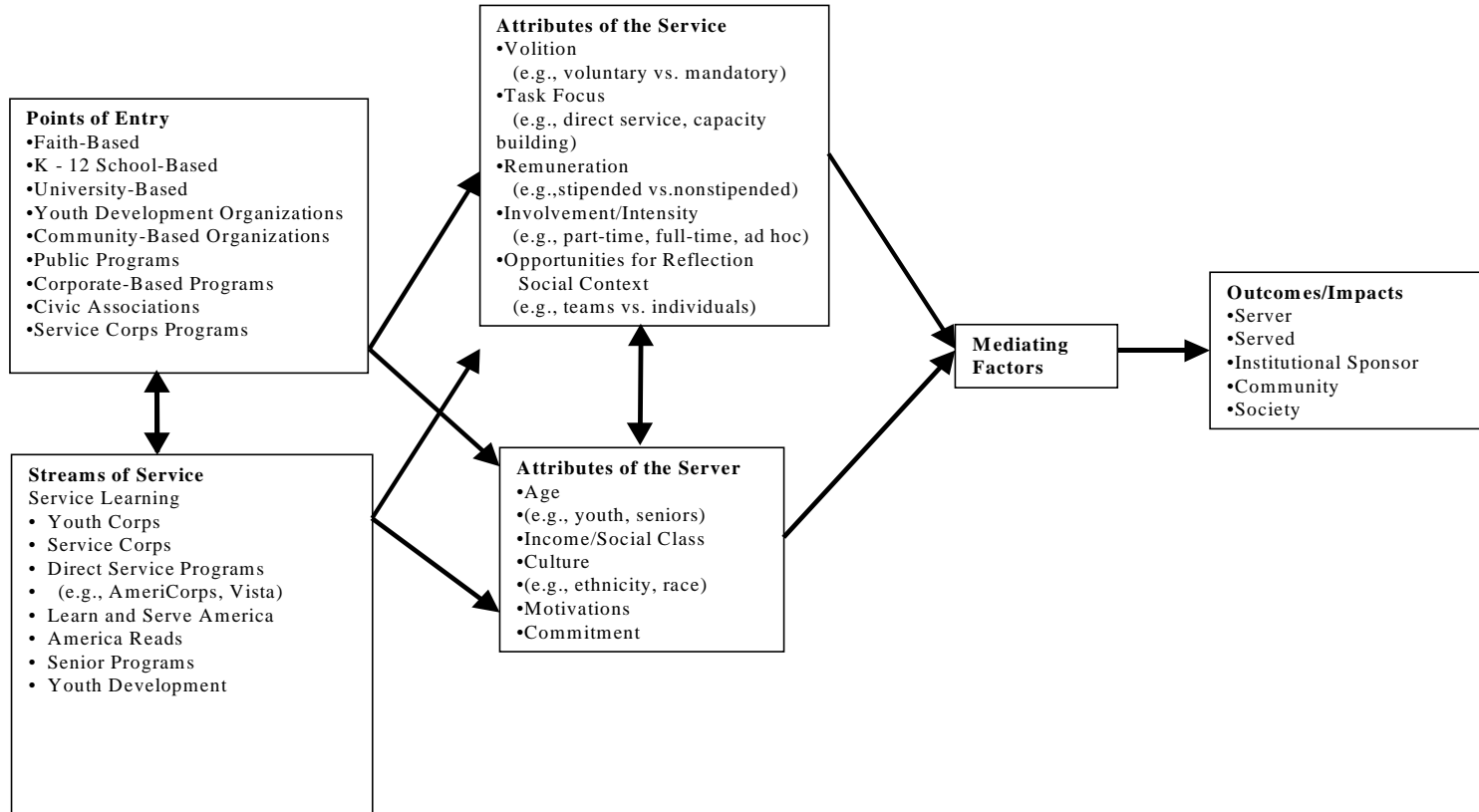


Table 2. Types of Publications in the Methods-Screen Database

Type of Publication	Number of Citations	Percentage of Total
Books	76	7.6%
Book Reviews	1	0.1%
Conference Papers	40	4%
Dissertations	194	19.4%
Government Documents	30	3%
Journal Articles	475	48.0%
Newspaper Articles	1	0.1%
Non-governmental Organization Documents	180	18%
Total	997	100%

Table 3. Citizen Service Categorized by Policy Area

Policy Area	Number of Citations
Community Development	178
Education	414
Environment	37
Health Care	60
Human Needs	100
Military	26
Public Safety	21
Restitution	9
Youth Development	63

Note: Community development includes community-based volunteer programs.
Youth development includes youth corps programs.

Table 4. Citations to National Service Programs

National Service Program	Number of Citations
AmeriCorps	61
VISTA	14
Foster Grandparent Program	6
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program	6
Senior Companion Program	4
America Reads	7
Learn and Serve America	10
Conservation Corps	13
Job Corps	1
Military	26
Total Unique Citations With National Service Search Terms	130

of service as an alternative sentencing strategy, few of the public safety sources (9) focus explicitly on restitution.

Service Programs

National Service. Since 1990, a moderate level of research has focused on national service programs such as AmeriCorps, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), and federal programs for the elderly (e.g., Retired and Senior Volunteer Program). Table 4 presents summary information about references to these service programs, totaling 130 records in the database. These include AmeriCorps (61), VISTA (14), Senior Companion Program (4), Learn and Serve America (10) and America Reads (7). The volume of recent research about national service programs is, to some extent, inversely related to the longevity of programs. Research about VISTA, for instance, is less prominent than AmeriCorps. This is not surprising given that new programs typically are subject to more evaluation and analysis than long-standing programs. Furthermore, depending on the particular service program, the volume of research may be over- or under-stated. For example, the volume of research about Learn and Serve America and America Reads is probably greater than the counts in the table because some research on volunteer tutoring does not refer to the program despite the fact that funding may be received from them. The same is likely to be true for senior programs.

Much of the research about national service programs includes evaluations and reports by the Corporation for National Service and selected state commissions. Because many of these materials are not indexed in the databases we searched, other similar evaluations and state commission reports likely exist. It is also possible that those who conducted the research were only interested in an element of one of these programs (e.g., the motivations of volunteers). In this case programmatic names might not be reflected in the title or abstract even though the research uses participants in a national service program as its subjects. For example, the database contains a number of studies on retired and elderly volunteers but it is unclear in most

Table 5. Citations to Different Types of Community/Citizen Service Programs

Community Service Program	Number of Citations
Community/Citizen Service - General	204
Community-Based Programs	44
Community Service – Restitution	9
Nonprofit Organizations Using Volunteers	75
Mentoring Volunteer Programs*	39
Volunteer Program	180
Youth Development Programs	53
Corporate-Based Service Programs	17
Corporate Social Responsibility	50
Faith-Based Programs	27
Points of Light Foundation	7
Philanthropy	29
Voluntarism – General	64
Volunteerism – General	111

* Does not include a systematic search of the mentoring literature.

cases if the research examines the efforts of one of the national service programs. What can be concluded is that the relatively small number of sources found suggests that national service programs are a fraction of the overall service-related research.

The military service studies in Table 4 include assessments of recruitment, motivation, retention and impacts of mandatory vs. voluntary service. A number of these studies are high quality, reflecting in part the substantial sums of money allocated by the Department of Defense to monitor and implement voluntary military service. These studies could be quite helpful to the service community for the knowledge base they have developed about service.

Community Service. Table 5 presents information about types of community service programs. A large portion of the literature in Table 5 is associated in some way with volunteering, as reflected in the frequency of references to nonprofit organizations using volunteers (75) and volunteer program (170). A relatively large number of citations (50) refer to corporate social responsibility. Although corporate social responsibility is multifaceted, a large portion of these sources address aspects of corporate service efforts.

Table 6 provides a more detailed breakdown of the types of programs included in the volunteer program category in Table 6. Education research at the college level is most common, followed by education research about K-12, tutoring, mentoring, and environment programs. At the other end of the spectrum, there appears to be little research on faith-based service programs. Similarly, little recent attention has been given to the service programs mediated by civic associations (e.g., Rotary) or corporations.

Table 6. Citations to Different Types of Volunteer Programs

Type of Volunteer Program	Number of Citations
Big Brother/Big Sisters	5
Corporate	17
Education – K – 12	83
Education – College	172
Environment	37
Faith-based	27
HIV/AIDS	25
Mentoring	39
Tutoring	51

Table 7. Citations to Service Programs in Education

Type of Education	Number of Citations
Character/Moral Education	79
Experiential Learning*	83
Service Learning	237

* Does not include a systematic search for the experiential learning literature.

Education. Research about service in education is voluminous, as reflected by the entries in Tables 7 and 9. The education literature focuses on three different areas: character education; experiential education; and service learning. The largest of these three categories is service learning, which is cited in 277 entries in the database.

Table 8 shows that the entries in the database address education at all levels. Higher education is the level most heavily represented, with 174 citations from a total of 414 sources. Elementary, middle, and high school are also well represented, with total citations of 46, 65, and 71, respectively.

The literature is more explicit about the education level of the server than it is on the served. The distribution of the research that is explicit about the education level of the server is about the same as for the total sample of education citations. The distribution for the served is quite different than for the server. The different distributions are not surprising, however, given the fact that most service learning or mentoring programs emanating from universities target elementary and secondary school children. This in large part accounts for the fact that only 2 of the citations identified involved service to populations in higher education.

Table 8. Citations to Service Programs by Level of Education

Level of Education	Number of Citations
<i>Total</i>	
Education – Total	414
Bilingual	7
Elementary (pre K – 6)	46
Middle School (7 – 9)	65
High School (10 – 12)	71
College and Graduate School	174
Adult (GED, continuing education, etc.)	10
<i>Server</i>	
Education – Total	249
Elementary (pre K – 6)	21
Middle School (7 – 9)	45
High School (10 – 12)	58
College and Graduate School	172
<i>Served</i>	
Education – Total	55
Elementary (pre K – 6)	26
Middle School (7 – 9)	20
High School (10 – 12)	13
College and Graduate School	2
Adult (GED, continuing education, etc.)	10

Civil Society. A portion of the literature examines aspects of civil society [Table 9], which we group together to include community development, citizen participation, and social capital. The lion’s share of these citations refer to citizen participation, a term that has a long history in fields such as public administration and political science. In fact, most of the research in Table 9 emanates from the field of political science.

Demographic Characteristics

Some abstracts refer explicitly to demographic groups. Table 10 summarizes the frequency of references to age, gender, race, income, and other demographic characteristics. The age of the server is mentioned in 350 abstracts. The age of the served is referred to in 156 references. Not surprisingly, the groups most frequently addressed in the research on servers are those age 6-18 (133) and 18-23 (189). Seniors (50+) are the age group of servers next most frequently mentioned in the abstracts. Among populations served, children and adolescents 6-18 years of age (105) are by far the most frequently cited group.

A modest amount of research self-consciously focuses on gender (88). This literature specifically refers much more frequently to females (25) than males (14). This is not entirely surprising in light of the higher propensity of females to volunteer. It indicates, however,

Table 9. Citations to Civil Society and Related Concepts

Concept	Number of Citations
Civil Society	12
Social Capital	11
Citizen Participation*	83

* Civic Engagement is included within Citizen Participation

Table 10. Demographic Characteristics Appearing in the Methods-Screen Database

Demographic Characteristics	Number of Citations
Age server – Total	353
Age server – 6 – 18	133
Age server – 18 – 23	189
Age server – 23 – 35	15
Age server – 35 – 50	7
Age server – 50+	48
Age served – Total	143
Age served – 0 – 6	9
Age served – 6 – 18	105
Age served – 18 – 23	7
Age served – 23 – 35	3
Age served – 35 – 50	1
Age served – 50+	31
Gender	88
Male	14
Female	25
Race	64
Black	32
White	18
Hispanic	11
Asian	1
Native American	4
Minorities – General	8
Income	40
Culture	44
Disabled	24
Demographic Characteristics - General	175
Demographics – Total	608

another potential research gap. More research about males might help to increase male service involvement.

Most of the research (32) that self-consciously addresses race focuses on African-Americans. Only 11 of the abstracts referred directly to Hispanics, while eight look at minority populations in general.

Outcomes of Service

Many of the abstracts in the database refer to outcomes of service. As shown in Table 11, the outcomes investigated in the research are quite diverse. Most of this research appears to be focused on the server. Among the outcomes associated with the server are academic performance (55), attitudes (60), career development (37), personal development (50), and self-esteem (47).

Based upon the frequencies in Table 11, less frequent research attention appears to be given to outcomes of service associated with the institutional sponsor, the served, and the community. Only 20 abstracts in the database refer explicitly to institutional sponsors. Community is an outcome referred to in only 31 of the abstracts, corporations in 2 and society in 7.

Other Issues Examined in the Research

Much of the research addresses issues encompassed by the categories discussed above. The abstracts also refer to other issues that are not as easily categorized. The keywords depicting these issues are presented in Table 12. The largest segment of references in this group is to motivation (170). Other keywords that are mentioned frequently in this group are collaboration, implementation, funding, leadership, and recruitment. Thus, many of the citations refer to administration or implementation issues. Table 13 breaks out the implementation research further by more detail about keywords in the abstracts.

Research Output Over Time

Our coding procedures also allowed us to examine the distribution of records by year of publication. Figure 2 indicates the number of records published by year. The trend is clearly towards increased attention to citizen service. It should be noted that the drop-off in 1998 and 1999 is likely a function of the lag time of indexing sources by the abstracting services.

Concluding Observations Emanating from Analysis of the Abstracts

As we note above, most of the research is focused on individuals (i.e., the server). This is not surprising. Many of the desired impacts of service are implicitly directed at the server. Individuals also present a discrete unit of analysis for whom instrumentation is easily developed (e.g., self-administered questionnaires). Moreover, it facilitates the reductionist approach employed in most academic research. The researcher views the service-related activity as an intervention and examines whether participating in the activity leads to changes in the individual.

Table 11. Citations to Different Outcomes of Service Activities

Impacts/Outcomes of Service Activity	Number of Citations
Academic Performance	55
Altruism	13
Attendance (at school)	15
Attitudes	60
Awareness	18
Behavior	40
Boredom	2
Career Development	37
Character	5
Citizenship	51
Civic Responsibility	23
Community	31
Corporate	2
Crime	11
Depression	3
Empathy	11
Ethics	19
Health	4
Institutional Sponsor	20
Interpersonal Relations	25
Job Satisfaction	24
Leadership	24
Personal Development	50
Racism	1
Respect	8
Responsibility	16
Satisfaction	19
Self-awareness	12
Self-esteem	47
Skill	22
Social Responsibility	23
Society	7
Stress	9
Substance Abuse	20
Violence	12
Well-being	7
Total Unique Citations Containing Outcomes Search Terms	409

In this case, the impacts that the researcher is concerned with are changes at the individual level. The underlying assumption with much of this research is that the cumulative effect of the individual-level changes leads to some community-level benefit (e.g., improved citizenship).

Table 12. Citations to Other Research Questions

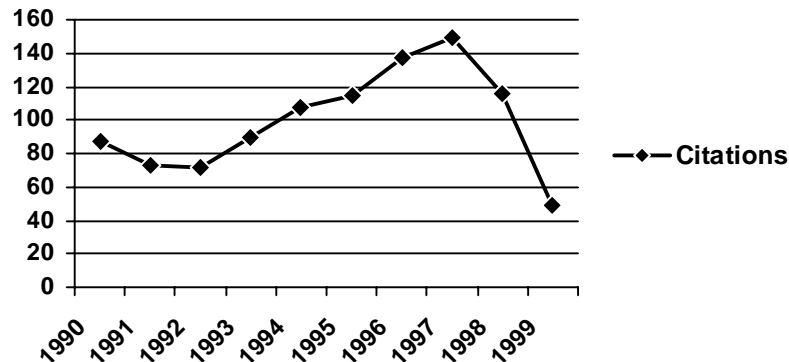
Research Questions	Number of Citations
Capacity Building	6
Collaboration/Coordination/Partnerships	109
Ethics	9
Funding Issues	14
Implementation Methods/Strategy/Structure	127
Job Satisfaction	24
Leadership	66
Legal Issues	10
Motivation	170
Multicultural Attitudes	15
Recruitment	60
Retention	24
Risk Management/Liability	3
Rural vs. Urban – Program Delivery	33
Stipended vs. nonstipended	16
Stress	9

Another, albeit smaller cluster of research, is concerned with the impacts of the service-related activity on the larger community. This research is largely targeted at the societal benefits derived from these programs. This line of research also is usually unconcerned with the contents of the service programs, looking instead at whether a program leads to the desired set of societal-level changes. Often this research assumes that the program also leads to the desired changes in the server.

The analysis uncovered a large quantity of sources about volunteering. This research, while voluminous, has not been viewed by some scholars as definitive with regard to understanding why people volunteer and why they continue their commitments (Pearce, 1993). This assessment may underestimate how much we actually know about the motivations for volunteering. For example, the database contains a number of studies addressing the motivation question, including a number of studies done by psychologists. There are also a number of studies examining the motivations for elder volunteers. However, even if we conclude that a great deal is known about volunteering, the factors influencing these commitments may differ from those that influence service.

Volunteering (and by extension service) has traditionally been associated with unpaid, other-oriented service, but more recently volunteering has come to be viewed more broadly, to include self-oriented, stipended service. These newer forms of service (e.g., stipended service) community service as restitution, mandatory service learning, and related forms of service, have received relatively little attention in the research. The lack of research about these new forms of service is particularly important given their centrality as instruments of national service since 1990.

Figure 2. Number of Citations Each Year



We know that the motivations of those who serve are quite varied. Some who engage in service are indeed altruists, people who are interested in giving to others. Others bring more self-interested motivations to service. They are interested in learning job skills, making contacts, or resolving problems that directly affect them. Although we can describe the motivational *states* that people bring to service and that describe people during their service, we know little about the dynamics of changes in motivation over time. Because most research is cross-sectional (i.e. focusing on a point in time) rather than longitudinal, we are unable to say much about how the motivations of servers change over time. We do, however, have some general (Pearce, 1993) and theoretical (Hirschman, 1982) evidence, and rich descriptions of service (Coles, 1993) that suggest motivations do indeed change over time. The idea of motivations changing over time is inherent in the concept of *transformational* service.

Substantial bodies of research focus on specific demographic groups. For example, older volunteers have been the object of many studies about volunteers (Fisher and Schaffer, 1993). In this and other cases the cumulative body of evidence about particular groups is enlightening. Just as the research illuminates the behavior and orientations of some demographic groups, it neglects other demographic groups. For example, relatively little research has been conducted about African-Americans.

What appears to be lacking is research that focuses on the implementation structures used to deliver service. Many of these service-related programs are collaborative efforts requiring coordination of different individuals and organizations (i.e., inter-organizational networks). A wide range of variables also exist that can influence the implementation of a service-related program. For example, the financial resources, staff training and expertise, and organizational leadership might influence the impacts of a service program. More research appears to be needed in this area to better understand the collaborative processes and the other factors that influence the effectiveness of service programs. Moreover, little research has focused on uncovering how elements of the service activity influence individual or community-level changes. Accordingly, more research is needed that looks at all elements of a service program,

Table 13. Citations to Different Implementation Issues

Implementation Issues	Number of Citations
Challenges	26
Climate	15
Community Relations	4
Contracting	3
Evaluation	36
Funding	47
Government	3
Incentives	19
Innovation	26
Law	1
Legal Issues	10
Legislative History	2
Liability	2
Methods	97
Policy Issues	7
Political Issues	5
Program Design	43
Publicizing	2
Reward	14
Risk Management	1
Staffing Issues	4
Strategy	16
Structure	23
Taxes	4
Technology	6

in other words the relationships between the attributes of the server, the service activity, and the impacts these activities have on the server and the surrounding community.

Recommendations for Enhancing Research About Service

Our review of the citizen service literature suggests that a field of citizen service may be emerging. However, several potential obstacles to the field's development exist. This section examines three interrelated issues related to the continued development of this new field of research. We have also identified several steps that could be taken to facilitate the development of this field of research and practice.

Strengthening the Research Infrastructure

The review of the literature illustrates just how rich and diverse the field of citizen service is today. Unfortunately, many practitioners and researchers do not view themselves as connected to a broader field of service. As a result, accumulation of knowledge is impeded. Moreover, opportunities for practitioners to learn from each other's experiences are limited more

than should be the case. Accordingly, much can be gained through the recognition that citizen service constitutes a new field of research.

However, our review also suggests that a great deal of work needs to be done to improve the infrastructure and support for those engaged in doing service-related research if the field is to grow, flourish, and mature. Some of the actions that might be taken to improve the research infrastructure might include:

- National Academy of Science/National Research Council report on civic engagement;
- Development of a professional association;
- Development of an interdisciplinary journal;
- Improved research support; and,
- Improved dissertation research support.

National Academy of Science/National Research Council Report. One action that could improve the visibility of this growing area of research and help to identify some of the important questions confronting practitioners and researchers would be to have a panel of scholars and professionals develop a report on civic engagement or citizen service. The report could be developed under the auspices of organizations such as The National Academy of Science, National Research Council, or Social Science Research Council. It would be useful to have the panel explore what can be done to improve civic engagement and the role of service and service-learning in accomplishing this goal.

Professional Association. Most well developed professions and fields of research have professional associations. There may be a need for a professional association that would bring together practitioners and researchers involved in matters related to citizen service. Existing associations such as the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), and American Educational Research Association provide some opportunities for researchers and practitioners to share their experiences. However, they do not provide an opportunity or encourage a wide range of practitioners and researchers to gather and exchange ideas and research in the area of citizen service. A professional association can also help improve the network of social connections between practitioners, funders (e.g., foundations), and researchers. The National Community Service Conference (NCSC), which is presented annually by the Points of Light Foundation in partnership with the Corporation for National Service, may be a venue at which practitioners and researchers could have serious exchanges. This would probably require changes in the mission of this conference, however. The conference is presently a training event for volunteer management, community volunteering and national service leaders in nonprofit organizations, businesses, and government agencies. Another potential forum is the annual National Service-Learning Conference, organized by the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC).

Journal of Citizen Service Research. Given the volume of research that was uncovered it is surprising to note that there are relatively few journals devoted exclusively to publishing research on citizen service. Instead, most research appears to be published in specialty journals in the traditional disciplines, which serves to fragment the literature and discourages the transmission of research across disciplines. There is a need for an interdisciplinary journal that

emphasizes high quality research about citizen service. Moreover, to enhance its credibility the journal should be housed at a major research university and perhaps be affiliated with a professional association such as the one described above. The *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* (MJCSL) most closely conforms to the type of high quality journal we are proposing. MJCSL's editorial policy presently defines its audience as college and university faculty and administrators and its focus as service-learning.

Research Support. A problem confronting researchers in any new area of research is finding the financial support to conduct high quality research whether it be basic research or applied research on important questions confronting practitioners. This is particularly true for interdisciplinary research that often does not fit well into funding mechanisms such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) that are largely oriented around traditional disciplines. Accordingly, foundations could play an important role in funding high quality interdisciplinary citizen service research.

Dissertation Support. If any field is to grow and mature, it must cultivate a new generation of researchers who will challenge old assumptions, ask new questions, and help to move the field or profession to the next level. One way to accomplish this is to provide additional support to students who want to do their dissertation and thesis work in the area of citizen service. Our review of the literature uncovered a number of high quality dissertations. We are confident that additional support could help to further develop theory and improve our understanding of important questions confronting practitioners engaged in citizen service.

Improving Research Dissemination. A small, but important change in the research infrastructure would be to improve the dissemination of research. Publication in journals and presentations at research conferences are traditional methods for disseminating research. These traditional means for dissemination need to be augmented by information technology.

Expanding the Scope of Research

Another problem that our review of the literature uncovered is the need for improving the interdisciplinary cross-fertilization of research. While there is a great deal of citizen service research in the traditional disciplines, researchers tend to focus on a limited subset of issues. For example, psychologists seem most concerned with aspects of individuals such as their changes in motivation or attitudes. Educators are most concerned with issues of appropriate pedagogy. Nonprofit managers often focus on the implementation of programs and questions of volunteer program administration. Political scientists often focus on matters related to encouraging a civil society. Unfortunately, many of the important questions confronting practitioners and policy makers are inherently transdisciplinary and cannot be answered without examining research from a variety of different disciplines. However, because researchers in each discipline tend to focus on a limited set of questions, it is hard to answer many transdisciplinary questions. Research about outcomes for the served (in contrast to the server) and the community, for example, are not as prominent because they do not readily fit into the "lenses" of traditional disciplines.

Many of the suggestions noted in the previous section can help overcome these problems. The development of a professional association and the creation of a new interdisciplinary journal

for citizen service research would help. Foundations and other funders of research and dissertation support could place greater attention on these transdisciplinary questions and encourage interdisciplinary research. Other steps could also be taken such as:

- Journal Symposia;
- Edited Volumes; and,
- Literature Reviews and Meta-Analyses.

Journal Symposia. One way to make researchers in one discipline aware of advances in another is to sponsor special issues and symposia in journals and invite papers from researchers in other disciplines. This can help researchers tap into other related lines of research. It may also help some researchers to realize that they are also doing service-related research.

Edited Volumes. A related endeavor is to compile edited volumes that bring researchers from different disciplines together to share different research perspectives on a particular issue or research question. Such volumes can also be an effective way to help accumulate the research that has been done in a particular area.

Literature Reviews/Meta-Analyses. Although our review of the citizen service research uncovered a vast amount of literature, there are relatively few high quality, interdisciplinary, comprehensive reviews of the literature. This is an important part of the development of any field because they help to make a vast literature more accessible. They are also an important part of theory building and a critical way that knowledge is accumulated within a field or profession.

Another impediment to developing a coherent body of research about service is that the outcomes of service are defined in so many different ways. This phenomenon is, in part, attributable to the diffuse goals of service programs. Outcomes are also diffuse for other reasons—among them the absence of standardization of outcome measures and over reaching claims for the effects of service. It would be helpful to focus a literature review on outcomes that have been used in service research, their measurement, and their plausibility. Such a review might seek input from opinion leaders about the outcomes that are sought through service.

Improving the Quality of Research

A finding of the review of the citizen service research was that a relatively small proportion of the total research was categorized as high quality. In part, this is probably due to the lack of a well-developed research infrastructure. High quality research, whether it is qualitative or quantitative, requires resources. There is the lack of good longitudinal panel data for doing comparative or time-series research. The field is also in large part driven by practice and much of the research demonstrates a clear preference for examining success stories rather than focusing on a wider range of programmatic experiences.

Many of the steps discussed above could help to improve the quality of research. For example, if a new journal were created with high standards for the quality of research it could help to create a greater awareness of the importance of using sound research methodologies.

However, there are other steps that can be taken to improve the quality of the research. These include:

- Longitudinal Research;
- Fund High-Quality Research; and,
- Avoid Success Bias.

Longitudinal Research. One of the barriers to doing high quality research is the lack of good longitudinal data and the resource intensive nature of gathering and maintaining the data over time. There are several steps that could be taken to encourage more longitudinal research. A new, long-term panel data set could be designed so that researchers from different disciplines could better examine their research questions. Existing longitudinal databases, such as the National Longitudinal Surveys, National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, the National Education Longitudinal Study, and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, might be alternative resources for longitudinal research. The Corporation for National Service might also facilitate access to databases either through the research and evaluation activities it supports or through its administrative record-keeping systems. Foundations and other funders could provide support or encourage researchers to conduct long-term research projects that track programs over a long period of time.

Fund High-Quality Research. Funders should require that the research they support is using appropriate methods to ensure the validity and reliability of their results. They can also utilize peer review procedures to ensure that proposals and work products are methodologically sound.

Avoid the Success Bias. Based upon our compilation and review of abstracts, we observed a tendency of the citizen service literature to focus on “successful” programs. This is understandable given the interests of program leaders to share success stories with others who are committed to service and for journals and other outlets to publish research about successful interventions rather than failures. While much can be learned from a successful program, often more can be learned when one examines programs that vary in their level of success. More attention needs to be given to the mix of programs that are used as a basis for understanding and implementing service.

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Appendix A

Methodology

Creating Search Terms

Our first task was to develop a list of terms that could be used to search the service-related research. The search terms included programs developed in response to national service legislation. This included searching for research on:

- AmeriCorps;
- Youth Corps;
- Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA);
- Learn and Serve America;
- America Reads;
- Foster Grandparent Program;
- Senior Companion Program; and,
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

Moreover, the Grantmaker Forum Research Task Force July 20, 1998 recommended conducting the search based on the points of entry to service programs such as:

- Faith-Based Programs;
- Public Programs;
- Community-Based Organizations;
- Youth Development Organizations;
- Corporate-Based Programs;
- K–12 School-Based Programs;
- University and College-Based Programs;
- Service Corps Programs; and,
- Civic Associations (e.g., Rotary).

Searches using points of entry had the advantage of broadening the base of the search and assured that a much greater range of service-related research was captured during our initial inventory. It also helped ensure that the inventory would capture non-federal service programs. The project team also wanted to employ a set of search terms that would identify research that identifies the impact service has on:

- Server;
- Served;
- Institutional Sponsor;
- Community;
- Nation; and,
- Civil Society.

To identify research that would shed light on the conditions necessary to develop and implement effective service programs, an expansive set of search terms was necessary. Our previous experience demonstrated the advantages of being expansive and editing the results of the search as necessary. If a restrictive set of search terms is used, it is easy to miss references or even a fruitful line of research because the terminology used by the author in a title, abstract, or list of keywords fails to contain one of the limited search terms.

Given the guidance provided by the Grantmaker Forum Research Task Force, the project team worked closely with members of our advisory team (composed of Robert Bringle, Frank Dirks, Lynne Ford, Rob Schumer, and Mary Tschirhart) to develop the list of search terms. The next step was to search selected databases to see how well the search terms performed. The search focused on several databases available at Indiana University over the worldwide web. These included:

- Dissertation Abstracts International;
- ERIC (Education);
- Education Abstracts;
- PAIS (Public Affairs);
- IPSA (International Political Science Abstracts);
- SocioFile (Sociology,);
- PsycINFO (Psychology); and,
- Philanthropic Studies Index.

Our preliminary review did not examine any business or government document databases or any library book catalogs. Rather, the focus was on refining the search terms. The results of this raw search are contained in Table 14. The absence of data for the Philanthropic Studies Index is a result of the fact that the database does not permit a key word search. Instead, you have to search by Library of Congress subject headings that are more general.

The numbers in the table in Table 14 reflect the number of references found between 1990 and 1998 in which the search term appears anywhere in the database record (e.g., title, key word, or abstract). Where possible, the results also reflect only those references published in the English language. The results of this search were surprising in several respects. First, the volume of references was much greater than anticipated and illustrates the breadth of service-related research currently underway. Every academic discipline is represented. Second, the programmatic search terms derived from the national service efforts represent only a small fraction of the overall service-related research. The volume of references expanded substantially when searching by points of entry. Finally, there is less overlap in the search results than anticipated. In other words, the search terms were pulling up different sets of records. For example, there is relatively little overlap between the records identified when searching by national service programs and by points of entry. The relatively small amount of overlap reflects, to a large extent, the different niches served by each of the bibliographic databases.

The results, while encouraging, indicated that our list of search terms had to be narrowed. This was accomplished by eliminating those search terms that pulled up an excessive number of records, suggesting they did not discriminate well among records. Other terms were eliminated

Table 14: Results of a Broad Scan of the Service-Related Research

Table 15: Results of the Preliminary Scan of the Service-Related Research

Table 16. List of Search Terms for the Preliminary Scan

Volunteer <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Voluntarism▪ Volunteerism▪ Volunteer and Corporation▪ Volunteer and Employee▪ Volunteer and Religion▪ Volunteer and School▪ Volunteer and Student	Service Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ National Service Trust Act▪ National and Community Service Act▪ Youth Corps▪ AmeriCorps▪ VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)▪ Learn and Serve America▪ America Reads▪ Foster Grandparent Program▪ Senior Companion Program▪ Retired and Senior Volunteer Program▪ Youth Development▪ Service Program▪ Public Service Program▪ Corporate Social Responsibility▪ Employee and Service and Community
Service <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Service-learning▪ Service Learning▪ Voluntary Service▪ Volunteer Service▪ Citizen Service▪ Service and Faith▪ Service and Religion▪ Service and Corporate	Civic Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Civic Engagement▪ Character Education

by scanning the search results and eliminating those terms that appeared to be ineffective with respect to identifying the research of interest to this project. While some useful references were surely lost, we are reasonably confident that they were either captured by other search terms or were identified as a result of the subsequent steps taken in constructing the database. Although Tables 14 and 15 include, for reference purposes, search information for “mentoring” and “experiential education,” we were directed by the Research Task Force not to include these terms in the final list of terms because of the potential vastness of sources associated with them. The preliminary search bears this out because the two search terms uncovered over 7,062 citations in the preliminary scan.

The process of search term development produced a revised list of search terms that appears in Table 16. A more limited set of databases was then searched using this list of key words. Education abstracts was not searched because ERIC appeared to be more inclusive. The Philanthropic Studies Index was not searched at this time because it was difficult to incorporate the search results into a database. The results of the searches using the revised list of key words are contained in Table 15. This process produced a large, but more manageable, set of records.

Developing the Database of Service-Related Literature

The next step was to incorporate the information into a ProCite database. ProCite is a bibliographic database software that lets you organize and manage databases containing thousands of references in different formats (e.g., books, journal articles, government documents, conference proceedings). The advantage to using ProCite was the software’s ability to import

electronic records from other online or CD-ROM databases. This is accomplished by saving the results of a search and then using a filter (i.e., configuration files) to import selected information into a database (ProCite includes filters for some databases and the software Biblio-Link allows you to create others). The software BookWhere was used to import records from library card catalogs.

There were several tasks involved in developing the database. Nine bibliographic databases were selected for use in the comprehensive scan: Academic Search Elite; Book Where; Dissertation Abstracts International; ERIC (Education); Government Documents; PAIS (Public Affairs); IPSA (International Political Science Abstracts); SocioFile (Sociology); and PsycINFO (Psychology). The keyword search was run using the CD-ROM versions of the Dissertation Abstracts, ERIC, PAIS, IPSA, SocioFile, and PsycINFO databases. The CD-ROM databases, although less flexible in terms of the search process, facilitated the development of the databases. Filters were developed for each of the bibliographic databases, which were then used to build a separate database for each search. The end result of this process were nine databases:

- Academic Search Elite--872 records;
- Book Where--960 records;
- Dissertation Abstracts International--500 records;
- ERIC--2,480 records;
- Government Publications--100 records;
- IPSA--70 records;
- PAIS--625 records;
- PsycINFO--634 records; and
- SocioFile--878 records.

The nine databases were then merged to create a master database. The vast majority of the records in the database contain detailed abstracts and other information about the reference.

While the database was being built, an effort was also underway to identify other service-related research publications that might not be in the database. This was done through a series of contacts with key researchers and members of the advisory committee. References were also obtained in response to a request circulated by email to members of the Grantmaker Forum Research Task Force. The references and reports were added to the database if they were not already present. For the most part, the added references were various reports that were not indexed in the searched databases. We envision this as an ongoing process where records will continue to be added as they are discovered.

Cleaning the Database

The next task involved a time-consuming process of cleaning the database. Each record was reviewed in some detail to eliminate (1) duplicates, (2) records dated prior to 1990, and (3) references in languages other than English. Service-related research on countries other than the United States was eliminated, although research comparing the United States to other countries was retained.

Each record was then examined to see whether it appeared to constitute service-related research. Due to the broad nature of the search categories, many records included in the original database had to be removed. During this process, a broad definition of service-related research was used and if there were any doubts, the record was retained. A broad definition of “research” was also employed and all records were retained that appeared to contain substantive information about a service-related program. Accordingly, the database includes journal articles, conference proceedings, books, book chapters, evaluations, reports, guidance manuals, training materials, trade journals, and other miscellaneous materials. Records that mistakenly survived the first cut were eliminated as they were discovered.

While the database was being built, an effort was also underway to identify other service-related research publications that might not be in the database. This was done through a series of contacts with key researchers and members of the advisory committee. References were also obtained in response to a request circulated by email to members of the Grantmaker Forum Research Task Force. The references and reports were added to the database if they were not already present. For the most part, the added references were reports that were not indexed in the searched databases.

Assigning Keywords and Defining Groupings

The next step in developing the database was to assign keywords to records and define groupings within ProCite. Assigning keywords to each abstract permits analysis using systematic qualitative methods. The information would allow us to identify areas of research, the questions asked, methods employed, and results achieved. The analysis of this information would then provide the foundation for developing a comprehensive framework for examining service-related research. It would also allow us to identify which components of the framework have received the most attention and where future research appears warranted. It could also help us identify the leading theoretical and conceptual frameworks being advanced to understand the issues confronting the development and implementation of effective service programs. The overall quality of the research could also be assessed during the analysis of the abstracts.

We created keywords for each of the records in the database. We initially entered keywords according to a protocol that used a fixed set of questions. This process proved to have disadvantages. When abstracts for a record did not contain the information to answer the precise questions we were asking, then we were unable to code the record. Conversely, if an abstract contained information that was not addressed by the fixed questions we were asking, then the content of the abstract was not fully reflected in the keywords. After experimenting with a fixed-item protocol and encountering its limitations, we changed to a more flexible process for coding keywords. The more flexible process used only a few closed-ended questions. The remaining keywords were created by selecting from a start list of keywords. In light of the diversity of records in the database, coders also were given the option of creating new keywords that reflected the contents of the abstract. These keywords were then added to the master list.

It is worth noting that the keywords we used are derived from the contents (i.e., the title of the publication and its abstract) of each record in the database. For a variety of reasons, we did not seek to superimpose common definitions or terminology for different keywords used in

the abstracts. This would have been time consuming, but more importantly it would have been difficult to do accurately without access to the full text of the original source. Thus, we did not, for example, try to reconcile references to “voluntarism” and “volunteerism” into a single keyword. (The fact is that the literature uses these terms some times as distinct concepts and other times interchangeably, making it virtually impossible to reconcile them.) This choice produced other classifications where there may appear to be overlap, but the outcomes were instead dictated by the contents of the record.

ProCite’s grouping function was used to further enhance our ability to sort and manipulate the contents of the database. Groupings were created in response to the overall goals of the project and input from the Grantmaker Forum Research Task Force. For example, groups were created for categories of research (e.g., streams of service or points of entry), units of analysis (e.g., changes in individuals or the community), and the type of publication (e.g., book, report, journal article, trade journal, dissertation, guidance document, etc.). During this stage, some editing of the records was done to correct formatting errors. These steps were necessary to proceed with more in-depth review of the service-related literature.

Applying a Methods Screen

The last step in organizing the database was to identify records that had a good probability of containing scientific research. Scholars disagree about the legitimacy of different types of scientific evidence and approaches for understanding the world around us. Some argue that only theoretical knowledge is meaningful. Others accept a more expansive definition of research, choosing instead to adopt quality standards for each type of research. Clearly, there are many ways for understanding the world around us. One common method is the traditional deductive scientific method. Theory is developed, hypotheses formulated and tested, and inferences drawn from the results of the analysis according to accepted standards of scientific inquiry. A less formal but nevertheless rigorous technique is to draw inferences from analysis of carefully gathered empirical evidence. A third way is what Bozeman (1993, p. 31) calls wisdom literature, by which he means “synthesis, impressions, systematically reported personal experiences, dialectics, and other approaches that may be characterized as systematic but not as theoretical.”

All three types of studies are contained in the database in a variety of forms, including books, reports, academic and trade journal articles, conference papers, curriculum materials, and guidance manuals. Table 17 provides some details related to an assessment of the quality of the research. The results of the coding process revealed that a wide range of research methods has been used to study citizen service. In fact, 997 of the records in the database appear to rely on methods that might be scientific. Among the most common approaches to studying service are surveys (334), case studies (237), and evaluations (304). A modest number of the abstracts also refer to literature reviews or meta-analysis (131). Only 76 of the abstracts referred to experimental/quasi-experimental or longitudinal research designs.

It is worth noting that this way of identifying scientific research is somewhat arbitrary and requires further scrutiny of the sources themselves before a judgment is made about quality. We sought to incorporate other methods into making a determination about quality (e.g., whether

Table 17. Search Terms for Methods-Screen

Methods Type	Number of Citations
Empirical	461
Evaluation	304
Method – Census Data	4
Method - Case Study	237
Method - Content Analysis	17
Method - Cost-Benefit Analysis	23
Method – Experimental or Quasi-Experimental	34
Method – Focus Group	16
Method – Game Theory	1
Method – Interview	171
Method – Literature Review	123
Method – Longitudinal	42
Method – Panel Study	12
Method – Simulation	4
Method – Survey	334
Method – Meta-Analysis	8

a source is refereed or not), but these alternatives were not foolproof and they also proved to be time consuming. We also consulted the Social Science Citation Index and members of the Grantmaker Forum Research Task Force to elicit information about the perceived or measured quality of journals so that we could eliminate some of them. The number of journals and periodicals appearing in the comprehensive database, over 800, and the lack of good quality information about many of the journals resulted in this process being only modestly helpful.