

Civic Service in 2022 in figures

Established by the law of 10th March 2010, civic service enables young people aged between 16 and 25 (up to 30 for young people with disabilities) to participate in a general interest assignment with an association or public institution. The scheme has become an increasingly important part of youth policy: between 2017 and 2022, some 80,000 young people began an assignment each year, four times as many as in 2014. During this period, around 10% of the 16–25 age group had gotten involved in Civic Service at some point. This paper details the development of Civic Service and the profiles of participants.

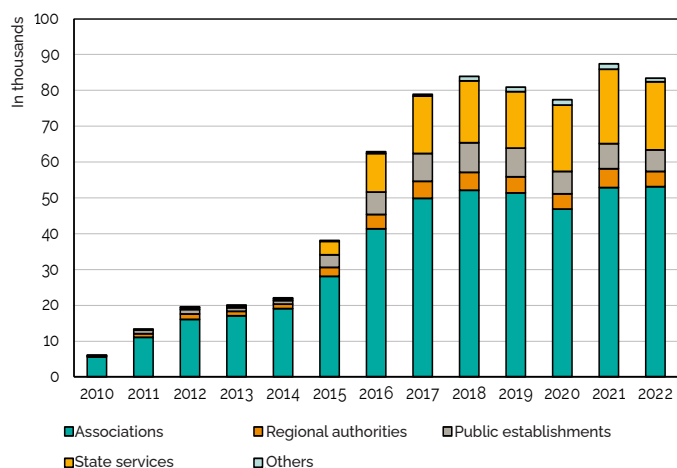
A FOUR-FOLD INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF ASSIGNMENTS SINCE 2014

Civic Service partly stems from the abolition of compulsory military service in 1997, which also ended civilian forms of conscription such as cooperation and conscientious objection. This left room for a scheme that would allow “social mixing” (Ferry, 2008) for young people from different social backgrounds.

Nearly a decade later, in 2006, a form of civil service was introduced, but with limited success. Civic Service was created a few years later based on some recommendations from the Unis-Cité association, which widely contributed to promoting the scheme publicly. It recommended a minimum period of six months, including days set aside for citizenship training and guidance for young people in their projects. A dedicated public interest group, the *Agence du service civique* (Civic Service Agency) is responsible for managing and developing the scheme.

graph 1

Number of admissions to Civic Service assignments by year and type of organisation



Source: ASP-ASC, traitements INJEP, MEDES.

Synopsis: over 83,000 assignments started in 2022. Of these, over 53,000 were hosted by an association, 4,000 by a regional authority, 6,000 by a public establishment and 19,000 by a State service.

After an expansion phase between 2010 and 2017, the number of admissions stabilised at around 80,000 per year from 2017 to 2019. There was a slight decrease in 2020 due to the health crisis, but a rebound was observed from 2021 onwards, continuing in 2022 with 83,497 new admissions (graph 1). The terrorist attacks in 2015 resulted in a renewed desire to strengthen national cohesion and the number of assignments on offer grew particularly quickly after that year. This expansion relied on the involvement of the public sector in particular: the share of assignments carried out in public organisations (State services, public establishments, regional authorities) increased from 12% in 2014 to 35% in 2022. Associations still hosted around 64% of the assignments started in 2022, although their share of the total number of assignments has been decreasing since 2014. Up until 2018, the number of assignments offered by associations increased greatly; at that point, it was 2.7 times greater than in 2014. Between 2018 and 2022, the number of assignments at associations stabilised overall, as did the total number of assignments.

AN AVERAGE OF 27 HOURS PER WEEK FOR 7 MONTHS

Civic Service is governed by the French National Service Code. Organisations need to be approved by the *Agence du service civique* (ASC) and decentralised state services, who are responsible for checking that the organisations offering Civic Service assignments correspond to the criteria defined by law and are effectively working in the general interest. The ASC divides assignments into nine categories: education for all (34 % of assignments in 2022), solidarity (27 %), sport (16 %), culture and leisure activities (10 %), environment (7 %), health (3%), remembrance and citizenship¹ (2 %), international development and humanitarian aid (0.7 %) and emergency interventions (0.6 %).

The assignments are paid at a rate of 610 euros net per month as of 1st of July 2023. The State pays part of this sum, amounting to 497 euros per month, while the host organisation must contribute a supplementary 113 euros, in cash or in kind. An additional 113 euros is allocated based on social criteria to scholarship holders in tiers 5 to 7 and to beneficiaries of the *revenu de solidarité active* (RSA, French unemployment benefits).

The Civic Service contract sets weekly working hours, ranging from 24 to 48 hours (27 hours on average in 2022). It provides for days of paid leave and the duration of the assignment is counted in pension rights calculations. The assignments last between 6 and 12 months (7 months on average in 2022), and each individual can only sign up for one assignment in their lifetime.

1. Including European citizenship.

The participants are supervised during their assignment by a supervisor from the host organisation. Associations receive a payment of 100 euros per month per young person for this supervision, which is not the case for public organisations. First aid training is mandatory for all participants and is paid for by the ASC at a rate of 60 euros per participant. In addition, the ASC also contributes 100 euros per participant for theoretical civic and citizenship training relating to the institutions and values of the French Republic.

If they are signed up to Pôle emploi (the French national job centre), participants are considered as category 4 jobseekers (unemployed jobseekers, but not immediately available), which means they don't have to seek work but are not paid unemployed benefits for this period. Payments under the RSA and *contrat d'engagement jeune* (CEJ, a scheme to help young people find work) are also stopped, but not housing benefits or student grants.

CIVIC SERVICE PARTICIPANTS HAVE VARYING ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS BUT ARE OFTEN JOBSEEKERS

The aim to make Civic Service accessible to all has increased the social diversity of participants' profiles. In 2022, 27% of participants did not have the French baccalaureate when they began a Civic Service assignment, 42% had a baccalaureate as their highest qualification, and 32% had tertiary qualifications. Additionally, young people from abroad can also carry out assignments: they represented 5% of participants in 2022, with more than one third of these being nationals of another European Union country.

In 2022, 34% of participants were registered as jobseekers when they signed up for Civic Service, and 29% were non-working non-students. For comparison, jobseekers and non-working non-students together represented 17% of the 16–25-year-old population in 2020 (*Enquête emploi en continu 2020*, INSEE). As a result, people who are neither working nor studying are overrepresented among those signing up to for Civic Service assignments. Finally, 4% were in salaried work at the start of their assignment, and 33% were students; Civic Service participants can continue their studies during their assignment.

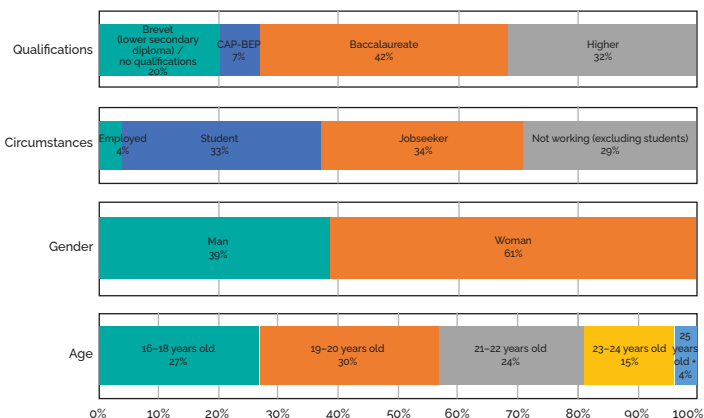
Additionally, the number of volunteers from priority urban districts (*quartier prioritaire de la politique de la ville*, QPV) (13%) is higher among participants starting an assignment than in the general population of 15–24-year-olds (9.2% according to the 2018 population census, INSEE).

61% of participants are women. The majority of these are attracted to assignments in the "education for all" (41% of assignments carried out by women, compared to 24% by men) and "solidarity" categories (28% compared to 25%). Inversely, only 8% of women sign up for sport assignments, whereas this field accounts for 28% of assignments carried out by men. Compared to men, more women have a tertiary qualification (35% compared to 27%), and they more frequently take on assignments in a public institution (41% compared to 25%).

In 2019, INJEP and ASC carried out quantitative research on a representative sample of young people participating in Civic Service. This showed that the majority of participants were from families where the parents were employed (53% of the participants' mothers and 32% of their fathers belong to this category) and work in the public sector (51% of mothers and 39% of fathers). Civic Service participants are also slightly more likely to have volunteered elsewhere before: 20% of Civic Service participants said they had volunteered for a few hours each week throughout the year during the 12 months preceding the start of their assignment, compared to only 15% of 18–25-year-olds in general (*Baromètre DJEPVA sur la jeunesse 2018*).

graph 2

Highest qualification obtained, circumstances before the assignment and age of participants in 2022



Source: ASP-ASC, traitements INJEP, MEDES.

Synopsis: 4% of participants in 2022 were in paid jobs when they started their assignment.

10% OF ALL 16–25-YEAR-OLDS PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC SERVICE

We can estimate that, in 2022, around 10% of a generation of young people undertook a Civic Service assignment². The probability of signing up varied greatly depending on the French département. The greatest discrepancy was between French overseas départements and regions (DROM) and mainland France: 36% of young Guadeloupeans signed up to Civic Service. This proportion was also much higher in French Guiana and Réunion (19%) and Martinique (21%) than in the rest of mainland France, where there were also great discrepancies between départements. For example, Ain and Haute-Savoie were well below the national average (4.7% and 3.2% respectively), whereas Indre, Cantal, Vosges and Meuse were well above it.

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² This refers to the proportion of a generation who participate in Civic Service if the numbers of people signing up by age observed over the year do not change over the period between a person's 16th and 26th birthday.

FURTHER READING

- Becquet V. (dir.), 2011, *L'expérience du service civique volontaire à Unis-Cité : quels enseignements pour le service civique ?*, Paris, INJEP, coll. "Les Cahiers de l'action" n° 34 [\[online\]](#).
- Ferry L., 2008, *Pour un service civique. Report to the President of the French Republic*, Paris, Odile Jacob.
- Francou Q., 2021, *Évaluation du service civique. Résultats de l'enquête sur les parcours et les missions des volontaires*, INJEP Notes & reports/Study report [\[online\]](#).
- Francou Q., Ploux-Chillès A., 2020, "Les volontaires en Service civique : des parcours de formation et d'insertion variés", *INJEP Analyses and summaries*, n° 32 [\[online\]](#).
- Agence du service civique website: www.service-civique.gouv.fr
- All of the tables referred to in this fact sheet and the other research data are available on the INJEP website.