

How do volunteers touch your life?

Volunteers are an important part of your community. They coach your child's team and direct community theatre. They respond to fires and look for missing persons. They spearhead community events and development initiatives. Volunteers provide meals to grandparents, serve at church suppers, protect the environment and sit on boards that deliver health care services.

Volunteers and not-for-profit organizations play a critical role in every community across Canada and throughout Nova Scotia. **Over 377,000 Nova Scotians** contribute their time and expertise to enrich our daily lives. Their services and programs are predominately focused in the local community and their impact on society and the economy go largely unnoticed

How many, doing how much

Source: 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating In Nova Scotia, over 48% of the population volunteered their time with a non-profit or volunteer group, giving just over 47 million volunteer hours (50 volunteer service hours per capita). By comparison, 45% of Canada's population over 15 years of age contributed over 2 billion volunteer hours (34.2 volunteer service hours per capita total population).

Canadian teenagers (15–19) are really pulling their weight volunteering at a rate of 65%—they are more likely than any other age group to volunteer. In Nova Scotia, young people between 15–24 are contributing 18% more hours per year than their national peers. Yet it's Canadians over 55 years who put in the most time averaging 223 hours per year.

Nova Scotia is the third leading province in the number of average hours contributed (195 hours), after British Columbia (199 hours) and Yukon (196 hours).

A small number give a lot

Source: 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating A small number of Canadians are contributing the lion's share of volunteer services. In 2004, 11% of Canadians accounted for 77% of all volunteer hours. In Nova Scotia, the decline in the number of volunteers has been offset by the fact that volunteers are putting in 32% more hours per volunteer. This means a greater burden is being borne by fewer volunteers.

Who are the volunteers?

Source: 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating The tendency to volunteer rises with the level of education. Sixty percent of Nova Scotia's university diploma or degree holders contribute their time, nearly twice the provincial average.

Married or common-law people are more likely to volunteer, and on average donate 207 hours per year. Sixty-six percent of Nova Scotians with school-age children volunteer, compared to 42 percent of people with no children in their household.

Volunteer rates are highest among youth, those with household incomes over \$100,000, and those who attend religious services weekly. Nova Scotia women are also more likely to volunteer than men.

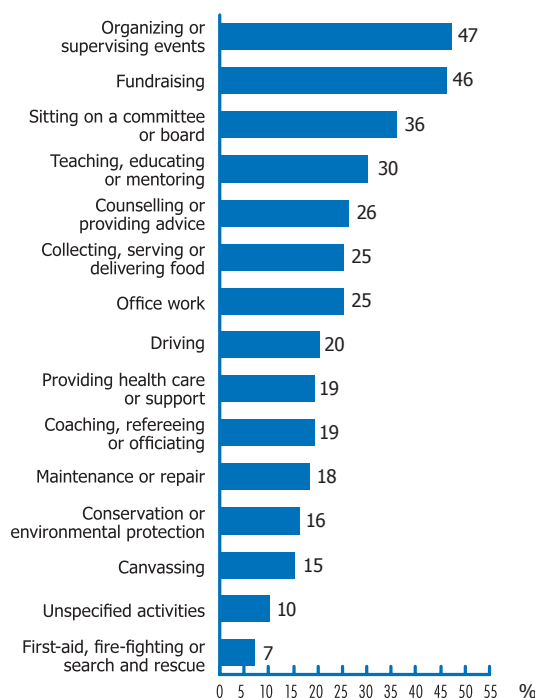
Why do people volunteer?

Source: 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating Research confirms that the majority of volunteers become involved because they want to contribute to their community or are personally attracted to a particular cause. Some people, particularly youth, also see volunteering as an opportunity to develop and use skills or experience.

Almost 90% of volunteers become engaged because they are asked, only 2% become involved via the internet and sadly, 40% of the people who are not currently volunteering have never been asked to contribute their time. Considering that only 11% of Canadians contribute over 77% of all volunteer hours, it may be time to take a careful look at how we are asking Canadians to get involved.

What do volunteers do?

Distribution of type of volunteer activity, volunteers aged 15 and older, Canada, 2004



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004

What's the result?

Source: 2004 National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations

The benefits of volunteerism go well beyond direct contribution to the community. Volunteers help create healthy communities, and are engaged citizens in our society. According to Health Canada, volunteerism is a key indicator of a "supportive social environment" that can enhance health.

There are currently over 5,820 organizations in the province—the second largest number of organizations per capita in Canada. Many Nova Scotians are helping with more than one organization but the large majority devote most of their volunteer hours to a single priority group.

Ways we can support volunteerism in Nova Scotia

Government and community organizations working together can support volunteerism in Nova Scotia by recognizing and appreciating the time and efforts of volunteers, hosting volunteer community round tables for information-sharing, encouraging community members to volunteer, providing training opportunities for new volunteers and showcasing the valuable role of volunteers in Nova Scotia.

Issues facing volunteers

Source: GPI Atlantic, The Economic Value of Civic and Voluntary Work in Atlantic Canada, 2003

Older volunteers saw the sharpest increase in average volunteer hours, with a 67-hour increase among those 65 and older. As many older volunteers age and move out of the volunteer sector, the issue of burn-out among remaining volunteers will escalate. Other issues include high costs of insurance for non-profit organizations, lack of sufficient capacity-building resources and tools, and the need for better recognition and supports for volunteers in communities.

But much more needs to be done, and the Nova Scotia government is committed to address with the volunteer community issues of capacity, tools and resources, and other key priorities for action. It is through these measures that we can strengthen and support a voluntary sector that represents a vital contribution to community, and the province.

Where do volunteers participate?

Nonprofit and voluntary organization volunteers, by primary activity area, Canada, 2003

Primary activity area	All volunteers (%)
Arts and culture	4.9
Sports and recreation	27.6
Education and research	7.8 ^E
Universities and colleges	0.2
Health	4.2
Hospitals	1.7
Social services	18.8 ^E
Environment	3.8
Development and housing	1.7
Law, advocacy and politics	1.9
Grant-making, fundraising and voluntarism promotion	8.6
International	0.8
Religion	10.9
Business and professional associations and unions	5.2
Organizations not elsewhere classified	2.0 ^E
All organizations	100

Notes: 1) Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. 2) ^E use with caution
Source: Statistics Canada, National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations.

Diversity of sectors

Nonprofit and voluntary organizations, by primary activity area, Canada, 2003

Primary activity areas	Number of organizations	% of all organizations
Arts and culture	13,770	8.5
Sports and recreation	33,649	20.9
Education and research	8,284	5.1
Universities and colleges	502	0.3
Health	5,324	3.3
Hospitals	779	0.5
Social services	19,099	11.8
Environment	4,424	2.7
Development and housing	12,255	7.6
Law, advocacy and politics	3,628	2.3
Grant-making, fundraising and voluntarism promotion	15,935	9.9
International	1,022	0.6
Religion	30,679	19.0
Business and professional associations and unions	8,483	5.3
Organizations not elsewhere classified	3,393	2.1
All organizations	161,227	100.0

Note: Figures do not add to total and percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.
Source: Statistics Canada, National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations.

Quick Facts

- Over 377,000 Nova Scotians, or 48% of the population, volunteers.
- Nova Scotians give over 4.7 million volunteer hours.
- A small number of people give the most volunteer time—in 2004, 11% of Canadian accounted for 77% of all volunteer hours.
- Almost 90% of volunteers become engaged because they are asked.
- There are currently over 5,820 organizations in the province.
- Since 1987, average volunteer time among seniors 65 and older has increased by 67 hours.

For more information:

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