

Motivations and Barriers to Volunteering

The 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP)¹ asked the 27% of Canadians who volunteered in 2000 whether any of a range of eight potential motivations was a reason they volunteered. The 73% of Canadians who did not volunteer were asked if any of a range of eight potential barriers was a reason that they did not volunteer.² The importance of some of these motivations and barriers varies with the personal characteristics of volunteers, notably age.

Motivations for volunteering

The most commonly cited motivation for volunteering (reported by 95% of volunteers) was a belief in the cause supported by the organization. A majority of volunteers also cited the desire to use their skills and experiences (81% of volunteers), being personally affected by the cause the organization supports (69%), and a desire to explore their own strengths and abilities (57%) as motivations for volunteering. Fewer volunteers said that they volunteered because their friends volunteer (30%), in order to fulfill religious obligations or beliefs (26%), or to improve their job opportunities (23%)

Age and motivations for volunteering

Younger volunteers were more likely to volunteer because they wanted to explore their strengths and abilities. Just over seven in ten (71%) volunteers aged 15 to 24 and 63% of volunteers aged 25 to 34 said that they volunteered for this reason, compared to less than half (46%) of volunteers aged 65 and over.

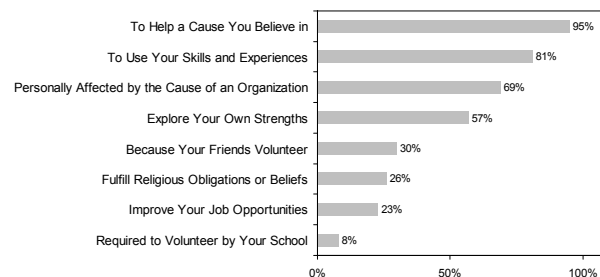
Younger volunteers were also more likely to volunteer because they wanted to improve their job opportunities. The majority (55%) of volunteers aged 15 to 24 cited this as a motivation for volunteering. The importance of this motivation declined dramatically with age. Less than one third (27%) of those aged 25 to 34 cited this motivation, and this dropped to just 6% of volunteers aged 65 and over.

Older volunteers were more likely to mention religious obligations and beliefs as a reason for volunteering. Half (50%) of volunteers aged 65 and over cited this as a motivation for volunteering, compared with one quarter or less of those under the age of 55.

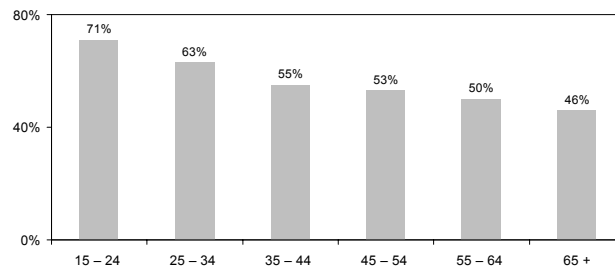
¹ NSGVP estimates are based on reports of charitable giving and volunteering over a one-year period by Canadians aged 15 and older.

² Because most Canadians did not volunteer in 2000, this fact sheet focuses on barriers to volunteering at all rather than barriers to volunteering more. Please see the report *The Volunteer Spirit in Canada: Motivations and Barriers* at www.givingandvolunteering.ca for an examination of barriers to volunteering more.

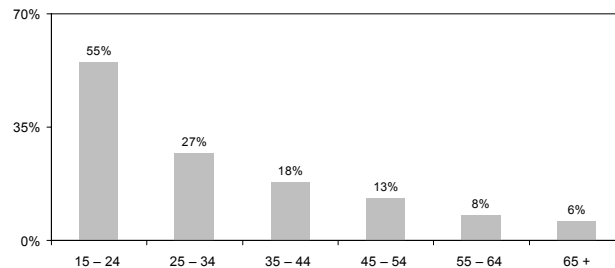
Motivations for Volunteering



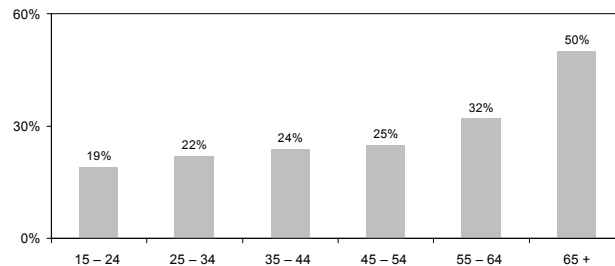
Volunteer to Explore Strengths, by Age



Volunteer to Improve Job Opportunities, by Age



Volunteer to Fulfill Religious Obligations, by Age



Barriers to volunteering

Nearly seven in ten Canadians (69%) who did not volunteer in 2000 cited lack of extra time as a barrier. Almost half (46%) said that they did not volunteer because they were unwilling to make a year-round commitment, and just under four in ten said that they gave money instead of volunteering (38%) or had not been personally asked to volunteer (37%). In comparison, 20% of non-volunteers said that they didn't volunteer because they didn't know how to get involved.

Age and barriers to volunteering

The importance of lack of time as a barrier to volunteering varied according to the age of the respondent. Eight in ten non-volunteers aged 25 to 34 (80%) said that they did not volunteer for this reason, compared to just 39% of those aged 65 and over.

Younger Canadians were, however, more likely to say that they did not volunteer because they had not personally been asked to do so. Almost half (49%) of non-volunteers aged 15 to 24 cited this as a reason for not volunteering, compared to just 27% of those aged 65 and over.

Older Canadians were more likely to say that they did not volunteer because of health problems or physical disabilities. This barrier is particularly important among those aged 65 and over. In this age group, 58% said they did not volunteer for this reason, compared to less than one in ten (9%) of those aged 25 to 34.

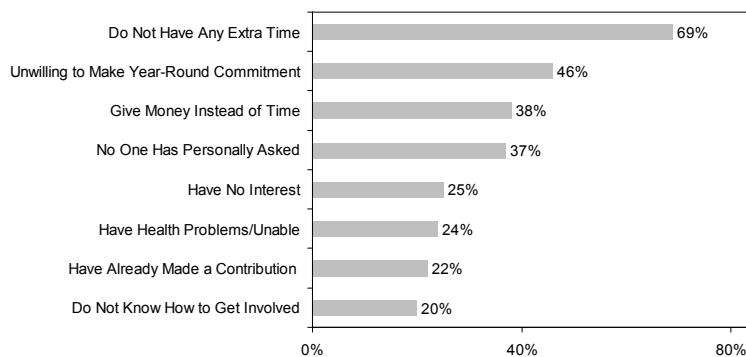
For more information on the 1997 and 2000 National Survey for Giving, Volunteering and Participating, including full text of the highlight report, *Caring Canadians*, *Involved Canadians*, please visit www.givingandvolunteering.ca.

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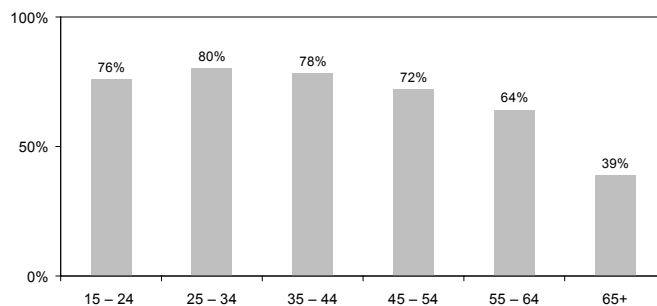
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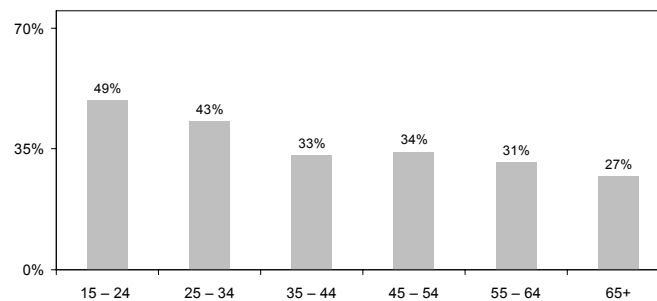
Barriers to Volunteering



Don't Volunteer because of Lack of Time, by Age



Don't Volunteer because Nobody Asked, by Age



Don't Volunteer because of Health Problems, by Age

