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# Giving and Volunteering in Ontario

Results from the National Survey of  
Giving, Volunteering and Participating

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CANADA

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## Introduction

Ontarians are actively involved in supporting one another and their communities—through donations and volunteer activities—according to findings from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP). Approximately 8 million Ontarians—89% of the province's population aged 15 and older—made financial or in-kind donations to charitable and non-profit organizations from November 1, 1996 to October 31, 1997. Direct financial support to these organizations totalled over \$2 billion. Ontario donors gave an average of \$279 each—17% more than the average Canadian donor. Furthermore, roughly 2.9 million Ontarians, or 32% of the province's population, volunteered their time and skills to voluntary organizations during the same period. These volunteers contributed a total of nearly 422 million hours, the equivalent of more than 200,000 full-time year-round jobs (assuming 40 hours per week for 48 weeks). On average, Ontario volunteers devoted 146 hours each to participating in volunteer activities—similar to the average number of hours contributed by Canadians.

The involvement of Ontarians in charitable organizations—whether by donating or volunteering—was demonstrated in a number of ways. Individuals made donations by approaching organizations on their own initiative; in response to requests from organizations; by depositing spare change in cash boxes; by leaving bequests to a charity; and by donating clothing, household goods, and food. Similarly, Ontario's volunteers participated in a wide scope of activities—from formal activities such as canvassing, organizing events, and delivering food to the needy—to informal helping such as babysitting, doing yard work, and driving someone to an appointment. Despite the fact that nine out of every 10 Ontarians are donors—and three out of every 10 are volunteers—statistical information regarding involvement within the non-profit realm has been lacking until now.

The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) was undertaken to better

understand how Canadians support individuals and communities, either on their own or through involvement with charitable and non-profit organizations. The NSGVP is a joint project of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Canadian Heritage, Health Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, the Kahanoff Foundation's Non-Profit Sector Research Initiative, Statistics Canada and Volunteer Canada. The survey was carried out by Statistics Canada during a three-week period in late November and early December of 1997 and asked respondents—aged 15 and older—about their giving, volunteering and participating during the one-year period between November 1, 1996 and October 31, 1997.

Government cutbacks at all levels have put pressure on the non-profit sector to provide a mechanism by which social services can be delivered less expensively. To do so, charities must continue to attract the support of the public. A better understanding of trends in giving and volunteering, therefore, is critical. Strategic information gleaned from the NSGVP can assist voluntary organizations in the development of their fundraising and volunteer recruitment strategies and help them to make the best use of limited volunteer and donor resources. Information on the demographic characteristics of donors and volunteers can improve the voluntary sector's ability to predict future trends. More generally, information from the NSGVP is useful for government and public institutions as they develop and manage social policies.

This report examines findings pertaining to the nature of giving and volunteering in Ontario. Whenever possible, these findings are discussed in terms of their relevance for developing fundraising and volunteer recruitment strategies. When useful, comparisons are made to Canada as a whole. Some of the topics covered are: profiles of Ontario donors and volunteers, the kinds of support Ontarians give, types of organizations supported, motivations and barriers for giving and volunteering, and connections between different forms of involvement.

## Charitable Giving in Ontario

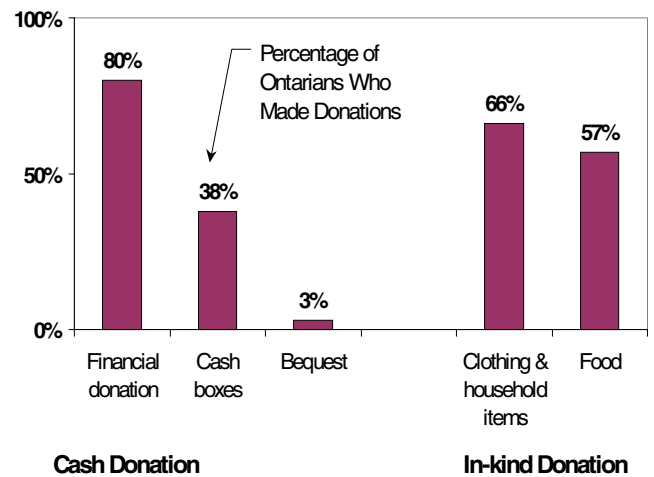
Charitable giving—in all its forms—allows non-profit organizations to offer programs and services that are essential to the well-being of individuals, and provides a mechanism through which people can express their ideals and values. The charitable contributions made by Ontarians range from financial contributions to donations of food, clothing, and household goods. Ontarians provide further support by purchasing products sold by charitable and non-profit or-

ganizations and by participating in charitable gaming. The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating sheds light on many aspects of giving, including the extent of support provided by donors; the characteristics of Ontario donors—including personal and economic characteristics and the role of religion; the organizations Ontarians supported; how they made their financial donations; and the reasons for making or not making financial donations.

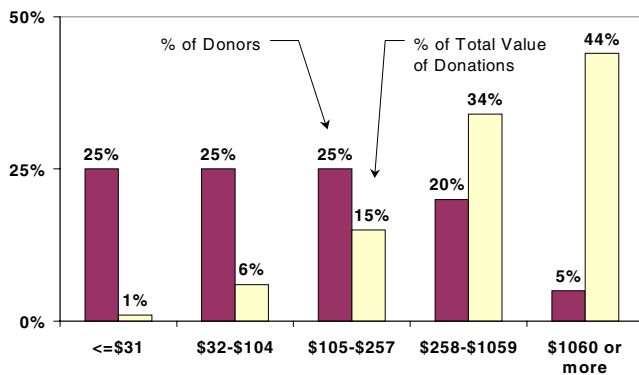
## The Support that Ontarians Provide

Approximately 8 million Ontarians, or 89% of the province's population aged 15 and older, made financial or in-kind donations to charitable and non-profit organizations between November 1, 1996 and October 31, 1997. Financial donations took several forms (Figure 1): 80% (7.3 million) of Ontarians made direct financial donations, either in response to an appeal or by approaching organizations on their own initiative; 38% deposited spare change in cash-boxes, usually beside a cash register; and 3% reported leaving a bequest to a charitable, religious or spiritual organization. This financial support totalled over \$2 billion (\$2.05 billion), 99% of which (\$2.02 billion) came from direct financial donations. The remaining 1% (\$28.92 million) came from deposits of spare change in cash boxes. In-kind donations were also common: 66% of Ontarians donated clothing or household goods; 57% donated food to a charitable organization such as a food bank.

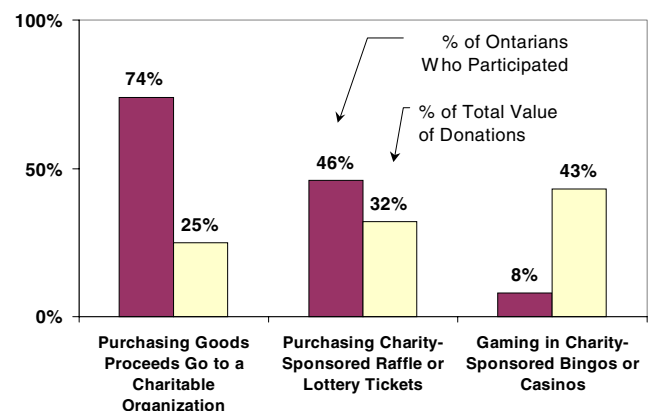
**Figure 1: Percentage Who Made Donations to Charitable and Non-Profit Organizations by Type of Donation, Ontario Population Aged 15 and Older**



**Figure 2: Distribution of Total Value of Donations by Size of Annual Donation, Ontario Donors Aged 15 and Older, 1997**



**Figure 3: Indirect Financial Support to Charitable and Non-Profit Organizations Through Purchases, Ontarians Aged 15 and Older, 1997**



The analyses presented in the remainder of this chapter will focus on direct financial donations (excluding deposits of spare change) and the donors who make them. The 80% of Ontarians who made donations in response to requests from organizations or by approaching organizations on their own initiative gave a total of over \$2 billion (\$2.02 billion). On average, donors gave \$279 during the 12-month period covered by the survey—17% more than the average Canadian donor.

The average donation does not effectively capture the distribution of donations, however. Included in the average are those who gave a relatively small amount during the year, as well as those who gave a substantial amount. If we divide donors into five groups (those in

the top 5% of donors, the next 20%, the next 25%, and so on), a much truer picture emerges.

Figure 2 reveals that most charitable donations came from a small percentage of Ontario's population: The top 5% of Ontario's donors—those who donated \$1060 or more annually—accounted for 44% of the total value of donations made in Ontario. The next 20% gave between \$258 and \$1,059 each, and accounted for 34% of the total value of all donations made. If we combine these two groups, we can see that 25% of donors in Ontario accounted for 78% of the total value of all donations. The remaining three-quarters of the province's donors—who gave \$257 or less—accounted for only 22% of all financial donations.

## Indirect Financial Support to Charitable and Non-Profit Organizations

Direct financial donations are not the only means of support for charitable and non-profit organizations: Ontarians can also provide indirect support through activities such as purchasing goods or raffle tickets, and participating in charity-sponsored gaming. This type of support is an important source of revenue for many non-profit organizations. A recent survey conducted by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, for example, found that 44% of non-religious, non-private foundation charities rely on charitable gaming revenues.

Figure 3 shows that Between November 1, 1996 and October 31, 1997, nearly three-quarters (74%) of Ontarians purchased goods such as chocolate bars, apples, poppies, flowers or coupon books where proceeds went to charitable and non-profit organizations; 46% purchased charity-sponsored raffle or lottery tickets (excluding government-sponsored lotteries such as Lotto 6/49), and 8% participated in gaming activities, such as charity-sponsored bingos or casinos. Ontario's charities and non-profit organizations received a significant amount of money from these activities, a total of nearly \$642 million for the year. Of this amount, \$274 million came from charitable gaming, \$208 million from purchases of charity-sponsored raffle or lottery tickets, and \$159 million from purchases of goods

## Who Donates?

### Personal and Economic Characteristics

The 8 out of ten Ontarians 15 years or older who made donations to charitable and non-profit organizations have varying backgrounds, occupations and lifestyles. An important part of developing an effective fundraising strategy is understanding who these donors are and how much they give.

Table 1 shows that the proportion of Ontarians who made donations to voluntary organizations generally increases with age. Sixty-three percent (63%) of Ontarians between the ages of 15 and 24 made a donation, compared to 86%

of those 35 to 44, and 81% of those 65 and older. The size of the average yearly donation also tends to increase with age. Donors 65 or older made average yearly contributions that were four times greater (\$407) than those made by 15 to 24 year-olds (\$104). In fact, seniors donated the largest amount of all age groups.

Married Ontarians—including those in common-law unions—were more likely to be donors (87%) than those who were single (67%), separated or divorced (75%), or widowed (74%). Although widowed Ontarians were least likely to donate, their average annual donations were larger (\$369) than donations for all other marital status categories. Married Ontarians accounted for the bulk (75%) of all donations made in Ontario during the year.

**Table 1:** Donor Rate, Total Donations, % of Total Value of Donations, and Average and Median Donation Made During 1997, Ontario Population Aged 15 and Older

	<b>Donor Rate (%)</b>	<b>Total Donations (\$,000)</b>	<b>% of Total Value of Donations</b>	<b>Average Donation (\$)</b>	<b>Median Donation (\$)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>2,023,873</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>105</b>
<i>Age</i>					
15-24	63	96,667	5	104	29
25-34	81	269,530	13	183	69
35-44	86	495,569	24	298	111
45-64	85	431,517	21	344	150
55-64	85	286,989	14	343	124
65 and over	81	443,602	22	407	177
<i>Sex</i>					
Male	78	996,856	49	290	104
Female	83	1,027,018	51	270	105
<i>Marital Status</i>					
Married and Common Law	87	1,508,441	75	313	130
Single, Never Married	67	255,419	13	164	50
Widowed	74	144,988	7	369	155
Separated or Divorced	75	115,026	6	240	90
<i>Education</i>					
Less than High School	70	314,315	16	177	65
High School Diploma	77	341,850	17	239	108
Some Post-Secondary	80	140,366	7	174	69
Post-Secondary Diploma	87	599,094	30	292	115
University Degree	92	628,247	31	531	224
<i>Labour Force Status</i>					
Employed	85	1,329,100	66	284	110
Full-time	86	1,096,528	54	291	120
Part-time	83	232,572	11	253	75
Unemployed	63	23,388	1	85	30
Not in the Labour Force	74	671,385	33	293	103
<i>Household Income</i>					
Less than \$20,000	63	167,480	8	149	50
\$20,000 - \$39,999	78	323,066	16	219	83
\$40,000 - \$59,999	83	452,965	22	257	103
\$60,000 - \$79,999	86	380,213	19	283	110
\$80,000 or more	93	700,149	35	453	165

Employed Ontarians were more likely to be donors (85%) than those who were unemployed (63%) and those not in the labour force<sup>1</sup> (74%). Full-time employees and individuals not in the labour force made the largest average annual donations (\$291 and \$293, respectively); together they accounted for 87% of the value of all donations made during the year.

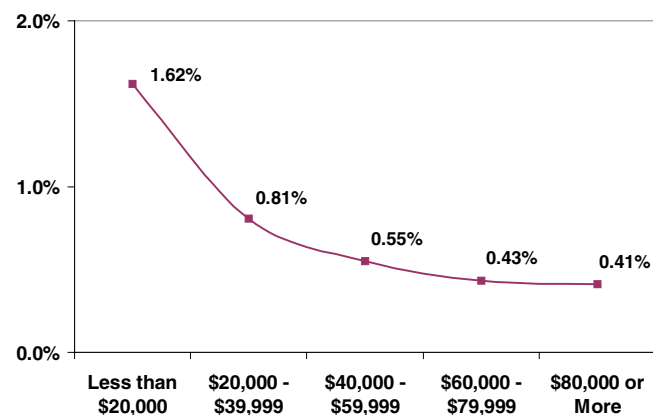
Both the donation rate of Ontarians and the amount of money they donated rose with their level of education. The likelihood of donating ranged from 70% for those with less than a secondary school education to 92% for those with a university degree. The average annual value ranged from \$177 among those with less than a high school education to \$531 for those with a university degree. Ontarians who received at least some post-secondary education accounted for more than two-thirds of the value of all donations made (68%).

One's ability to make financial donations is connected to one's disposable income. It comes as no surprise, then, that both the likelihood of Ontarians donating—and of making a larger total annual donation—increased with their income. Sixty-three percent of Ontarians with an annual pre-tax household income of less than \$20,000 were donors. This increased to 93% for Ontarians with a household income of \$80,000 or more. Average annual donations for those in the \$80,000 or more household income group were at least twice as large as those made by donors with incomes of less than \$20,000 *and* by donors with incomes between \$20,000 and \$39,999. In

addition, this top household income group accounted for just over one-third (35%) of the value of all donations made in Ontario.

Although Ontario donors with higher household incomes made larger average annual donations, they did not contribute a greater percentage of their income than did less affluent Ontarians. In fact, it was the reverse. Figure 4 illustrates that when annual donations are expressed as a percentage of pre-tax household income, donors in *lower* household income categories contributed a larger proportion of their income than did those in higher income groups.

**Figure 4: Percentage of Household Income Spent on Financial Donations by Level of Household Income, Ontario Donors Aged 15 and Older**



## The Role of Religion

The world's major religions encourage philanthropy—the giving of time and money—to the community. Religious factors—affiliation, attendance at a place of worship, and intensity of religious feeling—are important to consider, therefore, when attempting to understand the charitable giving patterns of Ontarians: These three factors were associated with both a heightened incidence of charitable giving and a greater amount of giving.

Ontarians who were affiliated with a community of worship, regardless of their religion, were much more likely to be donors (85%) than were those with no such affiliation (69%; Figure 5a). There was also a relationship between religious affiliation and the annual amount that people contributed. On average, donors who were religiously-affiliated contributed more than twice as much

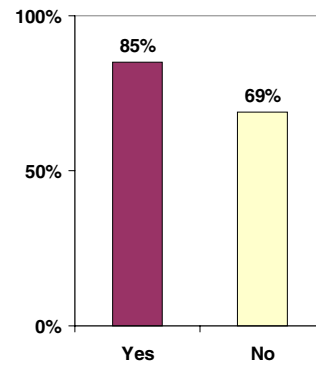
as donors with no affiliation (\$324 versus \$138, respectively; Figure 5b). Presented from a different perspective, individuals with a religious affiliation (72% of all Ontarians and 76% of all donors) accounted for 88% of the total value of all donations. It is also worth noting that religiously-affiliated donors were more likely to make financial contributions to non-religious organizations (90%) than they were to religious organizations (57%).

Attendance at a place of worship was also associated with the likelihood of being a donor and with the annual amount given. Ontarians who attended religious services weekly were more likely to donate than those who did not (90% versus 78%, respectively; Figure 6a). Furthermore, donors who attended services weekly made annual average donations that were more than twice that of non-weekly attenders (\$575 versus \$183; Figure 6b).

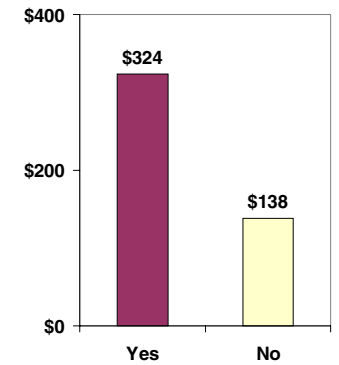
Looked at from a different perspective, people who attended religious services weekly (22% of all Ontarians and 25% of donors) accounted for slightly more than half (51%) of the value of all charitable donations in Ontario. Furthermore, donors who attended weekly were just as likely to make donations to non-religious organizations (84%) as they were to religious organizations (85%).

Ontarians who described themselves as “very religious“ were more likely both to be donors and to give more during the year than those who did not describe themselves in this way (89% versus 79%; \$553 versus \$231, respectively; Figures 7a and 7b). Furthermore, individuals who described themselves as “very religious” (14% of all Ontarians and 15% of donors) accounted for nearly one-third (30%) of the value of all charitable donations in

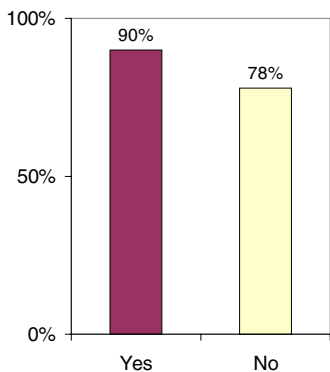
**Figure 5a: Donor Rate According to Religious Affiliation**  
Ontario Population Aged 15 and Over



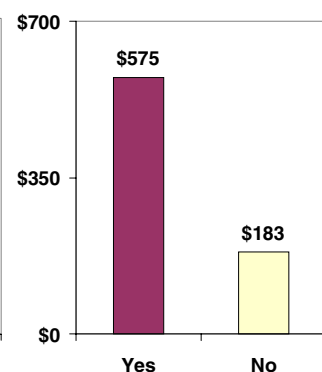
**Figure 5b: Average Donation According to Religious Afiliation**



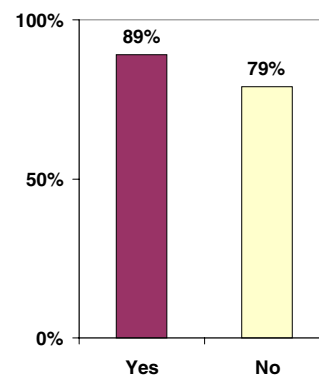
**Figure 6a: Donor Rate According to Attendance at a Place of Worship**  
Ontario Population Aged 15 and Over



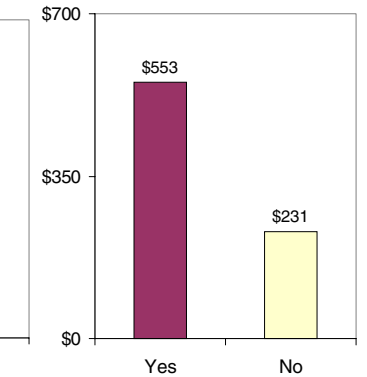
**Figure 6b: Average Donation According to Attendance at a Place of Worship**



**Figure 7a: Donor Rate According to Intensity of Religious Feeling**  
Ontario Population Aged 15 and Over



**Figure 7b: Average Donation According to Intensity of Religious feeling**



Ontario. With respect to the type of organizations they supported, a pattern similar to that of the religiously-affiliated emerged: that is, donors who described themselves as ‘very religious’ gave to non-religious organizations at a higher rate than they did to religious organizations (82% vs. 80%, respectively).

What does this information tell us? Specifically, the belief that religiously-involved individuals—defined in terms of affiliation, attendance at a place of worship, or intensity of religious feeling—donate only within the religious

domain is misplaced. Findings from the NSGVP demonstrated that these individuals are just as likely, if not more likely, to make financial contributions to non-religious organizations. What does this information tell us? Specifically, the belief that religiously-involved individuals—defined in terms of affiliation, attendance at a place of worship, or intensity of religious feeling—donate only within the religious domain is misplaced. Findings from the NSGVP demonstrated that these individuals are just as likely, if not more likely, to make financial contributions to non-religious organizations.

## A Profile of Top Donors

Earlier, we noted that Ontarians who donated \$258 or more annually—the top 25% of Ontario’s donors—accounted for 78% of the total value of donations in Ontario. Because this relatively small proportion of Ontario’s donors accounted for the bulk of donations, it would seem worthwhile to investigate whether they can be distinguished in terms of their personal and economic characteristics from donors who gave less than \$257 annually. The top 25% of donors can be divided into 2 groups: the top 5% (those who gave at least \$1060 annually) and the next 20% (those who gave between \$258 and \$1059 annually). We can then compare the demographic composition of these 2 groups to the rest of the donor population in Ontario.

Table 2 shows that both the top 5% of donors and the next 20% of donors—when compared to the rest of Ontario’s donor population—tend to be older, and are

more likely to be married, to have a university degree, and to have higher incomes. It is important to note, however, that there were also substantial differences between the top 5% of donors and the next 20% of donors. For example, 67% of the top 5% of donors were at least 45 years old, but just over half (55%) of the next 20% of donors were in this age group. Thirty-nine percent of the top 5% had a university degree, compared to 28% of the next 20% of donors. The same trend occurred for household income.

The differences between both of these donor groups and the rest of the donor population in terms of their religious involvement are also striking. Ninety-four percent of the top 5% of donors had a religious affiliation, as did 85% of the next 20% of donors. This dipped to 72% for the remaining donor population. This same pattern emerged for attendance at a place of worship and intensity of religious feeling.

## The Organizations that Ontarians Support

During the period covered by the Survey, Ontarians supported a wide variety of non-profit and charitable organizations such as food banks, research institutions, and centres that offer rehabilitative services. Table 3 shows the distribution of both the number and amount all donations according to the type of organization to which each donation was made<sup>2</sup>. Health organizations received the highest number of individual donations (41% of all reported donations), followed by social service organizations (20%) and religious organizations (15%). This same pattern emerged for Canada as a whole.

While religious organizations were the recipients of only 15% of the total number of donations, these donations amounted to \$1.04 billion—more than half of the value of all donations in Ontario (51%). This is because average yearly donations to religious organizations were much larger than those to non-religious organizations (\$309 and \$147, respectively). Health organizations were the second largest beneficiary of charitable giving, receiving \$382 million, or 19% of the total value of donations. This was followed by social service organizations, which received \$222 million, or 11% of the total value.

The majority of donors did not restrict their donations to one type of organization, but supported a variety of organizations and causes (Figure 8). Less than one-third

**Table 3:** Distribution of Number of Donations and Total Value of Donations by Type of Organization, Ontario Population Aged 15 and Older

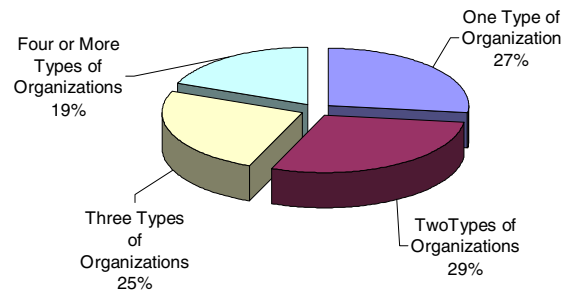
Organization Type	Distribution of Total Number of Donations (30 Million) (%)	Distribution of Total Value of Donations (\$2 Billion) (%)
Health	41	19
Social Services	20	11
Religion	15	51
Education/Research	6	3
Philanthropy and Voluntarism	5	6
Culture/Recreation	4	3
International	2	2
Environment	2	1
Other	2	1

**Table 2:** Demographic Characteristics of the Top 5% of Donors, the Next 20% of Donors and the Remaining Donor Population (75%), Ontario Population, Aged 15 and Older

	<b>Top 5% of Ontario Donors</b>	<b>Next 20% of Ontario Donors</b>	<b>Rest of Ontario's Donors (75%)</b>	<b>Ontario's Population</b>
<b>Annual Amount Donated</b>	<b>(\$1060 or more)</b>	<b>(\$258 - \$1059)</b>	<b>(\$1 - \$257)</b>	
<i>Age</i>				
15-24	4%	4%	16%	16%
25-34	9%	17%	22%	20%
35-44	20%	24%	23%	21%
45-54	25%	20%	16%	16%
55-64	17%	13%	11%	11%
65+	25%	22%	12%	15%
<i>Sex</i>				
Male	55%	49%	47%	49%
Female	45%	51%	53%	51%
<i>Marital Status</i>				
Married	74%	75%	64%	61%
Single, Never Married	11%	12%	25%	26%
Widow/Widower	8%	8%	6%	6%
Separated/Divorced	7%	5%	7%	7%
<i>Education</i>				
Less than Secondary	15%	15%	28%	28%
Grade 11-13 Graduate	14%	18%	21%	21%
Some Post-Secondary	4%	8%	13%	11%
Post-Secondary Certificate/Diploma	28%	32%	27%	26%
University Degree	39%	28%	12%	14%
<i>Labour Force Status</i>				
Employed	63%	68%	64%	61%
Full-time	53%	56%	51%	49%
Part-time	11%	12%	13%	12%
Unemployed	0%	1%	5%	5%
Not in the Labour Force	37%	31%	32%	34%
<i>Household Income</i>				
Less than \$20,000	6%	11%	17%	20%
\$20,000-\$39,999	16%	18%	21%	21%
\$40,000-\$59,999	21%	27%	25%	24%
\$60,000-\$79,999	15%	17%	19%	17%
\$80,000 and over	41%	27%	19%	18%
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>				
No Religious Affiliation	6%	14%	27%	27%
Affiliated	94%	85%	72%	72%
<i>Religious Attendance</i>				
Non-Weekly Attender	29%	44%	54%	50%
Weekly Attender	65%	42%	17%	22%
<i>Intensity of Religious Feeling</i>				
Does not Feel Very Religious	61%	76%	86%	84%
Feels Very Religious	38%	23%	12%	14%

(27%) of Ontario donors limited their donations to only one type of organization, while nearly three-quarters (73%) donated to two or more types of organizations. Of these, 29% supported two different types, 25% supported three types, and 19% supported 4 or more types of organizations.

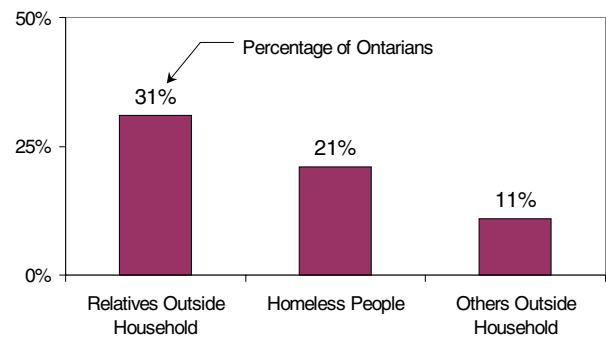
**Figure 8: Distribution of Donors by Number of Organizations Supported, Ontario Donors Aged 15 and older**



## Financial Support Given Directly to Individuals

In addition to the more formal ways of giving—that is, through a charitable organization—there are a number of ways in which Ontarians donated money directly to individuals (Figure 9): Thirty-one percent of Ontarians aged 15 and older gave money (excluding loans) to relatives who did not live with them; 21% gave money to the homeless; and 11% gave directly to others living outside their household.

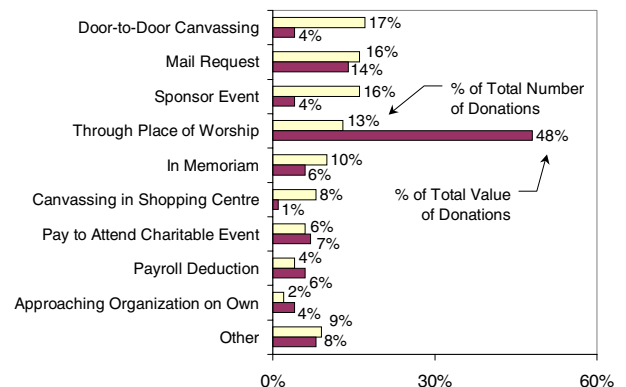
**Figure 9: Percentage of Ontarians Aged 15 and Older Who Gave Money Directly to Others, Not Through an Organization**



## How Ontarians Make Financial Donations

Charitable and non-profit organizations use a variety of methods to appeal for financial donations, and Ontarians respond differently to each. Figure 10 shows the percentage of all donations made in response to the various solicitation methods and the percentage of the total value of all donations reported for each method.

**Figure 10: Methods of Making Donations as a Percentage of Total Number of Donations and Total Value of Donations, Ontario Donors Aged 15 and Older**



The most frequent ways Ontarians made donations were by responding to a door-to-door canvasser (17% of the total number of donations); responding to a request through the mail (16% of the total number of donations); sponsoring someone in an event such as a walk-a-thon (16% of the total number of donations); and making a donation through a collection at a place of worship (13% of the total number of donations). Less common methods

of making donations were in response to being asked by someone at work (3%), telephone requests (3%), and television or radio requests (2%).

Figure 10 demonstrates that the frequency with which people respond to a particular method of fundraising is not necessarily related to the amount of funds raised by

that method. In other words, some methods of charitable giving are more frequent—such as responses to door-to-door canvassing and mail requests—while other methods generate more funds. For example, donations made through places of worship represented only 13% of the total number of donations made in Ontario, but accounted for almost half of the total value of all donations (48%).

## How Ontarians Decide to Give: Planned versus Spontaneous Giving

Ontario donors are approached every year by non-profit organizations seeking financial support. When do donors make decisions about where—and how much—to contribute? Are their decisions planned or spontaneous? Findings from the NSGVP show that the majority of Ontario donors did not plan their giving in advance. Those donors who made decisions about their charitable donations before being asked for money, however, gave more than those who made decisions spontaneously.

Table 4 reveals that only 16% of donors in Ontario decided in advance how much money they would donate to charitable and non-profit organizations, but that their donations accounted for 31% of the total value of donations. One in five donors (20%) decided in advance to which organization(s) they would give—accounting for about one-third (31%) of the total value of donations. More than half of Ontario's donors were spontaneous in their giving—deciding only when asked by the organization—and gave less than their premeditating counterparts. Spontaneous donors accounted for 62% of all donors, but only 41% of the total amount of all donations.

Ontario donors who gave to certain organizations on a regular basis accounted for a greater percentage of the total value of donations than did donors who varied the organizations to which they contributed. Forty-five percent of Ontario's donors gave to certain organizations regularly, accounting for 63% of the total value of donations. Individuals who varied the organizations to which they made donations accounted for 54% of all donors and 37% of the total value of donations in Ontario.

These statistics have considerable implications for the fundraising activities of charitable and non-profit organizations. While most of Ontario's donors responded to being asked and make their decisions spontaneously when faced with a request for donations, loyal donors who gave regularly to the same organizations tended, on average, to make larger donations than their more spontaneous counterparts. This suggests that Ontario's voluntary organizations which continue to approach new donors for financial contributions will have some success, but that there is much to gain by fostering ongoing relationships with donors.

**Table 4:** Percent of Donors and Percent of Total Value of Donations by Characteristics Measuring the Spontaneity of Making Financial Donations, Ontario Donors Aged 15 and Older

	% of Donors	% of Total Value of Donations
<b>Decide total amount of money to donate in advance</b>		
Yes	16	31
No	84	69
<b>Decide which organizations to donate to in advance</b>		
Yes	20	31
No, decide when asked by organization	62	41
Both	17	28
<b>Donate to certain organizations on a regular basis</b>		
Yes	45	63
No, vary the organizations to which donations are made	54	37

## Why Ontarians Make Financial Donations

Ontarians have a variety of reasons for giving, and for not giving or for not giving more, according to findings from the Survey. Understanding what inspires and what hinders people’s financial support can help voluntary organizations incorporate donor and non-donor concerns into their fundraising endeavors, ultimately building and strengthening their donor bases.

### Motivations

Donors in Ontario were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with six different reasons for giving to charitable organizations. Figure 11 demonstrates that most donors agreed that their reasons for giving were related to feeling compassion towards people in need (94%) and wanting to help a cause in which they personally believe (94%). It would seem then that most people’s charitable giving is motivated by some sort of altruism.

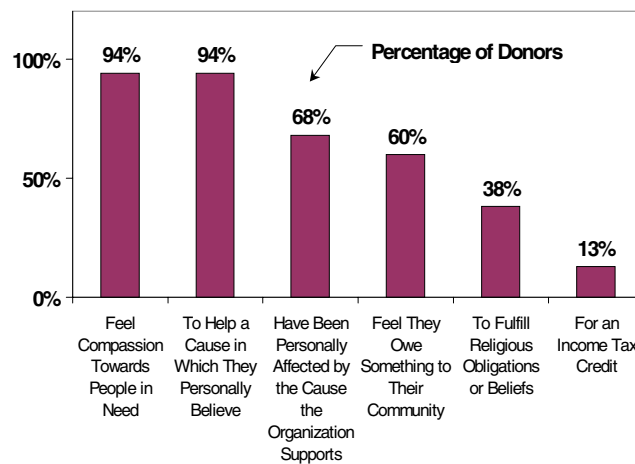
More than two-thirds of Ontario’s donors (68%) reported being affected—or knowing someone who was affected—by the cause which the organization supported and nearly two-thirds made donations because they felt they owed something to their community (60%). Somewhat fewer donors were motivated by a need to fulfil religious obligations or beliefs (38%) and a small minority (13%) stated that they donated in order to obtain a credit on their income taxes.

### Barriers

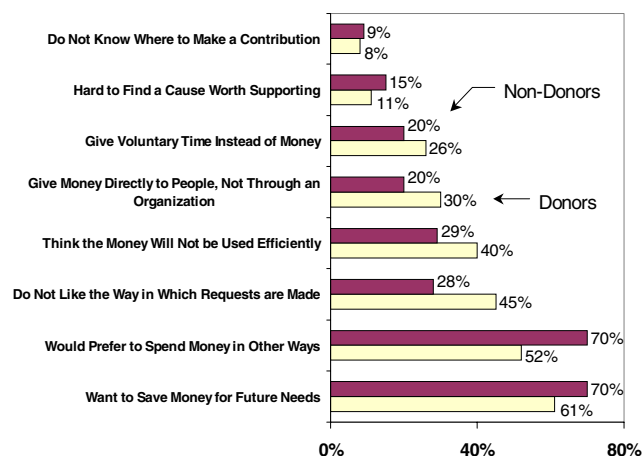
What reasons do non-donors have for not giving to charitable organizations? What keeps donors from giving more? Donors were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of possible reasons for their not donating more, while non-donors were asked about possible reasons for not donating at all.

When donors were asked why they did not donate more, nearly two-thirds (61%) reported that they were trying to save money for their own future needs (Figure 12) and more than half (52%) said they preferred to spend their money in other ways. A substantial proportion (45%) said they did not like the way requests were made or did not think their donation would be used efficiently (40%).

**Figure 11: Reasons for Making Financial Donations to Charitable and Nonprofit Organizations, Ontario Donors Aged 15 and Older**



**Figure 12: Reasons for Not Making Financial Donations or Not Making More Financial Donations by Donor Status, Ontarians Aged 15 and Older**



A smaller percentage of donors cited giving money directly to people (30%), giving volunteer time instead of money (26%), difficulty in finding a cause worth supporting (11%), and not knowing where to make a contribution (8%) as barriers to giving more money.

What deterred some Ontarians from becoming donors? Seventy percent of non-donors said they did not give because they wanted to save money for their own future needs. An equal number said they preferred to spend their money in other ways. Almost one-third of non-

donors reported that they did not like the way requests were made (28%) or that they thought their money would not be used efficiently (29%). Among the least cited reasons non-donors had for not donating were that they gave money directly to people (20%), they gave volunteer time instead of money (20%), they had difficulty finding a cause worth supporting (15%), and they did not know where to make a contribution (9%).

The two most frequently reported barriers to giving—by both donors and non-donors—included wanting to save money for future needs and preferring to spend money in other ways. Any appeals for donations should be sensitive to these concerns and provide potential donors with flexible options for making financial contributions.

Furthermore, two fairly significant barriers to giving for both donors and non-donors were that they did not like the way they were asked and did not think

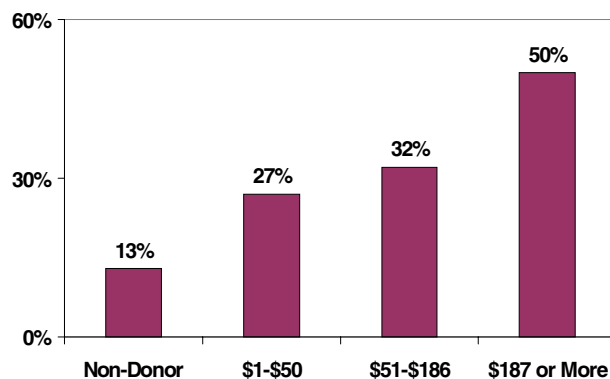
their donations would be used effectively. These are important donor concerns for fundraisers to address. First, fundraisers should take some care in developing the content of their request. Those who are being asked for support for the first time may need different information than those who are being asked for continued support. Similarly, some methods of solicitation work better for new donors, while others are better suited for renewing donors. If requests are not made appropriately, non-donors and donors alike can become turned off and choose to not donate or not donate *more*. Second, it comes as no surprise that a substantial proportion of donors and non-donors had concerns about whether their money would be used efficiently. One of the main issues facing charities today is donor demand for more accountability. This suggests that organizations should examine how they communicate what past donations have accomplished and how new donations will be used.

## The Links Between Charitable Giving and Other Forms of Supportive Behaviour

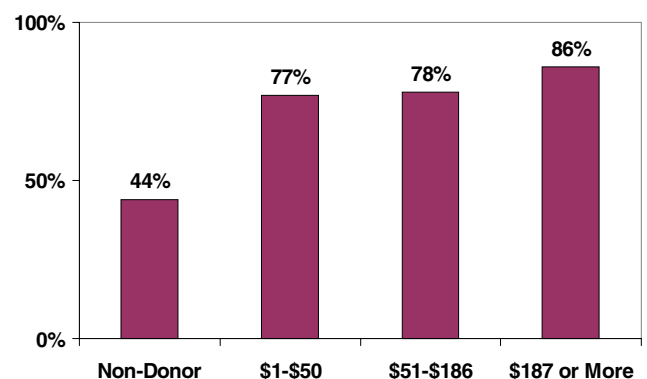
Ontarians support one another and their communities not only through making financial contributions, but also by becoming involved in a broad spectrum of activities including volunteering (Figure 13), helping others directly (Figure 14), giving money to others directly (Figure 15), and participating in community organizations (Figure 16). One of the insights provided by the survey is the evidence of linkages among these activities.

Figures 13 through 16 show that Ontario donors were much more likely than non-donors to engage in other supportive behaviour. In addition, the likelihood of involvement in these supportive behaviours generally increased with higher average annual donations.

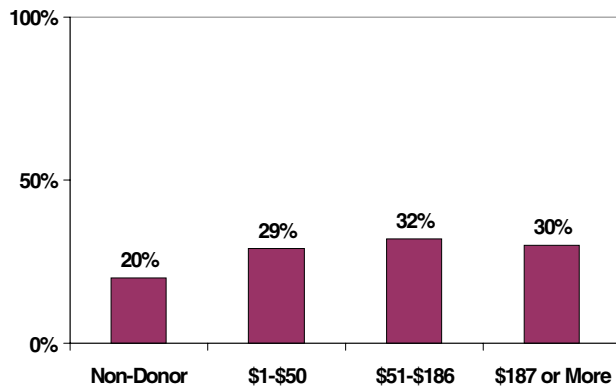
**Figure 13:** Percentage of Ontarians Aged 15 and Older Engaged in Volunteering by Amount of Yearly Charitable Donations



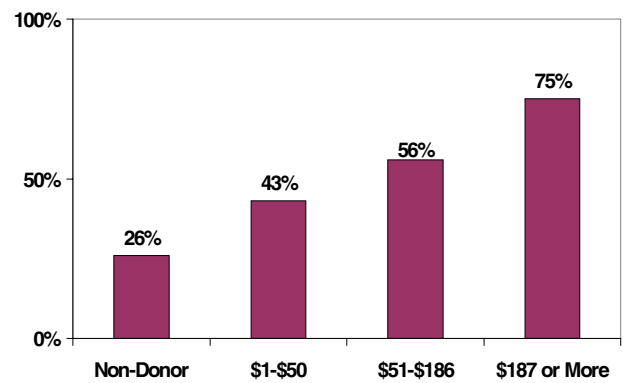
**Figure 14:** Percentage of Ontarians Aged 15 and Older Engaged in Helping Others Directly by Amount of Yearly Charitable Donations



**Figure 15:** Percentage of Ontarians Aged 15 and Older Giving Directly to Others by Amount of Yearly Charitable Donations



**Figure 16:** Percentage of Ontarians Aged 15 and Older Involved in Community Organizations by Amount of Yearly Charitable Donations

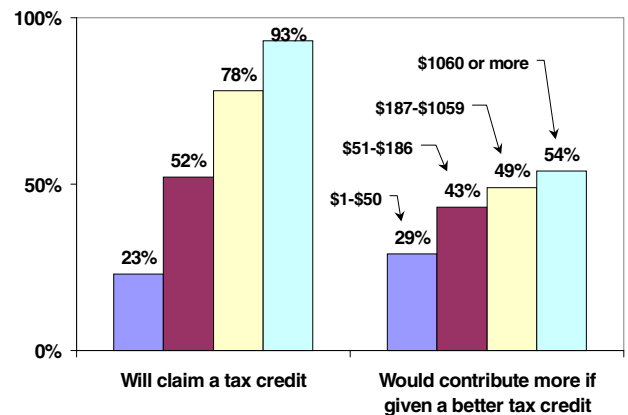


## The Role of Tax Credits

As a measure by government to encourage charitable giving, individuals who make contributions to charitable organizations are eligible to receive income tax credits for their donations. Such an incentive appears to be of interest particularly to those who make large financial contributions to voluntary organizations. Overall, more than half (51%) of all donors in Ontario indicated that they or someone else in their household would be claiming a tax credit. This percentage varied from a high of 93% of the top 5% of donors (i.e., those who gave \$1060 or more) to 78% of those whose yearly average donations totalled \$187 or more, and to 23% for those who donated \$50 or less (Figure 17).

When asked if they would increase their donations in the event of governments offering a better tax credit, 40% of Ontario donors agreed that they would. This percentage increased with greater average yearly donations; 54% of the top 5% of donors agreed they would give more,

**Figure 17:** Percentage of Donors Who Are Claiming a Tax Credit and Who Would Contribute More if Given a Better Tax Credit, by Amount of Annual Donations, Ontario Donors Aged 15 and Older



compared to 29% of donors who gave \$50 or less, and nearly half (49%) of donors who gave \$187 or more.

## Volunteering

Many Ontarians support charities and community organizations by volunteering their time, energy and abilities. Their volunteering can take many forms—serving as board members, coaching children and youth, serving meals and delivering food to the needy. Volunteering benefits a wide variety of organizations—and volunteers themselves. The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating sheds light on

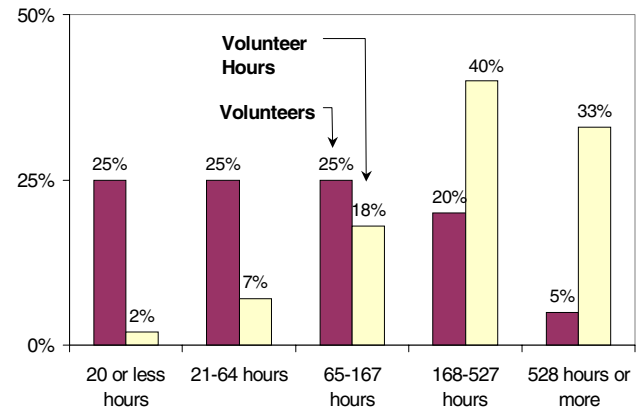
many aspects of volunteering, including the personal and economic characteristics of Ontario volunteers; how and why volunteers become involved (and why some individuals do not volunteer); the types of organizations supported by volunteers; the benefits of volunteering; and the links between formal volunteering and other forms of supportive behaviour.

## Volunteering in Ontario

Approximately 32% of Ontarians volunteered their time and skills to groups and organizations between November 1, 1996 and October 31, 1997. The 2.9 million Ontarians who volunteered contributed a total of 422 million hours, or the equivalent of more than 200,000 full-time year-round jobs (assuming 40 hours per week for 48 weeks). On average, Ontarians who volunteered contributed 146 hours of their time during the year covered by the Survey.

The average number of volunteer hours contributed by Ontarians does not give a true picture of the distribution of volunteers' time commitment, however. Included in the average are those who volunteered for relatively few hours during the year, as well as those who volunteered for many hours. If we divide volunteers into five groups (i.e., those in the top 5% of volunteers, the next 20%, the next 25%, and so on), a truer picture emerges. Figure 18 reveals that most volunteer hours came from a small percentage of the province's volunteers. The top 5% of volunteers contributed 528 hours or more, which accounted for one-third of all volunteer hours (33%). The next 20% contributed between 168 and 527 hours each,

**Figure 18:** Distribution of Total Volunteer Hours by Number of Hours Volunteered, Ontario Volunteers Aged 15 and Older, 1997



or 40% of all volunteer hours. If we combine these two groups, we can see that 25% of Ontario's volunteers accounted for 73% of the total number of volunteer hours. The remaining three-quarters of Ontario's volunteers accounted for only 27% of the total.

## Who Volunteers?

### Personal and Economic Characteristics

Ontario's volunteers come from a variety of lifestyles and socio-demographic groups, according to the Survey. Findings indicate that both the likelihood of Ontarians volunteering and the amount of volunteering they do vary with personal and economic characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, level of education, labour force status, household income, and religious practices. It is useful to examine patterns of volunteering across these demographics because such information may be helpful with future recruitment—those who already volunteer may be the easiest to recruit for further volunteer activity. It is also useful to know more about segments of the population that are less likely to volunteer. Knowing which groups volunteer at a lower rate can assist organizations in targeting these groups or intensifying recruitment campaigns aimed at them.

Ontarians between the ages of 15 and 24, and those aged 35-44 and 45-54 volunteer at a higher rate than those in other age groups (see Table 5). Also, the annual average number of hours volunteered is associated with age. Volunteers aged 45 and over contributed more hours (147 to 178) on average than younger volunteers. Seniors, who had the lowest volunteer rate of any age category, nevertheless spent considerably more time volunteering (178 hours or more) than other age groups.

Women were slightly more likely to volunteer than men (34% versus 30%, respectively). Male volunteers, however, spent more time volunteering than their female counterparts; on average, 158 hours versus 136 hours, respectively. Women accounted for 51% of the total number of volunteer hours in Ontario, and men, for 49%. The same pattern emerged for Canada as a whole.

**Table 5:** Volunteer Participation Rate, Total Hours Volunteered, % of Total Hours Volunteered and Average and Median Hours Volunteered During 1997, Ontario Population Aged 15 and Older

	<b>Volunteer Participation Rate (%)</b>	<b>Total Hours Volunteered (000)</b>	<b>% of Total Hours Volunteered (%)</b>	<b>Average Hours Volunteered</b>	<b>Median Hours Volunteered</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>421,596</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>65</b>
<i>Age</i>					
15-24	35%	75,111	18%	147	55
25-34	26%	57,910	14%	123	54
35-44	38%	103,603	25%	144	66
45-54	36%	78,254	19%	148	78
55-64	32%	45,915	11%	147	80
65 and over	26%	60,803	14%	178	68
<i>Sex</i>					
Male	30%	207,093	49%	158	70
Female	34%	214,502	51%	136	61
<i>Marital Status</i>					
Married and Common Law	33%	265,181	63%	144	67
Single, Never Married	32%	102,757	24%	138	55
Separated, Divorced	28%	31,412	7%	180	80
Widowed	23%	22,245	5%	184	81
<i>Education</i>					
Less than High School	20%	67,025	16%	130	52
High School Diploma	29%	96,719	23%	177	56
Some Post-Secondary	34%	45,280	11%	134	63
Post-Secondary Certificate or Diploma	37%	125,586	30%	146	73
University Degree	49%	86,986	21%	139	76
<i>Labour Force Status</i>					
Employed	34%	245,465	58%	131	62
Full-time	31%	172,472	41%	126	63
Part-time	47%	72,993	17%	142	62
Unemployed	29%	15,621	4%	123	52
Not in the Labour Force	28%	160,510	38%	182	72
<i>Household Income</i>					
Less than 20,000	23%	63,400	15%	157	66
20,000-39,999	29%	84,517	20%	155	64
40,000-59,999	31%	98,489	23%	149	66
60,000-79,999	33%	76,915	18%	152	60
80,000 or more	46%	98,275	23%	128	65

The volunteer participation rate of Ontarians tended to rise with level of education and household income. The volunteer participation rate for those with a university degree (49%) was substantially higher than for those with less than high school education (20%). However, individuals with a high school diploma contributed more hours than any other education level—177 hours on average, compared with 130 hours for those without a high school diploma, 134 hours for volunteers with some post-secondary education, 146 hours for those with a post-secondary certificate or diploma, and 139 hours for university graduates.

Education and income are often linked, so it perhaps comes as no surprise that the likelihood of volunteering increased with household income. Only 23% of those with an annual household income of \$20,000 or less volunteered, compared to 46% of those with an annual household income of \$80,000 or more. However, those with an annual household income of \$20,000 or less contributed the greatest number of hours—157 on average—compared to those in any other household income group.

Employed Ontarians in general (34%), and part-timers in particular (47%), were more likely to volunteer than both the unemployed and those not in the labour force (29% and 29%, respectively). Although Ontarians not in the labour force were less likely to engage in volunteer activities, when they did volunteer, they did so for more hours than either employed and unemployed Ontarians (183 hours versus 131 hours and 123 hours, respectively).

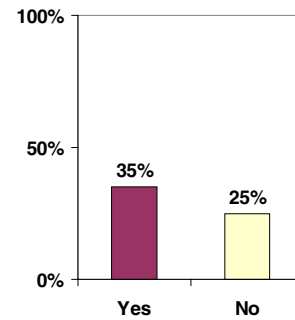
## The Role of Religion

Philanthropy, whether in the form of giving or volunteering, is encouraged in all major religions. It is not surprising, then, that the volunteering of Ontarians varied with their religious practices—specifically, their affiliation with a community of worship, the frequency with which they attended religious services, and the degree to which they considered themselves to be “very religious.”

Ontarians who had a religious affiliation were more likely to volunteer—and volunteer more hours—than those with no such affiliation (see Figure 19a). Specifically, 35% of religiously-affiliated Ontarians volunteered, compared to only 25% of those without an affiliation. Those with an affiliation also spent slightly more time volunteering than those without an affiliation (149 hours versus 140 hours, respectively; Figure 19b). Presented from a different perspective, people who had a religious affiliation (72%

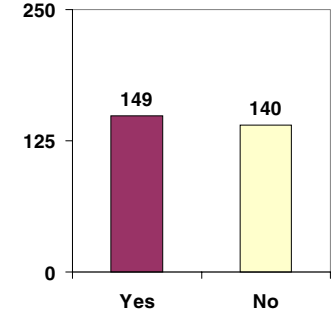
**Figure 19a:** Volunteer Participation Rate by Religious Affiliation

Ontario Population Aged 15 and over, 1997



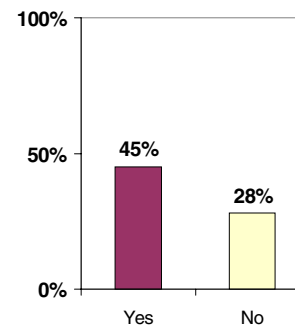
**Figure 19b:** Average Number of Hours Volunteered Annually by Religious Affiliation

Ontario Population Aged 15 and over, 1997



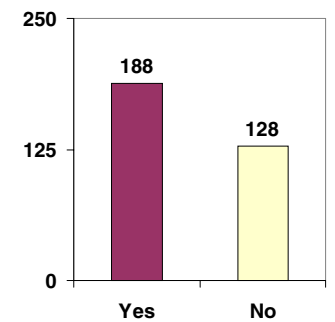
**Figure 20a:** Volunteer Participation Rate by Attendance at a Place of Worship

Ontario Population Aged 15 and over, 1997



**Figure 20b:** Average Number of Hours Volunteered Annually by Attendance at a Place of Worship

Ontario Population Aged 15 and over, 1997



of all Ontarians and 78% of all volunteers) accounted for 79% of the total number of all volunteer hours. It is also worth noting that religiously-affiliated volunteers were more likely to volunteer for non-religious organizations (86%) than they were for religious organizations (28%).

Similarly, individuals who attended religious services weekly were more likely to be volunteers and to volunteer more hours than those who did not attend weekly: 45% of weekly attenders volunteered, compared to 28% of nonweekly attenders (Figure 20a). Furthermore, weekly attenders spent 1.5 times more hours volunteering than did nonweekly attenders (188 hours versus 128 hours, respectively; Figure 20b). Individuals who attended religious services on a weekly basis (22% of all Ontarians and 31% of all volunteers) accounted for 40% of all volunteer hours. Like the religiously-affiliated, volunteers who attended weekly were more likely to volunteer for non-religious organizations (71%) than they were for religious organizations (55%).

In a similar fashion, the volunteer participation rate among Ontarians who described themselves as “very religious” was higher than that of people who did not describe themselves in this way (43% versus 30%, respectively; Figure 21a). Those who considered themselves to be very religious also volunteered more—an average of 202 hours during the year—than their less religious counterparts, who gave 134 hours (Figure 21b). With respect to the type of organizations for which they volunteered, a pattern similar to that of religious affiliates and weekly attenders emerged. That is, they were more likely to volunteer for non-religious organizations than religious organizations. Specifically, 54% of volunteers who described themselves as “very religious” volunteered for religious organizations; 72% of them volunteered for non-religious organizations.

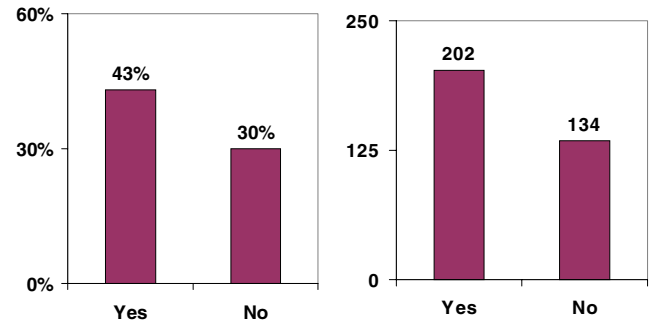
Although the likelihood of volunteering was found to be associated with religious practices, it is important to note two things. First, most volunteer activities were not focused on religious organizations. Only 22% of volunteers engaged in volunteer activities for religious organizations (accounting for 15% of all volunteer events and 20% of the total number of all volunteer hours).

## A Profile of Top Volunteers

One-quarter of Ontario’s volunteers accounted for the bulk of volunteer hours. Those who volunteered 168 hour or more annually—that is, the top 25% of Ontario’s volunteers—accounted for 73% of the total number of volunteer hours in Ontario. Because this relatively small proportion of volunteers accounted for a markedly disproportionate number of volunteer hours, it would be useful to investigate whether they can be distinguished in terms of their personal and economic characteristics from the rest of Ontario’s volunteers. The top 25% of volunteers can be divided into 2 groups: the top 5% (i.e., those who volunteered for at least 528 hours) and the next 20% (i.e., those volunteering between 168 and 527 annually). We can then compare the make up of these 2 groups to the rest of the volunteer population in Ontario.

Table 6 shows that the top 5% of volunteers tended to be younger than the next 20%, but of similar age to the rest of the volunteer population: 61% of the top 5% were 44

**Figure 21a: Volunteer Participation Rate According to Intensity of Religious Feeling** | **Figure 21b: Average Number of Hours Volunteered Annually According to Intensity of Religious Feeling**  
Ontario Population Aged 15 and over, 1997



Second, as with donating, we can see that the assumption that religiously active people only volunteer within the religious realm is incorrect. In fact, volunteers—religious affiliates, weekly attenders, and those who consider themselves “very religious”—were more likely to volunteer for non-religious organizations than for religious organizations.

years old or younger, compared to 53% of the next 20% of volunteers. A smaller proportion of the top 5% were employed (49%) compared to 64% of the next 20% and 67% of the remainder of the volunteer population. A substantially greater proportion of the top 5% were not in the labour force (48%) compared to 32% of the next 20%, and 29% of the rest of the volunteer population. Finally, individuals having a household income of at least \$40,000 accounted for 56% of the top 5% of volunteers, but rose to 65% of the next 20%, and 69% of the remaining volunteer population.

As with donating, there were also differences in religious involvement among these groups. Nearly half of the top 5% of volunteers attended a place of worship weekly. This fell to 37% of the next 20% of volunteers and 28% of the rest of the volunteer population. The same pattern emerged for both religious affiliation and intensity of religious feeling.

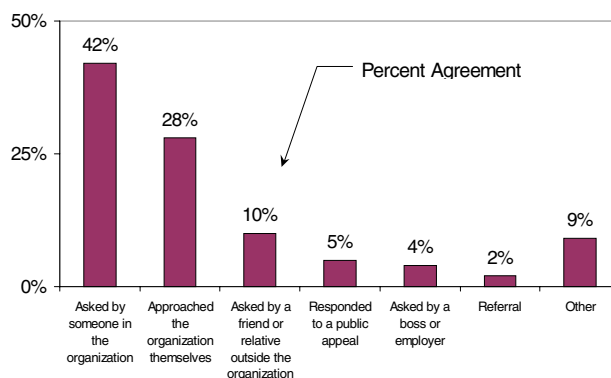
**Table 6:** Demographic Characteristics of the Top 5% of Volunteers, the Next 20% of Volunteers and the Rest of Volunteers (75%), Ontario Population, Aged 15 and Older

	<b>Top 5% of Ontario Volunteers</b>	<b>Top 20% of Ontario Volunteers</b>	<b>Rest of Volunteers (75%)</b>	<b>Ontario's Population</b>
<b>Annual Hours Volunteered</b>	<b>(528 or More)</b>	<b>(168 - 527)</b>	<b>(1 - 167)</b>	<b>(146)</b>
<i>Age</i>				
15-24	18%	14%	19%	16%
25-34	13%	11%	18%	20%
35-44	30%	28%	24%	21%
45-54	14%	23%	18%	16%
55-64	9%	13%	11%	11%
65+	16%	12%	12%	15%
<i>Sex</i>				
Male	50%	49%	44%	49%
Female	50%	51%	56%	51%
<i>Marital Status</i>				
Married	59%	69%	63%	61%
Single, Never Married	23%	20%	28%	26%
Widow/Widower	8%	5%	4%	6%
Separated/Divorced	11%	6%	6%	7%
<i>Education</i>				
Less than Secondary	12%	16%	19%	28%
Grade 11-13 Graduate	25%	19%	19%	21%
Some Post-Secondary	9%	10%	12%	11%
Post-Secondary Certificate/Diploma	39%	32%	29%	26%
University Degree	15%	24%	22%	14%
<i>Labour Force Status</i>				
Employed	49%	64%	67%	61%
Full-time	33%	46%	49%	49%
Part-time	16%	18%	18%	12%
Unemployed	4%	5%	4%	5%
Not in the Labour Force	48%	32%	29%	34%
<i>Household Income</i>				
Less than \$20,000	19%	14%	14%	20%
\$20,000-\$39,999	25%	21%	18%	21%
\$40,000-\$59,999	21%	24%	23%	24%
\$60,000-\$79,999	20%	15%	18%	17%
\$80,000 and over	15%	26%	28%	18%
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>				
No Religious Affiliation	17%	19%	22%	27%
Affiliated	82%	80%	77%	72%
<i>Religious Attendance</i>				
Non-Weekly Attender	36%	43%	48%	50%
Weekly Attender	47%	37%	28%	22%
<i>Intensity of Religious Feeling</i>				
Does not Feel Very Religious	72%	75%	82%	84%
Feels Very Religious	27%	23%	17%	14%

## How Volunteers Become Involved

Individuals come to volunteering in many different ways. Four in ten Ontarians (42%) volunteered after being approached to do so by someone in an organization (Figure 22). Another 28% approached organizations on their own. A much smaller number of Ontarians became volunteers because they were asked by a friend or relative outside the organization (10%); in response to a public appeal (5%); through a request made by a boss or employer (4%); and through a referral by a voluntary organization (2%). These figures suggest that Ontarians respond to direct appeals for their time—more volunteers became involved because someone asked them than in any other way.

**Figure 22: How Volunteers Became Involved, Ontario Volunteers Aged 15 and Older, 1997**



## The Organizations that Volunteers Support

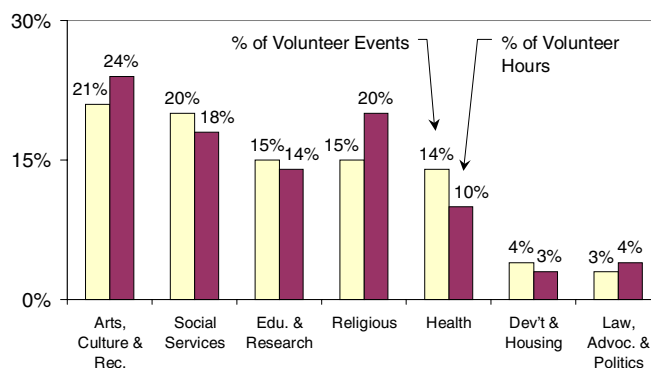
The charitable and voluntary sector is made up of a wide array of organizations, many of which involve volunteers. Figure 23 shows that four types of organizations<sup>3</sup> attracted the bulk of volunteer hours (76%) and the bulk of volunteer events<sup>4</sup> (71%). These organizations were arts, culture and recreation clubs (24% of all volunteer hours; 21% of all events), social service organizations (18% of all hours; 20% of all events), education and research organizations (14% of all hours; 15% of all events) and religious organizations (20% of all hours; 15% of all events).

Ontario volunteers tended to focus their activity on one or two organizations. More than half (58%) reported volunteering for only one organization; 25% reported volunteering for two organizations; 11% were involved in 3 organizations; and only 6% volunteered for four or more organizations.

## What Ontario Volunteers Do

The scope of volunteer activities is broad. The activities in which volunteers participate are of benefit to individuals (e.g., delivering meals to the elderly), to charities that provide programs and services (e.g., serving on a charitable board of directors or on a charity's fundraising committee), and to society as a whole (e.g., improving the environment). Ultimately, all of these activities contribute to a civil society.

**Figure 23: Distribution of Total Volunteer Hours and Total Volunteer Events by Type of Organization, Ontario Volunteers Aged 15 and Older, 1997**



Regardless of the beneficiary, the range of volunteer activities is diverse. Ontarians, however, engaged in some activities more frequently than others (see Figure 24). Half of Ontario's volunteers helped organize or supervise activities or events. Other common activities were canvassing, campaigning, or fundraising (44%) and sitting as a board member (38%). Twenty-eight percent of volunteers did consulting, executive, office or

administrative work; another 28% taught or coached for an organization. Smaller numbers of Ontario volunteers reported helping to educate, influence public opinion, or lobby others on behalf of an organization (27%); collecting, serving, or delivering food (22%); providing care or support (22%); maintaining or repairing building facilities for an organization (12%); providing health care through an organization (7%); and participating in a self-help group (6%).

## Other Ways of Helping People

In addition to volunteering formally with a charitable or voluntary organization, Ontarians help others in more informal ways—without the involvement of organizations. This informal helping is also a way for people to connect with individuals and participate in their communities.

Figure 25 shows the most common ways in which Ontarians provided help directly to individuals outside of their homes. These include: babysitting for others without being paid (41% of Ontarians), helping someone with shopping or driving someone to appointments or stores (40%), helping others write letters, solve problems, find information or fill out forms (36%), doing yard or maintenance work (33%), doing housework, such as cooking or cleaning (33%), and visiting the elderly (32%).

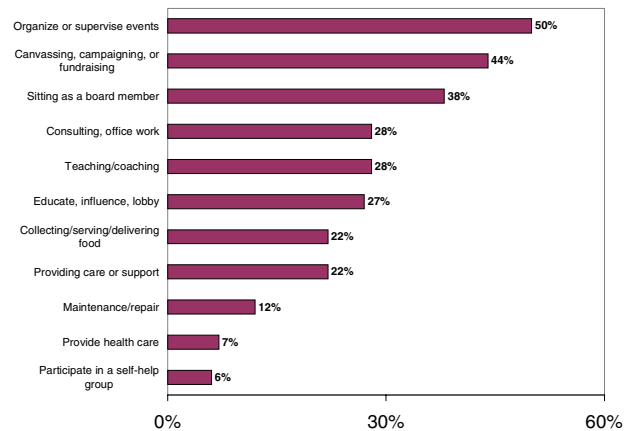
## The Reasons for Volunteering

Organizations that depend on the unpaid activities of people in their communities are always looking for ways to promote volunteering among individuals. In order to successfully recruit and retain volunteers, we must first understand exactly what inspires people to give their time, and what impedes their involvement.

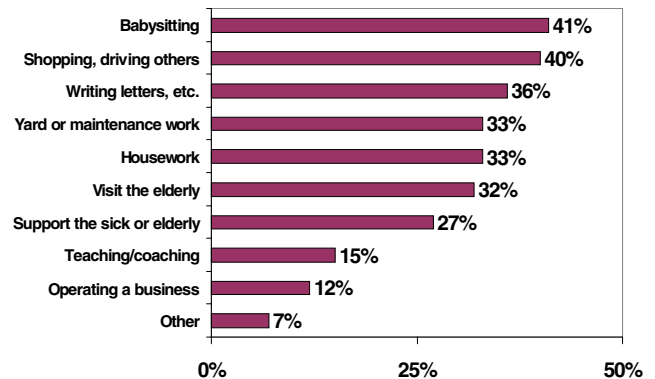
### Motivations

An individual volunteer may be motivated by one reason only, or by a variety of reasons. The 1997 survey asked respondents to agree or disagree with seven different reasons why they volunteered. Figure 26 shows that nearly all of Ontario's volunteers (96%) volunteered because they believed in the cause supported by the organization with which they were involved. Over two-thirds (68%) donated

**Figure 24: Activities in Which Volunteers Engage, Ontario Volunteers Aged 15 and Older, 1997**



**Figure 25: Types of Activities Done Directly for Others, Not for an Organization, Ontario Population Aged 15 and Older Who Help People Directly, 1997**



their time because they had been personally affected or knew someone who had been affected by the cause the organization supported.

Figure 26 also shows that eight out of ten volunteers got involved in order to use their skills and experiences (79%), and more than half agreed that they volunteered in order to explore their own strengths (56%). Close to one-third (31%) volunteered to fulfill religious obligations or beliefs and almost one-quarter (24%) volunteered because their friends did. Finally, about one-fifth (22%) identified improving their job opportunities as a motivating factor.

Volunteers' motivations varied by age group. For example, younger Ontario volunteers tended to volunteer for more pragmatic reasons, such as to explore their own strengths, use their skills and experiences, and improve their job

opportunities. Older volunteers were more likely to participate in volunteer activities to fulfill a religious obligation and because they had been personally affected or knew someone who had been affected by the cause the organization supported.

## Barriers

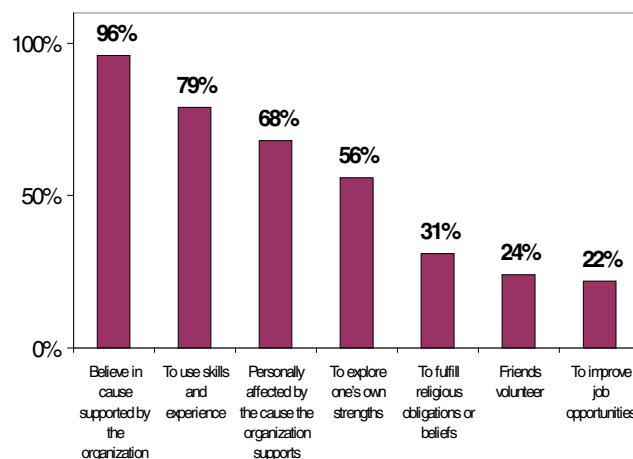
Just as there are a variety of reasons for people to volunteer, there are a number of barriers to their involvement. When *volunteers* were asked why they do not volunteer more time, three-quarters (75%) reported lack of extra time as an obstacle (Figure 27). Nearly one-third of Ontario's volunteers (32%) were unwilling to make a year-round commitment; 29% felt they had already made their contribution as a volunteer. One in five volunteers (21%) said they made donations instead of volunteering more time. Another 18% did not volunteer more because they had not been personally asked. A smaller percentage of volunteers reported that they were physically unable to volunteer more (14%); were deterred by the financial costs of volunteering (12%); were not interested in volunteering more (11%); and they did not know how to become involved (9%).

When presented with the same list of barriers, 72% of Ontario's *non-volunteers* stated that they did not have the time to get involved. Almost half (47%) were unwilling to make a year-round commitment. Two other barriers were identified by about one-third of non-volunteers: they gave money instead of time, and no one they knew had personally asked them. About one-fifth of non-volunteers reported that they felt they had already made their volunteer contribution, or that they were physically unable to volunteer. Just over one-quarter (27%) indicated that they had no interest in volunteering.

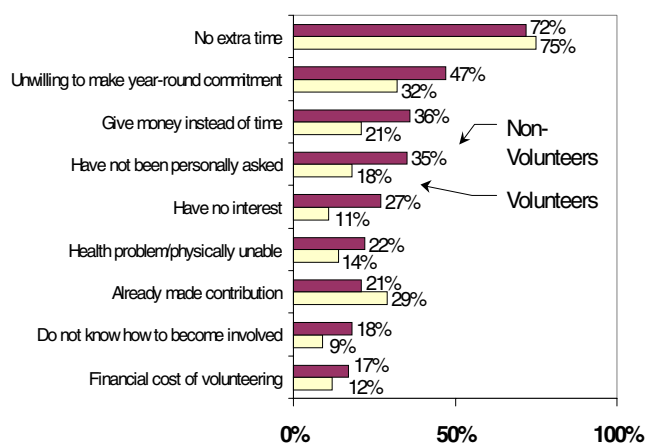
With the exception of 'already made their contribution as a volunteer' and 'lacking the necessary time,' a higher percentage of non-volunteers agreed with each barrier, compared to volunteers. The largest differences between these two groups occurred for 'unwilling to make a year round commitment' (48% of non-volunteers versus 32%, of volunteers), 'gave money instead of time' (36% versus 21%), 'have not been personally asked' (35% versus 18%) and 'have no interest' (27% versus 11%). When non-volunteers were asked why they did not volunteer—and volunteers why they did not volunteer *more*—the most frequent response for each group was lack of time.

The insights into barriers to volunteering have important implications for volunteer recruitment strategies. First,

**Figure 26: Reasons for Volunteering, Ontario Volunteers Aged 15 and Older, 1997**



**Figure 27: Reasons for Not Volunteering More or Not Volunteering, Ontario Population Aged 15 and Older, 1997**

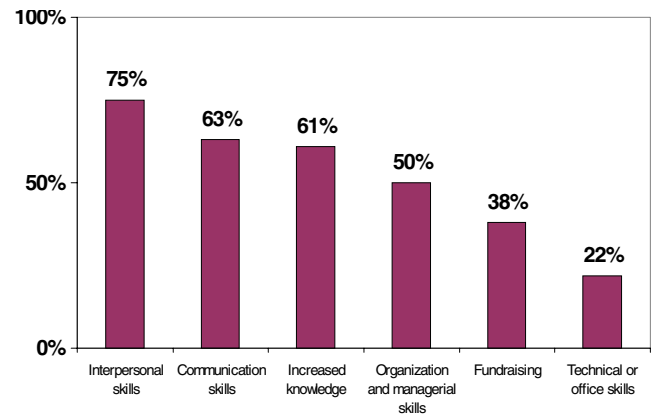


findings from the survey show that time is a precious commodity. The most frequent barriers for both volunteers and non-volunteers were lack of time and unwillingness to make a year-round commitment. Voluntary organizations may want to consider restructuring their volunteer opportunities to address concerns about time. This could mean shorter or more task-oriented assignments, for example. Second, a substantial proportion of non-volunteers (35%) indicated that they did not volunteer because they had not been personally asked. At the same time, being asked by someone in an organization was the main way that people came to volunteering. Clearly, asking for volunteers is effective. Not asking—assuming that volunteers will come forward on their own accord or through some indirect route—may be less effective and result in untapped volunteer potential.

## The Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteering is of benefit not only for the organizations involved and the people they serve, but also the volunteers themselves. Volunteers derive personal benefits from their volunteer activities (Figure 28). Three-quarters of volunteers reported gaining interpersonal skills, such as understanding people better, learning how to motivate others and learning how to deal with difficult situations. Almost two-thirds (63%) indicated that through their volunteer activities, they developed communication skills in public speaking, writing, conducting meetings, and public relations. Sixty-one percent increased their knowledge on issues concerning health, women, politics, criminal justice, and the environment. Half of Ontario's volunteers reported that their volunteer activities provided them with organizational and managerial skills. By using this information and communicating the personal benefits of volunteering, organizations may have some success in

**Figure 28: Benefits of Volunteering, Ontario Volunteers Aged 15 and Older, 1997**



recruiting individuals who are under-represented in volunteer activity.

## Employer Support for Employees' Volunteer Activities

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Ontario volunteers are employed. Many of these volunteers received support for their volunteer activities from their employers. Employer support most commonly took the form of permitting employees to: use company facilities and equipment for their volunteer activities (28%); take time off work for volunteering (25%); and change their hours of work to accommodate volunteering (22%). The type of employer support varied with the sex of the employee: Men were more likely than women to get employer support for taking

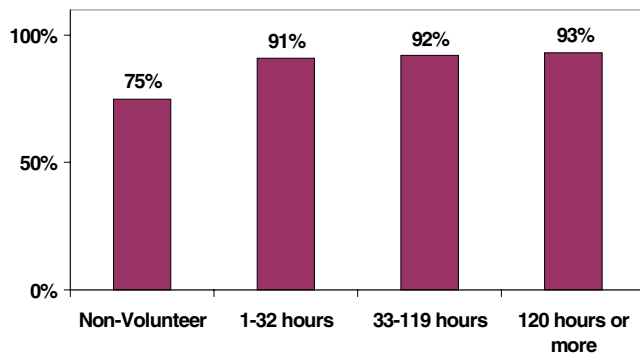
time off (26% versus 23%) and changing their work hours (25% versus 19%), while women were more likely to get support for using company facilities and equipment in their volunteering (30% versus 25%). Types of employer support also varied with the age of volunteers. In particular, 15-19 year-olds were the least likely of any age category to be supported in terms of using facilities and equipment or taking time off work for volunteering. They were, however, most likely to get employer support for modifying their hours of work.

# The Links Between Volunteering and Other Forms of Supportive Behaviour

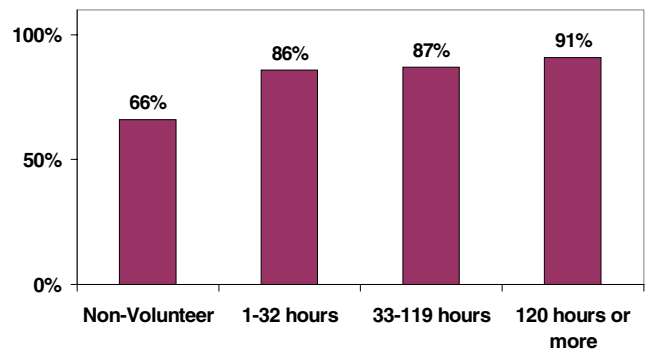
Figures 29 through 32 show that there is a relationship between volunteering and other forms of supportive behaviour (e.g., charitable giving, helping others directly, giving money to others directly, participating in community organizations). Specifically, Ontarians who participate in formal volunteering are generally more likely

than non-volunteers to make charitable donations (Figure 29), to help others directly (Figure 30), to give money to others directly (Figure 31) and to participate in community organizations (Figure 32). Furthermore, the likelihood of engaging in these activities increases as the amount of time volunteered by individuals increases.

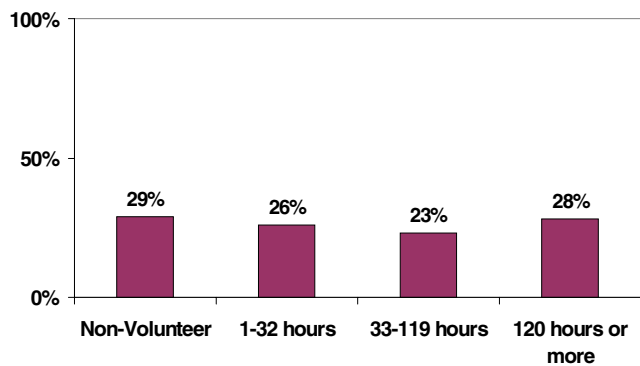
**Figure 29:** Percentage of Ontarians Aged 15 and Older Making Charitable Donations by Amount of Time Volunteered, 1997



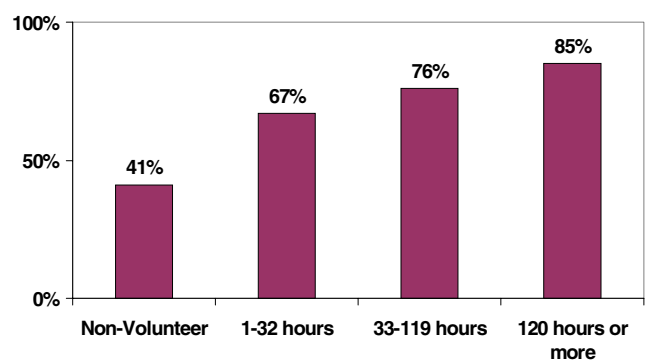
**Figure 30:** Percentage of Ontarians Aged 15 and Older Engaged in Informal Helping by Amount of Time Volunteered, 1997



**Figure 31:** Percentage of Ontarians aged 15 and Older Engaged in Giving Directly to Others by Amount of Time Volunteered, 1997



**Figure 32:** Percentage of Ontarians Aged 15 and Older Involved in Community Organizations by Amount of Time Volunteered, 1997



## Conclusion

The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating – although a preliminary investigation of the extent and character of Canadians’ contributory behaviours—has many implications for the third sector. First, findings from the Survey help to illuminate the factors that motivate and sustain charitable giving; increase and reinforce participation in volunteer activities; and also limit these two types of support. More importantly, these findings offer insights into lessons that can be useful to non-profit and charitable organizations in their solicitation and recruitment of donors and volunteers in Ontario. Below are some of the major issues that emerged and how they can affect the ways in which charitable and non-profit organizations operate in today’s climate.

### Who to Target When Soliciting Donations or Recruiting Volunteers

This report began with an overview of the donor/volunteer rates and average yearly/hourly donations associated with several different demographic categories: age, sex, household income, etc. Knowing which segments of Ontario’s population are more (or less) likely to donate or volunteer can assist charitable organizations that rely on such people to carry out their programmes and activities. First, those segments of the Ontario population that are already involved in donating and volunteering may be more responsive to further requests for support. Second, understanding which segments of Ontario’s population donate and volunteer at lower rates can help organizations think about what specific measures they may need to take to target these groups for support or to intensify fundraising and recruitment campaigns aimed at them.

While the National Survey data shows that there is potential for Ontario’s voluntary organizations to continue approaching *new* donors and volunteers, it also makes a case for the importance of loyal donors. First, Survey findings show that loyal donors who gave regularly to the same organizations tended, on average, to make larger donations than donors who varied the organizations they supported. This suggests that there is much to gain by fostering ongoing relationships with donors.

Second, the majority of charitable donations and volunteer hours came from relatively small proportions of Ontario’s

population. Findings from the National Survey indicate that the top 25% of donors (annual donations of at least \$258) and the top 25% of volunteers (168 hours or more annually) accounted for 77% of the total value of donations and 73% of the total number of volunteer hours in Ontario, respectively. This concentration of support has important implications for charitable and non-profit organizations. The sector’s dependence on a small percentage of the population for the bulk of support can be seen as an area of vulnerability for the voluntary sector: Any reduction in donations and volunteering among Ontarians who provide either the bulk of charitable donations or most of the volunteer time could result in a substantial decline in the availability of these two key resources to the voluntary sector. These findings serve as a reminder for Ontario’s non-profit and charitable organizations to foster and sustain the relationships that they have with existing donors and volunteers.

### Removing Barriers to Giving and Volunteering

Findings from the NSGVP demonstrate that when it comes to soliciting donations and recruiting volunteers, the importance of asking cannot be emphasized enough.

#### Donating

On average, Ontario donors gave \$279 during the 12-month period covered by the Survey—17% more than the average Canadian donor. The Survey suggests, however, that Ontarians could be encouraged to be even *more* generous if certain barriers were removed.

More than half of Ontario’s donors (63%) were spontaneous in their giving—that is, they made decisions in response to someone from a charitable organization *asking* for a donation. A substantial barrier to giving for both donors and non-donors, however, was that they did not like the way the request was made (45% and 28%, respectively). This has considerable implications for the fundraising activities of charitable and non-profit organizations: It is not sufficient for fundraisers to merely ‘ask’ potential donors to make charitable donations; they must also be concerned with ‘how’ they make their

requests. Both non-donors and donors alike can become disillusioned—and therefore, choose to not donate or not donate *more*—if requests are not handled in a way that responds to donors’ preferences.

It comes as no surprise that a substantial proportion of Ontario’s donors (40%) and non-donors (29%) had concerns about whether their donations would be used efficiently by charitable and non-profit organizations. One of the main issues facing charities today is donor demand for more accountability. In light of this, charitable and non-profit organizations might want to evaluate their current fundraising practices and examine how they communicate what past donations have accomplished and how new donations will be used.

## Volunteering

Forty-five percent of Ontarian volunteers became involved after being approached to do so by someone in an organization. In fact, being asked by an organization represents the most common way that volunteers became involved. A major obstacle to Ontarians not volunteering or not volunteering *more*, however, was that they “had not been personally asked.” This demonstrates that charitable and non-profit organizations should not rely on the individual to understand the need for volunteers and come forward on their own. Rather, organizations should ask – and ask again – when it comes to volunteer recruitment.

The only province with a lower volunteer rate than Ontario was Quebec. This suggests that there is a lot of room for growth in volunteerism in Ontario. According to the Survey, the biggest barrier to overcome in order to attract more volunteers is time: When *volunteers* were asked why they did not contribute more hours, three-quarters reported lack of extra time as an obstacle. Lack of time was also the most commonly cited barrier for non-volunteers. Another frequently mentioned barrier for both volunteers and nonvolunteers was the unwillingness to make a year-round commitment. Voluntary organizations may want to consider restructuring their volunteer

opportunities differently in order to involve Ontarians who are under time constraints. Shorter, more task-oriented assignments may be attractive to time-crunched volunteers. Family volunteering opportunities that allow parents and children to spend meaningful time together may be attractive to volunteers with children.

Volunteers derive an array of personal benefits from their volunteer activities. Many report gaining interpersonal skills, such as understanding people better, to communication skills, managerial skills, and increased knowledge. Among certain segments of the population – youth and the unemployed, for example – volunteering can provide new skills or experience that can help them as they seek employment. Stressing the many benefits of volunteering may be helpful to non-profit organizations that are looking for volunteers.

## The Links Between Giving and Volunteering

On a broader plane, one of the insights provided by the Survey is the evidence of a link between charitable giving and volunteering, and an association between this behaviour and other forms of supportive behaviour, such as helping others directly, giving money to others directly, and participating in community organizations. Donors were much more likely than non-donors to be involved in all of these supportive behaviours. The likelihood of their involvement generally increased with higher average annual donations. The same was true for volunteering; Ontarians who participated in formal volunteering were more likely than non-volunteers to engage in other supportive behaviours and this likelihood generally increased as individuals’ amount of volunteer time increased. The NSGVP further showed that individuals who engaged in these behaviours early in life were most likely to continue them later. Finding ways to foster the supportive behaviours of Ontarians will be beneficial not only to charities and non-profit organizations, but to the development of active citizens contributing to healthy communities.

## Endnotes

1. A person's labour force status can be employed (working), unemployed (looking for work), or not in the labour force (neither working nor looking for work).
2. Survey respondents were asked to provide information about the types of organizations to which they made donations. These organizations were classified into 13 categories.
3. Survey respondents were asked to provide information about the type of organizations for which they volunteered. These organizations were classified into 13 categories according to the types of activities in which they engage.
4. In this report, each organization reported by an individual constitutes one "volunteer event". A volunteer event represents an involvement with an organization. It does not take into account the number of different activities performed nor the frequency, timing or duration of volunteering in that organization.
2. Survey respondents were asked to provide information about the types of organizations to which they made donations. These organizations were classified into 13 categories.
3. For each volunteer event reported (up to a maximum of three), volunteers were asked how they first became involved with the organization for which they volunteered.
4. Survey respondents were asked to provide information about the type of organizations for which they volunteered. These organizations were classified into 13 categories according to the types of activities in which they engage.
5. In this report, each organization reported by an individual constitutes one "volunteer event". A volunteer event represents an involvement with an organization. It does not take into account the number of different activities performed nor the frequency, timing or duration of volunteering in that organization.

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Table 1: The median is the statistical “halfway point” of a distribution of values and provides another measure of how much the “typical” donor gives. In this case, half of all donors give less than the median value and half of all donors give more than the median value.

Table 3: Four types of organizations are contained in this category: development and housing; law, advocacy, and politics; business and professional associations; and other organizations not elsewhere classified.

Figure 10: “Other” category includes donations made in response to being asked by someone at work, telephone requests, TV/radio requests, and other.

Figure 22: For each volunteer even reported (up to a maximum of three), volunteers were asked how they first became involved with the organization for which they volunteered.