
Giving and Volunteering in British Columbia

Results from the National Survey of
Giving, Volunteering and Participating

Stephanie Saunders, MA
Research Associate
Canadian Centre for Philanthropy

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Introduction

British Columbians are actively involved in supporting one another and their communities by donating funds and goods, and by volunteering for charitable and nonprofit organizations, according to findings from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP). Nearly nine out of every ten British Columbians made donations by approaching organizations on their own; by responding to requests from organizations; by depositing spare change in cash boxes; by leaving bequests to charity; or by giving clothing, household goods and food. Three out of every ten British Columbian volunteered, both formally and informally, in a wide range of activities such as canvassing, organizing events, caring and supporting the elderly, babysitting or driving people to appointments.

The charitable and nonprofit organizations to which British Columbians gave their time and money rely heavily on this assistance to help finance and deliver their programs and services. Because of the importance of this type of support to these organizations and to the well being of British Columbians over all, it is essential to know more about giving and volunteering patterns in British Columbia.

The NSGVP was undertaken to better understand how Canadians support individuals and communities, either on their own or through their involvement with charitable and nonprofit organizations. It 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 as an adjunct to the Labour Force Survey during a three-week period in late November and early December of 1997. It asked 18,301 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 nonprofit sector to provide a mechanism by which activities and services can be delivered less expensively. To accomplish this, charities must continue to attract the support of the public. Therefore, a better understanding of trends in giving and volunteering is critical. Information from the NSGVP can help voluntary organizations develop their fundraising and volunteer recruitment strategies by highlighting which segments of the population are more likely to offer support, which are least likely to get involved, and what prevents individuals from giving and volunteering.

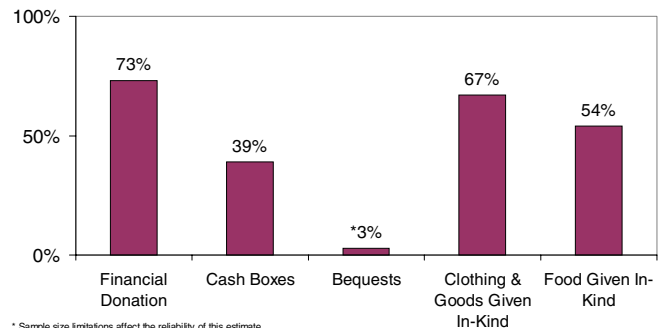
This report draws on NSGVP data to examine how British Columbians supported charitable and nonprofit organizations. It includes details of where the funds and volunteer hours came from, profiles of British Columbia donors and volunteers, descriptions of the top donors, the role of religion in giving and volunteering, information on how donations were made and how volunteers became involved, types of organizations supported, motivations and barriers for giving and volunteering, and connections between different forms of involvement.

Charitable Giving in British Columbia

Approximately 2.8 million British Columbians, or 89% of the province's population aged 15 and older, made financial or in-kind donations to charitable and nonprofit organizations between November 1, 1996 and October 31, 1997. Seventy-three percent of British Columbians (2.3 million) contributed an average of \$241 in direct financial donations either in response to an appeal or by approaching organizations on their own (Figure 1). Thirty-nine percent deposited spare change in cash-boxes, and 3% left a bequest to a charitable, religious or spiritual organization.

Of the total \$562 million in financial support given by British Columbians, 98% (\$552 million) came from direct financial donations and 2% (\$10 million) from deposits of spare change in cash boxes. Over two-thirds of British Columbians made in-kind donations of clothing or

Figure 1: Percentage of British Columbians Who Made Donations to Charitable and Nonprofit Organizations by Type of Donation, British Columbia Population Aged 15 and Older, 1997



household goods. More than half donated food to charitable and nonprofit organizations.

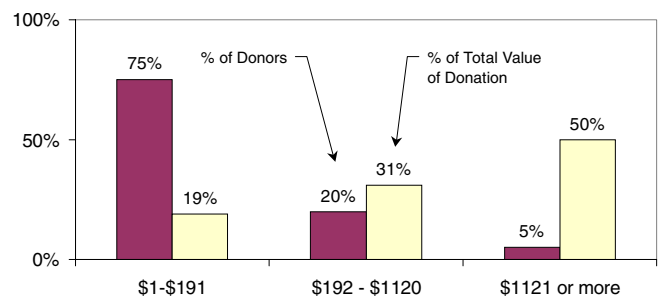
Who Gives the Most?

The average donation by British Columbian donors was \$241. However this does not provide a complete picture of charitable giving in the province. 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 three groups (the top 5%, the next 20%, and the remaining 75%), we get a more detailed picture.

remaining 75% of the province's donors (who gave \$191 or less) accounted for only 19% of the total value. This general pattern was observed for Canadian donors as a whole.¹

Figure 2 shows that the majority of charitable donations came from a small percentage of the B.C. population. Half of the total dollar value of donations made in the province came from the 5% of donors who gave \$1121 or more each. The next 20% of donors who gave between \$192 and \$1120 accounted for 31% of the total value. Together, these two groups accounted for one-quarter of all donors, but 81% of all financial donations. The

Figure 2: Distribution of Donors and the Total Value of Donations by Size of Annual Donation, British Columbia Donors Aged 15 and Older, 1997

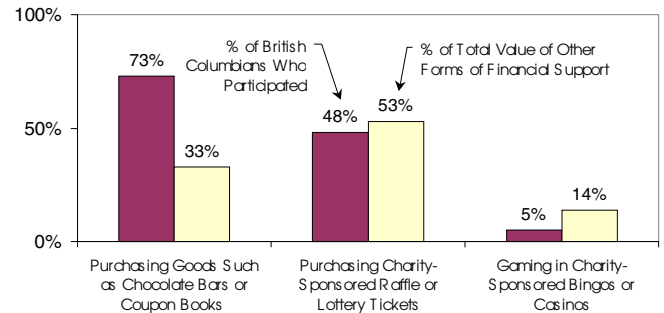


Indirect Financial Support to Charitable and Nonprofit Organizations

Donors can support charitable and nonprofit organizations indirectly by purchasing goods or by participating in charity-sponsored gaming. Total indirect support between November 1, 1996 and October 31, 1997 amounted to \$182 million. Figure 3 shows that nearly three-quarters of British Columbians (73%) purchased goods such as chocolate bars, apples, poppies, flowers or coupon books. This accounted for 33% (\$60 million) of the total value of indirect financial support. Almost half (48%) of British Columbians purchased charity-sponsored raffle or lottery tickets (excluding government-sponsored lotteries such as Lotto 6/49), accounting for 53% (\$97 million) of indirect financial support. Only 5% participated in gaming activities such as charity-sponsored bingos or casinos, but this accounted for 14% of all indirect financial support (\$25 million).

Indirect financial support accounted for one out of every three dollars British Columbians contributed to charity. It is important to note, however, that only a portion of the revenues from gaming activities or the sale of goods actually constituted a charitable donation – the remainder covered the overhead costs involved in producing these

Figure 3: Participation in, and Distribution of Other Forms of Financial Support to Charitable and Nonprofit Organizations, British Columbians Aged 15 and Older, 1997



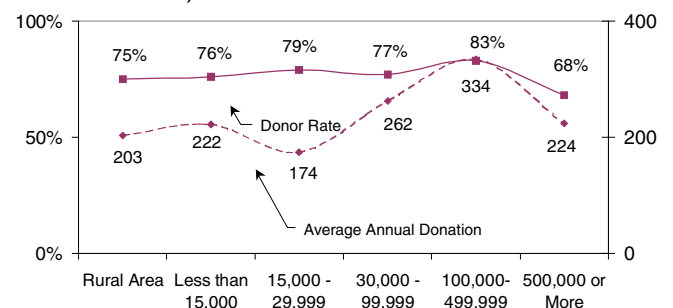
goods or organizing these events. Consequently, the total effective financial support to charitable and nonprofit organizations in British Columbia is estimated at greater than \$552 million, but less than \$734 million (\$552 million in direct financial support and \$182 million in indirect support).

Variations by Size of Community

Donation patterns in large urban areas in British Columbia tended to reflect province-wide patterns because such a high percentage of the provincial population lives in these areas. There were differences, however, between the giving patterns of British Columbians in large urban areas and those in smaller communities.

As Figure 4 illustrates, a higher percentage of people living in communities with populations of 100,000 to 499,999 (e.g. Victoria, Mastsqui, Mission) made financial donations than did those living in rural areas or large cities (populations of 500,000 or more). These donors also made

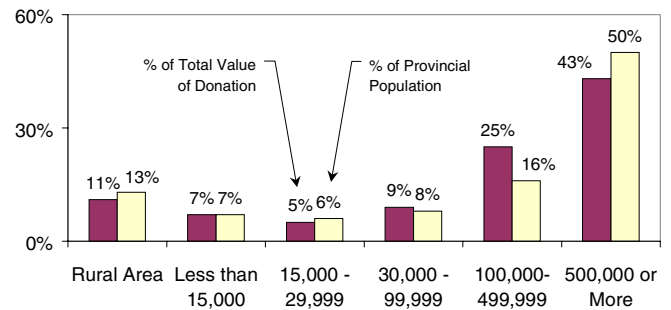
Figure 4: Percentage of the Population Making Donations and Average Annual Donation by Size of Community, British Columbia Population Aged 15 and Older, 1997



the highest average annual donation (\$334). Donors in communities with populations of 15,000 to 29,999 gave the lowest average annual donation (\$203).

Donors in large cities contributed the greatest percentage of the total value of financial donations (Figure 5). It should be noted, however, that half of all British Columbians live in these cities. Only 16% of the province's population live in communities with populations of 100,000 to 499,999, but donors in these communities contributed 25% of the total value of donations. British Columbians in rural communities contributed 11% of the total value of donations.

Figure 5: Percentage of Total Donations and Percentage of the Provincial Population by Size of Community, British Columbia Donors Aged 15 and Older, 1997



Who are British Columbia's Donors?

Personal and Economic Characteristics

The charitable giving of British Columbians varies with their socio-economic background and lifestyle. An important part of developing an effective fundraising strategy is an understanding of the personal and economic characteristics of the various segments of the donor population in relation to how much they give. This can allow fundraisers to design specific campaigns to encourage more support from those who already give, and appeal to support from those who have shown themselves less likely to give.

Table 1 shows a profile of donors in British Columbia. Donors were representative of the provincial population as a whole. Certain segments of the population, however, were somewhat over-represented in the donor population. These were donors between the ages of 35 and 44, those who were married, those with an university degree, and those who were employed full-time.²

Some segments of the British Columbian population were under-represented in the donor population. These were people between the ages of 15 and 24, those who were single, those with less than a high school education, those not in the labour force and those with household incomes of less than \$20,000.

The ability to make financial donations is associated with household income. Although British Columbians with higher household incomes tended to give larger average annual amounts, those with lower incomes contributed a larger percentage of their income (Figure 6). When annual donations are expressed as a percentage of pre-tax household income, donors with household incomes of less than \$40,000 donated a significantly larger percentage of their income than did those with incomes of \$40,000 or more. Donors with household incomes of less than \$20,000 gave almost three times more than did those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more.

Figure 6: Percentage of Household Income Spent on Financial Donations by Level of Household Income, British Columbia Donors Aged 15 and Older, 1997

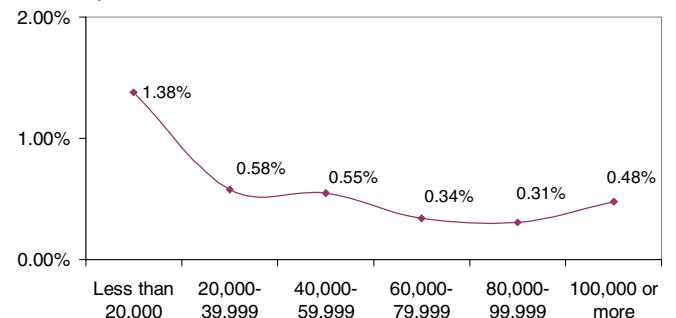


Table 1: Profile of British Columbia's Donor Population, Profile of British Columbia's Population Donor Rate, Average Donation and % of Total Value of Donations, 1997

	Profile of British Columbia's Donors	Profile of British Columbia's Population	Donor Rate (%)	Average Annual Donation (\$)	% of Total Value of Donations
Total			73%	\$241	100%
Age					
15-24	12%	16%	53%	\$49	2%
25-34	19%	20%	71%	\$208	16%
35-44	24%	21%	84%	\$174	18%
45-54	18%	17%	79%	\$315	24%
55-64	12%	11%	85%	\$305	16%
65+	15%	15%	70%	\$402	24%
Sex					
Male	48%	49%	71%	\$225	45%
Female	52%	51%	76%	\$256	55%
Marital Status					
Married & Common Law	69%	61%	83%	\$261	74%
Single, Never Married	20%	27%	55%	\$151	13%
Separated or Divorced	*7%	8%	67%	*\$169	*5%
Widowed	*4%	*5%	68%	*\$463	*8%
Education					
Less than High School	19%	23%	61%	\$165	13%
High School Diploma	21%	21%	72%	\$178	15%
Some Post-Secondary	14%	14%	73%	\$156	9%
Post-Secondary Diploma	31%	30%	76%	\$297	38%
University Degree	17%	13%	91%	\$373	26%
Labour Force Status					
Employed	65%	59%	81%	\$228	61%
Full-time	51%	46%	81%	\$192	40%
Part-time	14%	13%	79%	\$358	21%
Unemployed	*5%	6%	61%	*\$286	*6%
Not in the Labour Force	30%	35%	63%	\$260	33%
Household income					
Less than 20,000	18%	22%	59%	\$146	11%
\$20,000-\$39,999	26%	24%	80%	\$169	18%
\$40,000-\$59,999	22%	22%	73%	\$254	23%
\$60,000-\$79,999	18%	17%	80%	\$224	17%
\$80,000-\$99,999	8%	9%	72%	\$260	9%
\$100,000 or more	9%	7%	85%	\$634	23%
Presence of Children					
Aged 5 and Under: yes	16%	13%	90%	\$194	13%
no	84%	87%	71%	\$250	87%
Aged 6 to 12: yes	15%	13%	87%	\$235	15%
no	85%	87%	71%	\$242	85%
Aged 13 to 17: yes	11%	10%	84%	\$339	16%
no	89%	90%	72%	\$228	84%
Aged 18 and Older: yes	12%	11%	78%	\$284	14%
no	88%	89%	73%	\$235	86%
Religious Affiliation					
No Religious Affiliation	46%	52%	67%	\$121	23%
Affiliated	54%	48%	82%	\$348	77%
Religious Attendance**					
Non-Weekly Attender	70%	70%	82%	\$194	39%
Weekly Attender	30%	30%	82%	\$702	61%
Intensity of Religious Feeling					
Does not Feel Very Religious	87%	88%	73%	\$180	65%
Feels Very Religious	13%	12%	81%	\$636	35%

*Sample size limitations affect the reliability of these estimates

** Only respondents who were affiliated with a place of worship were asked about their religious attendance

Who is Most Likely to Donate?

In addition to understanding the socio-economic characteristics of the donor population, fundraisers must be aware of what segments of the population are giving the most and the least in order to target donors effectively in their fundraising programs. Table 1 (columns 4 and 5) shows the donor rates of each demographic segment of the British Columbian population, with the corresponding average annual donation. Column 6 includes the percent of the total value of British Columbia donations accounted for by each segment.³

- British Columbians aged 55-64 were more likely than others to make charitable donations. Youth 15-24 years old were the least likely to contribute. Seniors (65 and older) made the largest average annual donation of any age group.
- Women were more likely to donate than men and, in contrast to the national pattern, made, on average, larger donations than men.
- Married British Columbians – including those in common-law unions - were more likely to be

donors than were those who were single, separated or divorced, or widowed. Widowed individuals made larger average donations.

- The likelihood of making donations and the average annual donation generally increased with the level of education.
- Employed British Columbians were more likely to be donors than those who were unemployed or not in the labour force.⁴ However, on average, those who were part-time made the largest donations.
- British Columbians with incomes of \$100,000 or more were most likely to donate and, on average, gave larger donations.
- British Columbians with children 12 years of age and under were more likely to make donations than those with no children; donors with children over the age of 12 made larger donations than those with younger children.

Who are British Columbia's Top Donors?

British Columbians who donated \$192 or more annually – the top 25% of British Columbian donors – accounted for 81% of the total value of donations in the province. What personal and economic characteristics distinguished these individuals from the rest of British Columbia's donor population?

Table 2 compares the top 25% of British Columbian donors to the remaining 75% of donors. It shows that a larger proportion of the top 25% - compared to the

remaining 75% – were male, over 45 years old, had higher levels of education, not in the labour force, had household incomes of \$80,000 or more, and had children over the age of 18.

[See Next Page for Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Top 25% of British Columbia's Donors, and the Remaining 75% of British Columbia Donors Aged 15 and Over, 1997]

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Top 25% of British Columbia's Donors, and the Remaining 75% of British Columbia Donors Aged 15 and Over, 1997

	Top 25% of BC donors	Remaining 75% of BC donors
Annual Amount Donated	\$192 or more	\$1 - \$191
Age		
15-24	---	15%
25-34	*17%	19%
35-44	*19%	26%
45-54	*23%	17%
55-64	*15%	12%
65+	25%	11%
Sex		
Male	50%	47%
Female	50%	53%
Marital Status		
Married & Common Law	70%	68%
Single, Never Married	*14%	22%
Separated, Divorced	---	*6%
Widowed	---	---
Education		
Less than High School	*13%	21%
High School Diploma	*15%	22%
Some Post-Secondary	---	15%
Post-Secondary Diploma	34%	29%
University Degree	28%	13%
Labour force status		
Employed	63%	66%
Full-time	48%	52%
Part-time	*15%	14%
Unemployed	---	*6%
Not in the Labour Force	33%	29%
Household income		
Less than \$20,000	*12%	20%
\$20,000-\$39,999	*20%	28%
\$40,000-\$59,999	*21%	22%
\$60,000-\$79,999	*15%	19%
\$80,000-\$99,999	*12%	7%
\$100,000 or more	*20%	*5%
Presence of Children		
Aged 5 and Under: yes	*12%	18%
no	88%	82%
Aged 6 to 12: yes	*12%	16%
no	88%	84%
Aged 13 to 17: yes	*13%	11%
no	87%	89%
Aged 18 and Older: yes	*15%	11%
no	85%	89%
Religious Affiliation		
No Religious Affiliation	28%	52%
Affiliated	72%	47%
Religious Attendance**		
Non-Weekly Attender	52%	81%
Weekly Attender	48%	19%
Intensity of Religious Feeling		
Does not Feel Very Religious	72%	91%
Feels Very Religious	28%	9%

*Sample size limitations affect the reliability of these estimates

** Only respondents who were affiliated with a place of worship were asked about their religious attendance

---Amount too small to be expressed

The Role of Religion

Donor Rates and Average Annual Donations

The world's major religions have always encouraged the giving of time and money to the community. Religious factors – affiliation with a community of worship, frequency of attendance at a place of worship, and intensity of religious feeling or “religiosity” – are important to examine because they are associated with both higher donor rates and larger donations.

As Table 1 illustrates, British Columbia donors were generally representative of the provincial population in terms of their religious attendance and intensity of religious feeling. However, a larger proportion of donors claimed a religious affiliation (54%) compared with the provincial population as a whole (48%). Only 30% of donors attended weekly religious services, but they accounted for 61% of the total value of donations.

As Figures 7-9 show, British Columbians who were affiliated with a community of worship, attended services weekly, and described themselves as “very religious” were more likely to donate than were the rest of the population. They were also more likely, on average, to make larger donations.

Giving to Religious and Non-Religious Organizations

It has commonly believed that individuals with a religious affiliation, who regularly attend a place of worship or who describe themselves as “very religious” donate primarily to religious organizations. In fact, these donors are just as likely to give to non-religious organizations, and gave at a higher rate to non-religious organizations than to religious organizations.

- Donors with a religious affiliation were more likely to make financial contributions to non-religious organizations (75%) than they were to religious organizations (40%). These donors accounted for 58% of the value of donations and 52% of the number of donors to non-religious organizations.

Figure 7 (a & b): Donor Rate (a) and Average Annual Donation (b) by Religious Affiliation, British Columbia Population Aged 15 and Over, 1997.

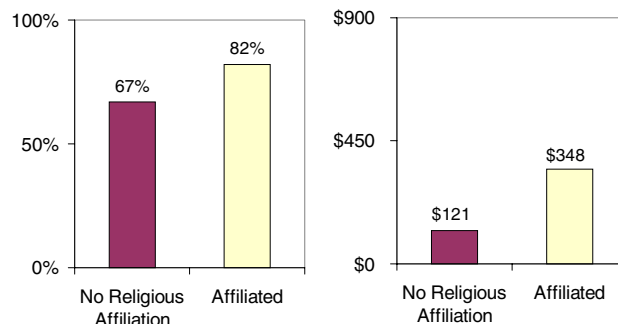


Figure 8 (a & b): Donor Rate (a) and Average Annual Donation (b) by Attendance at a Place of Worship, British Columbia Population Aged 15 and Over, 1997.

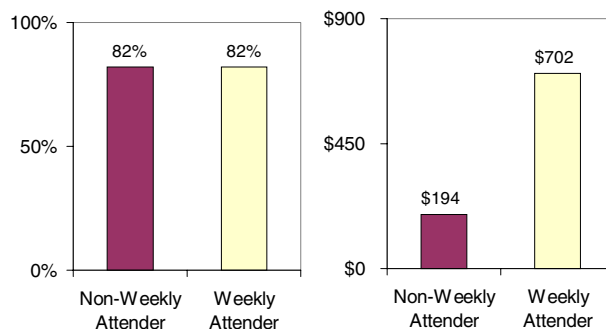
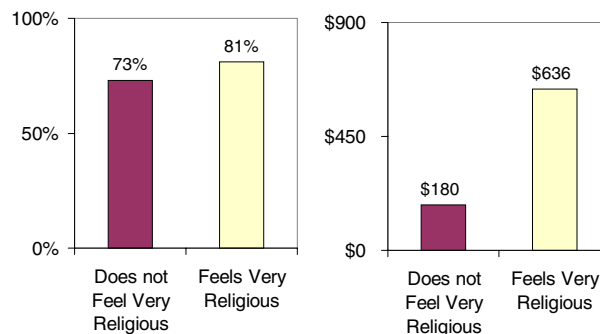


Figure 9 (a & b): Donor Rate (a) and Average Annual Donation (b) by Level of Religious Feeling, British Columbia Population Aged 15 and Over, 1997.



- Donors who attended a place of worship weekly were slightly more likely to make donations to non-religious organizations (70%) than they were to religious organizations (69%). Weekly attenders accounted for 35% of the value of donations and 15% of the number of donors to non-religious organizations.

- Individuals who described themselves as ‘very religious’ gave to non-religious organizations at a higher rate than they did to religious organizations (66% vs. 61%, respectively). These donors accounted for 13% of the value of donations and 12% of the number of donors to non-religious organizations.

Who are British Columbia’s Top Donors? Religious Factors

An examination of the differences between the top 25% of British Columbian donors compared to the rest of the donor population in terms of all three religious categories is striking (Table 2). Seventy-two percent of the top 25% of donors reported a religious affiliation, compared to 47% of the rest of British Columbia’s donor population.

Moreover, 48% of the top 25% of donors attended weekly religious services; this declined to only 19% for the rest of the donor population. Lastly 28% of the top 25% of donors described themselves as very religious compared to 9% of the remaining donor population.

The Organizations that British Columbians Support

British Columbians supported a wide variety of nonprofit and charitable organizations such as medical facilities, food banks, and research institutions. Figure 10 shows the distribution of both the total number of donations and the total value of donations according to the type of organization to which each donation was made.⁵

Although religious organizations received only 10% of the total number of charitable donations, these donations amounted to \$263 million – almost half of the total value of donations in British Columbia. This is because the average donation to religious organizations is almost three times greater than that to non-religious organizations (\$392 vs. \$134). Health and social services were the second and third largest beneficiaries of charitable giving, receiving \$73.6 million and \$73.4 million, respectively.

Figure 10. Distribution of the Total Value of Donations and Total Number of Donations by Type of Organization, British Columbia Donors Aged 15 and Over, 1997.

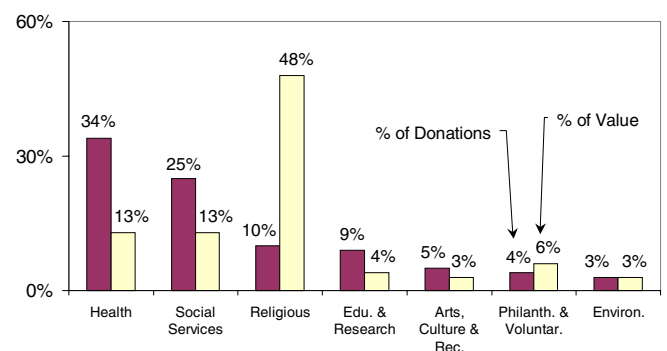
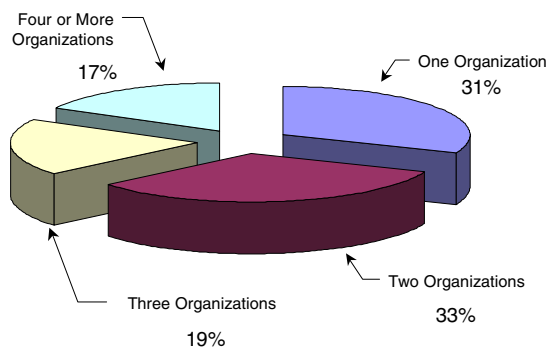


Figure 11. Distribution of Donors by Number of Organization Types Supported, British Columbia Donors Aged 15 and Over, 1997.

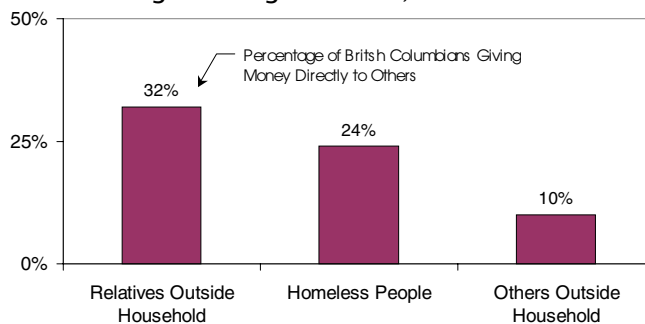


The majority of British Columbian donors did not restrict their donations to one type of organization, but supported a variety of organizations and causes (Figure 11). Only one third of donors limited their donations to one type of organization, while just over two-thirds donated to two or more types of organizations.

Financial Support Given Directly to Individuals

In addition to donations to organizations, there are a number of ways British Columbians give directly to individuals (Figure 12). Thirty-two percent of British Columbians gave money (excluding loans) directly to relatives who did not reside with them; 24% gave money to the homeless, and 10% gave money to others living outside their household. British Columbians were more likely than were Canadians as a whole to give directly to individuals.⁶

Figure 12. Percentage of British Columbians Aged 15 and Older Who Gave Money Directly to Others, Not Through an Organization, 1997.



How British Columbians Make Financial Donations

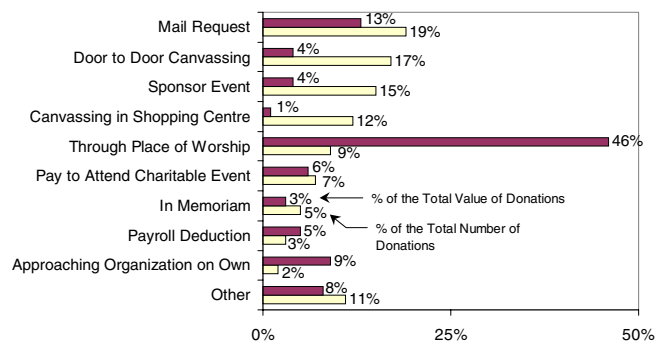
British Columbians made financial donations to charitable and nonprofit organizations through a variety of methods. Figure 13 illustrates the percentage of the total dollar value and total number of donations for each method.

The two most frequent ways Canadians made donations were by responding to a mail request (19%) and responding to a door-to-door canvasser (17%). However, responding to a mail request accounted for 13% of the total value of donations, while responding to a door-to-door canvasser only accounted for 4%.

To determine the best method of solicitation, one must consider not only the number of donations generated by each, but also their total dollar value. Some methods of making charitable donations are more frequent, but others bring in more money. This is most apparent with donations made through collections at places of worship. These represented only 9% of the total number of donations made in British Columbia, but accounted for

nearly half of the total dollar value (46%). Similarly, approaching an organization by oneself accounted for only 2% of the total number of donations, but 9% of the total dollar value.

Figure 13. Methods of Making Donations as a Percentage of the Total Value of Donations and the Total Number of Donations, British Columbia Donors Aged 15 and Older, 1997.



How British Columbians Decide to Give: Planned vs. Spontaneous Giving

British Columbians are approached every year by charitable and nonprofit organizations seeking financial support. Do they make their donations spontaneously or are decisions about charitable giving planned in advance? In fact, the majority of donors did not plan their giving in advance, but those donors who made decisions regarding their charitable donations beforehand gave more on average.

Table 3 shows that only 17% of donors in British Columbia decided in advance how much money they would donate, but that their donations accounted for 36% of the total value of all donations. Twenty four percent decided in advance which organization(s) they would support; they accounted for 40% of the total value of donations. Most donors were more spontaneous; however, they gave less on average. The 60% of donors who made their decisions spontaneously accounted for only 34% of the total value of donations.

British Columbian donors who gave to specific organizations on a regular basis accounted for a greater percentage of the total value of donations than those who varied the organizations they supported. The 43% of donors who gave to specific organizations regularly accounted for 68% of the total value of donations. The 57% who varied the organizations they supported accounted for only 31% of the total dollar value.

These statistics have significant implications for fundraising strategies. The majority of British Columbian donors tended to respond to being asked and to make their decisions spontaneously. But loyal donors who gave regularly to the same organizations tended, on average, to make larger donations. This suggests that voluntary organizations that approach new donors for financial contributions will have some success, but that there is much more to be gained by fostering ongoing relationships with existing donors.

Table 3. Percent of Donors and Percent of the Total Value of Donations by Characteristics Measuring the Spontaneity of Making Financial Donations, British Columbia Donors Aged 15 and Older, 1997.

	% of Donors	% of Total Value of Donation
Decided in advance total amount of money to donate		
Yes	17%	36%
No	83%	63%
Decided in advance which organizations to donate to		
Yes	24%	40%
No, decided when asked by organization	60%	34%
Both	17%	26%
Donated to certain organizations on a regular basis		
Yes	43%	68%
No, varied the organizations to which donations are made	57%	31%

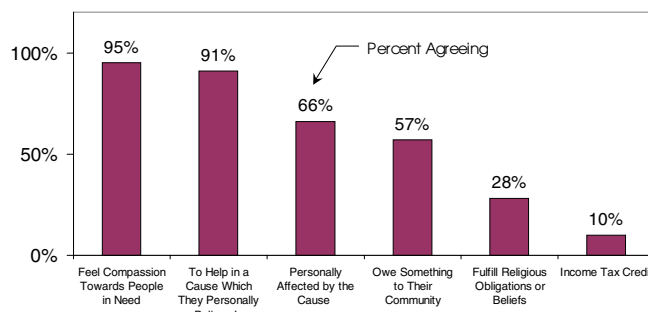
Why British Columbians Make Financial Donations: Motivations and Barriers to Giving

British Columbians have a variety of reasons for giving, not giving more or not giving at all to charitable and nonprofit organizations. An understanding of what encourages and what impedes people's financial support can help voluntary organizations in their fundraising activities, and ultimately build and strengthen their donor bases.

Motivations

British Columbian donors were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with six different reasons for giving to charitable organizations. Overwhelmingly, charitable giving appeared to be motivated by some form of altruism (Figure 14). Most donors agreed that they were motivated to give out of compassion towards people in need and to help a cause in which they personally believed.

Figure 14. Reasons for Making Financial Donations to Charitable and Nonprofit Organizations, British Columbia Donors Aged 15 and Older, 1997.



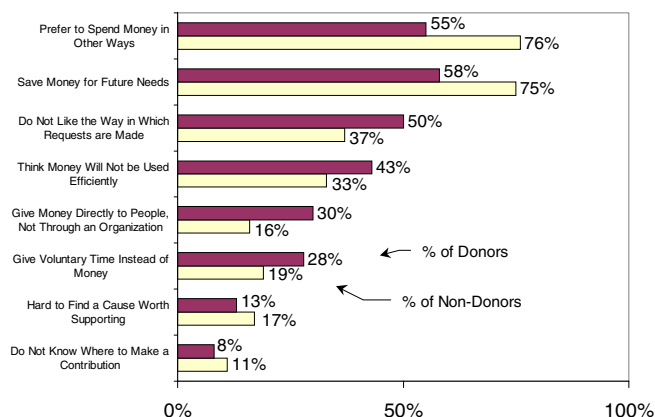
Somewhat fewer donors were motivated by a desire to fulfill religious obligations or beliefs. A small minority stated that they gave in order to obtain a credit on their income taxes.

Barriers

What prevents people from giving more or not giving at all? Donors were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of possible reasons for not giving more; non-donors were asked about reasons for not giving at all.

Figure 15 shows that both donors and non-donors were most likely to indicate financial barriers to donating more or at all. Over one half of donors and just over three-quarters of non-donors agreed that they preferred to spend their money in other ways. Fifty-eight percent of donors and 75% of non-donors agreed that they wanted to save their money for their own future needs. This suggests that appeals for donations should be sensitive to financial concerns and should provide potential donors with a case for support that is compelling enough to capture some of their discretionary dollars.

Figure 15. Reasons for Not Making More Financial Donations or Not Making Financial Donations at all by Donor Status, British Columbians Aged 15 and Older, 1997.



to find a cause worth supporting (13% of donors, 17% of non-donors). An even smaller percentage agreed that they do not donate more or at all because they do not know where to make a contribution (8% of donors, 11% of non-donors).

While barriers related to individual financial circumstances are largely beyond the control of charities, barriers relating to how requests were made and perceptions about how donations will be used can be addressed by all charitable and nonprofit organizations.

Fifty percent of donors and 37% of non-donors agreed that they did not donate more or at all because they did not like the way in which requests were made. Forty-three percent of donors and 33% of non-donors reported that they did not donate more or at all because they believed the money would not be used efficiently.

The Role of Tax Credits

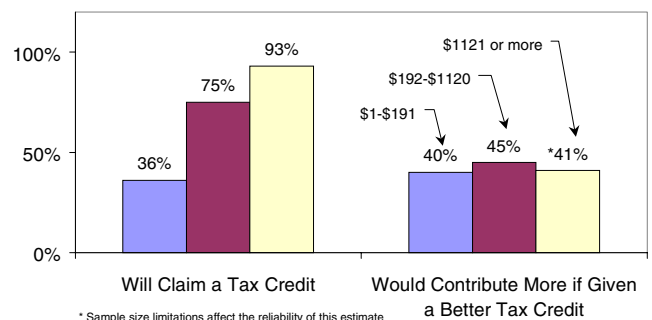
Donors to registered charitable organizations are eligible to receive income tax credits for their donations. Tax credits are an incentive for donors to increase their financial support, and can be especially beneficial to those who make large financial contributions. Forty-seven percent of all donors in British Columbia reported that they or someone else in their household would be claiming a tax credit. This varied from a high of 93% of the top 5% of donors (those who gave \$1121 or more) to only 36% of the rest of the remaining donor population (those who gave less than \$191)(Figure 16).

When asked if they would increase their donations if governments were to offer a better tax credit, 41% of British Columbia donors agreed that they would. There was little difference among donor groups, however. Donors who gave at higher levels were not more likely to identify better tax incentives as a motivation to give more. Forty-one

These findings have significant implications for fundraising campaigns. Fundraisers may have to consider modifying their fundraising approaches to build better relations with the 50% of donors who do not like the way their support is solicited. It is also essential for organizations to provide information about what past donations have accomplished and how new donations will be used. For further discussion on the application of NSGVP data to fundraising, please refer to [Fundraising Numbers: Using the National Survey for Giving, Volunteering and Participating for Fundraising](#).

percent of the top 5% of donors said they would give more, compared with 42% of the next 20% and 40% of the rest of donors.

Figure 16. 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, British Columbia Donors, 1997.



The Links Between Charitable Giving and Other Forms of Supportive Behaviour

British Columbians support one another and their communities not only through donations, but also by involvement in a wide variety of activities including volunteering, helping others directly (e.g., caring for and visiting the elderly or babysitting), giving money directly to individuals and participating in community organizations. Figures 17-20 illustrate

the strong linkage among these activities. The likelihood of involvement in a variety of supportive activities increased with the average annual donation. The top 25% of donors (those who gave \$192 or more) were more involved in these than the remaining 75% (those who gave less than \$191 or less) of the donor population.

Figure 17. Percentage of British Columbians Aged 15 and Older Engaged in Volunteering by Amount of Yearly Charitable Donations, 1997.

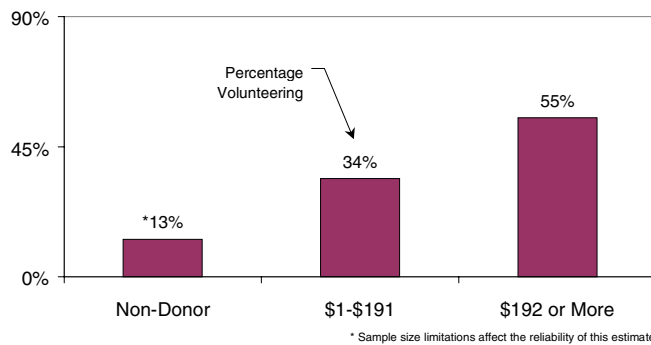


Figure 18. Percentage of British Columbians Aged 15 and Older Engaged in Helping Others Directly by Amount of Yearly Charitable Donations, 1997.

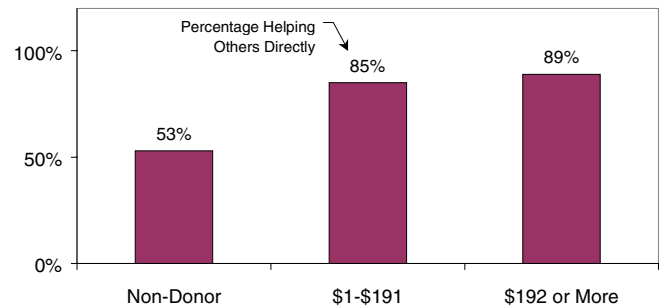


Figure 19. Percentage of British Columbians Aged 15 and Older Giving Directly to Others by Amount of Yearly Charitable Donations, 1997.

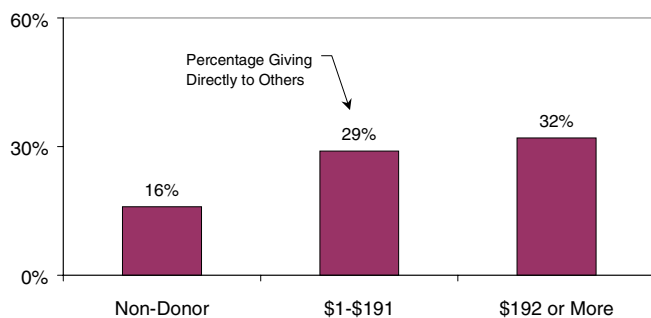
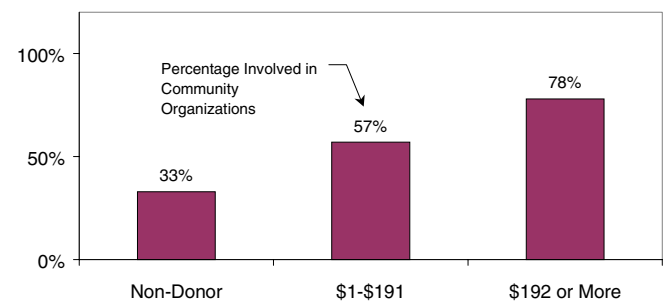


Figure 20. Percentage of British Columbians Aged 15 and Older Involved in Community Organizations by Amount of Yearly Charitable Donations, 1997.



Volunteering in British Columbia

Many British Columbians support charities and community organizations by volunteering their time and skills. These volunteers are important in developing, improving and sustaining charitable organizations. British Columbian volunteers do everything from fundraising, serving as board members, teaching and coaching youth, to providing meals and transportation for others. These and many more activities benefit a wide variety of organizations, the community at large, and volunteers themselves. An analysis of the data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating provides insight into several aspects of volunteering, including the personal and economic characteristics of British Columbian volunteers; how and why volunteers become involved; the types of

organizations supported by volunteers; the motivations, benefits and barriers to volunteering; and the links between formal volunteering and other forms of supportive behaviour.

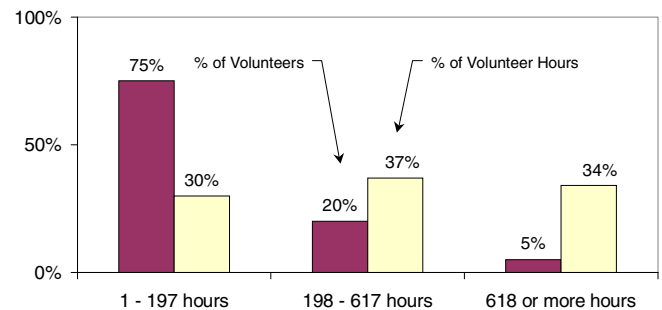
Nearly one third (32%) of British Columbians aged 15 and over volunteered for a charitable or nonprofit organization between November 1, 1996 and October 31, 1997. One million British Columbians volunteered a total of 169 million hours, or the equivalent of more than 88,000 full-time, year-round jobs (assuming 40 hours per week for 48 weeks). British Columbian volunteers contributed more hours during the year on average (169 hours) than those in other provinces. From 1987 to 1997 the volunteer rate increased by 3%.

Who Volunteers the Most?

The average number of volunteer hours does not give a true picture of the distribution of volunteer effort in British Columbia. Included in the average are those who volunteered many hours, as well as those who volunteered relatively few hours. If we divide volunteers into three groups (the top 5%, the next 20%, and the remaining 75%), we get a more accurate picture.

Figure 21 shows that just over one-third of all volunteer hours were contributed by the 5% of volunteers who gave 618 hours or more of their time. The 20% of volunteers who gave from 198 hours to 617 hours during the year accounted for 37% of all volunteer hours. Together, these groups made up 25% of all volunteers, but accounted for 71% of all volunteer hours. The remaining three-quarters of British Columbia's volunteers, who volunteered less than

Figure 21. Distribution of the Total Volunteer Hours by Number of Hours Volunteered, British Columbia Volunteers Aged 15 and Older, 1997.



197 hours annually, accounted for only 30% of all volunteer hours. This pattern is consistent with that of Canadian volunteers as a whole.⁷

Variations by Size of Community

The volunteering patterns for British Columbians in large urban areas are similar to those in the province as a whole because the majority of the population resides in such areas. There are differences, however, in the volunteering patterns in large urban areas and those in smaller communities.

Figure 22 shows that a much higher percentage of rural British Columbians volunteered than those who lived in cities and towns with 500,000 or more residents. Volunteers in towns with 30,000 to 100,000 residents (e.g., Nanaimo, Chilliwack) contributed the highest average number of volunteer hours during the year. Figure 23 illustrates that nearly half of all volunteer hours were contributed by those who lived in cities with populations of 100,000 or more; however, these communities accounted for 67% of the provincial population. Moreover, communities with fewer than 100,000 residents contributed a higher percentage of volunteer hours relative to their percentage of the population as a whole. For example, rural volunteers contributed 18% of all volunteer hours even though they accounted for only 13% of the provincial population.

Figure 22. Percentage of Population Volunteering and Average Annual Volunteer Hours by Size of Community, British Columbia Population Aged 15 and Older, 1997.

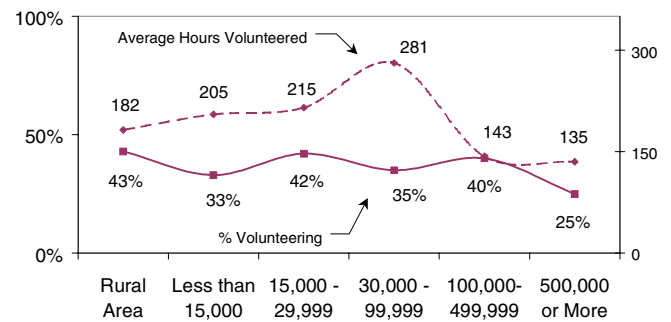
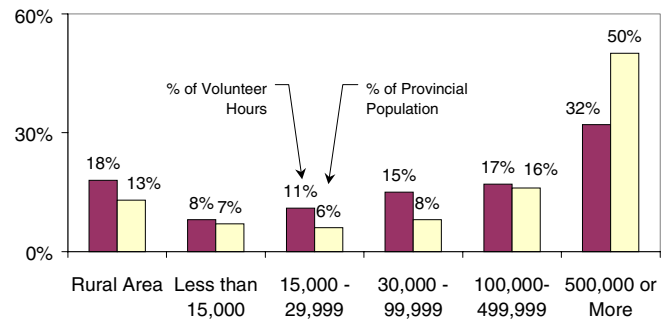


Figure 23. Percentage of Total Volunteer Hours and Percentage of Population by Size of Community, British Columbia Volunteers Aged 15 and Over, 1997.



Who are British Columbia's Volunteers?

Personal and Economic Characteristics

The volunteering of British Columbians varies with their socio-economic backgrounds and their lifestyles, according to the Survey. Table 4 shows that the profile of British Columbian volunteers was generally representative of the provincial population as a whole. Certain segments of the population were somewhat over-represented among the volunteer population, however. These were volunteers who were female, those between the ages of 35-44, those who were married, those with an university degree, those who were

employed part-time, those with a household income of \$40,000-\$59,999, and those with children between the ages of 6 and 17.⁸

The segments of the British Columbian population that were under-represented among volunteers were males, those over the age of 65, those who were single, those with less than a high school education, those not in the labour force, and those with household incomes of less than \$20,000.

Table 4. Profile of British Columbia's Volunteers, Profile of British Columbia's Population, Volunteer Rate, Average Number of Volunteer Hours and % of Total Number of Volunteer Hours.

	Profile of British Columbia's Volunteers	Profile of British Columbia's Population	Volunteer Rate (%)	Average Number of Volunteer Hours	% of Total Value of Volunteer Hours
Total			32%	169	100%
Age					
15-24	*14%	16%	28%	*99	*8%
25-34	22%	20%	36%	164	21%
35-44	24%	21%	37%	173	25%
45-54	19%	17%	36%	180	20%
55-64	*9%	11%	*28%	*172	*10%
65 and over	*12%	15%	24%	*233	*16%
Sex					
Male	44%	49%	29%	180	47%
Female	56%	51%	35%	160	53%
Marital Status					
Married & Common Law	65%	61%	34%	183	70%
Single, Never Married	24%	27%	29%	132	19%
Separated, Divorced	*8%	8%	*33%	*162	*8%
Widowed	----	*5%	----	----	----
Education					
Less than High School	16%	23%	23%	121	12%
High School Diploma	18%	21%	28%	157	17%
Some Post-Secondary	14%	14%	33%	185	15%
Post-Secondary Diploma	32%	30%	35%	174	33%
University Degree	20%	13%	48%	197	23%
Labour Force Status					
Employed	66%	59%	36%	160	62%
Full-time	47%	46%	33%	165	46%
Part-time	19%	13%	46%	148	16%
Unemployed	---	6%	---	---	---
Not in the Labour Force	29%	35%	27%	199	34%
Household Income					
Less than \$20,000	15%	22%	22%	170	16%
\$20,000-\$39,999	21%	24%	28%	201	25%
\$40,000-\$59,999	26%	22%	38%	196	30%
\$60,000-\$79,999	19%	17%	37%	128	15%
\$80,000-\$99,999	*9%	9%	35%	*118	*7%
\$100,000 or more	*10%	7%	43%	*153	*9%
Presence of Children					
Aged 5 and Under: yes	*14%	13%	*35%	*163	*14%
no	86%	87%	32%	170	86%
Aged 6 to 12: yes	20%	13%	52%	193	23%
no	80%	87%	29%	162	77%
Aged 13 to 17: yes	15%	10%	49%	240	21%
no	85%	90%	30%	156	79%
Aged 18 and Older: yes	*10%	11%	*29%	*233	*14%
no	90%	89%	33%	161	86%
Religious Affiliation					
No Religious Affiliation	42%	52%	39%	175	40%
Affiliated	58%	48%	27%	160	60%
Religious Attendance**					
Non-Weekly Attender	60%	70%	34%	143	49%
Weekly Attender	40%	30%	52%	226	51%
Intensity of Religious Feeling					
Does Not Feel Very Religious	82%	88%	30%	161	78%
Feels Very Religious	18%	12%	48%	205	22%

*Sample size limitations affect the reliability of these estimates

** Only respondents who were affiliated with a place of worship were asked about their religious attendance

--- Amount too small to be expressed

Who is Most Likely to Volunteer?

Understanding the personal and economic characteristics of the volunteer base in British Columbia is important in developing an effective volunteer recruitment strategy. Those who already volunteer may be persuaded to get more involved, while those groups that volunteer at a lower rate can be the focus of specific or intensified recruitment campaigns.

Table 4 (columns 4 and 5) shows the volunteer rates of each demographic group, with their corresponding average number of volunteer hours. Column 6 also includes the percent of the total number of volunteer hours accounted for by each segment.⁹

- British Columbians between the ages of 25 to 54 were more likely to volunteer for charitable and nonprofit organizations than youth (15-24 years) and those over 55. Seniors over the age of 65 were least likely to volunteer, but contributed the largest average number of hours during the year.
- Women were more likely to volunteer than men, but men volunteered more hours on average (160 hours vs. 180 hours).
- Married British Columbians were more likely to volunteer and on average contributed the greatest number of volunteer hours compared to those who were single, separated or divorced.
- The volunteer rate and the average number of volunteer hours tended to increase with the level of education, with one exception. Those with some post-secondary education contributed on average more hours than those with a post-secondary diploma.
- Part-time employees were more likely to volunteer than those employed full-time or not in the labour force; however, those not in the labour force contributed the largest average number of hours annually.
- High income earners, i.e., those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more, were more likely to volunteer than those in other income groups, but volunteers with a lower income of \$20,000 to \$39,999 volunteered for more hours on average.
- British Columbians with children under the age of 17 were more likely to volunteer than those with no children. Volunteers who had children under the age of 13 contributed fewer hours than those with older children.

The Role of Religion

Volunteer Rates and Average Number of Hours Volunteered

Philanthropy, whether in the form of giving or volunteering, is encouraged in all major religions. Volunteering by British Columbians varied with affiliation with a community of worship, the frequency with which they attended religious services and the degree they described themselves as “very religious.”

Table 4 shows a profile of British Columbian volunteers and includes the religious factors of affiliation, attendance and intensity of religious feeling. Compared with the population of British Columbia as a whole, volunteers were more likely to claim a religious affiliation, attended services weekly, and to describe themselves as “very religious.”

Interestingly, British Columbians who were not religiously affiliated were more likely to volunteer and contributed, on average, more volunteer hours (Figure 24a and b). However, Figures 25-26 show that, among those who claimed a religious affiliation, those who attended weekly services and those who described themselves as “very religious” were associated with a higher rate of volunteering, and a greater average amount of time contributed.

Volunteering for Religious and Non-Religious Organizations

Although the likelihood of volunteering was found to be associated with religious practices, the majority of volunteering activities was not focused on religious organizations. Only 20% of volunteers engaged in volunteer activities for religious organizations (accounting for 14% of all volunteer events and 19% of the total number of volunteer hours). Furthermore, religiously active people did not confine their volunteering to religious organizations. In fact, volunteers who were religiously affiliated and considered themselves “very religious” were more likely to volunteer for non-religious organizations than for religious organizations.

- Volunteers with a religious affiliation were more likely to volunteer for non-religious organizations (29%) than they were for religious organizations (14%). These volunteers accounted for half of all volunteer hours and 52% of the number of volunteers for non-religious organizations.
- Volunteers who described themselves as “very religious” were more likely to volunteer for non-religious organizations (33%) than for religious organizations (31%). They accounted for 11% of all volunteer hours and 13% of the number of volunteers for non-religious organizations.
- Volunteers who attended religious services on a weekly basis were the exception to this trend. They were more likely to volunteer for religious organizations (39%) than for non-religious organizations (33%). These volunteers accounted for 32% of all volunteer hours, but only 16% of the number of volunteers for non-religious organizations.

Figure 24 (a & b): Volunteer Participation Rate (a) and Average Number of Hours Volunteered Annually (b) by Religious Affiliation, British Columbia Population Aged 15 and Over, 1997.

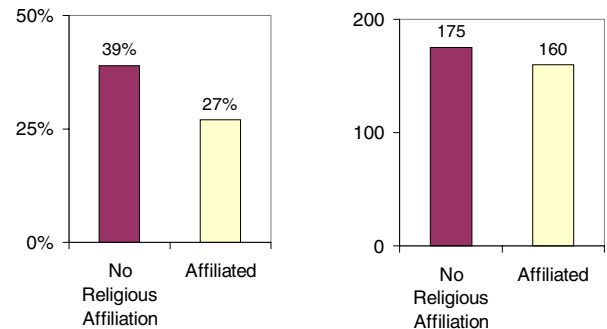


Figure 25 (a & b): Volunteer Participation Rate (a) and Average Number of Hours Volunteered Annually (b) by Attendance at Place of Worship, British Columbia Population Aged 15 and Over, 1997.

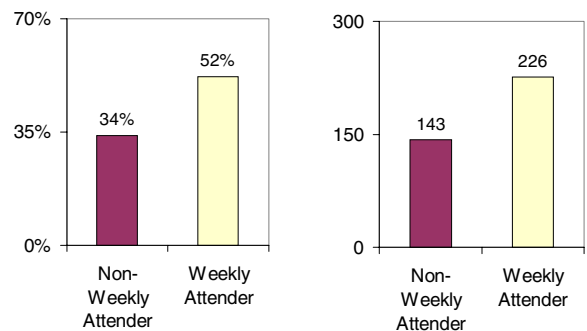
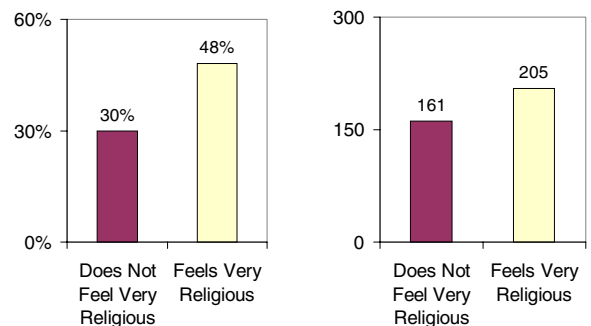


Figure 26 (a & b): Volunteer Participation Rate (a) and Average Number of Hours Volunteered Annually (b) by Level of Religious Feeling, British Columbia Population Aged 15 and Over, 1997.



Who are British Columbian's Top Volunteers? Religious Factors

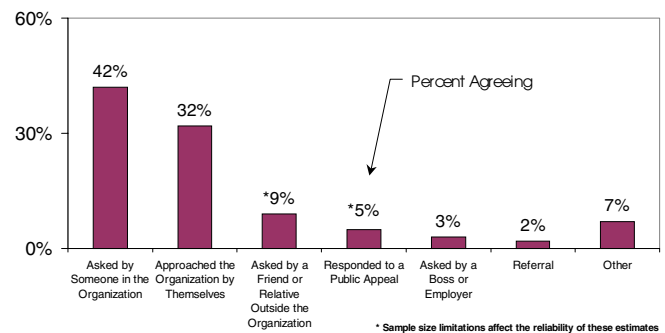
British Columbians who volunteered 198 hours or more annually - the top 25% of volunteers - accounted for 71% of the total number of volunteer hours in the province. What religious characteristics distinguished these individuals from the rest of the volunteer population?¹⁰

A larger proportion of the top 25% of volunteers (62%) were religiously affiliated compared to the remaining 75% of the volunteer population (56%). Furthermore, a larger proportion of the top 25% of volunteers attended weekly services (48%); this declined to 37% for the rest of the volunteer population. Lastly and perhaps more striking was 76% of the top 25% of volunteers described themselves as "very religious" compared to only 16% of the remaining volunteer population.

How Volunteers Become Involved

British Columbians began volunteering for nonprofit and charitable organizations in a variety of ways. Over four in ten volunteered after being approached to do so by someone in an organization (Figure 27)¹¹. Thirty-two percent approached an organization on their own. A much smaller number became volunteers because they were asked by a friend or relative outside the organization (9%); and in response to a public appeal (5%). Although one in three people come forward on their own initiative, these figures suggest a direct and personal appeal by an organization is the most effective way of involving British Columbians as volunteers.

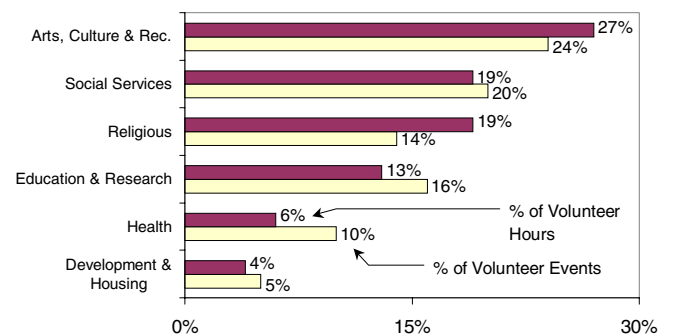
Figure 27. How Volunteers Became Involved, British Columbia Volunteers Aged 15 and Older, 1997.



The Organizations that Volunteers Support

The voluntary sector consists of a wide variety of organizations, many of which involve volunteers. Figure 28 shows that four types of organizations¹² attracted the majority of volunteer hours (78%) and the majority of volunteer events¹³ (74%). These were arts, culture and recreation organizations; social service organizations; religious organizations; and education and research organizations. Education and research organizations accounted for 16% of all volunteer events, and 13% of all volunteer hours contributed in British Columbia. Religious organizations accounted for 14% of volunteer events and 19% of total volunteer hours.

Figure 28. Distribution of Total Volunteer Hours and Total Volunteer Events by Type of Organization, British Columbia Volunteers Aged 15 and Older, 1997.



British Columbian volunteers tended to focus their activity on one or two organizations. More than half (54%) reported volunteering for only one organization; 27%

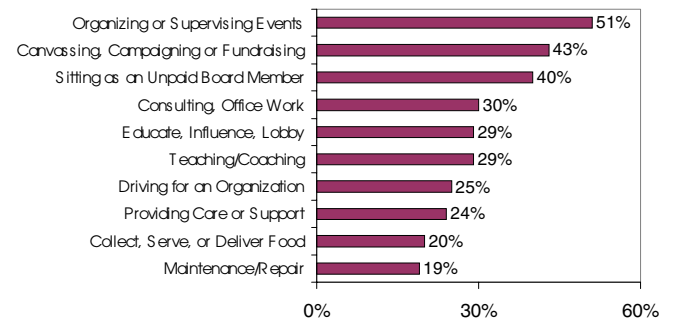
reported volunteering for two organizations; 12% were involved in three organizations; and only 7% volunteered for four or more organizations.

What Volunteers Do

Volunteers in British Columbia do everything from fundraising, coaching, and teaching to serving meals and providing transportation for others. The activities in which they participate in benefit individuals, charities, and society as a whole.

British Columbians engaged in some volunteer activities more frequently than others. More than half of volunteers helped to organize or supervise activities or events (Figure 29). Other common activities were canvassing, campaigning or fundraising (43%) and sitting as an unpaid board member (40%). Twenty-nine percent of volunteers helped to educate, influence public opinion or lobby others; another 29% taught or coached for an organization. Smaller numbers of British Columbian volunteers reported driving for an organization (25%); providing care or support such as counselling (24%);

Figure 29. Activities in which Volunteers Engage, British Columbia Volunteers Aged 15 and Older, 1997.



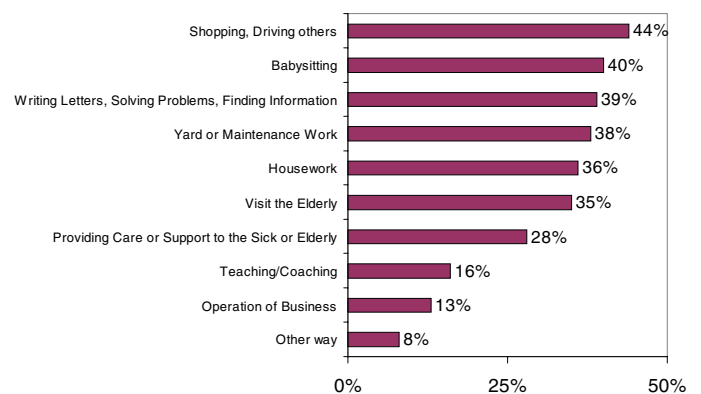
collecting, serving or delivering food (20%); and maintaining or repairing building facilities for an organization (19%).

Other Ways of Helping People

In addition to volunteering formally with a charitable or voluntary organization, many British Columbians help others in more informal ways. This informal volunteering is another way for people to connect with and participate in their communities.

Almost eight out of ten British Columbians engaged in helping and supporting activities without going through an organization. Sixty percent provided help to relatives not living with them and 78% provided this help to non-relatives. As Figure 30 shows, the most common of these activities were shopping or driving someone to appointments or stores (44%); babysitting without being paid (40%), helping others to write letters, solve problems, find information or fill out forms (39%), yard or maintenance work (38%), doing housework, such as cooking or cleaning (36%), and visiting the elderly (35%).

Figure 30. Types of Activities Done Directly for Others, Not for an Organization, British Columbia Population Aged 15 and Older Who Helped People Directly, 1997.



The Reasons for Volunteering: Motivations, Barriers and Benefits

Organizations that depend on the unpaid activities of people in their communities are always looking for ways to promote volunteering. To successfully recruit and retain volunteers, it is essential to understand what motivates people to volunteer and what impedes their involvement.

Motivations

Volunteers may be motivated by one or more reasons. The 1997 survey asked respondents to agree or disagree with seven different reasons why they volunteered. Figure 31 shows that almost all of British Columbia's volunteers (95%) gave their time because they believed in the cause supported by the organization in which they were involved. Seven out of ten volunteers said they or someone they knew had been personally affected by the cause the organization supported.

A large majority of individuals (83%) volunteered in order to use their skills and experiences; over half (56%) volunteered to explore their own strengths.

The motivations of volunteers varied by age group. Younger volunteers in British Columbia tended to give their time in order to explore their own strengths, use their skills and experiences and improve their job opportunities. Older volunteers (65+) were more likely to get involved as a way to fulfill religious obligations.

Barriers

Just as there are a variety of reasons for people to volunteer, there are a number of barriers to their involvement. When British Columbia's volunteers were asked why they did not volunteer more time, three-quarters (76%) reported a lack of extra time as an impediment (Figure 32). One-third felt they had already made their contribution as a volunteer; 28% reported they were unwilling to make a year-round commitment.

Figure 31. Reasons for Volunteering, British Columbia Volunteers Aged 15 and Older, 1997.

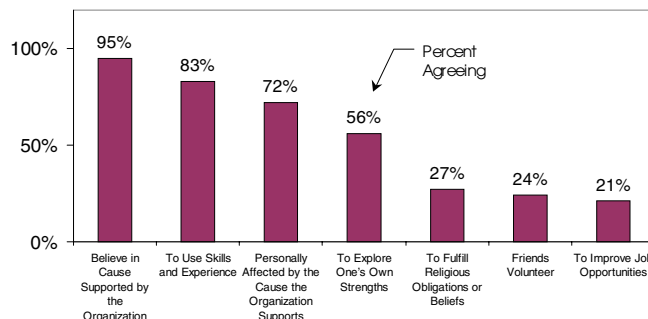
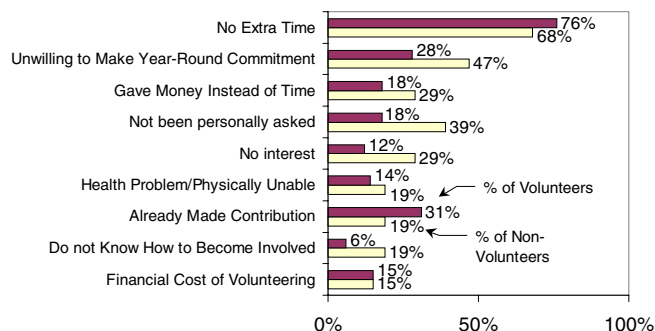


Figure 32. Reasons for Not Volunteering More or Not Volunteering at all, British Columbia Population Aged 15 and Older, 1997.



When asked similar questions about barriers, 68% of British Columbia's non-volunteers reported that they did not have the time to become involved. Forty-seven percent said they were unwilling to make a year-round commitment, while thirty-nine percent said that no one had personally asked them to volunteer. Two other barriers were identified by a third of the non-volunteers - giving money instead of time and having no interest in volunteering.

With the exceptions of 'no extra time' and 'already made contribution as a volunteer,' a higher percentage of non-volunteers agreed with each barrier, compared to volunteers. The largest difference between these groups was that 39% of non-volunteers but only 18% of volunteered cited 'not been personally asked'. Forty-seven percent of non-volunteers reported unwillingness to

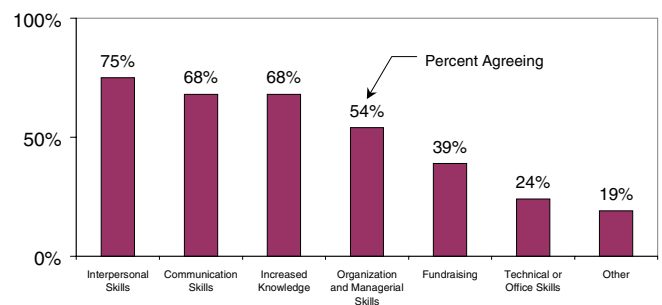
Benefits

Volunteers readily recognized that volunteering provides benefits not only for the organizations involved and the people they serve, but also for themselves. Three-quarters of British Columbia's volunteers reported gaining interpersonal skills, such as understanding people better, learning how to motivate others and learning how to deal with difficult situations (Figure 33). Two benefits were reported by over two-thirds of volunteers: developing communication skills such as public speaking, writing, conducting meetings and public relations; and increased knowledge on issues such as health, women, politics, criminal justice and the environment. Half of British Columbia volunteers reported that their volunteer activities provided them with organizational and managerial skills. By promoting the personal benefits of volunteering, organizations may have some success in recruiting individuals who are under-represented in volunteer activities. For further information on how to

making a year-round commitment as a barrier compared to 28% of volunteers. For further discussion on the application of statistics and barriers to volunteer management, refer to [Volunteering Numbers: Using the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating for Volunteer Management](#).

apply the behavioural characteristics of volunteers to recruitment campaigns, please refer to [Volunteering Numbers: Using the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating for Volunteer Management](#).

Figure 33. Benefits of Volunteering, British Columbia Volunteers Aged 15 and Older, 1997.



Employer Support for Employees' Volunteer Activities

Two-thirds of British Columbia volunteers are employed. Many of these volunteers reported receiving support from their employers for their volunteer activities. Employer support most commonly took the form of permitting employees to use company facilities and equipment for their volunteer activities (29%); taking time off work for volunteering (27%); and changing their hours of work to accommodate volunteering (26%).

Men were slightly more likely than women to use employer facilities or equipment (29% versus 28%). Women were more likely to take time off (28% versus 26%) and modify their work hours (26% versus 25%) in order to volunteer.

Types of employer support also varied with the age of volunteers.

Volunteers aged 45-54 were the most likely of all age groups to use company facilities and equipment (29%) and to take time off work (31%) for volunteering. Volunteers aged 15-24 years were the least likely of all age groups to take time off work (22%), but the most likely to modify their hours of work (35%). By citing these examples and by presenting information on the work-related benefits of volunteering (see "Benefits"), charitable organizations may be able to encourage support for volunteerism by more employers.

The Connection Between Early Life Experiences and Volunteering

British Columbians who engaged in certain activities when they were young were more likely to be volunteers as adults. While the volunteer rate for British Columbians as a whole was 32%, this increased to 37% for people who did some kind of volunteer work in their youth; 41% among people

who belonged to youth groups; 41% for those whose parents were volunteers; 42% for those who canvassed door-to-door in their youth; 45% for those who were active in student government; and 45% for people who were active in religious organizations.

The Links Between Volunteering and Other Forms of Supportive Behaviour

Figures 34-37 illustrate the relationship between volunteering and other forms of supportive behaviour (e.g., charitable giving, helping others directly, without the involvement of an organization, giving money to others directly, participating in community organizations). British Columbians who participated in formal volunteering were more likely than non-volunteers to make charitable donations (Figure 34), to help others directly (Figure 36), to give money to others directly (Figure 35), and to participate in community organizations (Figure 37).

The likelihood of involvement in a range of supportive activities increased with the amount of time an individual volunteered. The top 25% of volunteers (those who volunteered 198 hours or more) were generally more involved in helping others informally, and in participating in community organizations than the remaining 75% of the volunteer population (those who volunteered less than 197 hours).

Figure 34. Percentage of British Columbians Aged 15 and Older Making Charitable Donations by Amount of Time Volunteered, 1997.

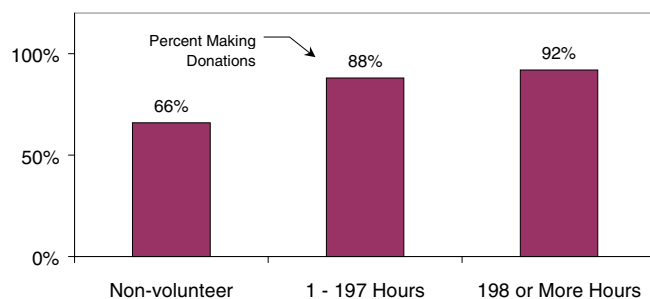


Figure 35. Percentage of British Columbians Aged 15 and Older Engaged in Helping Others Directly by Amount of Time Volunteered, 1997.

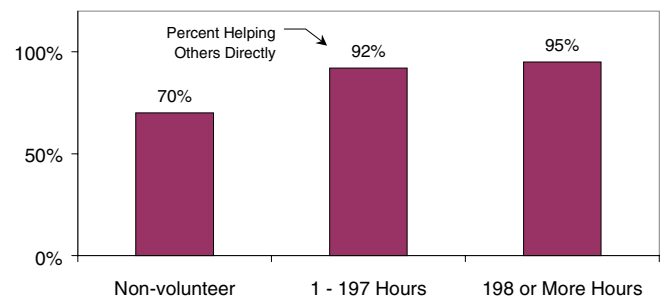


Figure 36. Percentage of British Columbians Aged 15 and Older Engaged in Giving Directly to Others by Amount of Time Volunteered, 1997.

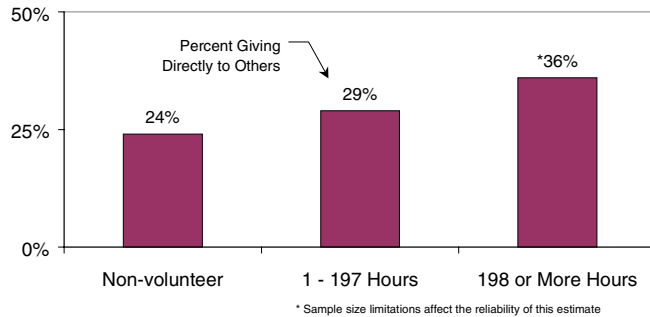
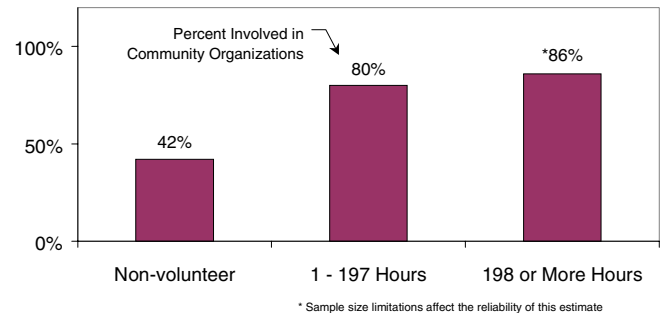


Figure 37. Percentage of British Columbians Aged 15 and Older Involved in Community Organizations by Amount of Time Volunteered, 1997.



Conclusion

This report has provided an overview of the patterns of giving and volunteering for charitable and nonprofit organizations in British Columbia through the analysis of the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating. This study has many implications for the voluntary sector.

Who to Target When Soliciting Donations or Recruiting Volunteers

By providing information on which segments of British Columbia's population are more (or less) likely to donate or volunteer, the NSGVP can assist charitable organizations that rely on such donors and volunteers to carry out their programs and activities. First, those segments of the British Columbia population that are already involved in donating and volunteering may be more responsive to further requests for support. Second, understanding which segments of British Columbia's population donate and volunteer at lower rates can help organizations identify specific measures to help target these groups for support or to intensify fundraising and recruitment campaigns aimed at them.

The majority of charitable donations and volunteer hours came from relatively small proportions of the British Columbia population. Findings from the Survey indicated that the top 25% of donors (who gave \$191 or more

during the year) and the top 25% of volunteers (who volunteered 198 hours or more during the year) accounted for 81% of the total value of donations and 71% of the total number of volunteer hours in British Columbia, respectively. This concentration of support has important implications for charitable and nonprofit organizations. The sector's dependence on a small percentage of the population for the bulk of support can be viewed as an area of vulnerability for the voluntary sector. Any reduction in donations and volunteering among British Columbians who provide either the bulk of charitable donations or the majority of 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 British Columbia's nonprofit charitable organizations to foster, and sustain the relationships that they have with existing donors and volunteers.

Removing Barriers to Giving and Volunteering

On average, British Columbia donors gave \$241. This was just slightly above the national average (\$239). However the province had the lowest donor rate of all provinces (73%) suggesting that British Columbians could be encouraged to be even more generous if certain barriers, such as the way requests were made, were removed. British Columbia had the second lowest volunteer rate, after

Quebec, although British Columbians volunteered for the highest average volunteer hours. Impediments to volunteering, such as a lack of time and unwillingness to make a year round commitment, may need to be addressed by volunteer managers in order to encourage more volunteer support.

Volunteers derive a variety of personal benefits from their volunteer activities. Several reported gaining interpersonal skills, such as understanding people better, to communication skills, managerial skills, and increased

knowledge. Stressing the many benefits of volunteering may be helpful to nonprofit organizations that are looking for volunteers. For further information on how to apply the barriers, benefits and motivations of giving and volunteering to help develop successful fundraising and volunteering programs, see [Fundraising Numbers: Using the National Survey of Giving Volunteering and Participating for Fundraising](#) and [Volunteering Numbers: Using the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating for Volunteer Management](#).

The Links Between Giving and Volunteering

One of the insights provided by the Survey was 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. British Columbians who formally

volunteered were more likely than non-volunteers to engage in other supportive behaviours, and the 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 British Columbians will be beneficial not only to charities and nonprofit organizations, but to the development of active citizens contributing to a healthy civil society.

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Endnotes

1. See Fact Sheet #1 “Charitable Giving in Canada” for more information
2. For more information on the personal and economic characteristics of British Columbia donor’s refer to Fact Sheet #28 “Who are British Columbia’s donors?”
3. For more information on the percentage of the total value of donations contributed by British Columbia’s donors refer to Fact Sheet #28 “Who are British Columbia’s donors?”
4. 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).
5. Survey respondents were asked to provide information about the types of organizations to which they made donations. These organizations were classified into 13 categories.
6. See “Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians; Highlights from the 1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating” , p. 20
7. See Fact Sheet #2 “Volunteering in Canada” for more information.
8. For more information on the personal and economic characteristics of British Columbia volunteers refer to Fact Sheet #29 “Who are British Columbia’s volunteers?”
9. For more information on the percentage of the total value of hours contributed by British Columbia’s volunteers refer to Fact Sheet #29 “Who are British Columbia’s volunteers?”
10. Due to sample size limitations the personal and economic characteristics of British Columbia’s top volunteers cannot be expressed.
11. 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.
12. Survey respondents were asked to provide information about the type of organizations for which they volunteered to. These organizations were classified into 13 categories according to the types of activities in which they engaged in.
13. 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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