

UNDERSTANDING CANADIAN VOLUNTEERS

.....
USING THE NATIONAL SURVEY
OF GIVING, VOLUNTEERING
AND PARTICIPATING TO BUILD
YOUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
.....

By Norah McClintock



Canadian Centre for Philanthropy™
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VOLUNTEER
BÉNÉVOLES
C A N A D A

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

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Canada 

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About this manual

Anyone who has ever been faced with recruiting, managing, and retaining volunteers knows that this is not a simple task. Volunteer positions must be designed to meet the needs of both the organization and the volunteer. Recruitment must target individuals with the appropriate skills, interest, and commitment. Training is critical to ensure that volunteers understand and can carry out their tasks. Volunteers must be screened to ensure safety for all concerned. Volunteers need to be recognized for their efforts.

The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) was undertaken first in 1997 and again in 2000 to better understand how and why Canadians support individuals and communities, either on their own or through their involvement with charitable and voluntary organizations. The NSGVP is a joint project of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Canadian Heritage, Health Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, Statistics Canada, and Volunteer Canada. The 2000 NSGVP was undertaken as part of the federal government's Voluntary Sector Initiative. It was conducted by Statistics Canada as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey in October, November, and early December of 2000. The 2000 NSGVP is based on a representative sample of 14,724 Canadians aged 15 and over.

Canadians' responses to the questions asked in the NSGVP can provide managers of volunteer resources with some insight into who Canada's volunteers are, why these individuals volunteer, and what they get from the experience. The responses can also provide insight into what prevents many Canadians from volunteering.

The purpose of this manual

This manual is primarily intended for those who are new to the field of volunteer resource management. It has two purposes:

- To highlight some of the significant findings of the 2000 NSGVP and show how these can be useful to those whose work involves recruiting, managing, and retaining volunteers.
- To provide a brief overview of the steps involved in recruiting and retaining volunteers.

This manual includes examples of how some organizations are successfully applying NSGVP information to their volunteer programs, exercises to help users relate information from the 2000 NSGVP to their specific situation, and suggested Key Resources for readers who want additional information.

A word on terminology

There are many titles used to designate the person who is responsible for volunteer resources within a charity or voluntary organization. The most common are manager of volunteer resources and manager of volunteer services. This person may also be referred to as a director, administrator, or coordinator. Throughout this manual, we use the term *manager of volunteer resources*.

The term *volunteerism* is used often in this manual. Volunteerism refers to the contribution of time, resources, energy, and/or talent without monetary compensation. This is distinct from voluntarism, which refers to the spirit or ideology of voluntary activity, and may or may not always involve volunteers.

The value of volunteer contributions in Canada

It seems that volunteerism and voluntary activity have enriched Canadian life beyond measure. Volunteers established the earliest hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged, and other health and welfare agencies in Canada. Some of Canada's best-known voluntary organizations have been in existence for well over a century. These include the YMCA (established 1851), YWCA (1870), St. John Ambulance Association (1877), Canadian Red Cross Society (1896), and Victorian Order of Nurses (1897). These and countless other charitable and voluntary organizations continue to depend on volunteers for organizational leadership, fundraising, and service delivery.¹ Over 40% of Canada's 78,000 registered charities have no paid staff and rely exclusively on volunteers to carry out their missions.

Canada's first volunteer centre was established in 1937 in Montreal to help match volunteers with agencies that needed their help. By the late 1960s, volunteer centres existed in many urban areas. They played an important role in recruiting, training, and referring volunteers, and in promoting the concept of volunteerism. Managers of volunteer resources can look to volunteer centres for management support, training, feedback, and information resources.

Today, Canadians continue to give freely of their time to a wide variety of causes and organizations. According to the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP), more than 6.5 million Canadians volunteered just over 1 billion hours of their time to charitable and voluntary organizations between October 1, 1999 and September 30, 2000 — the equivalent of 549,000 full-time jobs. If those organizations had to hire people to do the work undertaken by volunteers, a conservative estimate of the total payroll cost would be over \$17 billion.²

Volunteers strengthen charitable and voluntary organizations

Volunteers do everything from stuffing envelopes to serving on boards of directors. They raise funds for charity, coach sports teams, run youth and children's programs, deliver meals, shop for the elderly, help recent immigrants settle in, work to protect the environment, help feed hungry people, guide museum and art gallery visitors, and build homes for homeless people. In fact, one would be hard-pressed to find a task that has not been undertaken by volunteers.

Volunteers don't just provide desperately needed human resources to charities and voluntary organizations and the people they serve — they also bring new skills to these organizations.

Volunteers can be a source of fresh ideas and energy. Their efforts can expand an organization's capacity. Committed volunteers can help an organization forge stronger, broader links in the community and can be excellent ambassadors for the organization. Volunteers are also more likely to be donors than are non-volunteers - 91% of volunteers made charitable donations, compared to 73% of non-volunteers, according to the 2000 NSGVP.

¹ *Volunteerism: A Traditional Canadian Value*, Janet Lautenschlager, Voluntary Action Program, Canadian Identity Directorate, Department of Canadian Heritage, Ottawa, 1991.

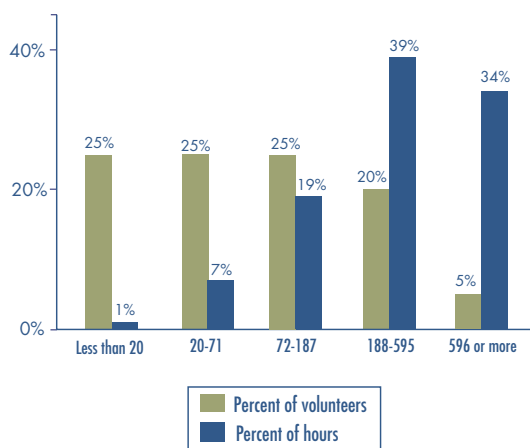
² This is based on the Canadian average hourly wage of \$16.89 (Statistics Canada's Survey of Employment, Payroll and Hours, *The Daily*, April 29, 2003) multiplied by 40 hours per week and 48 weeks per year.

Important volunteering trends

Canadians' involvement in volunteering appears to have changed between the 1997 and 2000 NSGVP surveys. The most significant changes are:

- **A decline in the number of Canadians who volunteer.** Just over 6.5 million volunteered in 2000, compared to nearly 7.5 million in 1997.
- **An increase in the number of hours contributed per volunteer.** The 27% of Canadians who volunteered in 2000 contributed more hours on average than in 1997 (162 versus 149).
- **Much continues to come from the few.** Over one third (34%) of all volunteer hours were contributed by the 5% of volunteers who gave 596 hours or more of their time. Another 39% of all hours were contributed by the 20% of volunteers who gave between 188 and 595 hours during the year. These two groups represent only 25% of volunteers, and less than 7% of all Canadians, but account for nearly three quarters (73%) of all volunteer hours.

Figure 1. Distribution of volunteers and of volunteer hours, 2000



These first three findings suggest that care should be taken with these “stalwart volunteers” to ensure that they are not overburdened and that they feel appreciated for the work they do. They also suggest that there is great potential to spread the volunteerism message to the remaining 93% percent of Canadians, especially the 73% who did not volunteer at all.

- **A decline in the number of religiously active Canadians who volunteer.** Although Canadians who attended weekly religious services remained much more likely to volunteer than those who did not, the volunteer rate for this group fell from 46% in 1997 to 41% in 2000.
- **An increase in the importance of time as a barrier in volunteering.** Lack of time was the reason given most frequently by volunteers for not volunteering more (75%) and by non-volunteers for not volunteering at all (69%). Unwillingness to make a year-round commitment was the next most frequently given reason (34% of volunteers, 46% of non-volunteers). Whether the causes are economic, family, and/or other pressures, it all adds up to one thing: today's managers of volunteer resources must take time constraints into account when recruiting and involving volunteers.
- **An increase in the job-skill motivation among volunteers.** Sixty-two percent of unemployed volunteers in 2000 believed that volunteering would improve their job prospects, up from 54% in 1997. Seventy-eight percent of unemployed youth held this belief in 2000, up from 65% in 1997.
- **An increase in employer support for volunteering.** Forty-seven percent of volunteers said they received some form of support from their employers, up from 44% in 1997.

In the pages that follow we will explore the significance of these trends and other changes since 1997.

Who are volunteers — A snapshot

The “typical” volunteer — and other volunteers

To the extent that there is a typical Canadian volunteer, she is between 35 and 54 years old, is married, has some post-secondary education, is employed, has a household income of over \$60,000, and a religious affiliation. In other words, according to the 2000 NSGVP:

- More women than men volunteered (women made up 54% of all volunteers), although men volunteered more hours on average.
- Nearly one half (44%) of all volunteers were between the ages of 35 - 54 years old.
- Just over half (53%) of all volunteers held a post-secondary degree or diploma or a university degree.
- Most volunteers (67%) were employed. Of these, more than three quarters (77%) held full-time jobs.
- Almost two thirds (65%) of volunteers in 2000 were married or in common law relationships.
- Those with higher than average household incomes were more likely to volunteer than were those with lower household incomes. Canadians with household incomes of more than \$60,000 annually accounted for 38% of the population, but 49% of all volunteers.
- Almost four in ten (37%) of all volunteers attended weekly religious services.

For a picture of the typical volunteer by province, see Appendix A.

The typical volunteer, however, is not the *only* volunteer. Thirty-four percent of volunteers were under the age of 35 in 2000. Thirty-five percent had a high school education or less. Half (51%) had household incomes of under \$60,000.

Knowing more about your volunteers and potential volunteers can help you to consider:

- the obstacles you may encounter in recruitment and retention;
- the challenges you may face in job design and scheduling;
- the issues that may arise as you develop your volunteer training programs; and,
- how best to recognize volunteers through recognition activities.

For example:

- Although people 35 to 54 years of age volunteered at a higher rate than any other age group, 70% of this age group did not volunteer. People in this age group are more likely than those in other age groups to devote their non-work time to raising a family.
- Volunteers who are employed are often looking for chances to use their skills and experiences (81% cited this as a motivation).
- Of those volunteers who served on a board or committee in 2000, 63% had either a post-secondary diploma or a university degree. Those with higher levels of education were also more likely to be involved in organizing or supervising events, providing information to help educate, influence public opinion, or lobby on behalf of an organization, and in consulting, executive, and office assignments.
- Volunteers with higher than average household incomes are more likely to be donors. These volunteers may make financial contributions to the organizations for which they volunteer.
- People who participate in a place of worship were more likely to volunteer to fulfill religious obligations or

beliefs - 60% of those who attended a place of worship weekly cited this as a reason for volunteering.

- Recent immigrants who volunteered devoted more of their support to religious organizations than did Canadians as a whole. Over one quarter (26%) of the hours volunteered by recent immigrants were devoted to religious organizations, compared to just 15% of the hours contributed by all Canadians.
- Young people were more likely to volunteer to improve their job opportunities than those in any other age group (55% of 15 to 24-year-olds).
- Part-time workers and those who are unemployed often view volunteer placements as opportunities to learn new skills or gain new knowledge that could help them in the search for full-time employment (34% and 42% respectively).

The “Stalwarts”

What about the one quarter (25%) of volunteers who contributed nearly three quarters (73%) of all volunteer hours? Compared to all volunteers, these stalwarts are more likely to:

- be female (53% of top volunteers);
- be aged 35 to 54 (45%) or over 65 (16%);
- not be in the labour force (35%);
- hold a university degree (27%);
- have household incomes of \$60,000 or more (15%); and,
- attend a place of worship weekly (45%).

Key Resources

It can be helpful to know more about the volunteers in the area in which your organization operates. The 2000 NSGVP includes specific information about volunteers in each province. This information is available in:

- *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating.*
- A series of national and provincial fact sheets on volunteers and volunteerism based on data from the 2000 NSGVP.

All of these resources are available online at www.givingandvolunteering.ca.

Example: Recruiting “outside the box”

When the director of a home support agency in northern Ontario attended a workshop a few years ago at which data from the 1997 NSGVP were presented, she was surprised to discover that youth constituted one of the fastest growing volunteer groups. “It was an area that I hadn’t tapped into,” she said. “I hadn’t even looked at that group.”

She decided to take steps to target this group in her recruitment. She contacted a local newspaper office to ask if they would be interested in a story on youth volunteers. She then arranged for some young people to tell their stories to a reporter. “One young woman who has been with us for a number of years started volunteering when she was 18,” the director said. “She had just got her first vehicle. She said she felt so fortunate to have it that she decided, why not use it for something good?” This volunteer told the reporter that she had wanted to cruise around in her car and that delivering meals on wheels gave her the chance to enjoy her car as well as help in the community. Another young volunteer started with the agency to complete the volunteer hours that were mandatory for his community college program. He even helped to recruit some of his classmates. They told the reporter that although they had started as volunteers because they needed the hours for their course, they had stayed because of the people. The newspaper ran the article on its front page. As a result, more young people volunteered with the agency.

Five years later, this agency is attracting high school students who need 40 hours of community service before they can graduate. The agency’s director reports that although these students don’t stay long, their experiences as youth volunteers shape their future. “The seed is planted. As they mature and have families of their own, they come back,” she says.

It’s Your Turn...

Who are *your* volunteers?

- Assemble a list of your volunteers.
- How many are men? Women?
- How many are in each of the following age groups: 15-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; 65 and over?
- What is their level of education: how many have less than high school; a high school diploma; some post-secondary; a post-secondary certificate or diploma; a university degree?
- How many are employed full-time; employed part-time; unemployed; not in the labour force (i.e., retired or not looking for work)?

Compare your volunteer profile to the national volunteer profile or the volunteer profile for your province (visit www.givingandvolunteering.ca for a complete list of available reports and fact sheets). What similarities or differences do you see? What conclusions can you draw?

Now compare your volunteer profile to the Statistics Canada Community Profile (see Key Resource below) for your community and/or the communities in which your organization is active. What observations can you make? For example, if your organization is active in a community with an older population, you might need to consider whether your volunteer assignments appeal to seniors. You might also want to think about partnering with seniors' groups. If there are many new Canadians in your community, you might need to think about what changes you will have to make in your organization and to your volunteer program in order to involve these groups successfully.

Ask yourself if there are groups in your community that are under-represented in your volunteer base. Are you reliant on one or two volunteer groups? What changes, if any, can you see in the next three to five years? What impact could these changes have? What changes could you consider making as you look to the future?

Key Resource

The Statistics Canada 2001 Community Profiles database allows you to see a profile, based on 2001 census data, for all Canadian communities (including cities, towns, villages, Indian reserves, and Indian settlements). This information is available online at: www12.statcan.ca/english/profil01/PlaceSearchForm1.cfm. Included in a Community Profile are:

- age characteristics (i.e., the percentage of people in various age groups in the community);
- marital status;
- languages spoken;

- mobility status (i.e., percentage of people who lived at the same address, in the same province or territory or in a different province or territory a year ago and five years ago);
- immigration characteristics (i.e., percentage of people who were Canadian-born, foreign-born, immigrated before 1991, and immigrated between 1991 and 2001);
- visible minority status;
- level of education;
- number of people in the household;
- percentage of people who work full-time; and,
- average annual earnings in the community.

Community profiles can help you get a good understanding of your potential pool of volunteers. You can then compare their characteristics to those of Canadians who are active volunteers by using NSGVP data.

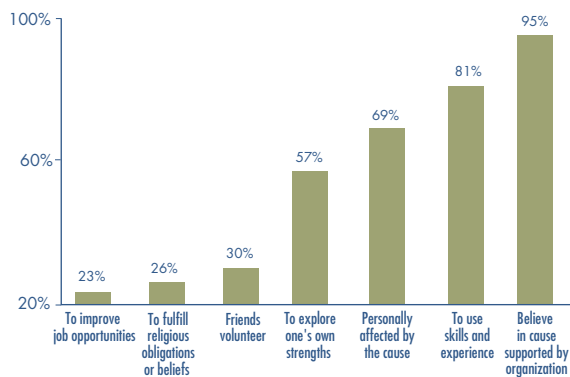
4 Understanding volunteerism

What motivates volunteers?

People volunteer for a variety of reasons. By understanding what motivates people to volunteer, managers of volunteer resources can better focus their recruitment strategies, design volunteer opportunities, structure training, and implement appropriate methods of recognition.

According to the 2000 NSGVP, people volunteered for many different reasons.

Figure 2. Reasons for volunteering, Canadian volunteers 2000



Most people volunteered for altruistic reasons - because they cared about the cause or issue involved, because they had been personally affected by the cause and wanted to give something back, or because of their religious beliefs. Others volunteered with benefits in mind - to improve their job skills, to challenge themselves, and to explore their abilities. Many people volunteered for a combination of reasons.

Employment situation and aspirations can influence volunteer motivations:

- Nearly two thirds (62%) of unemployed volunteers believed that volunteering would increase their chances of finding a job. This jumped to 78% among unemployed youth.
- Almost one quarter of unemployed youth (24%) said that volunteering had actually helped them find employment.
- More than one third (37%) of those who were employed said that they thought volunteering gave them new skills that could be directly applied to the workplace. This increased to 49% among employed youth.

Men and women had somewhat different motivations. The top motivation for both men and women was belief in the cause. Women, however, were more likely than men to volunteer to explore their personal strengths (62% versus 52% of male volunteers), while men were more likely than women to volunteer because their friends volunteered (33% of male volunteers versus 28% of female volunteers).

Younger volunteers were more likely to say they volunteered to explore their personal strengths (71% of volunteers aged 15 to 24 and 63% of volunteers aged 25 to 34). The importance of this motivation declined steadily with age. Volunteers aged 15 to 24 were also far more likely than volunteers in any other age group to say they got involved because their friends volunteered (42%).

Older volunteers were more likely to be motivated by a desire to fulfill religious obligations. Indeed, this motivation rose steadily with age, from only 19% of volunteers between the ages of 15 to 24, to fully half (50%) of those aged 65 and older.

Example: Taking volunteer preferences into account

A long-term care facility is always looking for volunteers to interact with residents as “friendly visitors.” The manager of volunteer resources discovered that men are generally more reluctant to volunteer for this type of assignment. So instead of asking men to do friendly visits, she asks them to coordinate events or run barbecues. The men who volunteer for these assignments often end up developing relationships with residents. This is a good example of analyzing the motivations and preferences of different volunteer groups to achieve the desired outcome.

What does this mean for managers of volunteer resources?

The best place to look for volunteers may be close to home. Most volunteers become involved because they believe in the cause or because they have been personally affected and want to give something back to the cause. Health organizations might find volunteers among those who have been helped or whose loved ones have been helped. Environmental organizations might find volunteers among those who have made donations. Arts organizations might find volunteers among audiences and attendees who are passionate about a particular art form. To attract these people to your volunteer program, be sure to take every opportunity to let them know how they can help. For

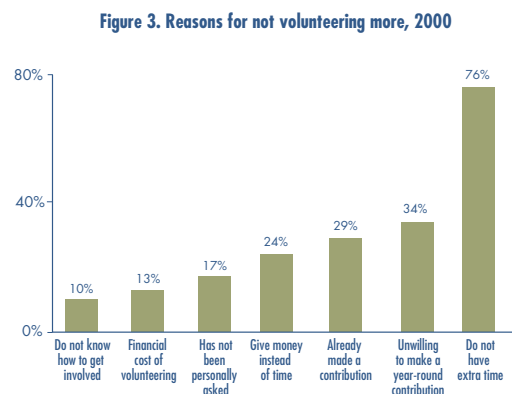
example, if your organization is open to the public, such as a hospital or arts venue, post signs and place brochures in key locations to advertise your volunteer program. If you have a newsletter for donors, include information about your volunteer program. Include a volunteer opportunities section on your Web site.

Remember to “sell” the benefits. In addition to “warm fuzzies,” many volunteers have tangible expectations. They want to learn, to exercise their skills and abilities, to challenge themselves, and to gain new knowledge and abilities. A volunteer experience can provide this. These benefits, if promoted, might help to draw non-volunteers into the ranks of volunteers. Moreover, satisfied volunteers who have learned more about the cause they are supporting, have contributed their skills and experiences, and have experienced personal growth will be more valuable to your organization and can be excellent ambassadors in the community. A study by the Volunteer Centre of Ottawa-Carleton concluded that satisfied volunteers also make good recruiters.³

What stops people from volunteering?

It’s easy to find out why people volunteer for your organization - you can simply ask them. But what keeps people from volunteering and what can you do to overcome those barriers?

Why volunteers don’t give more time. Respondents to the 2000 NSGVP who were volunteers were asked why they didn’t volunteer more.



The reasons for not volunteering more varied according to age, income, and employment status:

- Older volunteers were more likely to say that they did not volunteer more because they had already made their contribution to volunteering. Half (50%) of volunteers aged 65 and over cited this reason, compared to 40% of those aged 55-64, 34% of those aged 45-54, and 29% of those aged 35-44.
- Older volunteers were more likely to cite health and mobility problems as barriers. Nearly four in ten (39%) volunteers aged 65 and over said that they did not volunteer more because they had health problems or were physically unable to, compared to 23% of those aged 55-64, 14% of those aged 45-54, and 12% of those aged 35-44.
- Older volunteers were more likely to say that they gave money instead of time. Nearly one third (30%) of volunteers aged 65 and over said this, compared to 24% of those aged 35-64.
- Younger volunteers were more likely to say that they did not volunteer more because they did not have any extra time. Eighty-three percent of volunteers aged 25-34 cited this reason, as did 84% of those aged 35-44. This declined to 62% of volunteers aged 55-64 and less than half (49%) of volunteers aged 65 and older.
- Volunteers with higher household incomes were more likely to say that they did not volunteer more because they did not have extra time: 81% of volunteers with incomes of \$60,000 or more a year cited this as a barrier, compared to only 60% of those at the lowest income level (less than \$20,000). As well, higher-income volunteers were more likely to say that they gave money instead of additional time - 27% of those with incomes of \$60,000 or more, compared to only 19% of those at the lowest income level.
- Employed volunteers were more likely to say they did not volunteer more because they did not have extra time.

³ *Why People Volunteer*, Volunteer Centre of Ottawa-Carleton, A report to the Voluntary Action Directorate, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, Ottawa, 1992.

Eighty-three percent of employed volunteers cited this reason, compared to 59% of those who were not in the labour force.

One barrier was constant among volunteers in all age, income, and employment status groups: unwillingness to make a year-round commitment.

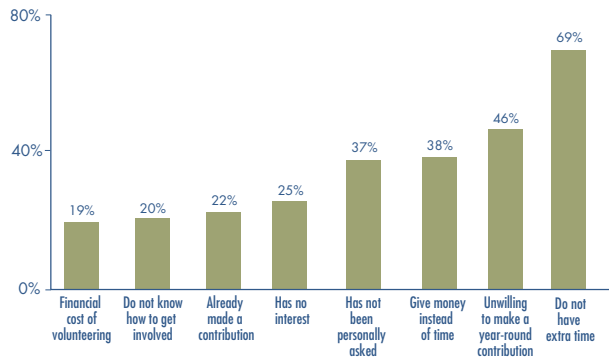
Why non-volunteers don't volunteer

Respondents to the survey who were not volunteers were also asked why they did not volunteer.

As with volunteers, the reasons non-volunteers gave for not volunteering at all varied according to age, income, and employment status.

- Older non-volunteers were more likely to say that they did not volunteer because they had already made their contribution to volunteering. Forty-three percent of non-volunteers aged 65 and over cited this reason, compared to 27% of those aged 55-64 and 45-54 and only 17% of those aged 35-44.

Figure 4. Reasons for not volunteering at all, 2000



- Older non-volunteers were more likely to cite health and mobility problems as barriers. Over half (58%) of non-volunteers aged 65 and over said that they did not volunteer because they had health problems or were physically unable to, compared to 35% of those aged 55-64, 22% of those aged 45-54, and 15% of those aged 35-44.
- Older non-volunteers were more likely to say that they gave money instead of time. Forty-five percent of non-volunteers aged 65 and over said this, compared to 40% of those aged 35-64.
- Younger non-volunteers were more likely to say that they did not volunteer because they did not have any extra time. Eighty percent of non-volunteers aged 25-34 cited this reason, as did

78% of those aged 35-44. This declined to 64% of non-volunteers aged 55-64 and only 39% of those aged 65 and older.

- Non-volunteers with higher household incomes were more likely to say that they did not volunteer because they did not have extra time: 79% of volunteers with incomes of \$60,000 or more cited this as a barrier, compared to only 51% of those at the lowest income level (< \$20,000). Higher-income non-volunteers were more likely to say that they gave money instead of additional time - 43% of those with incomes of \$60,000 or more, compared to only 28% of those at the lowest income level.
- Employed non-volunteers were more likely to say they did not volunteer because they did not have extra time. Eighty-one percent of employed non-volunteers cited this reason, compared to just 51% of those who were not in the labour force.

One barrier was constant among non-volunteers in all age, income, and employment status groups: unwillingness to make a year-round commitment.

What does this mean for managers of volunteer resources?

1. Time is a precious commodity for most Canadians. Statistics Canada's 1998 General Social Survey, which is conducted every five years, reported that one third of Canadians between the ages of 25 and 44 view themselves as workaholics - the same group who were most likely to report lack of time as their main barrier to volunteering. The same survey also showed that married mothers who work full-time cited the highest levels of time stress - 38% reported that they don't have enough time for family and friends. Attracting volunteers, especially among certain segments of the population, may require creativity when developing volunteer opportunities.
2. A significant number are unwilling to make a long-term commitment. To attract the skills and talents of these people, charitable and voluntary organizations may have to consider short-term, one-time, and even drop-in volunteer opportunities, where appropriate.⁴

Example: Involving time-stressed volunteers

Many volunteers and would-be volunteers have numerous demands on their time. A long-term care facility in Saskatchewan now offers more "episodic" volunteer opportunities to involve these busy people. In the spring and fall, it recruits volunteers for its walking and socializing program. "Our residents are rural-

⁴ For more information on this, please see Chapter Five, Designing Your Volunteer Opportunities.

based. They're farmers," says the director of volunteer resources. "Some of them may have dementia, but they can see it's getting green or it's getting near harvest. They feel pulled to the land." Volunteers are happy to get involved for these short periods of time, she says.

It's Your Turn...

What motivates your volunteers?

Use the results from the NSGVP to understand the motivations of your volunteers. Survey your volunteers. New volunteer applications provide a good opportunity to find out what their motives are. Ask them to identify as many of the following reasons for volunteering as apply to them:

- They want to help a cause they personally believe in.
- They have been personally affected or know someone who has been personally affected by the cause the organization supports.
- Their friends volunteer.
- They want to improve their job opportunities.
- They want to fulfill religious obligations.
- They want to explore their own strengths.
- They want to use their skills and experiences.
- Other reasons (ask them to name these).

Compare your results to the findings from the NSGVP. How many of the above motivations are echoed by your volunteers? Ask your volunteers whether their volunteer activities are meeting their expectations. For example:

- If you are motivated by a belief in the cause, do you feel that you are making a difference? In what ways?
- If you want to use your skills and experience, do you feel that they are being usefully applied to benefit the organization? In what ways?
- If you want to develop new skills, do you feel that you are acquiring those skills? What skills are you acquiring?

What stops people from volunteering?

It's more difficult to find out why people aren't volunteering. The questions asked by the NSGVP, however, can give you a starting point to think about barriers to volunteering. The NSGVP asked Canadians to choose from a list of

reasons why they did not volunteer (or, if they were already volunteers, why they did not volunteer more). People were asked if they did not volunteer because:

- They felt they had already made their contribution with respect to volunteering.
- They did not have extra time.
- They were unwilling to make a year-round commitment.
- They gave money instead of time.
- They had health problems or were physically unable.
- No one personally asked them.
- They did not know how to become involved.
- The financial cost of volunteering was too great.
- They were concerned that they could be sued or taken to court because of volunteer activities.
- They had no interest.

Think about the types of people you are trying to recruit. How might these barriers apply to these groups? What are some ways that you could address these barriers? Would providing childcare or transportation encourage people to volunteer?

Exit interviews

Another way to understand barriers is to conduct "exit interviews" with volunteers who are terminating their involvement with your organization. Ask the same kinds of questions that the NSGVP asks:

- What motivated you to volunteer? (Refer to NSGVP motivations.)
- How did you become involved? (Refer to NSGVP methods of involvement.)
- What benefits were you looking for? (Refer to NSGVP benefits of volunteering.)
- What benefits did you receive? (Refer to NSGVP benefits of volunteering.)
- Why are you leaving? (Refer to NSGVP barriers to volunteering.)

This information can help you understand what changes you might need to make to keep your volunteers involved.

Designing your volunteer opportunities

Creating effective volunteer opportunities

Organizations that depend on volunteers to carry out programs, deliver services, and undertake general administrative duties face a challenging environment. Fewer Canadians are volunteering. Those who do volunteer have different expectations than they did a decade ago. They also have less time available for volunteer activities. What can organizations do in the face of these challenges to maximize their chances of recruiting volunteers, involving them effectively, and keeping them engaged?

Susan J. Ellis, author of numerous books and resources on volunteering, says that when thinking about volunteers, the wrong question to ask is, “What can volunteers do to help us?” The right question, she suggests, is “What needs to be done around here?” This question leads to more creative thinking: what are we doing now that we would like to do more of, what needs do our clients or customers have that we haven’t been able to meet, what might we do differently if only we had more skills or more time?⁵

Once you know what you would like your volunteers to accomplish, you need to be as clear as possible in articulating what the volunteers’ responsibilities are and where these fit within the organization. According to research undertaken for the International Year of Volunteers, organizations get the best effort from their volunteers when those volunteers “have clearly defined roles, understand those roles, and feel a sense of confidence in their ability to fulfill their roles.”⁶

Volunteer Canada has produced a handbook called *A Matter of Design: Job design theory and application to the voluntary sector* that takes organizations through the steps of designing volunteer positions that meet the organization’s needs while ensuring that volunteers understand exactly what is required of them, both in terms of their assignments and the time involved, and that they have support to carry out those assignments.⁷

These steps are:

- Review the mandate or mission of your organization.
- Review the various functions or tasks that must be carried out to achieve the mission or mandate.
- Establish the qualities that are needed to perform the various components or tasks.
- Identify and describe discrete volunteer assignments, i.e., develop position descriptions.
- Match volunteers to positions or assignments.

Key Resource

A Matter of Design: Job design theory and application to the voluntary sector explains how to design volunteer positions to attract time-pressured volunteers. It explains how to do an assessment of volunteer needs and takes readers through each step of job design. Included are templates that readers can use to complete each step. It is available online at www.volunteer.ca.

Designing opportunities that meet needs and attract volunteers

Volunteers do not give their time to charitable and voluntary organizations for eight hours a day, five days a week. Instead, they fit their volunteer activities around their regular jobs, personal lives, and other commitments. Again, the 2000 NSGVP can be used to demonstrate these patterns. For example, two thirds (67%) of married female volunteers not in the paid labour force and with children at home contributed all their time during weekdays compared to just over one third (34%) of unattached, employed male volunteers. Four in every five (80%) of these women contributed all or part of their volunteer time during the day. In contrast, 85% of the male group con-

⁵ The Volunteer Recruitment Book, by Susan J. Ellis, ENERGIZE Inc., 1994.

⁶ What Determines a Volunteer’s Effort, by Kim Dorsch et al., Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and Volunteer Canada, 2002.

⁷ A Matter of Design: Job design theory and application to the voluntary sector, Volunteer Canada, 2002.

tributed all or part of their volunteer hours during the evening.

Volunteer involvement is typically done in time-limited chunks on a one-time, ongoing, or sporadic basis. The challenge to organizations is to design opportunities that meet the needs and constraints of volunteers and that still allow the work to get done. This requires creativity and good planning.

What do you want done? The volunteer position description

The first step, once you have identified what volunteers can bring to your agency, is to develop a position description. For example, you may decide that you need volunteers to help get more information to your clients. What exactly do you want these volunteers to do? Do you want them to assemble and mail out information kits? Do you want them to enter the names and addresses of people they have sent information to into your database? Do you want them to provide information to callers over the phone? If so, what kind of information? Are there confidentiality issues involved? How often do you want them to undertake this task? For how long each time? What is the overall time commitment needed?

You need to be as specific as possible. The answers to questions such as these will lead you to decisions about the type of person you need, the skills and qualifications that person should have, and how much training and ongoing supervision you will need to provide.

A good volunteer position description includes the:

- name of the assignment;
- purpose of the assignment;
- tasks to be undertaken;

- time commitment;
- skill requirements;
- training and development support offered;
- supervision structure (to whom volunteer reports; feedback mechanisms);
- authority and decision making structure;
- supporting policies; and,
- benefits.⁸

A clearly written volunteer position description not only clarifies what you need done and who will be best suited to fill the position, but also guides you in developing your recruitment message, interviewing potential candidates, selecting the best people from among the applicants, and evaluating volunteers as they carry out their assignments.

What is the best way to get the task done? Designing the position

How can you design the volunteer position to ensure that the task gets done while maximizing your chance of finding the right volunteer - or volunteers - to carry out that assignment?

Perhaps you have identified the need for one person twice a week on an ongoing basis. As you discuss this need with the staff person who will work with and supervise the volunteer, discuss whether you really need the same person each time, or if two people can share the task, one for each day. What do you mean by “ongoing”? The 2000 NSGVP identifies unwillingness to make a full-year commitment as a real barrier for volunteers. Can the position be broken into chunks so that one person could accomplish one phase in a couple of hours a week for a few weeks, and then someone else could handle phase two?

⁸ Ibid., pg. 46-47

Two - or more - can share

Try not to get locked into only one way of getting things done. For example, if you run a volunteer visiting program and you're having trouble recruiting long-term volunteers, maybe you can review the needs and objectives of your program. How many of your clients want one-to-one friendship, and how many just want someone to help them get their groceries or run errands? For the latter group, you may not need one person long-term; two or more volunteers giving their time now and then might be just as effective. This may require more coordination on your part, but the task will get done to everyone's satisfaction.

Be creative. For example, an organization may have had a volunteer office manager - a stalwart volunteer who showed up regularly for years and handled just about everything. Now she's "retiring" and the organization is having trouble finding someone just like her to carry on. That organization could use job design theory to break down the position into its component tasks (e.g., answer the phone; check the messages, mail, and email; respond or direct email to someone else; send out materials as requested; type minutes, photocopy; order coffee supplies, etc.). Once that is done, it becomes clear that each task could be assigned to a different individual, who has to make a much smaller commitment than the former stalwart volunteer. It's also clear that some jobs, like purchasing coffee supplies, require a different level of skill and commitment than others, such as answering and redirecting email.

Example: Matching skills to tasks

When a volunteer centre realized it had no staff member who was skilled in using layout software to design newsletters, brochures, and other printed materials, it decided to recruit a volunteer. It received 15 responses to an advertisement it placed. "Although we were only really looking for one person," says the executive director, "we ended up creating three positions: One for a person to set up templates for us; one for a person to teach layout to staff; and one for someone to design different products for us with layout software." Each volunteer had a specific, clearly defined task, with clear time requirements. Each task was based on knowledge of layout software, but called on other skills as well. Result: the organization involved three volunteers who were able to address its immediate and longer-term needs.

Family groups can get involved

Family pressures are a common cause of time constraints. Can you design your volunteer opportunity to accommodate families? Some organizations have heard from parents who want to encourage the value of volunteering in their children, but want opportunities to do this together. Some have responded by developing programs that encourage family activities.

Volunteer Calgary has developed a "Families Volunteering Together Project" to help organizations involve family groups in volunteering. It offers workshops to help organizations explore how existing programs can accommodate family groups. It also encourages organizations to explore ways that families can support them from the outside. For example, a health support organization has many clients who live in group homes and who don't have family supports. The organization started a basket program that encourages families to assemble special baskets for Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and other occasions, including Get Well baskets. The families give these baskets to the organization, which presents them to clients. Volunteer Calgary has produced information products to help managers of volunteer resources who want to involve families. For more information, including tips for involving families, visit Volunteer Calgary's Web site at www.volunteer-calgary.ab.ca.

Other volunteer activities that can be appropriate for family groups include:

- participating in fundraisers;
- cleaning up the environment;
- helping at shelters, soup kitchens, and breakfast clubs;
- friendly visiting;
- meal delivery;
- serving as a surrogate family; and,
- painting or making repairs to a hostel or mission.⁹

Involving families may mean offering your opportunities during non-business hours - in the early evening or on weekends - and being prepared to accommodate young children. But, depending on your organization and your volunteer opportunities, it could be well worth it. The long-term pay-off may be great, too.

Results from the 2000 NSGVP show that Canadians who were involved in volunteer activities when they were young were far more likely to volunteer as adults.

Example: Getting families involved

A historical village involves family groups of volunteers to help with special events and interpretive programs. It's great fun for families because participants get to dress in period costume. Families have a choice of volunteering together, as a unit. Or, if they want to, they can follow their own interests. Some families have started their own family tradition by volunteering for the same event each year. Young people who have been involved as volunteers sometimes get summer jobs at the village.

Group assignments

Short-term assignments can work well with employee volunteer groups. One agency has recruited 25 volunteers from a local bank. This group of employees delivers meals for the agency once a week. The employees go out in teams of two during their lunch hour once every two months to deliver meals. Besides the good feeling the employees receive from this activity, they have learned a lot about the downtown neighbourhood where the bank branch is located (most of the employees don't live near where they work). A bonus for the agency is that the employees are responsible for scheduling deliveries; if one team can't go out for whatever reasons, the employee group finds a replacement - alleviating a big headache for the volunteer coordinator in charge of the agency's meal deliveries.¹⁰

There are other ways to involve groups of volunteers. Consider shaping some routine volunteer activities into a social event - an evening of music, companionship, and information kit assembly. Some organizations have been very successful with "blitz" volunteering - getting a large group of people together in a short timeframe to accomplish a big job. Habitat for Humanity mobilizes groups of volunteers to build entire houses. Some agencies are exploring drop-in volunteering opportunities, such as helping with arts and crafts, or park cleanup.

Virtual volunteering

Virtual volunteering can offer flexible scheduling for some volunteers. Computers, email, and the Internet allow people to undertake assignments from home or work at times that best suit them.

Tasks that can be accomplished by virtual volunteers can be technical (e.g., conducting online research; designing an agency's logo, newsletter, Web site or database; translating documents; registering an agency's Web page on search engines) or non-technical (e.g., providing electronic mentoring; helping with language instruction; electronically visiting the home-bound; working with other volunteers on special projects).¹¹ A support-oriented organization based in Toronto uses email, chat rooms, and online discussion forums to connect children who have disabilities and chronic illness with peers and mentors across the country. Virtual volunteering is a way of life for this organization.

Not every job opportunity lends itself to flexible or virtual approaches, or to short-term assignments. There are times when the training involved is so intense or specialized that you want to make sure that the person you train is going to stay involved for a reasonable amount of time. But whenever you can be flexible, you certainly have a larger pool of people to appeal to and fewer barriers to overcome.

Example: Involving virtual volunteers

A health organization in Vancouver relies on three virtual volunteers to support its volunteer resources department. One does online searches. "She pulls up anything that has the word volunteer in it," says the leader of volunteer resources. "For example, let's say I'm doing some work on standards of practice. She will search on that and maybe make some connections with human resources and volunteer resources worldwide and see what she can pull out for me." A second virtual volunteer does reference checks for the organization's volunteer applicants. "I email her the names and numbers of the referees. She has a script. She does my reference checks and then emails all the details back to me." This is invaluable to the organization, which can have as many as 200 volunteer applications following an information session. The third virtual volunteer assists in Web design and is working on the organization's online, interactive application.

¹⁰ See Chapter Six for more on employee volunteering.

¹¹ "Virtual Volunteers," Volunteer Beat, Volunteer Canada, Vol. 3, No. 1.

Key Resources

Two resources from U.S.-based Energize Inc. can help you develop and manage virtual volunteering opportunities:

- The Virtual Volunteering Guidebook, available online at www.energizeinc.com/download/vvguide.pdf provides practical advice about virtual volunteering, including information about creating assignments, recruiting, screening online, supervising people remotely, and designing appropriate evaluation and recognition procedures.
- E-volunteerism, available at www.e-volunteerism.com, is an online journal that provides tips and information on how to involve virtual volunteers in your organization.

What's to be gained? Communicating the benefits of volunteering

As you design your volunteer opportunities, think about the benefits these assignments might offer to volunteers.

According to the 2000 NSGVP, volunteers themselves acknowledge that there is much more to volunteering than just a warm, fuzzy feeling of satisfaction. Volunteering gives people opportunities to learn and gain experience that isn't available in their work or home lives.

- More than three quarters (79%) of volunteers reported gaining interpersonal skills, such as the ability to understand people better, motivate people, and deal with difficult situations.
- More than two thirds (68%) reported learning better communication skills, such as public speaking, writing, public relations, and conducting meetings.
- Just under two thirds (63%) said they increased their knowledge about issues such as women's health, political issues, criminal justice, the environment, and so on.
- Over half (57%) said they gained organizational skills, such as how to organize resources, manage the work of others, be a leader, plan, and run an organization.
- More than four in ten (42%) learned fundraising skills.
- One third (33%) learned technical and office skills, such as coaching techniques, word processing, bookkeeping, and cataloguing.

- Nearly two thirds of unemployed volunteers (62%) said that their volunteer activity would help their chances of finding a job. Women were more likely to say this than men (68% of women versus 51% of men).
- More than one third (37%) reported that volunteering allowed them to learn new skills that could be directly applied to a job. Youth aged 15-24 were more likely than any other age group to report this benefit.

People who volunteered to improve their job opportunities were more likely to report receiving all of the above-mentioned benefits from their volunteer involvement, compared to those who did not volunteer for this reason. As well, volunteers who got employer support for their volunteer efforts reported receiving these benefits to a greater degree than those who did not receive employer support.

As you develop the volunteer positions that you have to offer, think about what your volunteers might gain from the experience. This is important information to include in your recruitment materials and messages. For example:

- Does your volunteer position offer the chance to learn specific skills, such as how to use a computer program or how to build a database?
- Does your volunteer position offer the chance to learn "transferable" skills that have an application in a workplace, such as communications skills, organizational skills, or leadership skills? Communication skills include learning how to present information and ideas clearly and concisely, and how to present opinions and ideas in an open and effective way. Leadership skills include learning how to motivate others, how to inspire trust and respect in others, build effective teams, delegate effectively, or gain cooperation from difficult people.
- Does your volunteer position offer the opportunity to learn about a specific area such as local history, environmental conservation, life-saving, or first-aid skills?

Key Resources

Two Government of Canada online resources can help you think about what skills your volunteers might learn from their involvement with your organization:

- The Youth-Link Web site includes a skills inventory available at <http://www.youth.gc.ca/yoaux.jsp?contentpageid=203&lang=en&flash=1&ta=5#skill>.

- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada has a skills inventory available online at http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/hip/hrp/career_awareness/products/takecharge/tc_24.shtml.

According to the 2000 NSGVP:

- More than half (62%) of unemployed volunteers believed that volunteering could increase their chances of finding a job. Will your position give these people training, job readiness, or résumé-building opportunities? If so, let them know.
- More than three quarters (81%) of volunteers who work are looking for an opportunity to use their skills and experiences in their volunteering. How will your opportunity provide this?
- More than half (55%) of volunteers between the ages of 15 and 24 want to increase job opportunities; 71% would like to explore their own abilities. How does your volunteer position meet these needs?

Example: Selling the benefits

A home-nursing organization runs a seniors' information line that uses seniors as volunteers to provide information and referrals. Part of the position involves entering information into a database, which was seen as a barrier by many prospective volunteers. "The words 'computer database' scared the daylight out of them," said the manager of volunteer services, "even though the database is so easy to use that all I have to do is teach them how to play solitaire and move the mouse around, and then they can use it." Because 'computer database' is intimidating to the target population, this manager doesn't use those words in her recruitment. Instead, she offers an "opportunity to learn how to use the computer," which makes it sound like a perk, not a requirement. "I tell them, if you want to use the computer, you can," she says. "Before you know it, they're using the database."

Your Turn...

Choose a volunteer position you're having trouble filling. Determine the specific skills, experiences, or qualities candidates should have to fill this position. For example, do they need computer skills? Do you require them at specific times of the day? Is proficiency in English a must or can the volunteer use their volunteer position to practice language skills? Do they have to have their own transportation?

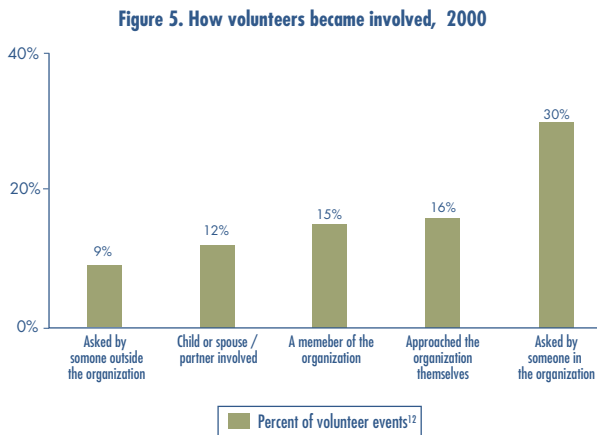
Brainstorm the various profiles of people who might have the skills, experience, or qualities to fill this job (e.g., students, job-seeking youth, unemployed persons, recent immigrants, families, seniors, etc.)

Now look at what the 2000 NSGVP tells you about the motivations of these groups and the possible barriers to their participation as volunteers. How might you design your volunteer opportunity to address these motivations and barriers? Can you break the opportunity into smaller components that might be suitable for volunteers with different skills and abilities?

You can plan a recruitment strategy once you know the volunteer position you are trying to fill. The qualifications, skills and abilities you need, time commitment involved, and benefits you can offer all need to be considered before recruitment can begin.

How volunteers get involved

According to the 2000 NSGVP, most people became involved as volunteers because they were personally asked, by someone inside or outside the organization, than by any other way. This suggests that the best way to get volunteers is for you, your staff, or your volunteers to deliver the message that you have opportunities available personally.



The second most common way people became volunteers was by approaching the organization on their own. This means that you need to be prepared to respond to and welcome people who offer their services to you.

Finding volunteers

Start close to home

According to the 2000 NSGVP, 95% of volunteers gave their time because they believed in the cause and more than two thirds (69%) volunteered because they or someone close to

them was personally affected. Looking for volunteers close to home may be the best way to get started. If you are running a children's or youth program, parents are an obvious group to start with. One hospital has had success with placing tent cards on cafeteria tables in the hospital to let family members and other visitors know about the need for volunteers. Many organizations include volunteer recruitment messages and volunteer news in newsletters and other pieces of information that are sent to supporters. If your organization has paid staff, make sure that they have a good understanding of your volunteer program and are aware of volunteer opportunities so that they can help to reinforce your recruitment message.

Example: Operation Ask

One hospital knew, from 2000 NSGVP information, that personally asking is the best way to get people to volunteer. Based on this, it instituted a volunteer recruitment program called Operation Ask. The volunteer resources department provides staff and current volunteers with concrete tips on how to ask someone and referral cards to give to potential volunteers. If a person is successfully referred to the volunteer resources department (i.e., if that person subsequently becomes an active volunteer), the name of the staff person or volunteer who made the referral is entered into a draw. A draw is held every time 25 volunteers are successfully referred. "In two years, we've had 204 people referred that way, who have subsequently become volunteers," says the manager of volunteer resources. "The draws keep the interest up. And the whole program builds on what we knew from the national survey - the reason that people volunteer is because someone asks them. The survey said that there were one million fewer volunteers, but we bucked that trend, partly because of Operation Ask and partly because we were already recruiting with a greater variety of techniques."

Taking your message farther afield

According to the 2000 NSGVP, a significant number of people volunteer to use their skills and experiences and to improve their job skills. Some organizations have made a good match between the needs of these volunteers and their own needs.

¹² Each involvement with an organization reported by a volunteer constitutes one 'volunteer event.' For each volunteer event reported (up to a maximum of three), volunteers were asked how they first became involved with the organization.

A health organization has developed relationships with a number of business schools in its community. After students complete their courses at one of the schools, they are then sent out on practicums to gain work experience. The business schools call the organization for placements. The students who come to the agency are moved around within the organization so that they receive a well-rounded experience - and the organization benefits from expanded administrative support. The same organization has been successful in recruiting nursing students, student nutritionists, and students in various other health fields who have an interest in learning more about the health disorder the organization deals with.

A charity that connects kids with disabilities and chronic illness to each other and to mentors through email and online chats needs volunteers who are computer-friendly and sensitive to the issues faced by these young people. When this organization recruits, it focuses on students at universities with occupational therapy programs, and staff and volunteers at some of the treatment centres and hospitals with which it is affiliated.

Connecting with faith communities

The NSGVP revealed that 76% of volunteers had a religious affiliation and 25% attended a place of worship weekly. Furthermore, 87% of volunteers with a religious affiliation spent their volunteer time with organizations that were not religiously oriented. Connecting with faith communities can be a good way to find volunteers. The author of the report, *Religion, Participation and Charitable Giving*, based on the 1997 NSGVP, spoke with members of Canada's faith communities and concluded:

- Many specialized ministries of faith groups helping the homeless, elderly, and similar groups, expressed interest in knowing what other faith groups are doing so that they could share common experiences and better co-ordinate their activities.
- With few exceptions, local clergy and religious leaders know very little about and have little communication with local voluntary organizations.

- Faith communities do not want a stream of outside agencies speaking at the principal weekly service, where the focus is religious worship. However, most clergy indicated they would be very happy to insert announcements or calls for volunteers in their bulletins, which are distributed to all who attend.

Key Resource

The Role of Religion in Giving and Volunteering report is available online at www.givingandvolunteering.ca.

Example: Connecting with faith communities

A health organization in Saskatchewan keeps in constant contact with places of worship. "We talk to church groups," says the director of volunteer resources. "Church recruitment can happen through church bulletins. As well, we're lucky here because each community has some type of ministerial associations where the heads meet regularly to plan projects together. That can be a good point of entry. We also make contact through the individuals who are our clients. That will sometimes stimulate those groups to think about an individual or group of individuals who need something and they may be open to providing that in one way or another - whether it's social time or fundraising for a service that's needed."

Older adults

Canadians over the age of 50 are healthier, better educated, and wealthier than ever before. Many are retiring earlier. However, although the average number of hours volunteered tends to increase with age (volunteers aged 55-64 contributed 181 hours a year on average; those aged 65 and older contributed 269 hours), it would be wrong to assume that these people volunteer because they have nothing else to do with their time. Many managers of volunteer resources are discovering that retirees - especially early retirees from the baby boom generation - have many things they want to do. Travel, spending time with family, hobbies, and sports and fitness activities can fill the days of these people.

Organizations that involve older adults will benefit greatly from what these volunteers have to offer. But they will also face challenges. According to Volunteer Canada, Canadians over the age of 50, especially those of the baby boom generation, “show a general tendency to be forthright about their needs. They will seek out volunteer work that interests them, that is designed to achieve clearly stated goals, that is well-managed and fun to do. They will often want to kill two birds with one stone - spending time with family members, supporting a cause that has affected or does affect them, or improving their community economically as well as socially.”¹³

Volunteer Canada suggests the following to organizations that want to involve older adults of the baby boom generation:

- Keep in mind that volunteering is a two-way exchange. Baby boomers grew up in a culture of affluence. They’re used to having their material needs met. Develop volunteering opportunities that offer incentives - both tangible and intangible.
- Baby boomers come to volunteering as a skilled and well-educated group with strong notions about their work, their world, and their leisure. They are willing to participate at all levels in nonprofit and voluntary organizations - boards of directors, advisory, hands-on helping - but want to be as much a part of the design and management as the delivery. They expect to be consulted on how the goals of the project, program, or committee will be achieved.
- Baby boomers come from a labour force that has instituted workers’ rights, anti-discrimination, Total Quality Management, and other human resources developments. As such, they expect to participate in a critical evaluation of their volunteer experiences. The evaluation process should encourage older volunteers to self-evaluate and to feel free to express their concerns to you.¹⁴

Key Resource

Volunteer Connections: New Strategies for Involving Older Adults, produced by Volunteer Canada, examines the volunteer management implications of an aging population and provides tips and information on recruiting and involving older adults. It’s available online at www.volunteer.ca.

Example: Involving skilled volunteers

Five years ago, a volunteer centre had a contingent of volunteers who tackled traditional tasks - filing, answering

the phone, stuffing envelopes. Today, it has found ways to involve volunteers who bring special skills to the organization, professional people who have said, “I could work as a consultant, but I don’t have to. If you could give me something meaningful to do as a volunteer, I would be much happier.” These volunteers are helping the organization do things that it could never have managed before, according to the executive director. In the past, she says, “We would write a grant proposal to get someone to write a marketing plan for us. Now we draw on many skilled volunteers.” These volunteers want to be involved in the community and use the skills they have developed in their work life. They are helping the organization develop policy, a human resources plan, a financial plan, and a technology plan.

Example: Appealing to new retirees

A Winnipeg hospital wanted to involve more new retirees as volunteers. It held focus groups, which confirmed some of 2000 NSGVP information. According to the manager of volunteer resources, new retirees “said they wanted more flexibility, not a long-term commitment, more variety in their jobs, and that volunteering had to be meaningful.” As a result, the hospital changed its volunteer messages. “Our number one message had been, it’s time to volunteer. We stopped focusing on time because we found out that they really didn’t want to be reminded about time issues. Instead, we presented the message from their point of view and focused on job design. Now we say, if you want to get more exercise, come volunteer to be an ambassador because you’ll get lots of walking throughout the hospital as you help people find their way to appointments; if you like to meet people, come and work in our gift shop where we need your customer service skills.”

Young volunteers

Young people continue to volunteer at a high rate. According to the 2000 NSGVP, Canadians aged 15-24 volunteer at a rate that is second only to those aged 35-54. They accounted for 18% of all volunteers and nearly 15% of all volunteer hours in 2000.

In many jurisdictions (e.g., British Columbia and Ontario) youth volunteering is part of the high school curriculum. Indeed, 35% of volunteers aged 15-19 in 2000 reported that they were required to do so by their school, their employer, or the government. Some community college and university programs promote volunteerism and can be a great place for volunteers with specific skills. Some programs, such as social work, may require applicants to have a minimum number of volunteered hours in organizations related to their field of

¹³ Volunteer Connections, *New Strategies for Involving Older Adults*, Volunteer Canada, 2002.

¹⁴ Ibid.

study. Young volunteers bring enthusiasm, energy, and a fresh perspective to the organizations with which they volunteer. Here are a few things to keep in mind about young volunteers:

- Young volunteers (between the ages of 15 and 24) are more likely to be full-time students than are non-volunteers in the same age group. Over two thirds (68%) of young volunteers attended school full-time in 2000, whereas only half (50%) of young non-volunteers were full-time students.¹⁵ Because they tend to be students, young volunteers are often more interested in volunteer opportunities that can be done part-time (e.g., one evening or one day a month) or in short, intense bursts (e.g., during Christmas or summer holidays). As well, students' availability changes throughout the year.
- More than four in ten (42%) young volunteers got involved because their friends were involved, compared to only 28% of older volunteers who got involved for this reason.¹⁶ Nearly half (49%) of young people agreed that they did not volunteer because they had not been personally asked.¹⁷ Using young people to recruit other young people could be an effective strategy.
- Youth often have personal reasons for volunteering. Seventy-one percent got involved to explore their own strengths;¹⁸ whereas 54% of older volunteers got involved for this reason. When recruiting young people, it can be effective to let them know what they can learn and how they can develop and challenge themselves personally through volunteering.

Involving young volunteers can be fruitful, provided you keep in mind their motivations (young people value volunteer experiences that offer them an opportunity to learn new skills, especially if they're job-related, and to build references and a résumé), their lack of experience, and the time pressures that many young people face.

Key Resource

Volunteer Connections: New Strategies for Involving Youth, produced by Volunteer Canada, provides a wealth of tips for information on recruiting and involving young people. It's available online at www.volunteer.ca.

Example: Opportunities for youth

A museum in Manitoba makes good use of students for its interpretive programs. "Students like to know the exact time commitment," says the manager of volunteer resources. "So I've done a flyer for high school students called "Weekend Fun at the Museum." It lists seven different interpretive activities they can get involved with, all in a fun way. For example, they can be on our 17th century sailing vessel and explain to visitors what a sailor's life was like." She uses the same flyer to recruit summer volunteers. "I just add information about our summer day camp and call it "Summer Fun at the Museum." This type of flyer, stressing short-term activities and fun, is very different from what she sends to other types of prospective volunteers.

New Canadians

According to the 2000 NSGVP, new Canadians volunteer for many of the same reasons as other Canadians: primarily because they believe in the cause or the organization, and secondarily, to use their skills and experience.

Adjusting to a new life in Canada can be challenging for recent immigrants. Volunteering is one way to practice new language skills, build social networks, gain Canadian experience, and develop a sense of attachment and integration to a new community. The combination of language classes, often available from settlement organizations and school districts, and volunteer experience can assist individuals in adapting to their new environment.

As well, those new to Canada can enrich organizations with new perspectives, and can help voluntary agencies build links with and reach into new communities. Many organizations that serve a diverse population, or who are seeing changes in the composition of the community in which they operate, are conscious of the need for their staff and volunteers to reflect the population they serve. For some, this means making special efforts to recruit from among diverse cultural groups.

According to the 2000 NSGVP, those born outside Canada were more likely to say that they didn't volunteer because they did not know how to get involved. One third (33%) of non-volunteers born outside Canada cited this reason, compared to just 10% of Canadian-born non-volunteers.

¹⁵ What Influences Youth to Volunteer?, Canadian Council on Social Development, Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2002.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Youth Giving and Volunteering, by Donna Pickering, Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2002.

¹⁸ Op. Cit

Indeed, recent immigrants to Canada were more likely than established immigrants to say that they did not volunteer because they:

- had not been asked (48% of recent immigrant non-volunteers vs. 34% of established immigrant volunteers);
- did not know how to become involved (41% vs. 23%); or,
- had concerns about the financial costs of volunteering (26% vs. 13%).

Depending on your agency's experience and degree of diversity, you may want to consider cross-cultural training. You may also need to examine your current volunteer recruitment policies and practices and make some changes. Do your brochures, pamphlets, and newsletters depict a multicultural organization? Is your volunteer department flexible enough to include non-traditional recruitment methods? Does your organization require character or work references, which may be impossible for new immigrants, especially refugees? Can some existing positions be adapted to accommodate people who are still learning English?¹⁹

Tap into existing networks. By building links with immigrant aid societies or culturally specific community groups, you can expand your connections. Arrange to visit some of these groups and tell them about your agency or organization. Find out more about what they are doing. Articles in local and culturally specific media about your minority volunteers will send the message that your organization is willing to adapt to and welcome the new skills and experiences that volunteers from outside of Canada bring to an organization.

Talk to other mainstream organizations that have successfully recruited ethnic minority volunteers. Familiarize yourself with organizations that have large ethnic minority memberships. Churches, temples, youth groups, sports groups, schools and universities, professional and employee groups, arts and cultural associations and language classes may be willing to display your recruitment information or may allow you to address their groups.

Key Resource

Stronger Together: Recruiting and Working with Ethnocultural Volunteers, by the Central Volunteer Bureau of Ottawa-Carleton and available online at www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/

progs/pc-cp/pubs/index_e.cfm provides more information on recruiting and working with ethno-cultural and recent immigrant volunteers.²⁰

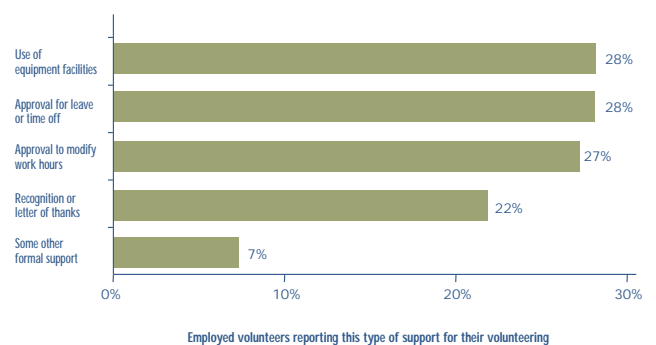
Employees, companies, and volunteering

The 2000 NSGVP paid special attention to employee volunteers. Employee volunteer initiatives that involve both current and retired or retiring employees have become more common in recent years. Employees at Chevron Canada Resources can participate in Employees in Action. Not only are they able to take up to ten days paid leave annually to do volunteer work, but the company also makes donations to the groups for which they volunteer.

Volunteer centres are a good place to start if you are interested in reaching employee groups. Many volunteer centres have good links with companies in their area and can advertise volunteer positions. One volunteer centre emails volunteer opportunities to representatives of interested companies. These are then circulated electronically within the companies.

While some employee volunteers and volunteer programs clearly identify those involved as employees of a specific company, companies are also sensitive to the personal nature of volunteerism. Many employees volunteer quietly and quite separately from their workplace. Nonetheless, these employees are happy to have employer support for their volunteering. And this support is growing. According to the 2000 NSGVP, almost one half (47%) of volunteers working for an employer (i.e., not self-employed) reported they had been given some sort of support for their volunteer activities by their employer.

Figure 6. Employer support for volunteering, Canadian volunteers, 2000



¹⁹ *Stronger Together: Recruiting and Working with Ethnocultural Volunteers*, Central Volunteer Centre of Ottawa-Carleton, 1990.

²⁰ *Connecting Companies to Communities: Imagine's Best-Practice Guide*, Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 1999

Use of facilities and equipment for their volunteer activities continued to be the most commonly reported type of employer support in 2000. Twenty-seven percent were given approval to modify work hours to allow for volunteer activities, up from 22% in 1997, and 22% said they received recognition or a letter of thanks from their employer for their volunteer activities, up from 14% in 1997. Other forms of support by employers included donating prizes, donating money, and sponsoring or paying entry fees for an event.

Volunteers who received employer support in 2000 contributed more hours on average than did those who received no support (151 vs. 131 hours). They were also far more likely than those who received no support to report gaining benefits such as new skills that could be applied directly to their work, increased organizational and managerial skills, and increased communication skills. You may want to provide this information to companies that you are approaching.

The interests and priorities of the employer - whether related to their corporate giving or community investment programs, or to their marketing and public relations objectives - can affect the extent to which employees are encouraged to participate in volunteer activities and the employer's willingness to facilitate volunteerism.

When thinking about companies that might be a source of volunteers, ask:

- Are there companies in your area that are restructuring or downsizing and are offering community placements as a way to help employees make the transition out of their workforce?
- Are there companies that use volunteering to help retirees make the transition to a non-work life?
- Will your volunteer opportunity give a newly merged or newly restructured company a chance to engage its employees in team-building?
- Can you make the case that your volunteer positions will offer professional development or skills training to a company's employees?
- Does the company have a community investment policy? If so, how do your volunteer opportunities match the general community investment objectives of the company? Some companies look for opportunities to involve their employees when making donations or sponsorship

decisions. If your organization is seeking both financial and volunteer support, be sure to coordinate your volunteer recruitment efforts with the person in charge of fundraising for your organization.

Tips for working with employee volunteer groups

1. Plan and use volunteer time wisely. People who work full-time and/or have family and other commitments must have these commitments respected. If you have, or can design, volunteer activities that can be done in small chunks (e.g., meal delivery at lunch hour) or in short, but fairly intensive spurts (e.g., handling games at a weekend fun fair) you will have a better chance of getting people involved.
2. Stress the benefits. These may be "soft" benefits. For example, one group of employees who undertook meal delivery found it a great stress reliever in their weekly routine. The program also opened their eyes about the neighbourhood in which they worked. You may be offering "hard" benefits that are directly related to their work situation, such as the chance to learn and practice communication or organizational skills.

The executive director of a volunteer centre has seen people embark on new work opportunities as a result of their volunteer activities. For example, a telephone company employee who was president of a local youth group in his volunteer life gave a speech at the group's banquet. When the volunteer's employer learned that this person was proficient in public speaking - a skill that he had honed as a volunteer - the employer offered him a promotion. "I've seen it happen hundreds of times," the executive director says. Someone who has learned to be a trainer in a volunteer program, for example, may be able to transfer those skills to another career track in their workplace and become a trainer, motivator, or project team leader.

3. Be sensitive to changes in a company. If a company is restructuring, downsizing, or undergoing a merger, this may affect your employee volunteer efforts. One agency has had its contact person within the company change three times in the course of a year. This has meant building new relationships with each new person, which can be time-consuming. Employees, too, may feel stressed or may find their enthusiasm dwindling as their workplace situation changes.

Key Resources

- *Volunteer Connections: The benefits and challenges of employer-supported volunteerism*, by Volunteer Canada, provides a wealth of information about how to approach and work with employee volunteer groups. It's available online at www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/ESVEnglish.pdf.

Although directed to employers rather than professionals in volunteer administration, the following provide useful insights into employee volunteerism:

- *Developing an Effective Corporate Volunteer Program: Lessons from the Ford Motor Company of Canada Experience*, available online at www.nonprofitscan.ca/pdf/MAN/Pancer-MAN-English-Web.pdf.
- *Corporate Volunteer Programs: Benefits for Employees, Corporations and the Community*, a fact sheet, available online at www.nonprofitscan.ca/pdf/FS/Pancer-FS-English.pdf.

Example: Involving employee groups

The Calgary Workplace Volunteer Council, an initiative of Volunteer Calgary and a number of Calgary-based companies, has been staging Paint the Town since 1998. This project is designed to help seniors and individuals with disabilities who cannot afford or are physically unable to maintain their homes. In 2002, more than 300 employee volunteers were given time off work for the day. These volunteers painted the exteriors of houses, including siding, trim, fences, and decks. The employee groups who were involved felt like they were really helping members of the community. The homeowners felt proud of their houses at the end of the day.

Other approaches

If you are new to the field of volunteer management, a visit to your local volunteer centre is a good investment of time. Not only do volunteer centres act as a referral point between the public and agencies that need volunteers, but they also offer a range of support services to managers and coordinators of volunteer resources. Most have reference libraries and offer workshops and consultations on a wide range of recruitment, management, and retention topics. The Volunteer Canada Web site (www.volunteer.ca) includes a complete list of volunteer centres across Canada.

Collaborative recruiting can work for some agencies. Are there organizations in your community with volunteers who share the same demographic profile as your volunteers? Are there

agencies whose work is similar or complementary to your own? Organizations that you may consider as “competition” for your volunteers could turn out to be partners in joint recruitment efforts. Perhaps you can team up to offer interesting or unique volunteer opportunities that might benefit both organizations and help boost your joint community profiles.

Most people like to learn new things - and volunteers are no exception. By offering a workshop or a speaker on a topic of interest to your organization - the challenges facing home care, for example, or the situations faced by the homeless - you can attract people who have an interest in your work. This could be a good pool of potential volunteers.

Other methods to consider:

- mass media (many newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and local TV outlets offer space to advertise volunteer opportunities);
- publications with a well-defined target audience (e.g., seniors' newspapers, women's magazines, youth publications);
- flyers and bag inserts; (one community health agency sends flyers and bag inserts to pharmacies and grocery stores for distribution); and,
- the Internet (the Volunteer Opportunities Exchange (www.voe-reb.org) is a free service that allows organizations to post volunteer positions and volunteers to search for opportunities).

Your recruitment message

Armed with a position description and a target audience, you can now design your recruitment message. This should include:

- What the volunteer will do and how this fits into the mission and objectives of the organization or the specific program (refer to your position description).
- The qualifications, skills, attributes, or specific experiences the volunteer must have.
- The time commitment required. Be realistic. Lack of time is a huge barrier to people undertaking or continuing volunteer activities. If you need the same person to show up at a specific location every Wednesday afternoon for the next year, recruit on that basis. If you need someone for a short period of time for a couple of weeks only, say so. Don't tell someone it will take only two hours once a month and then

expand the position until it consumes more time than the volunteer has. Not only do you risk losing that person as a volunteer for your organization, but you can deter that person from volunteering in the foreseeable future.

- What the volunteer will gain. You have already brainstormed the benefits. Now is the time to communicate them. For example, if young people who have participated in your program have been able to use the skills they learned as volunteers to get into the work force, say so. If your volunteers have told you that they not only feel great about what they are doing as volunteers, but that they are also learning a lot, communicate that. If your program has helped newcomers integrate into the community, be sure others know.

Example: Developing partnerships that attract volunteers

A visiting-nurse organization runs a volunteer visiting program that matches volunteers with seniors for one-to-one weekly visits. By keeping the schedule of visits flexible, it has been able to attract volunteers from a variety of groups.

It has entered into a partnership with a bank. Bank employee volunteers spend one lunch hour per week with a senior that they are matched with. The senior lives within walking distance of the bank branch and the bank is flexible about the time of day employees can visit. It usually gives a few extra minutes for travel/walking time.

The agency also has a partnership with the local Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization in which a “Big” and a “Little” are matched with a senior for friendly visiting. Since the “Big” has already committed to a once-a-week visit with the “Little,” the organization asks that they visit the senior together once a month. This works well with senior clients who do not require as much social support or with those who may already have a volunteer who supports them in other ways.

The organization has established a formal relationship with the School of Pharmacy at its local university. Each year, several first year students donate three hours per week as volunteer visitors. Many seniors enjoy the youth and enthusiasm of these students, and the chance to play the role of mentor and surrogate grandparent to the students, many of whom are “from away.”

Example: Different approaches for different groups of volunteers

A health-related charity in a small community (population

10,000) could not function without volunteers. The organization has only one half-time staff member who is on the road two days a week and who relies on between 15 and 30 core volunteers (depending on the time of year) to keep the office running, provide information to the public, and organize fundraising events. Another hundred or so episodic volunteers help with events throughout the year.

The organization uses different methods to recruit and recognize its core and episodic volunteers.

To recruit core volunteers, the half-time staff member goes out into the community and asks directly: Do you want to help? She also has volunteers ask friends if they want to get involved. “It’s the best way in a small community where everyone knows everyone else,” she says. These core volunteers tend to be older. They get involved because they have time to give and because the health disorder the charity deals with tends to affect older people.

Episodic volunteers are recruited differently, through advertisements, items in the newsletter that is sent out to all members, and through careful database management. These volunteers often help with specific events. Records of this have to be kept so that these volunteers can be brought back year after year.

Recognition of core and episodic volunteers differs. Recognition of core volunteers is more direct and personal: they are invited to a Christmas party and a barbecue at the end of the year. They are also provided with ongoing feedback and recognition. “I try to make them feel like they’re part of my family,” the staff member says. Recognition of episodic volunteers happens at the events for which they volunteer. For example, they might receive tickets to go to the next event at no charge or a small, token gift.

It’s Your Turn...

Select a specific position for which you need more volunteers. Now select a specific target group from which to recruit for that position. What do you know about the motivations of your target group? What do you know about possible barriers to their involvement? What benefits could they be seeking?

Taking into account common motivations and barriers, as identified by the 2000 NSGVP, develop your key volunteer recruitment message. What will this volunteer position mean to your organization? What will it accomplish in the community? What will the volunteer gain from the experience?

Interviewing, screening, and training

Getting your message out isn't the end of the recruitment process. You may end up with more volunteers than you have positions. You may attract people with a range of abilities, qualities, and skills, not all of whom are appropriate to your agency. The position you are offering may be a sensitive one - your volunteers might work with children or frail seniors. Careful selection and screening processes are imperative to address safety and confidentiality issues. Thorough orientation and training are key to a job well done.

It is beyond the scope of this manual to provide a thorough discussion of each of these critical areas. This section will merely outline the basics. Please refer to Key Resources below and "Where You Can Get More Information" at the end of this manual for resources that can guide you through these steps. You can also contact your local volunteer centre for guidance.

Selection and interviewing

Professional managers of volunteer resources stress the importance of a formal selection process. The complexity of this process may vary, depending on the nature of the volunteer assignment. If you're recruiting 50 volunteers to run booths at a fun fair, for example, training them for their duties may be more important than subjecting them to a rigorous selection process. If you're looking for a volunteer who must possess certain skills, you will need to be more rigorous.

Interviewing candidates allows you to learn more about them and what they can bring to your organization. It also gives potential volunteers the chance to understand your organization and the volunteer opportunity, and to decide whether they are truly interested. Using your position description as a guide, you and the candidate can together decide if the match is a good one.

Screening

Screening helps to ensure the safety and security of your organization, your volunteers, and the people served by your organization. Every organization that provides services and programs to the community has a legal obligation to take reasonable precautions to protect its clients, staff, and the community from harm. Proper screening of the individuals

who deliver your programs and services is essential and cannot be emphasized enough. Contact your local volunteer centre for more information about screening. Most volunteer centres offer workshops and provide materials on proper screening processes.

Key Resources

Two excellent guides to proper volunteer screening are:

- *The Screening Handbook: Protecting Clients, Staff and the Community*, by Volunteer Canada. For more information, visit the Volunteer Canada Web site at www.volunteer.ca.
- *Beyond Police Checks: The Definitive Volunteer & Screening Guidebook*, by Linda Graff, Graff and Associates. For more information, visit Linda Graff's Web site at www.lindagraff.ca.

Orientation

Orientation provides volunteers with all of the information they need about the organization to which they are giving their time. Much of this information can be delivered in orientation sessions for groups of volunteers. You should also prepare an orientation manual that includes all the basic information every volunteer needs. This could include:

- your organization's mission statement;
- a description of your organization's major programs;
- your organization's goals and future plans;
- how your organization relates to other service providers in the community;
- an organizational chart that tells volunteers who staff are and what they are responsible for;
- the purpose of the volunteer program;
- how the volunteer program is organized;

- when training and performance reviews will take place;
- policies of your volunteer programs (i.e., relating to confidentiality, reimbursement of incidental expenses, etc.);
- major do's and don't's;
- common problems encountered by volunteers in your organization or in the specific volunteer position, and how to overcome them; and,
- a list of supporting activities that your organization will undertake for the volunteer (i.e., performance feedback, letters of recommendation, training, help with difficult situations, etc.).

Example: Additional resources in the volunteer handbook

In addition to these basics, the volunteer handbook produced by a museum and art gallery in Alberta includes a “partnership agreement” that spells out the obligations of the manager of volunteer resources, including to act as a liaison between volunteers and staff; to keep volunteers and staff informed of volunteer activities and needs throughout the year; and to assist volunteers in evaluating their assignments and making necessary changes. By accepting this document, volunteers agree, among other things, to consider the volunteer assignment as a serious professional commitment and to view the position as valid and important; to support the museum by maintaining a family membership and promoting programs and events to others; and to attend orientation and training sessions as scheduled and undertake continuing education when provided to maintain and enhance competence in assigned tasks. The handbook also outlines what volunteers may expect: a challenging and worthwhile position; recognition of accomplishments; periodic feedback; involvement or representation in decisions that affect the volunteer service; support to resolve differences; and an opportunity to change placements. Volunteer ethics are outlined, as are volunteer benefits, which include museum shop discounts and a museum membership after 100 hours of service.²¹

Training

The 2000 NSGVP confirms that many people volunteer to challenge themselves, to learn new things, and to practice new skills. They are eager for new experiences and knowledge. Your volunteer training program can fulfill volunteers’ desire to learn as well as your need to impart information.

In addition to traditional training methods (e.g., lectures, presentations, and demonstrations) you may want to consider some alternate training methods, such as mentoring and coaching. A charity that connects young people with disabilities to each other and to mentors does most of its training online. Its volunteer manual can be downloaded from its Web site. Most of its orientation and training happens online. Online conferences are hosted by volunteers. New volunteer hosts are paired up with experienced volunteers so that they can learn the ropes before hosting their own conference. There is also a private conference just for the hosts, where they can post questions and get answers.

Example: New approaches to training

“I still have colleagues who are doing one-day training,” says the manager of volunteer resources at a health organization. “That’s just not a fit for us anymore. We have more episodic volunteers, so one day of training just isn’t meaningful. On our eight sites, we have 140 role descriptions. I would say that more than 75 percent of them do not require extensive training. For many of the positions, we’re engaging more staff to do more condensed training - here’s your role description, let’s review it, are you comfortable with it, great, go. We pair them with a staff member and they get most of their training by doing.”

Some volunteers, for example, spiritual volunteers and those working in palliative care, and those in similar, complex roles, get in-depth training. “But if I have a volunteer coming in doing bingo with 30 residents and our recreation staff, I’m not too concerned that they’ve

²¹ Volunteer Handbook, Glenbow Museum Volunteer Program.

had a day of training,” the leader of volunteer resources says. “They catch on pretty much at the end of the first hour.”

Orientation is a bit longer, she says, but a lot of it is done through take-away modules that volunteers can take home and read on their own time.

Example: Cooperative training

A group of agencies serving youth in Winnipeg runs a volunteer training co-op. Each of the member agencies hosts just one training session each year that volunteers from nine other agencies are invited to attend. The host agency arranges for a speaker to give a presentation on a topic of relevance to all the volunteers. The host also looks after the cost of the speaker and refreshments, and arranges the workshop location. Topics covered include volunteering with sexually abused children; volunteering with challenging and aggressive youth; and discipline with dignity. On average, about 30 volunteers attend each event. The benefit, according to an agency participant, is maximum training of volunteers with a minimum investment of time on the part of each agency.

A note on boards

More than four in ten (41%) volunteers are members of a charity or nonprofit board of directors - the body that bears the ultimate responsibility for the organization. It's not unusual, especially in small organizations, to find that a significant number of board members have never served on a board before. It's especially important, then, to pay special attention to training for board members and making sure that they understand their duties and responsibilities.

Key Resources

- *Primer for Directors of Not-for-Profit Corporations*, from the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, provides directors and prospective directors with guidance on the duties, rights and liabilities involved in serving on a not-for-profit corporation's Board. It also provides organizations with a useful tool to promote governance accountability. For more information, visit the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy Web site at www.ccp.ca.
- The Board Development series of workbooks, published by the Muttart Foundation, includes the following titles:
 - *Hiring and Performance Appraisal of the Executive Director*;
 - *Financial Responsibilities for Not-for-Profit Boards*;

- *Developing Job Descriptions for Board Members of Nonprofit Organizations*; and,
- *Board Building: Recruiting and Developing Effective Board Members for Not-for-profit Organizations*.

For ordering information, visit Volunteer Calgary at www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca.

Example: Involving leadership volunteers

The business sector is often looked at as a source of funds. But it's also a great source of highly skilled people who can offer a lot to voluntary organizations, especially at the governance level. Recognizing this, Volunteer Vancouver launched a program to recruit and train corporate employees interested in serving on nonprofit boards of directors. “We actually go into a business and do board training. We then place individuals on boards and do follow-up with the non-profits,” says Volunteer Vancouver's executive director. The program, originally called “Business Volunteers in the Community,” gives businesses an opportunity to demonstrate their corporate citizenship, gives employees a chance to contribute and to stretch their leadership skills, and provides much-needed expertise to nonprofits. Volunteer Vancouver has now expanded that program to collaborate with Altruvest Charitable Services in Toronto and launch BoardMatch Greater Vancouver.

Keeping staff “in the loop”

Although the manager of volunteer resources may be the person who recruits the volunteers and manages the volunteer program overall, volunteers do not typically spend their time with that person. It is more likely that they will work with other staff members. Volunteer satisfaction and enthusiasm will, therefore, depend on the quality of relationships with these staff members. It's important, then, that paid staff understand and support the concept of volunteerism within the organization. After all, they have a vested interest in making sure the volunteers feel positive about what they're doing and feel they are contributing and being appreciated.

In one large organization, the volunteer coordinator makes presentations to all new staff to tell them about the value of volunteering within the organization, the range of activities made possible by volunteers, and how the volunteer program works. This also gives staff the chance to ask questions.

An organization serving at-risk children recruits adults as volunteer mentors. This organization has implemented a

standard that requires staff to check in with these volunteers a minimum of 10 times a year to ensure that the children get the best attention possible and the volunteers receive the support they need. According to the executive director, the agency has realized that the closer the relationship and the more contact the case worker has with a volunteer, the longer the volunteer stays in the agency. As well, it's far cheaper for the agency to keep a volunteer, screened once and supported, than to have to recruit, screen, train, and support over and over again.

Example: Using motivation to shape recognition

A museum and art gallery in Alberta knows that its volunteers are motivated by “the product” - the organization's exhibitions and events - and by the chance to learn new skills and gain new experience. The museum offers extensive training to its volunteers. If a volunteer is interested in particular artists, they can learn more about them, their work, and their time period by working in the galleries. They have a chance to view the art and work with an art curator and programming staff. If they're working in the museum collection, they work alongside curators and conservators.

It's Your Turn...

Review your volunteer manual. When was the last time it was revised? Does it include all of the information volunteers need? Do your volunteers know the mission and objectives of your organization? Do they know where they fit in? Do they understand their roles and responsibilities? Do they understand the obligations of the organization? What else can you add to respond to volunteers' questions?

Your volunteer manual is not static. As your organization grows or as your programs change over time, you will need to update your manual. Some organizations store the text of their manual on computer and only print on demand so that volunteers always get the latest version of the manual. Some maintain and update their volunteer manuals online.

Managing and recognizing volunteers

To successfully manage and recognize your volunteers, you have to keep in mind why they are there. The 2000 NSGVP tells us that the vast majority of them (95%) volunteered because they believed in the cause. Over two thirds (69%) had been personally affected by the cause. Eighty-one percent want to put their skills and experience to good use. Over half (57%) want to explore their strengths. Remembering this will help you think about how to keep your volunteers motivated and how to recognize them in a way that will be meaningful to them.

Record keeping

No matter how many volunteers you involve in your organization, you need to keep a record of who they are, the number of hours they volunteer, and the activities they undertake for you. This can be done on either paper or on a computer.

The volunteer resources department at a major hospital in Vancouver has volunteers check in for their assignments on an interactive touch-screen monitor. The information they enter goes directly into a database so that the manager of volunteer resources has a record of each volunteer's activities over time. The software allows her to click on a "Who's Here" icon on her computer so that she can see which volunteers are present at any given time, and what assignments they are doing. If she needs to move volunteers from one part of the health centre to another, she can easily locate people.

Keeping good records is not only a necessity for an efficient volunteer program, but it also has many benefits:

- It can help you think about training or professional development seminars, workshops, or other learning opportunities that would be of interest to volunteers and helpful to the activities they are doing. Good records can also help you see when a volunteer may be ready for a new challenge.
- It can guide you in implementing meaningful and personal recognition. You can use the information in your volunteer records to do reference letters or to help volunteers who are seeking employment build their resumes. Your records can prompt you if you write thank you letters to your volunteers' employers (always with the volunteers' permission), when you recognize their contribution to your organization, or when you

communicate with schools or other academic institutions that require proof of volunteer activity as an enrolment pre-requisite or a course component. One multi-service agency that has a lot of student volunteers uses its records for this purpose. This information also allows it to offer references for young people seeking their first paid job.

- It can help you make the case for volunteerism in your organization. What tasks were completed by volunteers? What was the dollar value of the effort contributed by your volunteers? What could you do if you had more volunteers contributing more time, knowledge, and skills to your organization?

Volunteer recognition

Anyone who has ever volunteered has come home with a T-shirt, a lapel pin, or a coffee mug. Those items are nice perks but, as one manager of volunteer resources says, you can't buy recognition from a catalogue. The best recognition is personal. The best way to offer personal recognition is to link it to the volunteer's reasons for volunteering.

Are your volunteers employed? One social service agency has among its volunteer visitors several members of the military. What they do as volunteer visitors is far removed from their military jobs. Once a year the agency's board president writes letters to thank them for their involvement. In some cases, this has had a positive effect on people's career placement because, as one senior officer has said, it contributes to providing a well-rounded picture of an up-and-coming officer.

A museum's volunteers are highly motivated by the desire to learn. The museum's recognition program builds on that and thanks volunteers by giving them behind-the-scenes tours, special lectures, special awards of merit based on performance, a performance evaluation system where staff evaluate their performance and vice versa, end-of-project and end-of-exhibition programs where they have wine and cheese and do a postmortem on the event or celebrate with champagne.

A hospital recognizes its volunteers by promoting them. Senior and excellent volunteers are given the responsibility for training newer volunteers. The manager of volunteer resources at the hospital says that "this act of faith is more valuable than

pins and certificates.” It also offers training opportunities to its volunteers. “Our volunteers love training and are hungry for it,” she says. “We have better attendance at training sessions than at teas, dinners, etc.”

A community health agency is moving away from formal recognition events and into more personalized recognition. When the manager of volunteer services sees education or training opportunities that may be of interest to the agency’s volunteers, she contacts them and offers to send them. Volunteers are also offered access to all staff-wide programs, free immunizations, and other health screening services.

Recognition events work well for some volunteer groups. Some hold teas or luncheons to thank volunteers. One employee group was presented with halos at a luncheon in recognition of their status as “angels.” They wore those halos proudly. Many organizations devote space in their newsletters or on their Web sites to thanking volunteers. Some have gone even more public and have thanked volunteers through ads in local newspapers. Many communities and levels of government sponsor annual volunteer awards (usually coinciding with Volunteer Week in April each year) for which organizations can bring forward nominations.

Keeping in touch

The trend to more short-term and episodic volunteering has made ongoing communications with volunteers more important than ever. Short-term and episodic volunteers may spend only a few days or a few weeks at your organization, organizing or volunteering for a special event or participating in a specific project. These volunteers may be interested in volunteering again in the future - if they know how and when they can get involved. It’s critical to keep a good database on these people. Send them one-page updates by mail, fax, or email about upcoming volunteer opportunities.

Example: More recognition approaches

One health organization has examined its volunteers and what motivates them. Some volunteers want to gain job or career-related experience; some want to make good use of

their time; others want to give back to the organization. “So we look at a variety of methods of recognizing our volunteers,” says the manager of volunteer resources. “In the past few years, we’ve added to our mix of recognition. We still have the big banquet and awards dinner, because there’s a certain group of volunteers to whom that’s an important tradition. But for younger volunteers, we have more fun events like glow bowling. We also do more individual recognition throughout the year - giving them coupons when they come in for an extra shift, making sure that when our volunteers have been acknowledged for something in the community that we put that in our newsletter. For some volunteers, the reference letter is important. We also keep our eye out for community awards for which we can nominate our volunteers. Extra training is also an important form of recognition for some volunteers. In our newsletter, we advertise training that might be of interest to volunteers - e.g., conflict resolution, how to deal with difficult people - and that can also help them in their volunteer positions. Learning new things is appealing to a large segment of volunteers.”

It’s Your Turn...

Chapter Three prompted you to find out more about what motivates your volunteers. Go back to the answers you gathered from that exercise.

Now that you have identified key motivators for your volunteers, brainstorm how to recognize their contributions in ways that are most meaningful for them. For example:

- A volunteer who is motivated by a desire for more knowledge may appreciate the opportunity to attend a conference or workshop on a related issue.
- A volunteer who wants to be part of a group might welcome a thank-you social event.
- A volunteer who wants to feel needed or appreciated might value a personal thank you from the people he or she is helping.

Making the case for volunteerism

You know volunteers are important to fulfilling the mission of your organization. But is this understood by those who have the ability to promote volunteerism, to help fund the infrastructure needed to attract, train, screen, and manage volunteers, or to facilitate its application within your organization? Findings from the 2000 NSGVP can help demonstrate the importance of volunteer activities in your community to various audiences.

Educate decision-makers

Use 2000 NSGVP information to educate politicians, government officials, school boards, and other community stakeholders about the value of volunteerism.

It takes time, staff, and money to recruit, train, motivate, supervise, recognize, and evaluate volunteers. To justify that expenditure, it helps to be able to express the value of volunteer activity to Canadian society as a whole, as well as to your province, your community, and your organization.

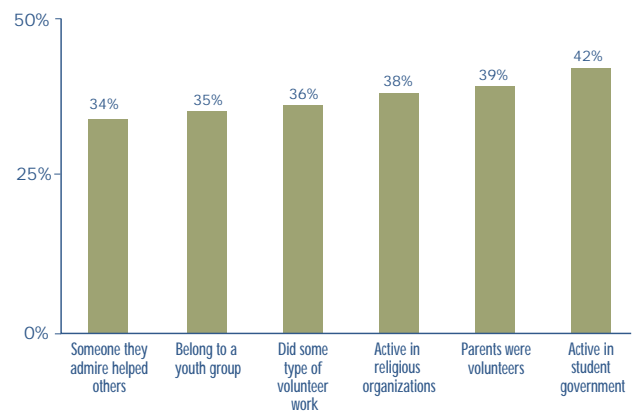
If you're in a province or city where the volunteering rate is lower than the national average, you could consider using the data to make the case that an investment in promoting volunteering will result in a tangible benefit back to the community. If you live in an area where the volunteering rate is higher than the national average, a continued investment in promoting volunteering can boost the value back to the community. A variety of reports and fact sheets from the NSGVP are available at www.givingandvolunteering.ca. These can be downloaded and printed for distribution. There are no copyright restrictions on this information for charities and voluntary organizations.

Some of the data in the 2000 NSGVP may point to public policy issues. For example, the 2000 NSGVP tells us that Canadians with certain life experiences as youth were more likely to volunteer as adults. Whereas 27% of Canadians as a whole volunteered, this increased for those who participated in certain activities as youth. This suggests that efforts to promote volunteerism among youth have a long-term pay-off for voluntary organizations and for society as a whole.

Educate the media

Often, voluntary agencies want to get their message out to the media. You may want to highlight the contribution and importance of volunteers during Volunteer Week each April. You may want to take advantage of the Christmas season, when most people are feeling full of good will, to tell people about your agency's volunteer needs. Or you may want to generate interest in volunteerism during the annual volunteer-a-thon or volunteer fair in your community.

Figure 7. Volunteer rate for those with certain life experiences as youth, 2000



Note: The national volunteer rate is 27%.

Backing up your message with solid - and interesting - facts can help you to get media attention and to give your message credibility. You can use 2000 NSGVP information to:

- Highlight key trends in volunteerism and examine more in-depth issues including the role of religion, the determinants of volunteering, and differences by type of organization (www.givingandvolunteering.ca/reports.asp#2000).
- Paint a picture of volunteers and what they are doing both nationally and in your province with a series of fact sheets on volunteer behaviours by social and economic characteristics such as age and income (www.givingandvolunteering.ca/factsheets.asp#2000).

Make the case within your organization

Recruiting, managing, and retaining volunteers costs money. A major international sporting event has budgeted \$3.3 million to recruit, train, and support the volunteers it will need to ensure the event runs smoothly. This works out to \$478 per volunteer. How many charities and voluntary organizations have resources like this at their disposal?

To attract, train, and keep volunteers, an organization needs someone in charge. If your organization uses a lot of volunteers regularly, you probably need a manager of volunteer resources. This is a qualified and trained professional staff member who:

- plans and implements volunteer recruitment programs;
- determines, in conjunction with other staff, the best roles for volunteers;
- writes volunteer position descriptions;
- interviews, screens, orients, and trains volunteers;
- works with staff to evaluate volunteer performance;
- orients staff on how best to integrate volunteers into their programs;
- ensures that volunteers are motivated and recognized for their contributions; and,
- evaluates and adjusts the volunteer recruitment and management program.

This person, who provides and manages a vital resource, should be an important member of the organization's management team.

The Canadian Museums Association has produced a pamphlet called "Manager of Volunteer Resources," that outlines the responsibilities of paid professionals in this position and highlights the benefits to the organization. These include:

- a higher profile for your organization in the community;
- enhanced collaborative relationships between staff and volunteers;
- a well-trained and committed volunteer team;
- a knowledgeable public relations force acting as your organization's community ambassadors; and,
- increased opportunity to build community and corporate partnerships.

The pamphlet quotes Glenbow-Alberta Institute's President and CEO, Dr. Robert Janes, who says, "Our decision to hire a professional volunteer manager is one of the best decisions we have ever made. With the increasing importance of volunteers in all aspects of our work at Glenbow, it is critical that we made every effort to ensure that the needs and aspirations of our volunteers are satisfied. No one is more uniquely qualified to oversee this than an effective volunteer manager."²²

²² "Manager of Volunteers," Canadian Museums Association. For information, call 1-800-670-0401.

Communicate the value of your volunteers

Increasingly, organizations are measuring the economic value that volunteers add to their organizations. There are various ways to do this (see Key Resources below). They then use this information to:

- Demonstrate how much volunteers contribute to the organization (i.e., the dollar value of the time they contribute).
- Evaluate the contribution of volunteers relative to the investment the organization makes in recruiting, training, supporting, and recognizing volunteers.
- Describe to funders how volunteers extend the human resources capacity of the organization and what this contribution is worth in dollars.
- Report on the value of volunteers' contributions in annual reports, financial statements, and other communications items.

Key Resources

There are a variety of ways to measure the economic value of volunteers. These resources explain some of them:

- *Assigning Economic Value to Volunteer Activity: Eight Tools for Efficient Program Management*, available online at www.nonprofitscan.ca/pdf/MAN/Goulbourne-MAN-English-Web.pdf.
- *What Volunteers Contribute: Calculating and Communicating Value Added*, available online at www.nonprofitscan.ca/pdf/MAN/Quarter-MAN-English-Web.pdf.

Example: How some organizations report volunteer contributions

Organizations report on their volunteer contribution in annual reports in a variety of ways. For example, the B.C. Persons with AIDS Society reported on the activities of its volunteer resources department: "Placing 187 volunteers in Society programs, responding to 264 inquiries related to volunteering, interviewing 208 applicants for positions in the Society, recognizing over 150 volunteers for their contributions, introducing a five-year service recognition pin." The Canadian Nature Federation reported on one of its programs in this way:

"Community Action Fund grants gave local partners \$165,000 in cash, and helped leverage an additional \$150,000 in grants, over \$60,000 in donated materials and services, and over 10,000 volunteer hours with a monetary value of \$200,000 - totaling more than \$575,000 worth of community conservation!" The Support Network, an Alberta-based distress and information centre, reported: "Over 21,810 volunteer hours were contributed to our programs. At an average Albertan salary of \$15/hour, the monetary value of the volunteer contribution exceeded \$327,150." All these messages communicate the importance of volunteers and volunteer management.

It's Your Turn...

Is your organization prepared to support the efforts of the volunteers it needs? The Canadian Association of Volunteer Resources, a professional association for those working in the field of volunteer resources management, has adopted Standards of Practice for the profession. How many of the CAVR standards on organizational planning and coordination of volunteers do you have in place?

- The organization has a clearly designated individual qualified to manage all aspects of volunteer involvement.
- Volunteer assignments are developed to provide meaningful opportunities for volunteers to utilize their skills, time and personal motivations and to reflect the needs of the organization.
- Successful recruitment incorporates internal and external strategies to best meet the needs of the client and organization.
- Standard screening procedures consistent with the National Education Campaign on Screening are utilized consistently, and without exception.
- The orientation process provides an overview of the organization to every volunteer, regardless of specific assignments. It places the volunteer assignment in context and allows for consistent introduction of policies, procedures, rights, and responsibilities. Training is customized for volunteers based on the needs of the volunteer assignment and the individual needs of the volunteer.
- Appropriate levels of supervision are provided for volunteers.

- Recognition is a form of acknowledgement of volunteer efforts. All volunteers are appropriately, equitably, and consistently recognized by the organization.
- Evaluation of the impact of volunteers and volunteer programs is regularly completed to determine the outcome of the service as well as its effectiveness and efficiency.
- Standardized documentation and records management practices are followed.

For information on CAVR, visit www.cavr.ca.

Key Resource

Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement, available from Volunteer Canada (www.volunteer.ca) provides a framework for your organization to start discussing the role that volunteers play in helping achieve your purpose or mission.

Where you can get additional help

The **Canadian Centre for Philanthropy** has a number of volunteer resources available through their family of Web sites. These include:

www.givingandvolunteering.ca. This site showcases the results from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP), which are accessible in a number of fact sheets, reports, and management resources. It also includes a glossary of terms and FAQs (frequently asked questions), and offers users an opportunity to submit a question - and receive a prompt answer - about the survey data.

www.nonprofitscan.ca. This site includes a wealth of information on volunteerism and other nonprofit organizations. It also houses reports and fact sheets from the International Year of Volunteers research projects.

www.kdc-cdc.ca. The Knowledge Development Centre provides grants to support research on volunteering and volunteerism. It also promotes the transfer of knowledge to voluntary organizations by disseminating information resources and products such as fact sheets, short reports, and other publications. It is funded through the Community Partnerships Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage as part of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative.

Additional Resources

The Web sites listed below provide a wealth of information and resources on volunteer recruitment, management, and retention. All include links to a wide range of other volunteer-related sites, organizations, and resources.

Volunteer Canada (www.volunteer.ca) provides resources on volunteering for both agencies and individuals. Its Web site also includes links to volunteer centres and their Web sites across Canada. Many of the volunteers centres that have Web sites offer a wide range of articles online and opportunities to order books and other resources.

Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (www.cavr.ca) has a national certification process for managers of volunteer resources, Standards of Practice for the profession, and guidelines on ethical conduct. Its Web site includes links to provincial of professional association for managers of volunteers.

VOE - Volunteer Opportunity Exchange (www.voe-reb.org) allows agencies to use the Web to post volunteer opportunities.

Association for Volunteer Administration (www.avaintl.org) produces publications and holds an annual international conference on volunteer administration (in October). It also has a professional certification program for volunteer administrators.

BoardSource (www.ncnb.org) offers online resources for nonprofit boards of directors, including books, booklets, newsletters, and frequently asked questions.

The Department of Canadian Heritage's Community Partnerships page (http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/index_e.cfm) has a number of publications that can be downloaded. These include:

- *Volunteering: A Traditional Canadian Value - a sketch of volunteering in Canada from a historical perspective*
- *Stronger Together - recruiting and working with ethno-cultural volunteers*
- *Family Volunteering: The Ties That Bind - an introduction to preparing your agency for family volunteers*
- *Why People Volunteer - an anecdotal study on volunteer motivation, satisfaction and dissatisfaction*
- *Bridges to the Future - supported programs for volunteers with special needs*

- *Volunteering for Work Experience - what volunteering can offer to people who are looking for paid employment*
- *A Springboard to Tomorrow - creating volunteer programs for young people that encourage the development of skills*

The Department's Cyberstation (www.pch.gc.ca/Cyberstation) has good information and links on youth volunteering that can be helpful to organizations seeking to recruit young volunteers.

Energize (www.energizeinc.com) has an online library and bookstore, "hot topic" questions and answers, and other resources for managers of volunteer services.

Points of Light (www.pointsoflight.org) produces and distributes information on a wide variety of volunteer-related topics in the U.S.

Virtual Volunteering Project

(<http://www.serviceleader.org/new/virtual>) contains complete information on virtual volunteering, as well as advice and other resources pertaining to volunteer management.

Volunteer Management (<http://www.avaintl.org/network/cybervpm.html>) offers online discussion groups, volunteer management and recruitment resources on a wide variety of topics, and volunteer training kits.

Volunteer Today (www.volunteertoday.com) is an "electronic gazette" that contains news, information on various aspects of volunteer management, and a resource section.

APPENDIX A Profile of Volunteers by Province

	Newfoundland	Prince Edward Island	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia						
	Volunteer Rate %	Mean Hours	Volunteer Rate %	Mean Hours	Volunteer Rate %	Mean Hours	Volunteer Rate %	Mean Hours	Volunteer Rate %	Mean Hours						
Total	31	206	34	186	19	159	25	165	36	140	42	154	39	139	26	169
Age																
15 - 24	40	254	35	125*	18	140*	28	150	36	115	46	115	46	109	29	86
25 - 34	33	151*	27	120	19	98	19	149*	33	115*	38	142*	36	124*	27	145*
35 - 44	35	203*	36	216	21	137	29	163	40	152	48	137	45	142	27	135*
45 - 54	32	173*	41	191	18	147	31	151	40	142	48	171	41	125	32	189
55 - 64	32*	159*	42	254*	22	194	28	157	36	113	38	183	37	164*	24	230
65 +	--	--	23	205*	16	283	17	261*	32	195*	33	207	21	273*	15	351
Sex																
Male	27	215	34	213	20	170	24	172	31	156	40	173	38	149	23	165
Female	36	201	39	159*	18	148	27	160	42	128	45	137	40	130	29	171
Marital Status																
Married/Common law	32	195	38	190	20	156	27	165	39	147	47	163	39	131	27	193
Single	34	240	39*	166*	17	150	24	136	32	119	37	121	43	148	27	100
Widowed	--	--	--	245*	14*	204*	16	320*	29	173*	31	198	23*	269*	--	--
Separated or divorced	--	--	36	165*	19	193*	24	192	38	103*	31	143*	38	137*	22	231*
Education																
Less than high school	22	241	23	124	14	159	18	154*	25	106*	31	152	24	150*	19	159*
High school diploma	28*	--	34*	154*	13	210	22	135	33	138	44	128	35	130	19	132*
Some post-secondary	--	--	--	291*	28	128*	28	187*	52	133*	42	163	52	143*	33	212*
Post-secondary diploma	36	173*	47	201	21	170	26	174	41	143	45	165	40	131	26	180
University degree	49*	273	52*	245*	27	132	38	176	49	179	64	163	56	150	40	161
Labour Force Status																
Employed	36	197	38	171	19	131	27	157	38	140	45	152	40	124	29	148
Full-time	36	177	39	168	19	118	25	155	37	144	42	152	38	127	28	147
Part-time	--	--	49	172*	20	178*	36	164	45	129	55	155	48	118	30	151
Unemployed	30*	178*	--	86*	--	132*	23*	106*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Not in labour force	27	226	31	187*	19	199*	22	193	33	144	40	160	36	172	22	200
Household Income																
Less than \$20,000	16	119*	--	131*	15	224	13	201	22	100*	30	127	20	286*	19	212*
\$20,000 to \$39,999	30	227	32	195*	16	174	20	193	32	135	37	144	30	164	18	181
\$40,000 to \$69,999	39	198	31	170*	18	163	26	158	37	148	40	173	37	131	24	187
\$70,000 to \$99,999	35*	193*	59	175*	34	207*	36	168*	25	138	28	166	38	124*	30	140
\$100,000 or more	46*	252*	58*	220	50	142	41	179*	28	110	33	152	51	102	39	152

*Sample size limitations affect the reliability of this estimate.

-- Estimate too small to be expressed.



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