



The Giving and Volunteering of Seniors

Fact Sheet #11



The Role of Seniors

Canadian seniors 65 and older make an important contribution to charitable giving and volunteering. However, different patterns emerge not only between younger and older seniors, but also between seniors and the rest of the population, according to analyses of data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP).¹



Giving: How Many? How Much?

-  Eight out of ten Canadians 65 and older made direct financial donations to charities, for a total of \$924.7 million.
-  Younger seniors between the ages of 65 and 74 were more likely to make in-kind donations such as clothing (65%), and food (52%) than their older counterparts (75 and older). However, 7% of older seniors left a bequest to a charitable, religious or spiritual organization, compared to 4% of younger seniors.

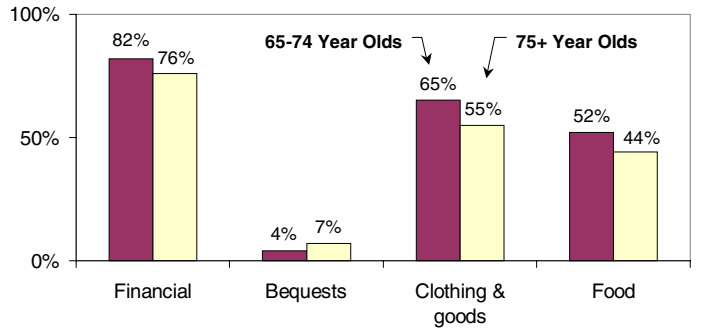
Variations by Age

-  Eighty-two percent of 65-74 year olds made charitable donations. This declined to 76% for seniors 75 and older.
-  Older seniors (75 and older) made larger average annual donations than those 65-74 years old (\$377 vs. \$301). In fact, older seniors made the largest average annual donation (\$377), compared to all other age groups.

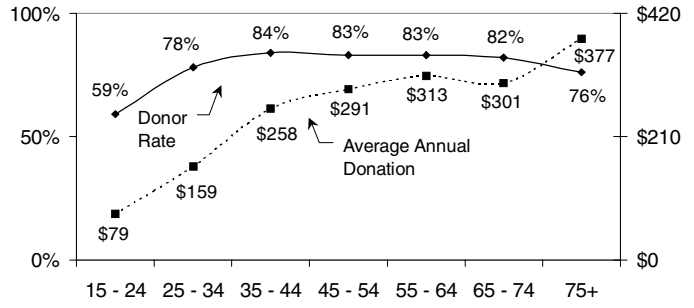
Organizations Supported

-  Sixty percent of the total value of donations (\$552.0 million) made by seniors (65 and older) were given to religious organizations. These organizations received 18% of the total number of donations by seniors.²
-  Health organizations accounted for just 16% (\$146.1 million) of the total value of donations, but 42% of the total number of donations.

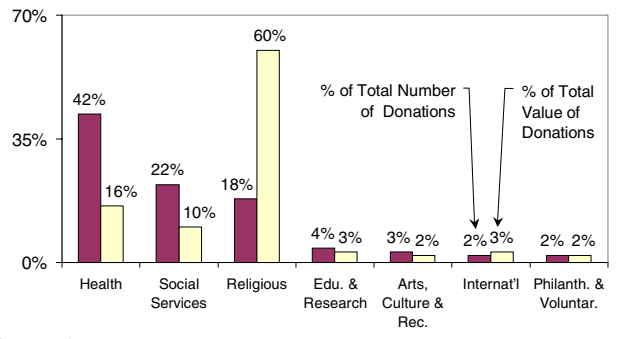
Percentage of Canadian Seniors Making Donations by Type of Donation



Percentage of Population Making Donations and Average Annual Donation by Age



Percentage of Donations and Percentage of the Value of Donations Received from Seniors by Type of Organization



QUICKfacts...

More than half of seniors reported making financial donations in order to fulfill religious obligations or beliefs, compared to 31% of donors aged 15-64.

Almost half of seniors volunteered to fulfill religious obligations, compared to 27% of volunteers aged 15-64.

Forty-four percent of seniors, but only 30% of those aged 15-64, did not donate more because they gave money directly to people instead of through an organization.

1. Findings from the NSGVP are based on reports of charitable giving and volunteering over the one-year period from November 1, 1996 to October 31, 1997 by Canadians aged 15 and older.
 2. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Volunteering: How Much? How Many?

The Giving and Volunteering of Seniors

65 and older volunteered for a charitable or nonprofit organization – the lowest volunteer rate of all age groups.

Senior volunteers contributed an annual average of 202 hours each – the highest of all age groups.

Variations by Age

Seniors between the ages of 65 and 74 were more likely to volunteer than those 75 and older (26% vs. 18%). However, older seniors contributed slightly more hours on average (205 hours) than their younger counterparts (201 hours).

Organizations Supported

The majority of senior volunteer activity occurred in four types of organizations:

- Religious organizations
- Social services organizations
- Arts, culture and recreation organizations
- Health organizations

Activities Supported

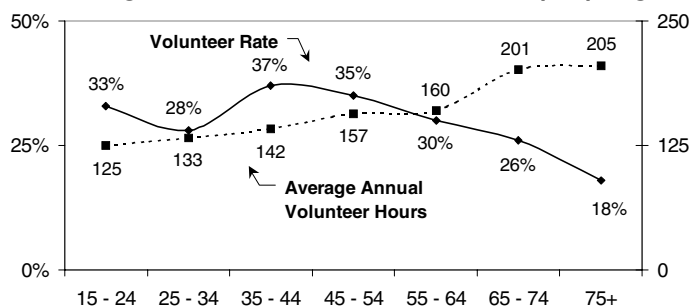
Support for volunteer activities differed between senior volunteers and the rest of the volunteer population (15-64 year olds).

Over one third of seniors organized and supervised events, compared to more than half of 15-64 year old volunteers.³

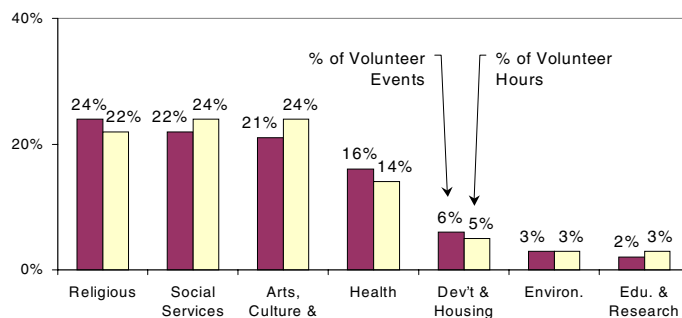
Thirty-one percent of senior volunteers (31%) provided care or support, such as counselling and friendly visiting, compared to 22% of younger volunteers.

3. Percentages do not add up to 100% because many volunteers engaged in more than one type of activity.

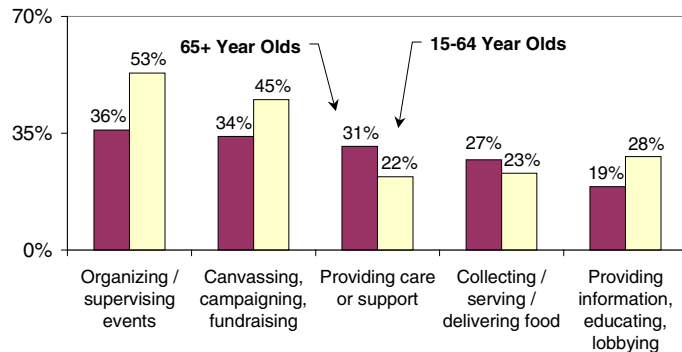
Percentage of Population Volunteering and Average Hours Volunteered Annually by Age



Percentage of Seniors' Volunteer Events and Seniors' Volunteer Hours by Type of Organization



Percentage of Volunteers by Age and Activity



Canadian Centre for Philanthropy™
Le Centre canadien de philanthropie^{MC}



We would like to acknowledge the support provided by Community Foundations of Canada for the production of this fact sheet.

Rew-printed April 2001

More information on the results of the NSGVP, including the full text of the highlight report *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians*, is available online at our Web site: www.nsgvp.org

Or contact us:

Research Coordinator
Canadian Centre for Philanthropy
425 University Avenue, Suite 700
Toronto Ontario, M5G 1T6
Phone: 416-597-2293 ext. 238 Fax: 416-597-2294
e-mail: ccpresearch@ccp.ca

Fact Sheet #11 written by Stephanie Saunders, Research Associate, Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.