

# 2007 CANADA SURVEY OF Giving, Volunteering & Participating



## Giving and Volunteering for Social Services Organizations in Alberta

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Findings from the Canada Survey of Giving,  
Volunteering, and Participating



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### Statement on data quality

The results presented in this report are derived from a survey. As such they are estimates, not definite measures. Because of variation in the sample size involved with various questions, and variability in the answers given, some estimates are more precise than others. Estimates with a coefficient of variation less than 16.6% are unqualified. Estimates with a coefficient of variation between 16.6% and 33.3% are noted with an E and should be used with caution. Estimates with a coefficient of variation greater than 33.3%, or based on fewer than 30 respondents are not presented and are represented in tables and figures with the symbol ... For more detailed information concerning data quality, readers are referred to Appendix 2 of *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* (Hall, Lasby, Ayer, & Gibbons, 2009).

### Acknowledgements

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## INTRODUCTION

According to the 2003 National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO), Social Services organizations comprise the fifth largest component of the nonprofit and voluntary sector in Alberta.<sup>1</sup> The 1,800 Social Services organizations account for about 9% of the approximately 20,000 organizations in Alberta and received 10% of total revenues reported by nonprofit and voluntary organizations (Hall, et al., 2005; Roach, 2006). Although these organizations have a central role in Alberta's nonprofit and voluntary sector, touching the lives of many Albertans daily, relatively little is known about the Albertans who provide these organizations with two of their key resources: volunteer time and financial donations.

This report uses findings from the 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating (CSGVP) to provide insight into the Albertans who support Social Services organizations. It details how much these Albertans contribute, how they make donations, how they come to volunteer for Social Services organizations, what they do as volunteers, the other causes they support, their motivations for making contributions of money and time, and the barriers they face in doing so.

## CHARITABLE GIVING TO SOCIAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS

The level of monetary support Albertans offer to Social Services organizations is comparatively large. Just over one million Albertans (the equivalent of 37% of Albertans aged 15 and over) donated to Social Services organizations in 2007 (see Table 1). By way of comparison, 85% of Albertans made donations to charitable and nonprofit organizations of all types, meaning that approximately two fifths of all donors (43%) contributed to Social Services organizations. These donors typically gave relatively large amounts Social Services organizations, contributing an average of \$171<sup>E</sup> each (compared to an average of \$596 for donations to all organizations). Collectively, they made approximately 1.5 million donations to Social Services organizations, for a total value of \$175 million.

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<sup>1</sup> Social Services organizations provide human and social services to a community or a specific population within a community, such as children, youth, families, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities. The services these organizations provide are diverse, including emergency support and relief, income support, food banks, women's shelters, and life skills programs. This definition is based on the International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations (Salamon & Anheier, 1997). The modified classification used here divides nonprofit organizations into 13 different groups – where fewer than 13 groups are presented in this report, it is due to sample size limitations.

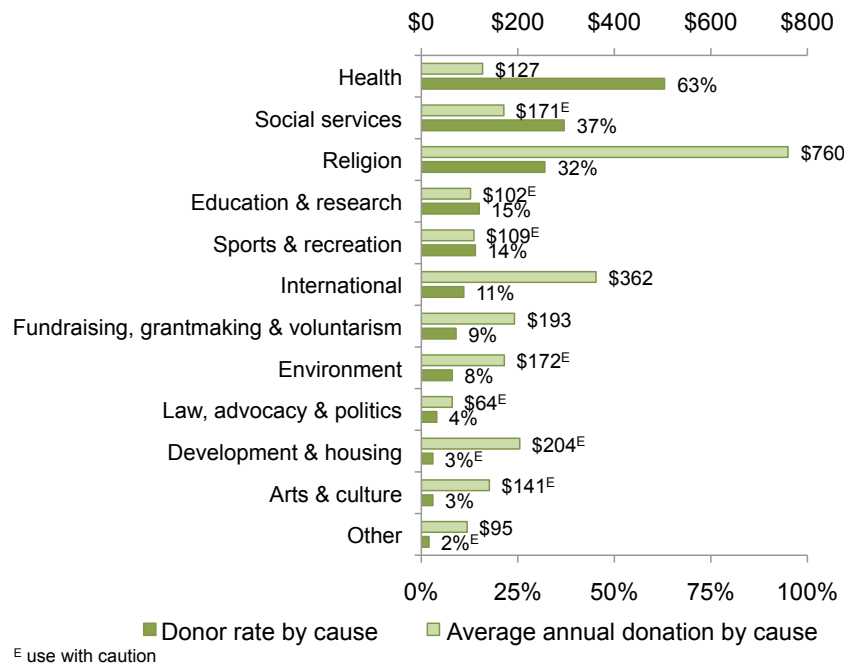
**Table 1: Donors and donation amounts, Social Services organizations and All organizations, population aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**

Rate of donating	Social Services Organizations	All Organizations
Total population (thousands)	2,806	2,806
Donors (thousands)	1,027	2,386
Donor rate	37%	85%

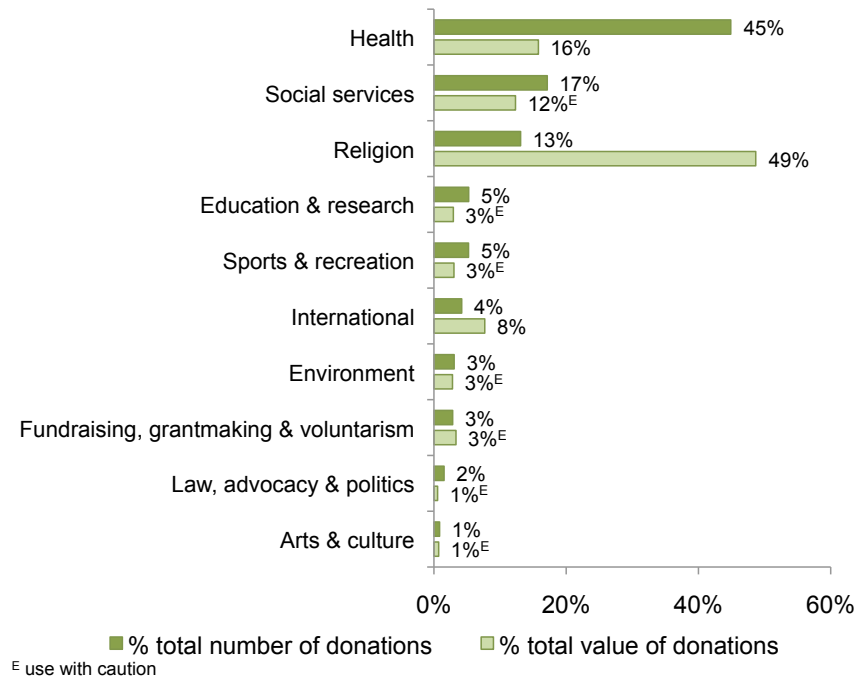
Amount donated	Social Services Organizations	All Organizations
Total amount donated (thousands)	\$175,345	\$1,421,663
Mean donation	\$171 <sup>E</sup>	\$596
Median donation	\$25	\$150

**Figure 1: Donor rate and average annual donation by organization type, population aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



The base of support for Social Services organizations in Alberta is quite broad, second only to that for Health organizations (see Figure 1). Social Services donations accounted for approximately 17% of the total number of donations and 12% of the total value of donations made by Albertans (see Figure 2). Social Services organizations ranked third in total monetary support in Alberta, behind Religious and Health organizations.

**Figure 2: Percentage of total number and total value of donations by organization type, donors aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**

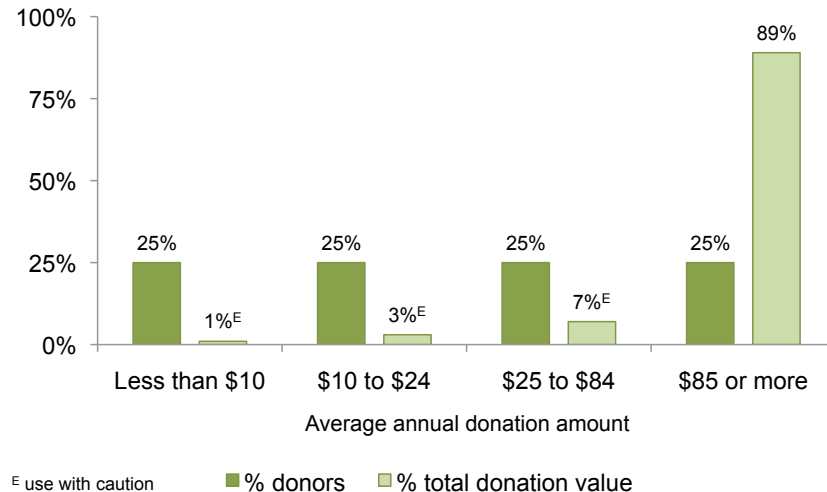


Although the percentage of Alberta residents donating to Social Services organizations is quite similar to the percentage donating in the rest of Canada (37% vs. 39%), Alberta Social Services donors contributed much larger amounts on average (\$171<sup>E</sup> vs. \$78 for the rest of Canada). Alberta donors allocated roughly the same proportion of the number of donations to Social Services organizations as did donors in the rest of Canada (17% of the total number of donations vs. 18% for the rest of Canada) but noticeably more of the total value of donations (12% vs. 9% of the total value of donations in the rest of Canada).

### The concentration of support

Although support for Social Services organizations is broadly based, most of the money comes from a small minority of donors. Almost nine-tenths (89%) of the total value of donations to Social Services organizations came from the 25% of donors who contributed \$85 or more annually (see Figure 3). This degree of concentration is quite high when compared to the degree of concentration in total donations to all organization types in both Alberta (83% of total donation value came from the top 25% of donors) and Canada as a whole (82%).

**Figure 3: Distribution of donors and percentage of total annual donation to Social Services organizations by amount of annual donation, Social Services donors aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



### Who gives to Social Services organizations?

Although the decision to donate is a highly personal one, there are some characteristics that appear to be associated with increased likelihood of donating to Social Services organizations and/or of making larger donations. The most significant of these characteristics appear to be age, sex, level of formal education, and frequency of religious attendance (see Table 2).

The likelihood of donating to Social Services organizations appears to increase with age. Albertans aged 55 and older were most likely to give (45% donated) while those aged 15 to 34 were least likely to do so (28%). However, those aged 35 to 54 made the largest donations (an average of \$271<sup>E</sup> annually).

Women were more likely to donate than were men (41% vs. 32%), although male donors gave more (\$248<sup>E</sup> vs. \$110).

The likelihood of donating increased with the level of formal education attained, ranging from a low of 29% among those who had attended high school to a high of 44% among those with a university degree. However, the average amount donated did not vary greatly with the level of education.

Albertans who attended religious services weekly were more likely to donate than were those who attended services less regularly or did not attend at all (43% vs. 34%). However, the average annual donations of each group were broadly similar (\$167<sup>E</sup> and \$159<sup>E</sup> respectively).

**Table 2: Social Services donor rate and average Social Services donation, by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Social Services donor rate</b>	<b>Average annual Social Services donation</b>
15 to 34 years	28%	\$70
35 to 54 years	39%	\$271 <sup>E</sup>
55 years or older	45%	\$133
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	32%	\$248 <sup>E</sup>
Female	41%	\$110
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married or common-law	38%	\$141
Single	27%	...
Widow or widower	62%	\$108 <sup>E</sup>
Separated or divorced	40%	...
<b>Education level</b>		
High School	29%	...
Post-secondary	37%	\$193 <sup>E</sup>
University	44%	\$179
<b>Labour force status</b>		
Employed	34%	\$171
Unemployed	59% <sup>E</sup>	\$39 <sup>E</sup>
Not in the labour force	36%	...
<b>Presence of children</b>		
No children in household	36%	\$232 <sup>E</sup>
Children in the household	37%	\$94
<b>Religious attendance</b>		
Weekly attendee	43%	\$167 <sup>E</sup>
Not a weekly attendee	34%	\$159 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Household income</b>		
Less than \$40,000	35%	\$55
\$40,000 to \$99,999	38%	\$81
\$100,000 or more	36%	\$373 <sup>E</sup>

<sup>E</sup> Use with caution

... Sample size too small to be presented

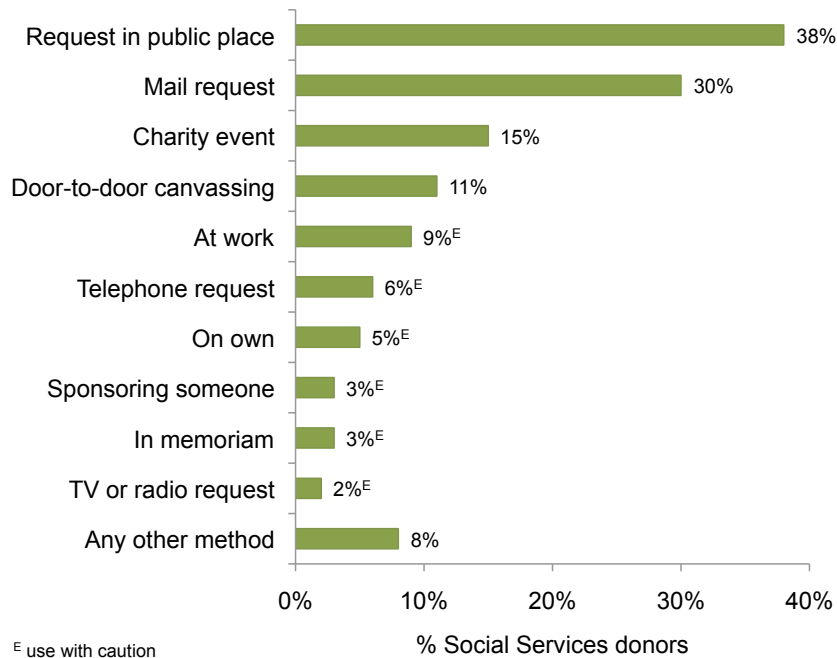
The likelihood of donating to Social Services organizations does not appear to increase greatly with household income. However, those with the highest incomes (\$100,000 or more) gave the most (\$373<sup>E</sup> on average).

### How do Social Services donors donate?

Social Services donors were most likely to report donating in response to a request in a public place, such as in a shopping centre or on the street (38% donated this way; see Figure 4). Somewhat fewer donated in response to a mail request (30%). Noticeably fewer donated

by paying to attend a charity event (15%), and roughly one in ten (11%) donated in response to door-to-door canvassing or at their place of work (9%). These five methods were also the means of donation most commonly reported by Social Services donors in 2004.

**Figure 4: Percentage of donors contributing by selected donation method, Social Services donors aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**

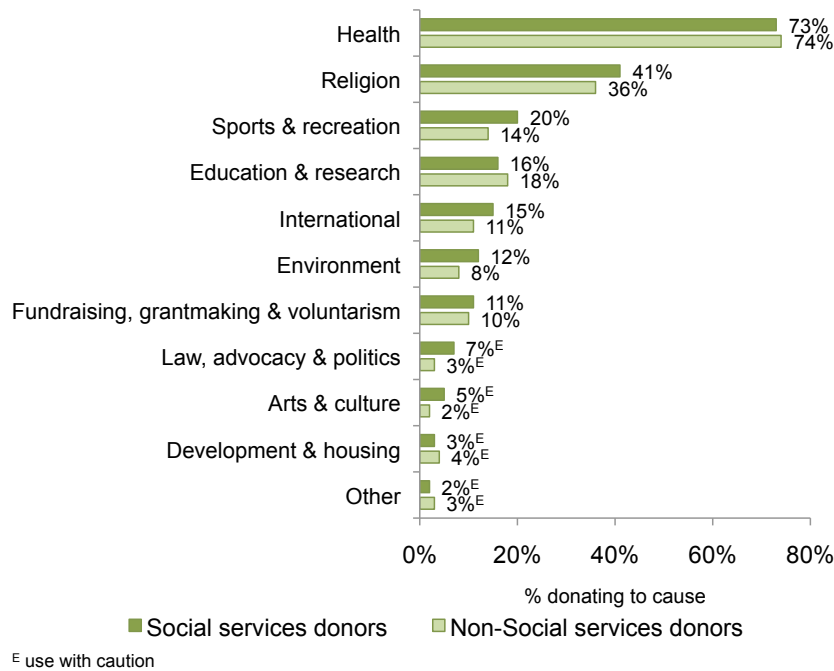


### What other causes do Social Services donors support?

Social Services donors do not confine their support solely to Social Services organizations. On average, Social Services donors supported 2.1 other causes in addition to Social Services; this compares to an average of 1.8 causes *in total* for those who did not donate to Social Services organizations.

Although Social Services donors contribute to more causes, this additional support does not seem to focus on any particular type of organization. Social Services donors tend to show the same patterns of support for other organizations as do non-Social Services donors. For

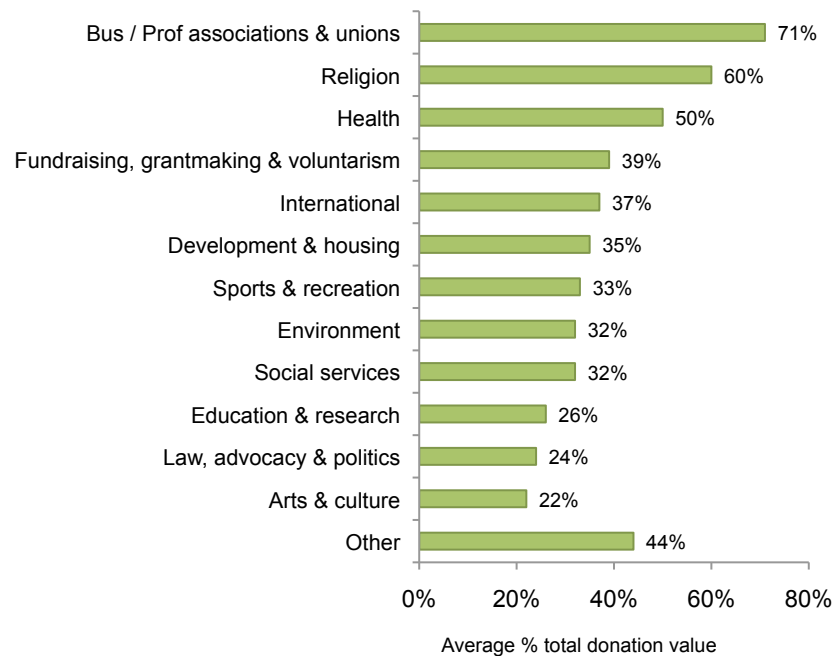
**Figure 5: Rates of donation to other organization types, Social Services donors and Non-Social Services donors aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



instance, both groups were most likely to donate to Health and Religious organizations and much less likely to donate to organizations working in the areas of Arts & Culture and Development & Housing (see Figure 5). In terms of differences, Social Services donors were slightly more likely to donate to Religious and Sports & Recreation organizations than were non-Social Services donors.

In terms of how they allocate their donations across causes, Social Services donors tend to be somewhat less focused than are supporters of other causes. On average, Social Services donors contributed about one third (32%) of the total value of their donations to Social Services organizations (see Figure 6). Only three types of organizations (Education & Research, Law, Advocacy & Politics, and Arts & Culture) received smaller average percentages of their supporters' total donation value.

**Figure 6: Average percentage of total donation value allocated by organization type. donors to organization type aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



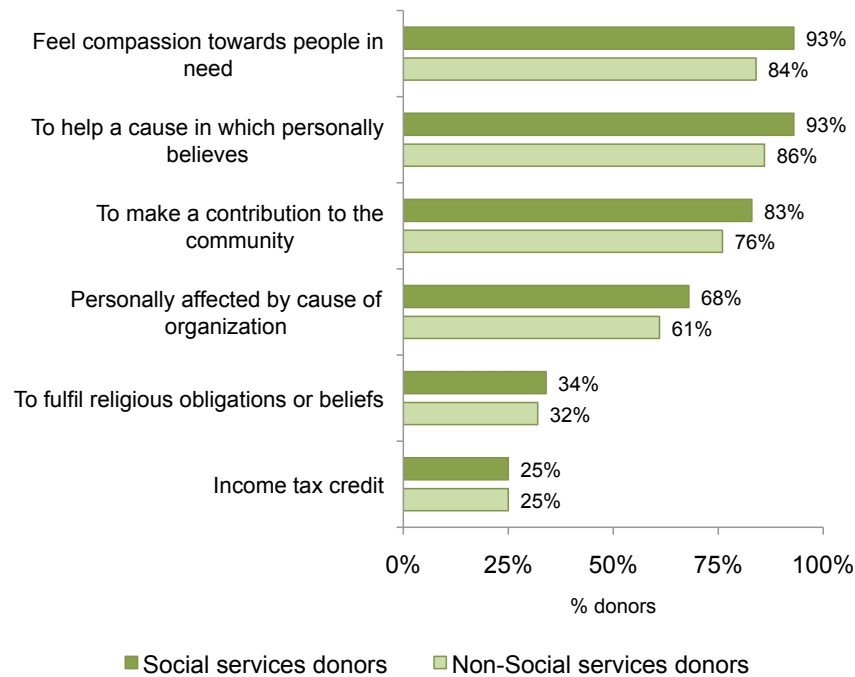
### What motivations and barriers do Social Services donors experience?

Broadly speaking, Social Services donors are motivated to donate by the same range of factors as are donors to other types of organizations.<sup>2</sup> Social Services donors were most likely to say they donated because they felt compassion towards those in need and to help a cause in which they personally believe (93% of Social Services donors cited each motivation; see Figure 7). They were slightly less likely to say they donated in order to make a contribution to the community (83%) or because they were personally affected by the cause the organization supports (68%). Religious obligations or beliefs (34%) and income tax credits (25%) were least likely to be reported as motivations. The same pattern of motivations among Alberta Social Services donors was seen in 2004.

There is little to differentiate donors who contribute to Social Services organizations from those who do not. Social Services donors were somewhat more likely to cite the more common motivations, but none of them stand out as being particularly influential. Religious beliefs and tax credits, on the other hand, were the least important motivations and were cited by virtually the same percentages of both Social Services and non-Social Services donors.

<sup>2</sup> The CSGVP asks respondents whether any of six possible motivations played an important role in their decision(s) to donate. These questions apply to donating generally, rather than donating specifically to Social Services organizations. For this reason this report contrasts donors who contribute to Social Services organizations with those who do not.

**Figure 7: Motivations for donating, Social Services and Non-Social Services donors aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**

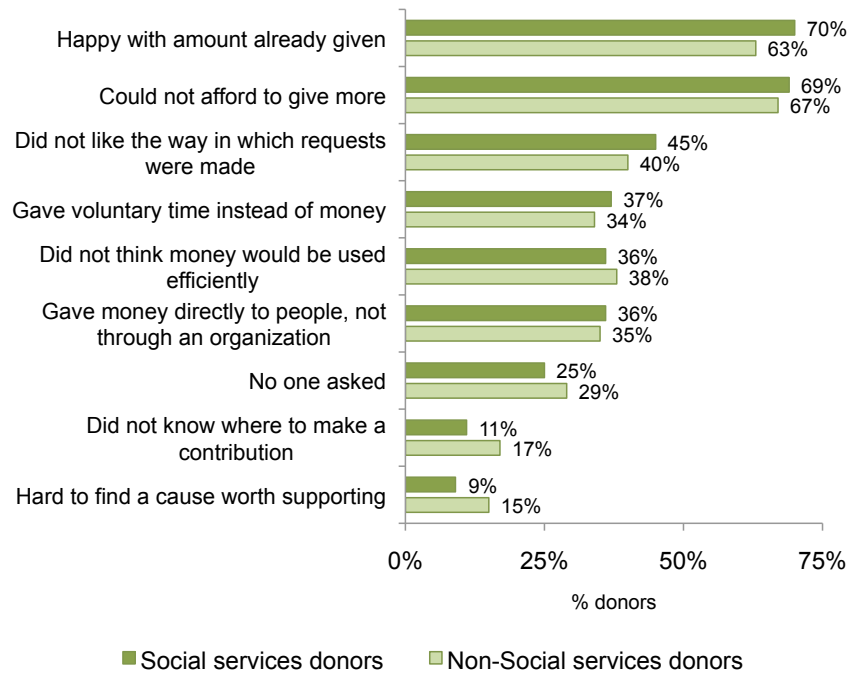


In terms of barriers to donating, the same general pattern emerges among both Social Services donors and non-Social Services donors, although there are some important differences.<sup>3</sup> Both groups were most likely to say they did not donate more because they were happy with the amounts they had already given and because they could not afford to give more (see Figure 8). Similarly, both groups were least likely to say they did not know where to make a contribution or were unable to find a cause worth supporting.

However, Albertans who donated to Social Services organizations were somewhat more likely to say that they did not donate more because they were happy with the amounts that they had already given (70% of Social Services donors vs. 63% of non-Social Services donors). Conversely, Social Services donors were less likely to say that they did not donate more because they did not know where to make a contribution (11% vs. 17% of non-Social Services donors) or could not find a cause worth supporting (9% vs. 15%).

<sup>3</sup> The CSGVP asks donors whether any of nine potential barriers prevented them from donating as much as they otherwise would have. Again, these questions apply to donating generally rather than donating specifically to Social Services organizations.

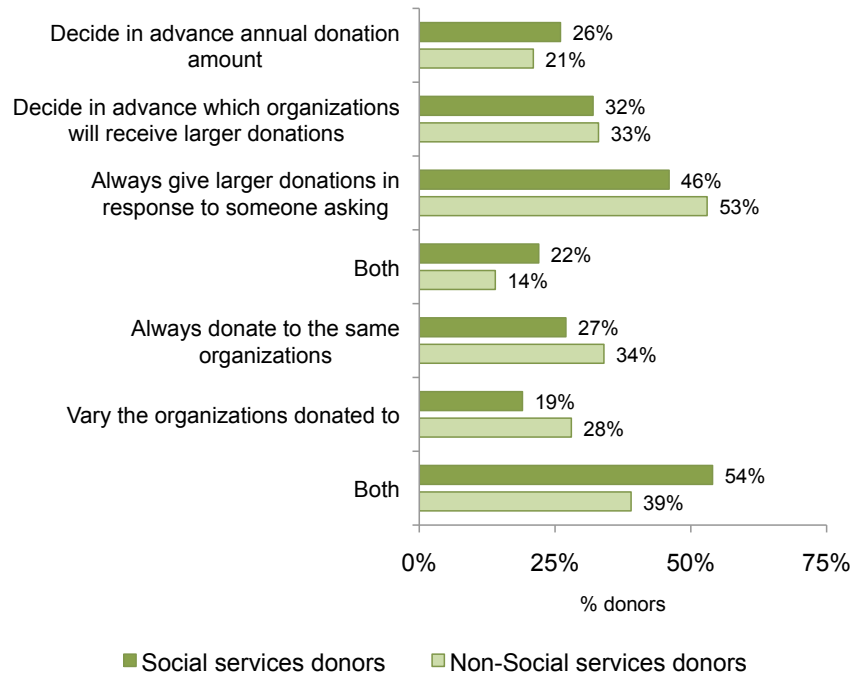
**Figure 8: Barriers to donating more, Social Services and Non-Social Services donors aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



**The role of prior planning in donating to Social Services organizations**

Those who donate to Social Services organizations are somewhat more likely than non-Social Services donors to give both as a result of prior planning and in reaction to requests. The CSGVP asked donors whether they always donate to the same organizations, vary the organizations they support, or donate to a mixture of new and familiar organizations. Social Services donors were strikingly more likely to say that they donated to a mix of new and old organizations (54% vs. 39% of non-Social Services donors; see Figure 9). Similarly, they were more likely to say they chose the organizations they supported with their larger donations both on the basis of prior planning and in response to organizational requests (22% vs. 14% of non-Social Services donors). Roughly a quarter of Social Services donors reported that they decided in advance the amount they would donate over the course of a year (26% vs. 21%).

**Figure 9: Percentage of donors reporting prior planning measures, Social Services and Non-Social Services donors aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



## VOLUNTEERING FOR SOCIAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS

Social Services organizations account for a significant proportion of the volunteering in Alberta. Approximately 357,000 Albertans volunteered for Social Services organizations in 2007, the equivalent of 13% of the population aged 15 and over (see Table 3). Put another way, one quarter of Alberta's 1.4 million volunteers (52% of the population aged 15 and over) volunteered for Social Services organizations. Annually, these volunteers contributed an average of 85 hours each to Social Services organizations for a total of approximately 30.7 million hours, the equivalent of almost 16,000 full-time jobs.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 3: Volunteers and volunteer hours, Social Services organizations and All organizations, population aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**

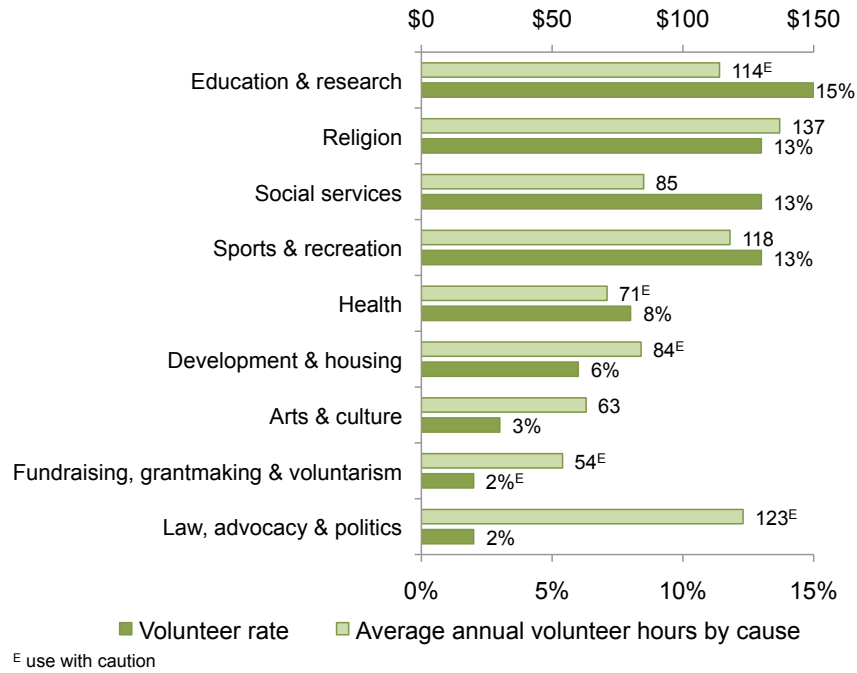
	<b>Social Services Organizations</b>	<b>All Organizations</b>
<b>Rate of volunteering</b>		
Total population (thousands)	2,806	2,806
Volunteers (thousands)	357	1,445
Volunteer rate	13%	52%
<b>Hours volunteered</b>		
Total hours (thousands)	30,682	247,913
Mean hours	85	172
Median hours	24	58

Compared to other types of organizations, Social Services organizations have the third largest volunteer pool (13% of the population aged 15 and over; see Figure 10) behind Education & Research (15%) and Sports & Recreation organizations (13%). In terms of hours volunteered, Social Services organizations received 12% of total hours contributed by Alberta volunteers (see Figure 11). Only Religious (19%), Education & Research (19%<sup>E</sup>), and Sports & Recreation (18%) organizations received higher percentages of total volunteer hours.

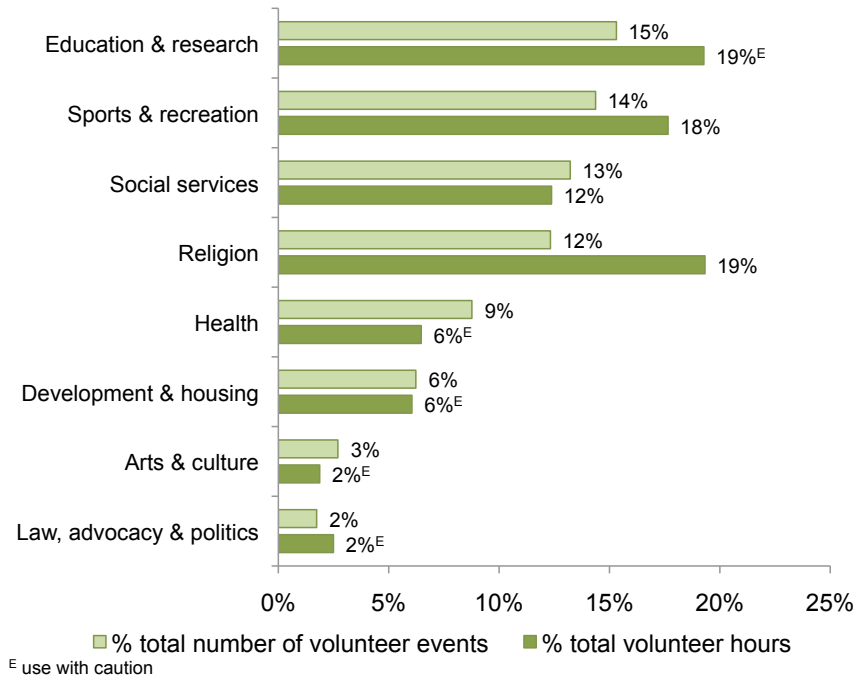
Compared to other Canadians, Albertans were slightly more likely to volunteer for Social Services organizations (11% of Canadians from other provinces volunteered), though they volunteered fewer hours, on average (85 vs. 118 for Canadians from other provinces). Collectively, volunteers from the rest of Canada contributed a somewhat larger proportion of their total volunteer hours to Social Services organizations (17% vs. 12% for Albertan volunteers)

<sup>4</sup> Assuming a 40 hour work week and 48 work weeks per year.

**Figure 10: Volunteer rate and average annual hours volunteered by organization type, population aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



**Figure 11: Percentage of total number of volunteer episodes and total volunteer hours by organization type, volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**

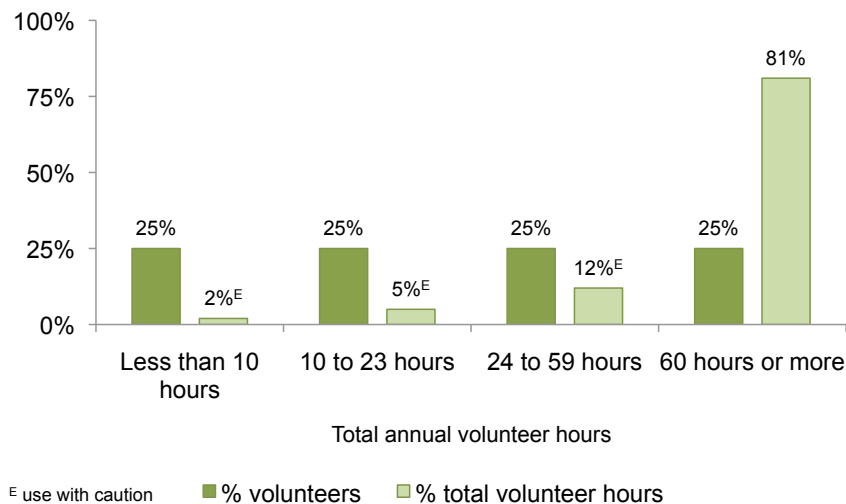


### The concentration of support

Although a relatively broad slice of the Albertan population volunteers for Social Services organizations, most of the hours come from a minority of those volunteers. Just over four fifths (81%; see Figure 12) of volunteer hours contributed to Social Services organizations came from the 25% of Alberta volunteers who contributed 60 hours or more to Social Services organizations annually. About one eighth of total Social Services hours (12%<sup>E</sup>) came from the 25% of volunteers who contributed between 24 and 59 hours annually, with the remaining half of Social Services volunteers contributing just 7% of total hours.

Expressed in terms of the level of support from all Albertans, four fifths of total Social Services volunteer hours came from just 3% of the population (one quarter of the 13% of Albertans who volunteered for Social Services organizations). This degree of concentration is consistent with that seen with volunteering as a whole. For instance, 79% of total hours contributed by Alberta volunteers came from the 25% of volunteers who contributed the largest number of hours annually. Similarly, 78% of total volunteer hours in Canada came from the top quarter of volunteers (Hall, et al., 2009).

**Figure 12: Distribution of volunteers and percentage of total annual volunteer hours for Social Services organizations, Social Services volunteers, aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



### Who volunteers for Social Services organizations?

As with donating, volunteering is a personal decision; however, there are some personal characteristics that appear to be associated with increased likelihood of volunteering for Social Services organizations and with contributing more hours. But, generally speaking, these patterns are less pronounced than they are with donations to Social Services organizations. The most important of the variations appear to be religious attendance, educational attainment, and marital status (see Table 4).

Albertans who attended religious services weekly were strikingly more likely to volunteer for Social Services organizations (20% volunteered vs. 11% of those who did not attend

religious services weekly or at all). However, those who do not attend services weekly contributed more hours on average (95<sup>E</sup> annually vs. 68<sup>E</sup> for weekly attenders).

**Table 4: Social Services volunteer rate and average Social Services volunteer hours, by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Social Services volunteer rate</b>	<b>Average annual Social Services volunteer hours</b>
15 to 34 years	13%	92 <sup>E</sup>
35 to 54 years	14%	74 <sup>E</sup>
55 years or older	12%	94 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	12%	76 <sup>E</sup>
Female	14%	94 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married or common-law	13%	79 <sup>E</sup>
Single	14%	91 <sup>E</sup>
Widow or widower	...	...
Separated or divorced	10% <sup>E</sup>	139 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Education level</b>		
High School	11%	81 <sup>E</sup>
Post-secondary	12%	88 <sup>E</sup>
University	18%	99 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Labour force status</b>		
Employed	14%	84 <sup>E</sup>
Unemployed	...	...
Not in the labour force	12% <sup>E</sup>	91 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Presence of children</b>		
No children in household	13%	92 <sup>E</sup>
Children in the household	14%	76 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Religious attendance</b>		
Weekly attendee	20%	68 <sup>E</sup>
Not a weekly attendee	11%	95 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Household income</b>		
Less than \$40,000	10% <sup>E</sup>	90 <sup>E</sup>
\$40,000 to \$99,999	11%	102 <sup>E</sup>
\$100,000 or more	17%	68 <sup>E</sup>

<sup>E</sup> Use with caution

... Sample size too small to be presented

Albertans with a university education were somewhat more likely to volunteer than were those with lower levels of educational attainment. Nearly one in five (18%) of those with a university degree volunteered for Social Services organizations, compared to 12% of those with a post-secondary education and 11% of those with a high school education or less. The average number of hours contributed also increased with education attainment, from a low

of 81<sup>E</sup> among those with high school or less, to a high of 99<sup>E</sup> among those with a university degree.

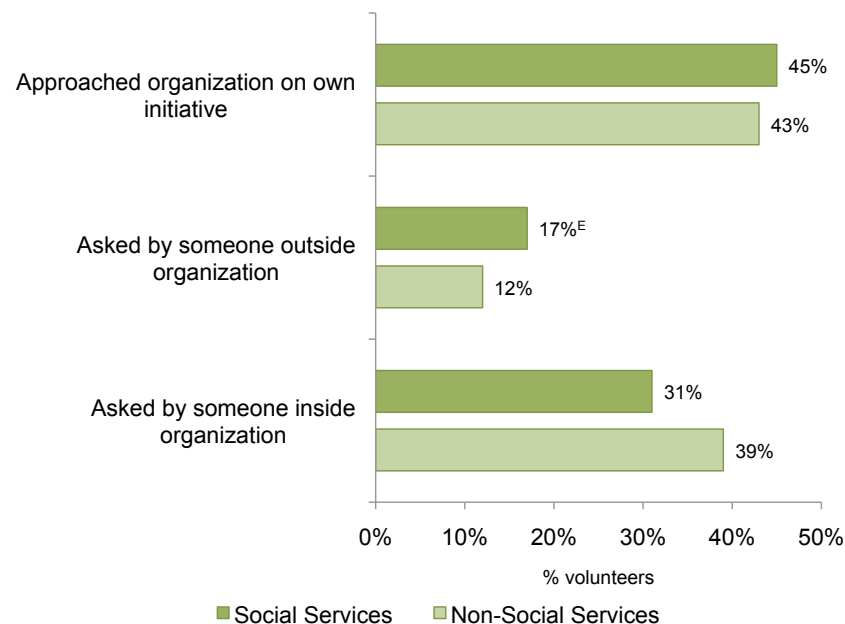
Albertans who were married or single were somewhat more likely to volunteer (13% and 14% respectively) than were those who were separated or divorced (10%<sup>E</sup>). However, those who were separated or divorced contributed noticeably more hours on average (139<sup>E</sup> vs. 79<sup>E</sup> for married volunteers and 91<sup>E</sup> for single volunteers).

Variations according to most other personal characteristics were relatively small, with the exception of household income. Those with annual household incomes in excess of \$100,000 annually were more likely to volunteer (17%) though they contributed somewhat fewer hours on average (68<sup>E</sup>).

### How do Social Services volunteers become involved?

Volunteers for Social Services organizations were most likely to become involved after approaching the organization on their own initiative (45% of Social Services volunteers became involved in this way; see Figure 13). They were somewhat less likely to become involved after being asked by someone in the organization itself (31% became involved in this way) and least likely to become involved after being asked by someone outside the organization (17%<sup>E</sup>).

**Figure 13: Method of initial involvement with organization, Social Services volunteers and Non-Social Services volunteers, volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



Compared to volunteers for other types of organizations, Social Services volunteers were less likely to become involved after being asked by someone inside the organization (31% vs. 39% of volunteers for other organizations) and more likely to respond to someone outside the organization (17% vs. 12%).

### What do Social Services volunteers do?

Social Services volunteers engaged in a wide range of activities, but in 2007 were most likely to engage in fundraising (36% of Social Services volunteers), organizing or supervising events (34%), and teaching, educating or mentoring (26%; see Figure 14). Generally speaking, they were least likely to engage in more specialized activities such as first-aid, firefighting, or search and rescue, and coaching, refereeing or officiating.

**Figure 14: Percentages of volunteers engaging specific volunteer activities, Social Services and non-Social Services volunteers, Alberta, 2007.**

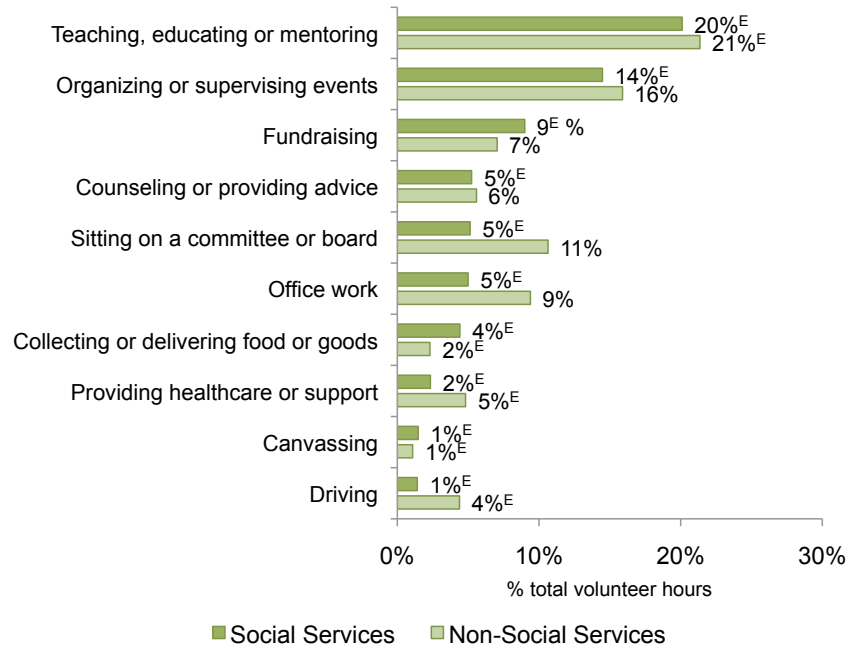


There appear to be relatively few major differences between Social Services volunteers and non-Social Services volunteers in terms of the activities they perform. Of particular note, Social Services volunteers were less likely than other volunteers to report organizing or supervising events (34% vs. 43% of non-Social Services volunteers) or sitting on committees or boards (16%<sup>E</sup> vs. 28%). Differences with a number of other more specialized volunteer activities are likely to be driven by the specific nature of the organization (e.g., coaching, refereeing or officiating tend to be specific to Sports & Recreation organizations).

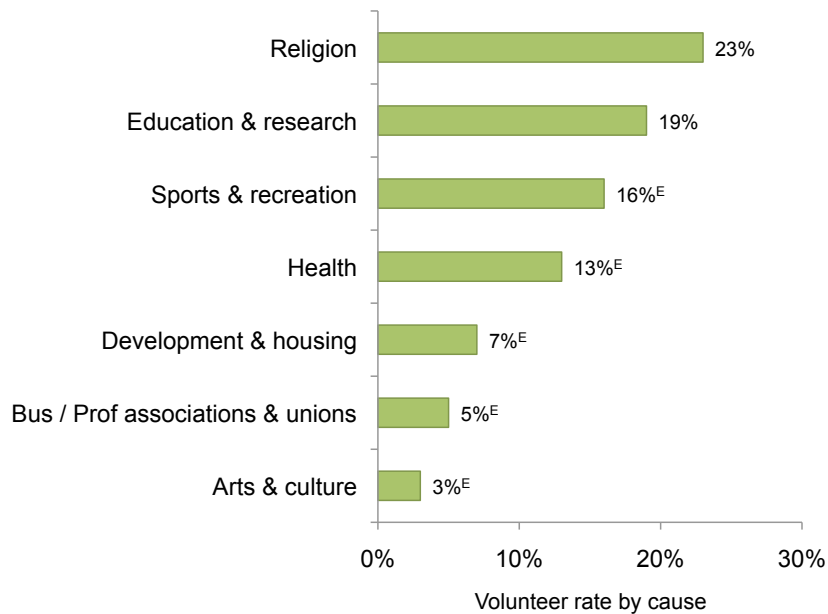
The differences between Social Services volunteers and non-Social Services volunteers were minor in terms of the time they devoted to various volunteer activities. However, although Social Services volunteers were most likely to engage in fundraising, this activity ranked third in terms of the total number of hours volunteered (9%<sup>E</sup> of total hours; see Figure 15). Other activities that accounted for large percentages of total hours include teaching,

educating or mentoring, which ranked first (20%<sup>E</sup>) and organizing or supervising events (14%<sup>E</sup>).

**Figure 15: Percentage of total Social Services and non-Social Services volunteer hours by volunteer activity, volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



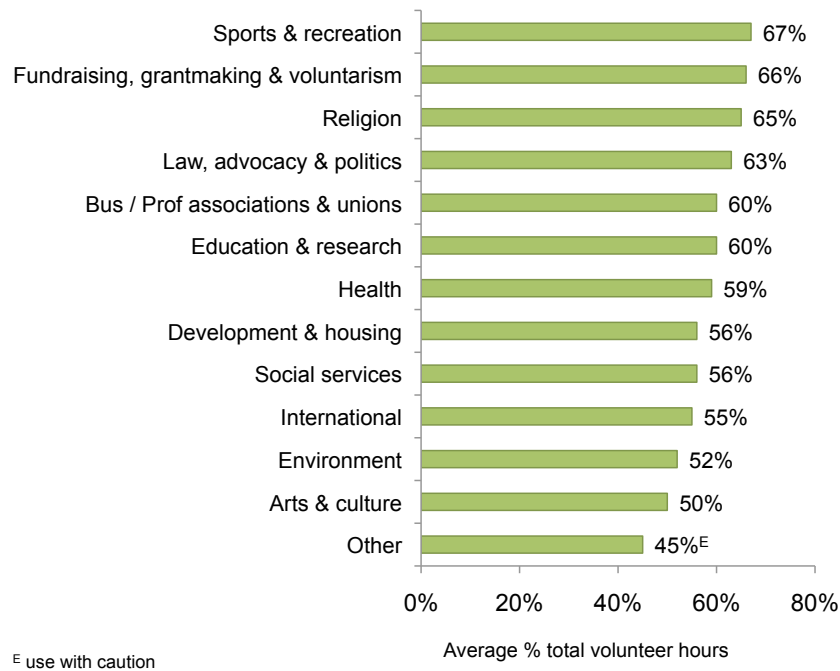
**Figure 16: Rate of volunteering for other types of organizations, Social Services volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



### What other organizations do Social Services volunteers support?

Most Social Services volunteers in Alberta did not restrict their volunteering to Social Services organizations. Just over two thirds (68%) volunteered for at least one other type of organization. By comparison, just 41% of non-Social Services volunteers volunteered for more than one type of organization. Social Services volunteers were most likely to also volunteer for Religious (23% volunteered), Education & Research (19%), and Sports & Recreation (16%<sup>E</sup>) organizations (see Figure 16).

**Figure 17: Average percentage of total hours devoted to organization type by supporters of organization type, volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



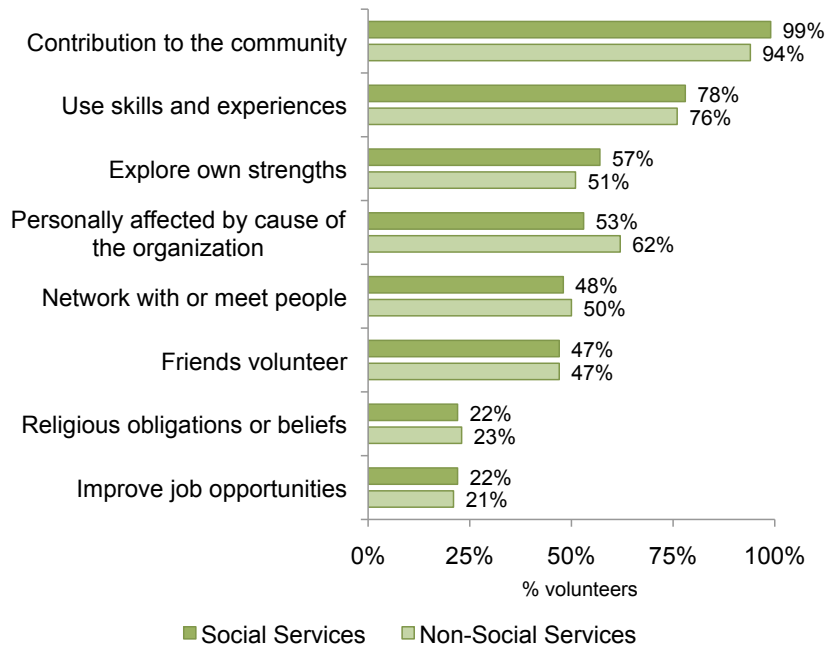
However, Social Services volunteers contribute less time on average than do the supporters of other causes. On average Social Services volunteers contributed just over half (56%) of their volunteer hours to Social Services organizations (see Figure 17). By comparison, volunteers for Sports & Recreation, Fundraising, Grantmaking & Voluntarism, and Religious organizations all contributed approximately two thirds of their total volunteer hours to these causes. These patterns of support are comparable to those seen in 2004.

### What motivations and barriers do Social Services volunteers experience?

Generally speaking, Alberta's Social Services volunteers tend to react quite similarly to the various potential motivations and barriers as do volunteers for other types of organizations. For instance, both Social Services volunteers and volunteers for other organizations were most likely to agree that they volunteered in order to make a contribution to their community (99% of Social Services volunteers and 94% of non-Social Services volunteers; see Figure

18).<sup>5</sup> Conversely, both groups were least likely to say that they volunteered in order to improve their job opportunities (22% and 21% respectively).

**Figure 18: Motivations for volunteering, Social Services and non-Social Services volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



In terms of differences in motivations, Social Services volunteers were somewhat less likely to report volunteering because they were personally affected by the cause the organization supports (53% vs. 62% of non-Social Services volunteers). Conversely, they were somewhat more likely to volunteer because they wanted to explore their own strengths (57% vs. 51%). Results from 2007 and 2004 were quite similar, with Social Services volunteers showing very similar patterns in motivations in both years. The only exception to this is the percentage of Social Services volunteers who volunteered because they wanted to explore their own strengths, which increased from 47% in 2004 to 57% in 2007.

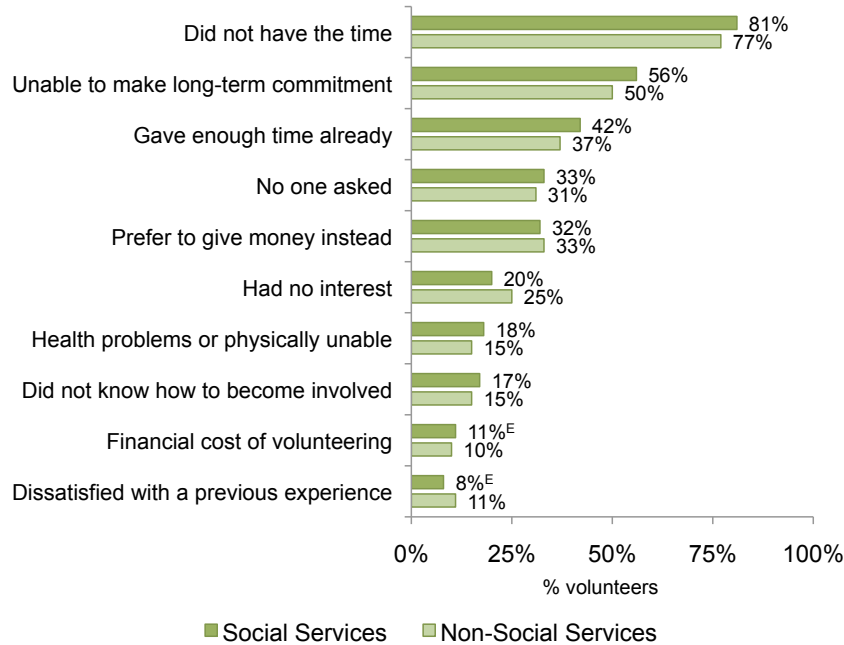
Social Services volunteers and non-Social Services volunteers also tended to respond quite similarly to potential barriers.<sup>6</sup> For instance, both groups were most likely to report that they did not have the time to volunteer more (81% of Social Services volunteer and 77% of non-Social Services volunteers; see Figure 19), were unable to make a long-term commitment (56% and 50% respectively), or felt that they had already contributed enough time (42% and

<sup>5</sup> The CSGVP asks volunteers whether any of eight potential motivations were important in their decision to volunteer for the organization for which they volunteered the most hours. These potential motivations tie directly to the type of organization to which the respondent contributed the most hours, meaning that the motivations are specific to volunteering for Social Services organizations.

<sup>6</sup> The CSGVP asks whether any of 10 potential barriers kept volunteers from volunteering more time than they might otherwise have contributed. These barriers pertain to volunteering generally, rather than volunteering specifically for Social Services organizations.

37% respectively). Conversely, they were least likely to report the financial costs of volunteering (11%<sup>E</sup> vs. 10%) and dissatisfaction with previous volunteer experiences (8%<sup>E</sup> and 11%).

**Figure 19: Barriers to volunteering more, Social Services and non-Social Services volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2007.**



Looking at potential differences between the two groups, there is little that stands out, given the relatively modest size of the differences, other than to note that Social Services volunteers were somewhat more likely than non-Social Services volunteers to cite most barriers to volunteering. This is somewhat different from the pattern seen in 2004, when Social Services volunteers were somewhat less likely than non-Social Services volunteers to cite most barriers. This suggests that the Alberta Social Services volunteer pool should be closely monitored for signs of stress.

**SUMMARY**

Social Services organizations receive considerable levels of support from Albertans. They benefit from the second largest donor pool and any type of organization and the third largest volunteer pool. Over one third of Albertans (37%) donated an average of \$171 each in 2007, contributing a total of \$175 million. Similarly, just over one in eight Albertans (13%) volunteered an average of 85 hours each. Collectively these volunteers contributed 30.7 million volunteer hours, the equivalent of almost 16,000 full-time jobs. Although the pools of supporters for Social Services organizations are broad, most of the support provided comes from a minority of contributors. Nine tenths (89%) of the money donated and 81% of the hours volunteered to Social Services organizations came from the top 25% of donors and volunteers.

The likelihood of donating to Social Services organizations increased with age and level of formal education. The likelihood of volunteering for Social Services also increased with level of formal education, but not with age. Albertans who attend religious services on a weekly basis are more likely to donate and to volunteer than are other Albertans. Those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more stand out in that they make the larger average donations than those with lower incomes and are more likely to volunteer.

Albertans were most likely to donate to Social Services organizations in response to requests in a public place (such as on the street or while shopping), mail requests and paying to attend a charity event. They were most likely to become involved as volunteers after approaching the organization on their own initiative. However, they stand out from volunteers for other organizations in that they are more likely to become involved after being asked to volunteer by someone not already involved with the organization.

Social Services supporters tend to be less focussed in their support than are those who support many other causes. They devote comparatively large proportions of their total support to other causes. On average, just under a third of their total donations and just over half of their total volunteer time is allocated to the Social Services cause.

Social Services donors assigned the same relative importance to motivations as did other donors, though they were somewhat more likely to report most motivations. They were more likely to mention barriers that are associated with limitations on the amount given, rather than barriers that prevent giving. For instance, they were more likely than other donors to say they were happy with the amounts they had already given, but less likely to say they did not know where to make a contribution.

In terms of motivations and barriers for volunteering Social Services volunteers are not greatly different from other volunteers. They tended to assign the same relative importance to motivations for volunteering as did other volunteers. This pattern also held true for the barriers that they faced.

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## About Imagine Canada

Imagine Canada is a national charitable organization that looks into and out for Canada's charities and nonprofit organizations.

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