

2004 CANADA SURVEY OF Giving, Volunteering & Participating



The Giving and Volunteering of Youth

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



givingandvolunteering.ca

INTRODUCTION

The Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating (CSGVP) examines the many ways in which Canadians aged 15 and over provide support to charitable and nonprofit organizations and to one another. This report uses data from the 2004 CSGVP to explore the role of youth in giving and volunteering for charities and nonprofits. It is intended to help these organizations better engage youth and increase their involvement as donors and volunteers.

For the purposes of this report, *youth* are defined as those Canadians aged 15 to 24. Most of the presentations in this report dealing with donations compare youth to older Canadians. Where germane, additional detail differentiating between youth aged 15 to 19 and those aged 20 to 24 is added. Some of the presentations dealing with volunteering add data pertaining to those aged 25 to 29, who are identified as *transitional youth* (i.e., they are in transition to full adulthood).

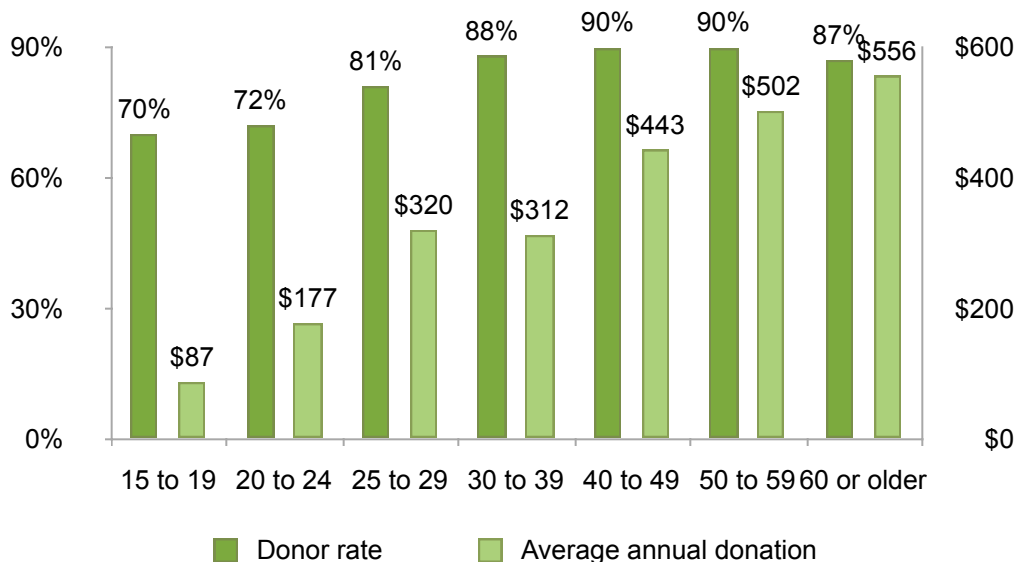
MAJOR FINDINGS: CHARITABLE GIVING

- Youth are less likely to give and tend to make smaller annual donations than older Canadians.
- Although youth give less, they tend to support the same types of organizations as older Canadians.
- Youth are most likely to make their donations by responding to requests made in public, but donations made in this way amount to only 4% of the total value of youth donations. Youth are much less likely to donate in response to a mail request, but these donations account for 10% of the total value of youth donations.
- Youth are less likely than older Canadians to decide in advance how much they will donate and which organizations they will support. They are also less likely to give to the same organizations year after year.
- Youth are more likely than older Canadians to not donate or not donate more because they prefer to volunteer instead, they were not asked to donate or donate more, or they did not know where to make a donation.

CHARITABLE GIVING

Youth are less likely than older Canadians to make financial donations and give smaller average amounts. In general, the likelihood of donating increases with age until the age of 59, after which it declines slightly (see Figure 1). Over two thirds (70%) of those aged 15 to 19 donated, compared to 90% of those aged 40 to 59. The average amount donated also tends to increase with age, ranging from a low of \$87 among youth aged 15 to 19 to a high of \$556 among those 60 and older.

Figure 1: Donor rate and average annual donation by age group, 2004



Because youth are less likely to donate and tend to give less, they account for a smaller proportion of the total value of donations than their numbers might suggest. Youth aged 15 to 19 made up 9% of the Canadian population but accounted for just 2% of the total value of all donations (see Table 1). Similarly, youth aged 20 to 24 made up 8% of the population but contributed 3% of the total donation value.

Table 1: Population distribution and percentage of total annual donation value by age group, 2004

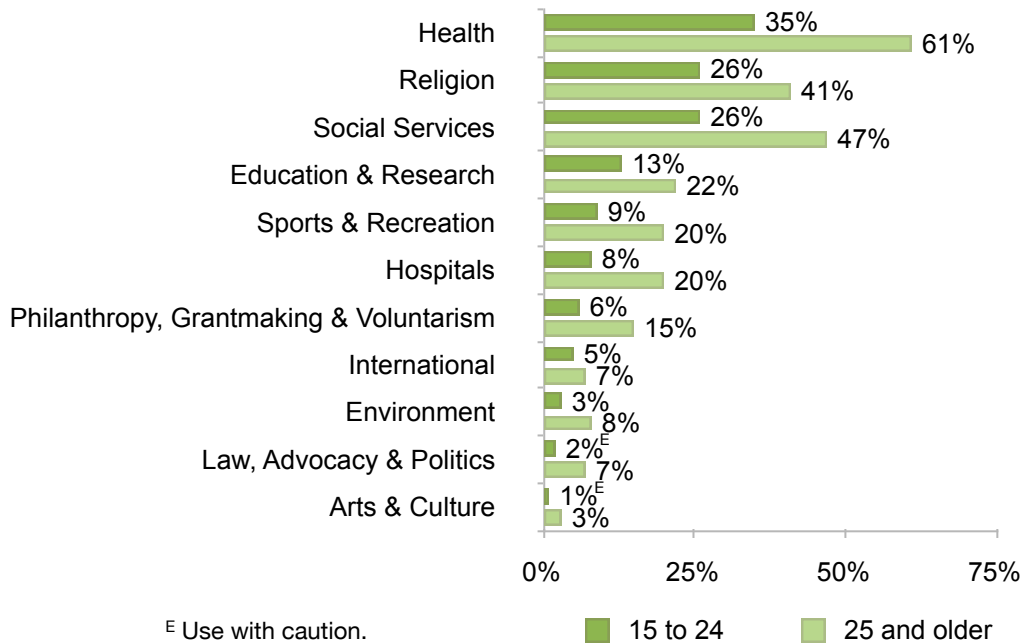
	% Population	% Donation Value
15 to 19	9%	2%
20 to 24	8%	3%
25 to 29	8%	6%
30 to 39	18%	15%
40 to 49	20%	23%
50 to 59	17%	22%
60 or older	21%	29%

The organizations youth support

Younger Canadians are less likely than older Canadians to donate to all types of charitable and nonprofit organizations. Like older Canadians, youth were most likely to give to Health (35%), Social Services (26%), Religious (26%), and Education and Research organizations (13%) (see Figure 2).

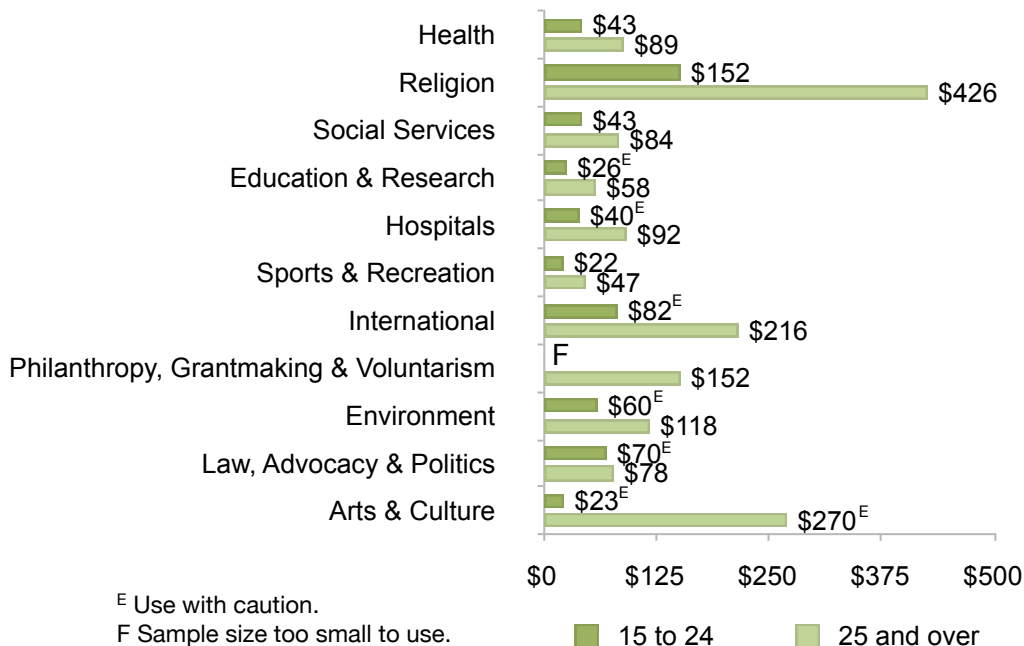
In general, youth tend to donate less money than older Canadians to all types of charitable and nonprofit organizations. In some cases, they give a great deal less; in other cases, the gap between their support and that of older Canadians is smaller. The differences were greatest among Religious organizations (youth donated an average of \$152 annually vs. \$426 for older donors), Arts and Culture (\$23^E vs. \$270^E), and International organizations

Figure 2: Donor rate by selected organization types, youth and older Canadians, 2004



(\$82^E vs. 216) (see Figure 3). Differences in support were much smaller for Law, Advocacy, and Politics organizations (\$70^E vs. \$78).

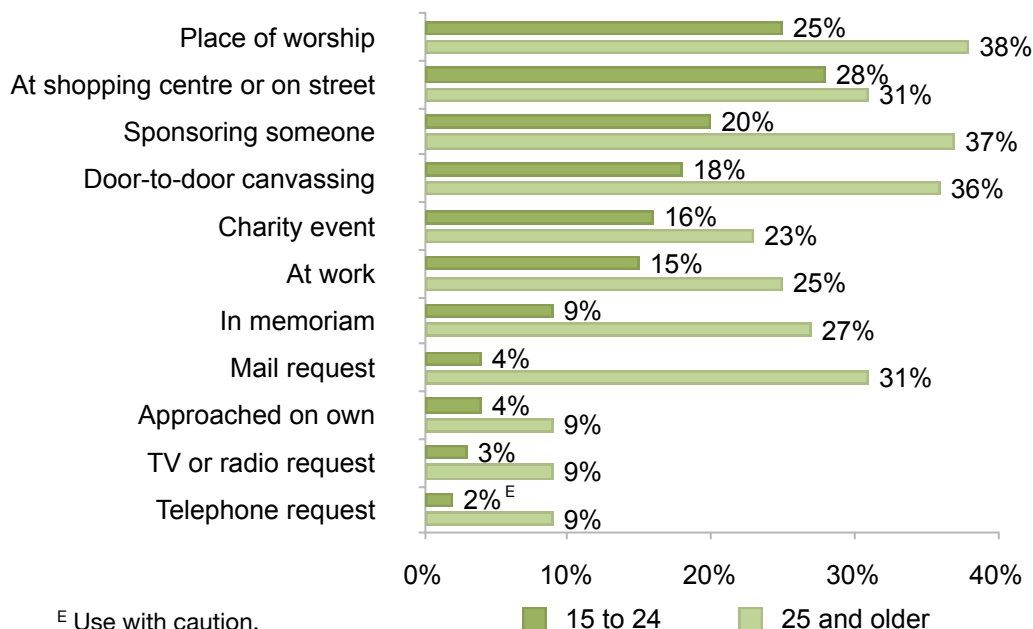
Figure 3: Average amounts donated to selected organization types, youth and older Canadians, 2004



How youth make donations

Youth were most likely to donate in response to requests made in public places, such as shopping centres or on the street (28% of youth donated in response to such requests), in a place of worship (25%), by sponsoring someone in an event (20%), and through door-to-door canvassing (18%) (see Figure 4).

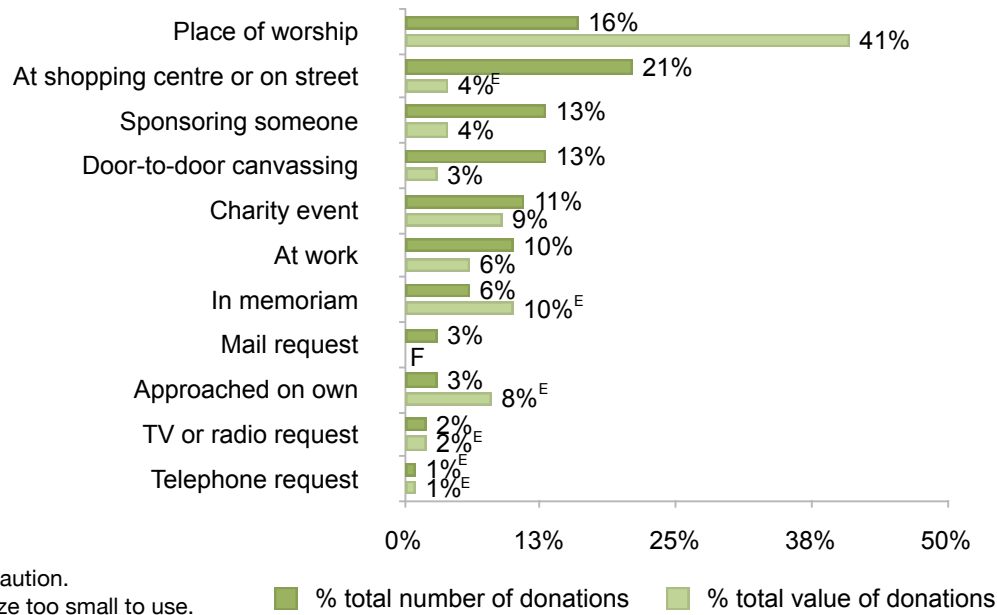
Figure 4: Percentage of donors responding to selected solicitation methods, youth and older Canadians, 2004



Youth donors were much less likely than older donors to donate in response to a mail request (4% of youth donated this way, compared to 31% of older Canadians), in memory of someone (9% vs. 27%), in response to door-to-door canvassing (18% vs. 36%), or by sponsoring someone in an event (20% vs. 37%). The only method that attracted similar percentages of youth and older Canadian donors was public solicitations (28% of youth and 31% of older Canadians gave through this method).

Some solicitation methods attract more money than others, and some methods that are used less frequently by donors account for a greater percentage of the value of total donations than other methods that are used less frequently. For example, although youth made more of their donations in response to solicitations on the street or in a shopping centre (21% of youth donations were made in this way), this method accounted for only 4%^E of the total value of youth donations (see Figure 5). Conversely, youth made just 6% of their donations in memory of someone, but this accounted for 10%^E of their total donation value. The most productive methods among youth were donating through a place of worship (16% of donations vs. 41% of value) and after approaching the organization on their own initiative (3% vs. 8%^E).

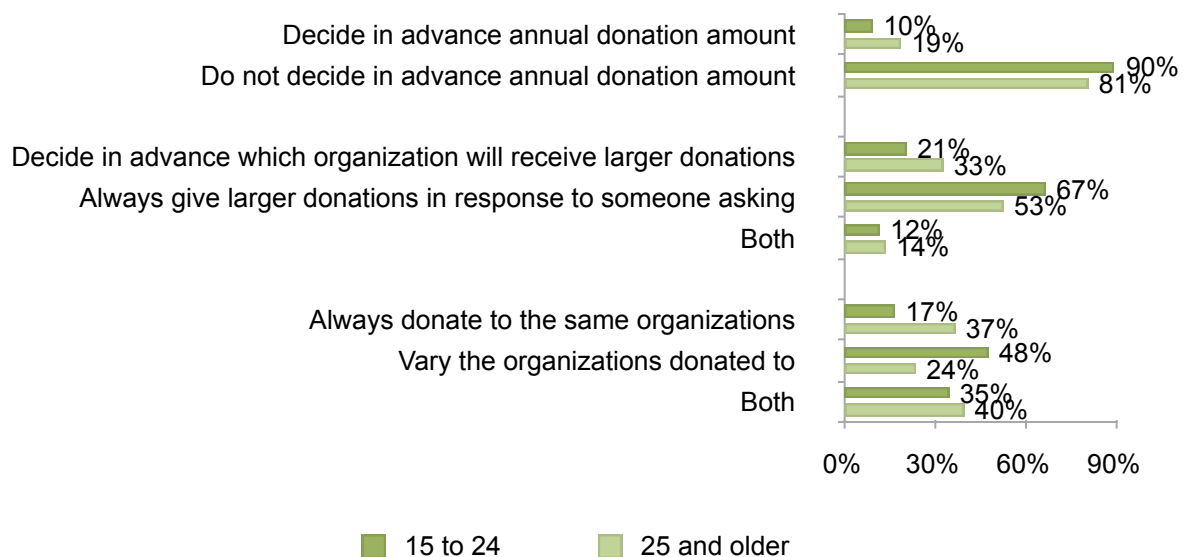
Figure 5: Distribution of total number of donations and total value of donations by selected solicitation methods, youth 15 to 24, 2004



Decision making around donations

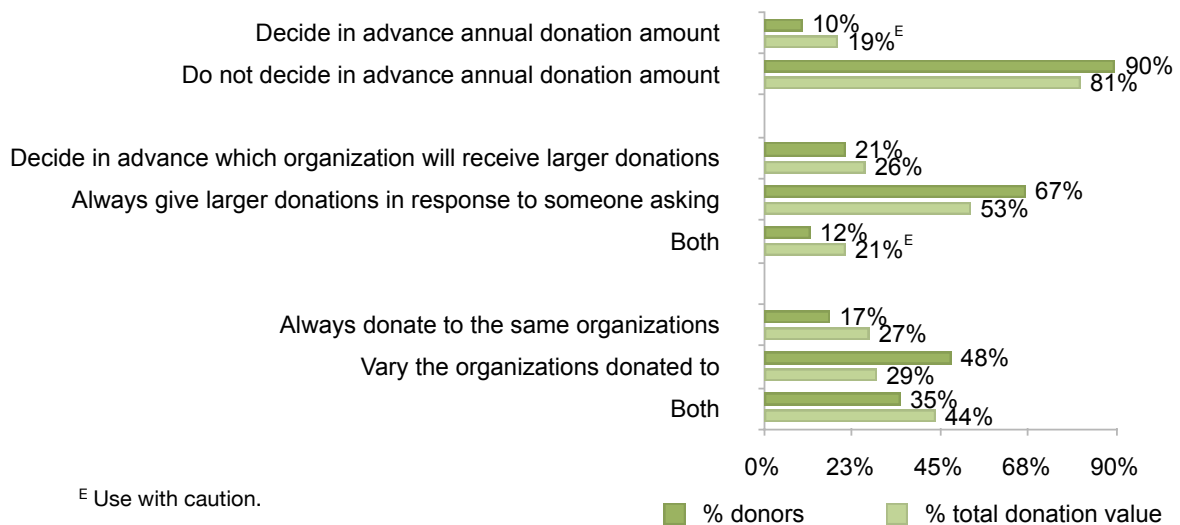
Youth donors are less likely than older donors to plan their giving in advance and to donate to the same organizations year after year. Youth donors were half as likely as older donors to decide in advance how much they would donate in the coming year (10% of youth donors vs. 19% of older donors) (see Figure 6). They were also less likely to decide in advance which organizations they would support (21% vs. 33% of older donors) and to donate always to the same organizations from year to year (17% vs. 37%).

Figure 6: Percentage of donors making giving decisions, youth and older Canadians, 2004



Donors who plan their donations in advance and donate to the same organizations year after year are important because they tend to give more than other donors. The 10% of youth who decided in advance how much they would give accounted for 19%^E of the total value of youth donations (see Figure 7). Similarly, the 21% of youth who decided in advance which organizations they would support accounted for 26% of total youth donations. The 17% of youth who gave to the same organizations year after year contributed 27% of the value of donations.

Figure 7: Distribution of youth donors making giving decisions and of total annual donation value by giving decisions, youth, 2004



Why youth give

Like older donors, youth are most likely to be motivated by altruistic concerns such as compassion towards those in need or the desire to make a contribution to the community and less likely to be motivated by other factors. Youth, particularly those aged 15 to 19, were less likely than older donors to cite almost every motivation for giving. For example, they were less likely to donate because they were personally affected by an organization’s cause (48% of those aged 15 to 19, 54% of those aged 20 to 24 and 65% of older donors) and were strikingly less likely to cite being motivated by income tax credits (6%^E 15 to 19 and 10% 20 to 24 vs. 22% of older donors) (see Table 2). The only exception to this general pattern was the desire to make a contribution to the community, which was cited by 81% of donors 15 to 19 and 79% of both 20 to 24 year old donors and donors 25 years of age and older.

Table 2: Reasons for making financial donations, youth and older donors, 2004

	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 and older
Feel compassion towards people in need	86%	88%	90%
To make a contribution to the community	81%	79%	79%
To help a cause in which personally believes	79%	86%	87%
Personally affected by the cause the organization supports	48%	54%	65%
To fulfill religious obligations or beliefs	26%	23%	33%
Income tax credit	6% ^E	10%	22%

^E Use with caution.

The barriers to giving faced by youth

The CSGVP asked non-donors whether any of eight potential barriers had prevented them from donating. As a group (i.e., both 15-to-19-year-olds and 20-to-24-year-olds), youth were more likely to say they did not donate because no one had asked them to (35% of those aged 15 to 19 and 33% of those aged 20 to 24 vs. 19% of older respondents) (see Table 3).

Conversely, they were less likely to say they gave money directly to people in need, without going through a charitable organization (13%^E and 15%^E vs. 24% respectively).

Table 3: Reasons for not donating at all, youth and older non-donors, 2004

	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 and over
Could not afford to give	55%	74%	64%
Gave voluntary time instead of money	35%	26%	23%
No one asked	35%	33%	19%
Did not know where to make contribution	29%	17% ^E	13%
Hard find a cause worth supporting	16%	14% ^E	17%
Gave money directly to people, not through an organization	13% ^E	15% ^E	24%
Did not think money would be used efficiently	12% ^E	21% ^E	24%
Did not like way in which requests were made	9% ^E	23% ^E	16%

^E Use with caution.

Youth aged 15 to 19 were more likely than older respondents to say they did not donate because they volunteered instead (35% vs. 26% of those aged 20 to 24 and 23% of those 25 and older). They were also more likely to say they did not know where to make a contribution (29% vs. 17%^E of those aged 20 to 24 and 13% of those 25 and older).

Conversely, they were less likely to believe that the money they donated would not be used efficiently (12%^E vs. 21%^E and 24%).

Youth aged 20 to 24 stand out from other non-donors in that they were more likely to say that they could not afford to donate (74% cited this barrier, compared to 55% of those aged 15 to 19 and 64% of older non-donors). They were also more likely to say that they did not like how requests for donations were made (23%^E vs. 9%^E of donors aged 15 to 19 and 16% of older donors).

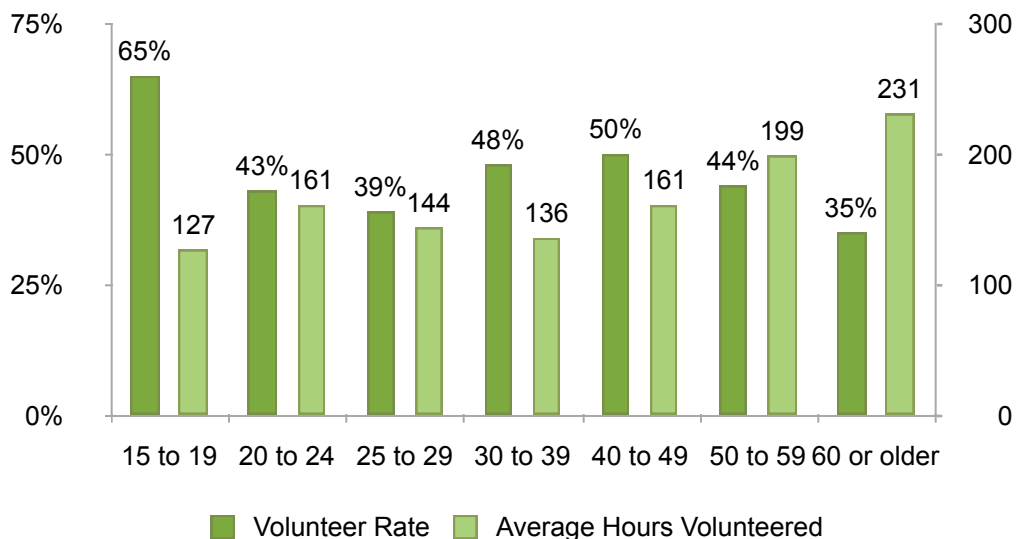
MAJOR FINDINGS: VOLUNTEERING

- Youth aged 15 to 19 are more likely to volunteer than any other age group, but they tend to contribute the fewest hours. Older youth are much less likely to volunteers than youth aged 15 to 19 but tend to give slightly more hours.
- Youth are more likely than older Canadians to volunteer for and give more of their time to Education and Research organizations.
- Youth are more likely than older Canadians to be required to volunteer, most often by their schools.
- Youth are more likely to volunteer for reasons related to employment and social concerns.
- Youth are more likely to not volunteer or not volunteer more because they were not asked to or because they did not know how to. They are less likely to feel they have already given enough time.

VOLUNTEERING

Youth show striking variations in their patterns of volunteering. About two thirds (65%) of youth aged 15 to 19 volunteered, compared to 43% of those aged 20 to 24 and 39% of those aged 25 to 29 (see Figure 8). After age 30, the likelihood of volunteering increases to a high

Figure 8: Volunteer rate and average annual volunteer hours by age group, 2004



of 50% among those aged 40 to 49 and declines with age thereafter.

In terms of the number of hours volunteered, youth aged 15 to 19 contributed an average of 127 hours annually while those aged 20 to 24 contributed 161 hours. Transitional youth

contributed an average of 144 hours. The number of hours dipped to 136 among volunteers aged 30 to 39 and then increased with age to a peak of 231 hours among those 60 and over.

Although the volunteer rate and average number of hours contributed vary strikingly between those aged 15 to 19 and those aged 20 to 24, both groups account for percentages of total volunteer hours that are roughly in keeping with their representation in the population. Youth aged 15 to 19 made up 9% of the Canadian population and contributed 10% of all volunteer hours. Similarly, those aged 20 to 24 made up 8% of the population and contributed 7% of total volunteer hours. A similar pattern is seen with transitional youth, who made up 8% of the population and accounted for 6% of total volunteer hours.

The organizations youth volunteers support

Youth and older Canadians are similar to the extent that they are most likely to support the same four types of organizations: Education and Research, Social Services, Sports and Recreation, and Religion. However, there are some important differences among the various age groups. For instance, those aged 15 to 19 were approximately two to three times more likely than older Canadians to volunteer for organizations working in the areas of Education and Research (31% of those aged 15 to 19 volunteered vs. 9% of those aged 20 to 24 and 10% of those aged 25 and over) and Social Services (19% vs. 11% for those aged 20 and over) (see Table 4). Similarly those aged 20 to 24 were markedly more likely to volunteer for Universities and Colleges (7%^E vs. 2%^E of those aged 15 to 19 and 1% of those aged 25

Table 4: Volunteer rate by selected organization types, selected age groups, 2004

	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 and over
Education & Research	31%	9%	10%
Social Services	19%	11%	11%
Sports & Recreation	14%	9%	12%
Religion	11%	8%	10%
Health	7%	7%	7%
Development & Housing	7%	3% ^E	5%
Arts & Culture	5% ^E	3% ^E	2%
Law, Advocacy & Politics	3% ^E	3% ^E	4%
Environment	3% ^E	3% ^E	3%
Hospitals	3% ^E	2% ^E	3%
Universities & Colleges	2% ^E	7% ^E	1%

^E Use with caution.

and over). Conversely, they were somewhat less likely than others to volunteer for Religious (8% vs. 11% and 10%), Health (7%) and Development and Housing (3%^E vs. 7% and 5%) organizations.

Not surprisingly, volunteers of all age groups tend to devote most of their volunteer hours to the organizations for which they are most likely to volunteer. Generally speaking, all age groups tended to allocate the largest percentages of their volunteer hours to the same four organization types: Education and Research, Social Services, Sports and Recreation, and Religion (see Table 5). Compared to older volunteers, youth tended to devote more of their

Table 5: Distribution of annual volunteer hours by selected organization types, selected age groups, 2004

	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 and over
Education & Research	23%	13% ^E	9%
Social Services	23%	19% ^E	16%
Sports & Recreation	12%	9% ^E	20%
Religion	13% ^E	19% ^E	16%
Health	3% ^E	5% ^E	5%
Development & Housing	4% ^E	2% ^E	6%
Arts & Culture	5% ^E	F	4%
Law, Advocacy & Politics	1% ^E	3% ^E	4%
Environment	F	F	4%
Hospitals	1% ^E	F	3%
Universities & Colleges	F	F	F

^E Use with caution.

F Sample size too small to use.

volunteer hours to Education and Research and Social Services organizations and less to Sports and Recreation organizations. Interestingly, those aged 20 to 24 contributed 19%^E of total volunteer hours to Religious organizations, more than both younger and older volunteers.

What youth volunteers do

Volunteers aged 15 to 19 are more likely than older volunteers to engage in most volunteer activities. For example, they were more likely than older volunteers to organize or supervise

Table 6: Percentages of volunteers involved in different volunteer activities, selected age groups, 2004

	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 and over
Organizing or supervising events	53%	46%	46%
Fundraising	52%	37%	46%
Teaching, educating or mentoring	34%	36%	29%
Coaching, refereeing or officiating	32%	19%	17%
Collecting, serving or delivering food	31%	19%	24%
Counselling or providing advice	25%	23%	27%
Providing health care or support	24%	18%	18%
Sitting on a committee or board	23%	28%	39%
Conservation or environmental protection	20%	14%	15%
Office work	19%	22%	26%
Maintenance or repair	19%	15%	18%
Canvassing	19%	13%	14%
Unspecified activities	11%	10%	9%
Driving	10%	14%	22%
First-aid, fire-fighting or search and rescue	7% ^E	7% ^E	7%

^E Use with caution.

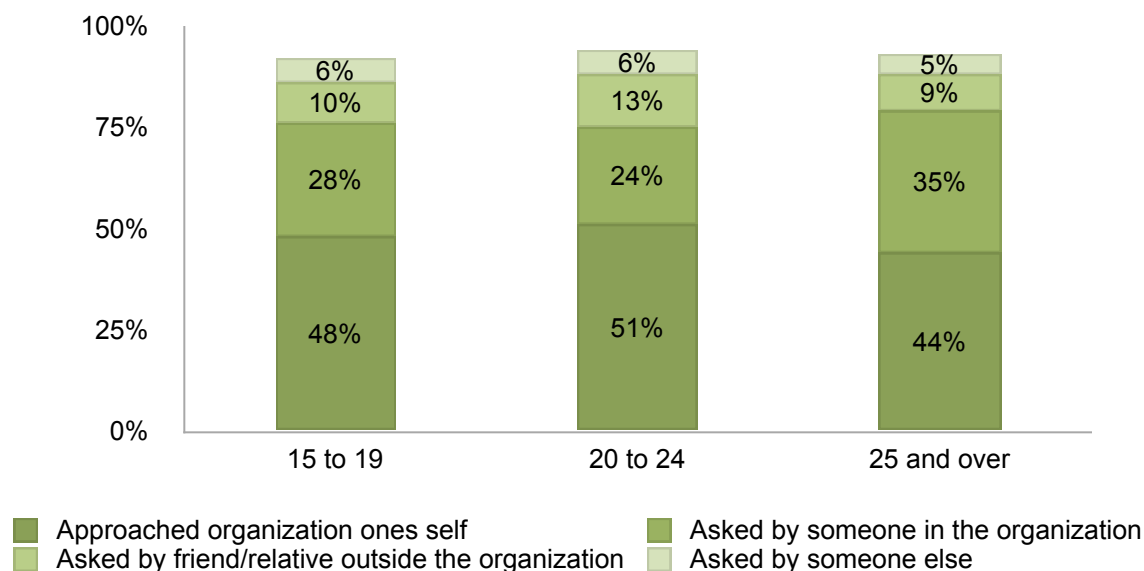
events (53% performed these activities) or to engage in fundraising (52%) (see Table 6). Compared to other volunteers, youth aged 15 to 19 appeared to have a particular affinity for coaching, refereeing, or officiating (32%), providing health care or support (24%), conservation and environmental protection (20%), and canvassing (19%).

Volunteers aged 20 to 24 are relatively unlikely to participate in most volunteer activities. At best, they were as likely as older volunteers to engage in some activities, such as organizing or supervising events, providing health care or support, and canvassing. They were less likely than both younger and older volunteers to do fundraising (37% vs. 52% of volunteers aged 15 to 19 and 46% of older volunteers) or to collect, serve, or deliver food (19% vs. 31% of younger volunteers and 24% of older volunteers).

How youth volunteers become involved

The CSGVP asks volunteers how they became involved in the organization to which they volunteered the most time. Youth were slightly more likely than older volunteers to say that they had approached the organization on their own initiative (48% of volunteers aged 15 to 19 and 51% of those 20 to 24 vs. 44% of older volunteers) (see Figure 9). Youth who became involved in this way found out about the opportunity through a variety of means but were most likely to have responded to advertisements (e.g., posters, newspapers) that highlighted volunteer opportunities. Almost one quarter (24%) of volunteers aged 15 to 19 learned of volunteer opportunities in this way, compared to 18% of those aged 20 to 24 and 14% of those 25 and over.

Figure 9: Methods of initial involvement with primary organization, selected age groups, 2004



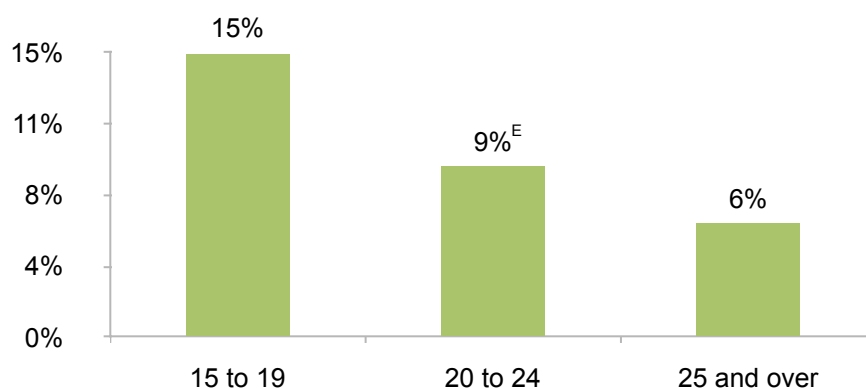
Most other volunteers became involved after being asked by someone to volunteer. Most commonly, volunteers said they were asked by someone who was already involved with the organization (28% of volunteers aged 15 to 19, 24% of those aged 20 to 24 and 35% of those 25 and over). About one in ten volunteers in all age groups were asked to volunteer by

a friend or relative who was not already involved with the organization, and about one in twenty were asked by someone else.

Mandatory community service

Youth are more likely to engage in mandatory community service than are older Canadians.¹ The percentage of volunteers engaging in mandatory community service for the organization to which they contributed the most hours was highest (15%) among volunteers aged 15 to 19 and declined to 6% among volunteers 25 and over (see Figure 10). Just over two thirds of youth who performed mandatory community service said that they were required to do so by their school. Conversely, 66% of older volunteers said it was the organizations they volunteered for that required them to engage in mandatory community service.²

Figure 10: Percentages required to perform mandatory community service for main



^E Use with caution.

Why youth volunteer

Work-related and social motivations to volunteer decrease with age, while the likelihood of volunteering because one was personally affected by the organization's cause increases with age. The percentage of volunteers who said they volunteered to explore their strengths decreased from 65% among volunteers aged 15 to 19 to 44% among volunteers 30 and over, and the percentage who said they volunteered to improve their job opportunities decreased from 65% among volunteers aged 15 to 19 to only 11% among volunteers 30 and over (see Table 7). The percentage who said they volunteered because their friends did decreased from 54% among volunteers aged 15 to 19 to 41% among volunteers aged 30 and over. The

¹ The term *mandatory community service* is used here to refer to volunteering that “volunteers” were required to engage in.

² Examples of this type of requirement would be an organization that required volunteering as a condition of membership or an organization that required volunteer labour from parents as a requirement of their children's involvement.

percentage who said they volunteered because they were personally affected increased from 45% among volunteers aged 15 to 19 to 64% among aged 30 and over.

Table 7: Reasons for volunteering for main organization volunteered for, youth and older volunteers, 2004

	15 to 19 years	20 to 24 years	25 to 29 years	30 years and older
To make a contribution to the community	88%	90%	90%	93%
To use skills and experiences	77%	81%	74%	76%
To explore one's own strengths	65%	62%	54%	44%
To improve job opportunities	65%	44%	30%	11%
Friends volunteer	54%	47%	45%	41%
To network with or meet people	51%	49%	46%	46%
Personally affected by the cause of the organization	45%	53%	58%	64%
To fulfill religious obligations or beliefs	18%	16%	20%	24%

Barriers to volunteering faced by youth

The CSGVP asked non-volunteers whether any of ten possible barriers had prevented them from volunteering. Although youth and older Canadians tended to highlight the same barriers as being among the most important (e.g., lack of time, inability to make a long-term commitment, not being asked), youth tended to respond somewhat differently to many barriers than did older Canadians.

Youth non-volunteers are particularly affected by a number of barriers, particularly lack of time. They were more likely to say that they did not have the time to volunteer, and the percentage citing this barrier increased with age to peak at 83% among non-volunteers aged 25 to 29 (see Table 8). Younger non-volunteers were also more likely than those over the age of 30 to say that no one had asked them to volunteer and that they did not know how to become involved. It is important to note that the percentages citing the latter two barriers decreased with age, suggesting that the key issue may be one of lack of outreach. However, those younger than 25 were also noticeably more likely to say that they had no interest in volunteering.

Table 8: Reasons for not volunteering, youth and older volunteers, 2004

	15 to 19 years	20 to 24 years	25 to 29 years	30 years and older
Did not have the time	70%	76%	83%	63%
Unable to make a long-term commitment	42%	56%	56%	59%
No one asked	58%	55%	53%	35%
Did not know how to become involved	44%	36%	29%	18%
Gave enough time already	9%	10%	7%	17%
Had no interest	39%	28%	21%	22%
Gave money instead of time	26%	31%	40%	54%
Health problems or physically unable	F	7% ^E	8% ^E	31%
Dissatisfied with a previous experience	7%	6%	6%	6%
Financial cost of volunteering	12% ^E	15%	17%	15%

^E Use with caution.

^F Sample size too small to use.

Conversely, youth non-volunteers were less likely to say they were unable to make a long-term commitment, that they had volunteered enough time already, that they had health problems or were otherwise physically unable to volunteer, or that they gave money instead of volunteering.

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Cover photo courtesy of Imagine Canada member the Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

About Imagine Canada

Imagine Canada is a national charitable organization whose cause is Canada's charities and nonprofits. We reinforce the sector's collective voice, act as a forum and meeting place and create an environment in which organizations contribute to building stronger communities.

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