



## **NEWS RELEASE**

June 9, 2009

### **Volunteerism Rates Increase in Alberta**

National statistics released June 8, 2009

The 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating shows that the number of Albertans who volunteer their time increased four percentage points between 2004 and 2007. Alberta's volunteer rate of 52 per cent exceeds the Canadian average of 48 per cent.

"Volunteering as a form of civic engagement is strong in Alberta, according to the report released yesterday by Statistics Canada," notes Karen Lynch, Executive Director of Volunteer Alberta.

The average number of hours volunteered per year in Alberta is down to 172 hours per person, compared to 175 hours in 2004.

Albertans aged 35 to 44 years old are most likely to volunteer, while citizens aged 65 years and older volunteer the most number of hours. The former group volunteered an average of 179 hours a year in 2007, while the latter volunteered 216 hours per year.

Women are more likely than men to volunteer, while the number of volunteer hours was higher among men (175 hours compared to 169 hours for women). People who volunteered the most time in Alberta had a university degree, children, and attended weekly religious services.

#### **Alberta Donors**

Albertans donated more money in 2007 (\$596) than in 2004 (\$500). The percentage of Albertans who donated also increased from 79 per cent to 85 per cent. The Community Spirit Program in Alberta provided a significant tax incentive to donors to increase giving to charitable organizations.

The survey also showed that donations are on the rise among men versus women. In 2004, women donated an average of \$530 per year, while men donated, on average, \$467. In 2007, the average donation from men was \$650 (compared with \$543 from females). High donations came from those with a university degree (\$1030) or attended a weekly religious service (\$1,405).

While these figures are useful to show general trends, a more detailed analysis of the Alberta data was not available to Volunteer Alberta this year. In the past, the (former) Wild Rose Foundation funded a more complete analysis of Alberta survey data, providing a clearer picture of what an Albertan donor and volunteer looked like.

While basic information is available through the 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating, more in-depth analysis may uncover trends such as differences between urban and rural volunteer-related data, immigration statistics, and the barriers to volunteering and donating. This information is now only available on a fee-for-service basis.

The research outcomes are crucial to the nonprofit/voluntary sector and private and public funders, as 58 per cent of nonprofits entirely rely on volunteers (National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations in Alberta, 2006).



### **Canadians**

The average number of donations from one person were directed to 4.3 organizations in 2004 versus 3.8 in 2007. This drop is likely due to increased competition in the nonprofit/voluntary sector.

A very thin wedge of Canadian donors – 10 per cent of donors – gave 62 per cent of the donations in 2007.

Core supporters (donate \$364 or more, volunteer at least one hour) account for 14 per cent of the population but contribute 59 per cent of donations and 40 per cent of volunteer hours.

Ten per cent of volunteers give 54 per cent of the volunteer hours, proving still that a lot comes from a little.

The barriers to volunteering in 2007 increased compared to in 2004. Non-volunteers and volunteers both gave more reasons for not volunteering such as: unable to make a long-term commitment, gave money instead of time, had no interest, did not know how to become involved, or dissatisfied with a previous experience. Of interest is the non-volunteers' concern about the financial cost in volunteering (up from 15 per cent to 18 per cent).

Canadians volunteered almost 2.1 billion hours in 2007, the equivalent of 1.1 million full-time jobs. This represents an increase in hours since 2004 (by four percentage points).

Additional benefits of volunteering were recognized in the 2007 CSGVP survey. Two-thirds stated they increased their interpersonal skills while nearly half reported gaining communication skills. Other volunteers acquired organizational, fundraising, technical and office skills and an increase in knowledge.

Lynch observes, "with all these benefits gained, it is no wonder that Alberta's volunteer rate increased in 2007."

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### **Backgrounder attached**

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## Backgrounder

**Volunteer Alberta**, a provincial nonprofit, removes barriers in the nonprofit/voluntary sector, allowing volunteers to engage in Alberta communities. The mission of Volunteer Alberta is to create possibilities in Alberta's voluntary sector by strategically connecting leaders, members, organizations and networks. Current projects include providing risk management seminars, connecting Alberta's volunteer centres to the high-speed internet - the SuperNet - to enable videoconferencing and virtual volunteering, and working with nonprofits to remove barriers to integrate immigrants as volunteers in rural Alberta. For more information on these projects or other Volunteer Alberta initiatives, please visit [www.volunteeralberta.ab.ca](http://www.volunteeralberta.ab.ca) for more information.

The **Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating** (CSGVP) (formerly the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating) provides the most comprehensive look at the contributions of Canadians to one another and to their communities ever undertaken in Canada.

The CSGVP asks Canadians a series of questions about how they give money and other resources to individuals and to charitable and nonprofit organizations; volunteer time to charitable and voluntary organizations and directly to individuals; and participate in organizations by becoming members. The CSGVP is the result of a partnership of federal government departments and voluntary sector organizations that includes Imagine Canada, Canadian Heritage, Health Canada, Social Development Canada, Statistics Canada and Volunteer Canada. For more information visit [www.givingandvolunteering.ca](http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca).