

CANADIAN PRESS / LEGER MARKETING

## How Canadians Perceive Volunteer Work

Report



## 1.0 Study Highlights

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- Most Canadians do volunteer work.

Question : *In the past 12 months, have you volunteered...?*

n=1529	YES	NO
Canada	59%	41%

- At least one day a month is spent volunteering.

Question : *On average, how many hours a month do you volunteer? Is it... ?*

n=900 people who volunteer	
Less than 5 hours a month	37%
5 to 9 hours	25%
10 to 19 hours	20%
20 to 29 hours	8%
30 hours and +	7%
DNK / Refusal	3%

**CANADIAN AVERAGE: 10.7  
Hours per month**

- Volunteer work : a personal decision to help others.

Question : *Why did you first decide to do volunteer work...?*

n=900 people who volunteer	
... because you had decided to	57%
... because someone asked you	22%
... because family members or friends did	11%
None of the above	8%
Dnk/ Refusal	2%

- Over a third of volunteers would be willing to go abroad to volunteer.

Question : *Would you be willing to do volunteer work abroad?*

n=900 people who volunteer	Yes	No	Don't know / Refusal
Canada	36%	61%	3%

- Volunteer work is not sufficiently acknowledged by governments.

Question : *Do you think volunteer work is sufficiently acknowledged by ....governments?*

n=1529	Yes	No	Don't know / Refusal
	20%	71%	8%

## 2. Detailed Results

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### 2.1 Most Canadians do volunteer work

58% of Canadians spend part of their free time doing volunteer work, compared to 41% who don't.

Women (61%), over-65s (61%), Prairie residents (67%), Albertans (65%), high income earners (66%), retirees (62%), professionals (69%), and university graduates (72%) do the most volunteer work.

Question : *In the past 12 months, have you volunteered?*

n=1529	YES	NO
Atlantic Provinces	61%	39%
Quebec	54%	46%
Ontario	58%	42%
Prairies	67%	33%
Alberta	65%	33%
British Columbia	55%	43%
Canada	59%	41%

Note : The 100% complement represents those who don't know or who refuse to answer.

33% do volunteer work that involves providing support to different groups of people (children, the elderly, women in difficulty) while 21% say they volunteer in the area of sports and leisure, 16% in social work (associations), 16% in the health sector, 13% in cultural activities, 6% defending human rights and 15% in other areas.

*... in the following areas... ? (Possibility of mentioning various fields)*

n=1529	
... Providing support to different types of people (children, the elderly, women in trouble, etc.)	33%
... sports and leisure	21%
... social welfare	16%
... health	16%
... culture and the arts	13%
... defending rights	6%
... other areas	15%
Doesn't volunteer	41%
Don't know / Refusal	1%

## 2.2 At least one day a month is spent volunteering

Canadian volunteers spend an average of over 10 hours a month doing volunteer work.

37% do under 5 hours, 25% between 5 and 9 hours, 20% between 10 and 19 hours, 8% between 20 and 29 hours and 7% more than 30 hours a month of volunteer work.

The time spent doing volunteer work varies according to the availability of people. Those over 55 and homemakers do an average of 13 days per month, while 25-44 year olds do an average of 9 days per month.

Canadians who volunteer in the field of sports and leisure do more hours of volunteer work on average (11.7 hours/month) than those who volunteer in other areas. Volunteers in the field of social work seem to spend the least amount of time on average (8.7 hours/month).

Question : *On average, how many hours a month do you volunteer? Is it...?*

n=900 people who volunteer	Provide support to different types of people							
	TOTAL	Sports and leisure	Social work	Health	Culture and the arts	Defending rights	Other fields	
Under 5 hours	37%	38%	31%	42%	47%	37%	38%	47%
5 to 9 hours	25%	25%	26%	26%	21%	24%	24%	24%
10 to 19 hours	20%	20%	23%	19%	21%	16%	28%	13%
20 to 29 hours	8%	9%	9%	5%	2%	11%	3%	6%
30 hours and +	7%	7%	9%	4%	6%	10%	7%	5%
Dnk / Refusal	3%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	0%	6%
<b>Average number/month</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>8.4</b>

Note : The data is based on the first answer given in response to the question relating to which field the volunteer work was done.

## 2.3 Volunteer work: a personal decision to help others

57% of Canadians first decided on their own to do volunteer work, while 22% responded to a request, 11% did so because family members or friends did so and 8% for less quantifiable reasons.

69% of those over 55 acted out of a personal decision, compared to 17% who responded to a request.

Question : *Why did you first decide to do volunteer work? Is it...?*

n=1529

... because you had decided to	57%
... because someone asked you	22%
... because family members or friends did	11%
None of the above	8%
Don't know/ Refusal	2%

Canadians volunteer in order to help others (52%), to give back some of what they've received (37%), to do a favour (20%), to feel a sense of worth (19%), to meet people (11%), out of duty (10%) and to make friends (7%).

Question : *Why do you do volunteer work? (Possibility of giving several answers)*

n=999 people who volunteer	Canada	Atlantic Province	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	Alberta	British Columbia
To help others	52%	61%	55%	49%	58%	60%	41%
To give back some of what you have received	37%	39%	25%	39%	37%	39%	47%
To do a favour	20%	20%	51%	10%	9%	13%	10%
To feel a sense of worth	19%	21%	11%	21%	28%	20%	16%
To meet people	11%	11%	11%	11%	15%	11%	9%
Out of duty	10%	3%	10%	9%	12%	12%	13%
To make friends	7%	5%	6%	9%	7%	6%	2%
None of the above	6%	8%	2%	8%	5%	5%	9%
Don't know/ Refusal	2%	0%	1%	2%	0%	1%	5%

## 2.4 Over a third of volunteers would be willing to go abroad to volunteer

36% of volunteers say they are ready to do volunteer work abroad, while 61% say they wouldn't be interested.

53% of 18-24 year olds and 55% of students are among those who would most like to go abroad.

Question : *Would you be ready to do volunteer work abroad?*

n=900 people who volunteer	Yes	No	Don't know / Refusal
18 – 24 years old	53%	42%	6%
25 – 34 years old	40%	56%	5%
35 – 44 years old	34%	62%	3%
45 – 54 years old	35%	64%	1%
55 – 64 years old	35%	65%	0%
65 years and older	22%	77%	2%
Canada	36%	61%	3%

## 2.5 Volunteer work is not sufficiently acknowledged by governments

71% of Canadians feel that volunteer work is not sufficiently acknowledged by governments, whereas 56% feel it is sufficiently recognised by the general public.

Question : *Do you think volunteer work is sufficiently acknowledged by ... ?*

N=1529	Yes	No	Don't know / Refusal
... governments	20%	71%	8%
... the general public	56%	40%	4%

### 3.0 Methodology

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This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1529 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal and Winnipeg call centres between December 3 and December 8, 2002. Up to ten call-backs were made in the case of non-response.

Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to geographic location, gender and language spoken at home to ensure a sample representative of the entire Canadian adult population. In the end, the maximum margin of error obtained for a sample of 1529 respondents is of  $\pm 2.5$ , 19 times out of 20.