

New report shows that about 700,000 Canadians age 15 or older volunteered nearly 75 million hours in arts and culture organizations

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Canadian arts and culture organizations rely on volunteers to fulfill many roles, including serving on boards of directors, organizing events, fundraising, teaching or mentoring others, and performing various administrative tasks. Without volunteer support, many arts and culture organizations would be unable to achieve their mandates. In fact, a 2003 survey of non-profit organizations found that almost two-thirds of arts and culture organizations are run entirely by volunteers.

Given the importance of volunteers, *Volunteers in Arts and Culture Organizations in Canada in 2007*, the 31st report in the *Statistical Insights on the Arts* series from Hill Strategies Research, provides an important indicator of the health of the arts and culture sector and evidence of community engagement in arts and culture organizations, including organizations involved in visual arts, architecture, ceramic art, performing arts, museums, zoos, aquariums, media and communications as well as historical, literary and humanistic societies.

On a national level, the key findings of the report are:

- 698,000 Canadians age 15 or older volunteered 73.5 million hours in arts and culture organizations in 2007.
- The 73.5 million hours volunteered in arts and culture organizations is equivalent to about 38,000 full-time, full-year jobs, valued at about \$1.1 billion.
- The 73.5 million hours contributed to arts and culture organizations represent an average of 105 hours per volunteer.
- The most common reason for volunteering in arts and culture organizations is a desire to make a contribution to one's community (chosen by 92% of volunteers).
- Education is clearly the most important demographic factor in arts and culture volunteering. Canadians with higher levels of education are more likely to volunteer in cultural organizations than other demographic groups.
- 1.3 million Canadians volunteered in arts and culture organizations, donated money to them, or did both in 2007. This represents 5.0% of all Canadians 15 years of age or older.

On a provincial level:

- Saskatchewan residents are most likely to volunteer in arts and culture organizations (4.1% did so in 2007), followed by Nova Scotians (4.0%), Manitobans (3.5%), and New Brunswickers (3.3%). The arts and culture volunteer rate in Quebec and Alberta match the Canadian average (2.6%).
- Some differences in provincial volunteer rates could be due to different overall levels of volunteer activity between the provinces. As a percentage of all provincial volunteers, Nova Scotia and Quebec organizations are most successful in attracting volunteers to arts and culture causes, with 7.1% of all volunteers in each of these two provinces. New Brunswick and Saskatchewan follow very closely, with 7.0% and 6.9% of all volunteers in these provinces (respectively) attracted to arts and culture organizations. In Manitoba, 6.4% of volunteers gave their time to arts and culture organizations, a figure that is above the Canadian average (5.6%).

The report highlights the strong competition for volunteers from other non-profit sectors:

- The 698,000 volunteers in arts and culture organizations comprise 5.6% of all Canadian volunteers. Sports and recreation, social service, education and research, and religious organizations attract the most volunteers (close to 3 million each), followed by health organizations (1.6 million) and development and housing organizations (1.2 million).

A variety of statistics show that there was a decrease in arts and culture volunteering between 2004 and 2007:

- The number of arts and culture volunteers decreased by 4%, from 729,000 in 2004 to 698,000 in 2007. In comparison, the number of volunteers in all types of non-profit organizations increased from 11.8 million to 12.5 million, a 6% increase. Because of these changes, the arts and culture sector's share of total volunteers decreased from 6.2% in 2004 to 5.6% in 2007.
- Only two non-profit sectors saw a larger decrease in the number of volunteers than the arts and culture: universities and colleges (a 21% decrease) and organizations involved in law, advocacy and politics (a 13% decrease). Hospitals and environmental organizations saw the largest increases in the number of volunteers (16% for hospitals and 13% for environmental organizations).
- As a percentage of the population 15 or older, the arts and culture volunteer rate decreased slightly, from 2.8% in 2004 to 2.6% in 2007. In comparison, the percentage of the population 15 or older who volunteered in any type of non-profit organization increased very slightly, from 45% in 2004 to 46% in 2007.
- The average hours per arts and culture volunteer decreased from 120 to 105 between 2004 and 2007, a 13% decrease. In comparison, there was a very small decrease (-1%) in the average hours volunteered in all types of non-profit organizations.

- While most types of non-profit organizations saw very little change in the average hours volunteered, religious organizations saw a substantial increase in average hours (11%). Education and research organizations also saw an increase (6%). Organizations involved in law, advocacy and politics are the only other type of non-profit organization with a decrease in average hours volunteered (-14%) that was similar to the decrease for arts and culture organizations (-13%).
- For the arts and culture, the combination of a decrease in the number of volunteers (-4%) and a decline in average hours per volunteer (-13%) led to a 16% decrease in the total number of hours volunteered (from 87.8 million in 2004 to 73.5 million in 2007). In comparison, there was a 4% increase in the number of volunteer hours in all types of organizations. Because of these changes, the arts and culture sector's share of volunteer hours decreased from 4.4% to 3.6%.
- While there are no statistically definitive answers as to why these decreases have taken place, possibilities include the strong competition from other non-profit sectors, a potentially wider array of volunteer choices, and declining support from older volunteers.

Data source and full report information

The report examines data from custom tabulations that Hill Strategies Research commissioned from Statistics Canada based on the 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP). Between September and December 2007, Statistics Canada surveyed a statistically representative sample of Canadians 15 and older (20,510 people) about their volunteer work in all types of not-for-profit organizations in the 12 months preceding the survey.

The full report contains many more details about arts and culture volunteers, volunteer hours, volunteer activities, reasons for volunteering, demographic characteristics of volunteers, changes in volunteering, and provincial data. Funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Ontario Arts Council, the report is available free of charge on the Hill Strategies Research website (<http://www.hillstrategies.com>) and the websites of the funding organizations.

The previous report in the *Statistical Insights on the Arts* series, based on the same survey as this report, showed that there are approximately 759,000 donors to arts and culture organizations. These donors gave a total of about \$101 million to arts and culture organizations in 2007. In combination, the two reports provide a valuable portrait of individuals' participation in arts and culture organizations in Canada.

Media contact

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