

# Who are British Columbia's Volunteers?

## Personal and economic characteristics

Twenty-six percent of British Columbia residents (845,000 people) volunteered an average of 169 hours each, according to the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating.<sup>1</sup> Whether individuals volunteer and how many hours they contribute vary with a number of personal and economic characteristics. This fact sheet explores the relationship between volunteering and age, education level, sex, labour force status, and household size.

### Age

British Columbians aged 45 to 64 were the most likely to volunteer (29% volunteered in 2000), followed closely by those aged 30 to 44 (28%). Those aged 65 and older were much less likely to volunteer (15%).

Although comparatively few British Columbians aged 65 and older volunteered, this group contributed the most hours on average (351). Volunteers aged 15 to 29 contributed the fewest hours on average (109). Compared to the rest of the country, British Columbians aged 65 years and older had the lowest volunteer rate but volunteered the highest average number of hours.

Volunteers aged 65 and older accounted for a disproportionately large percentage of total volunteer hours. Although they made up only 9% of volunteers, they contributed 18% of all volunteer hours. Those aged 45 to 64 also accounted for a disproportionately large percentage of volunteer hours (33% of volunteers, 39% of hours).

### Education

Four in ten (40%) residents of British Columbia with a university degree volunteered. In contrast, fewer than two in ten (19%) of those with a high school diploma or less volunteered.

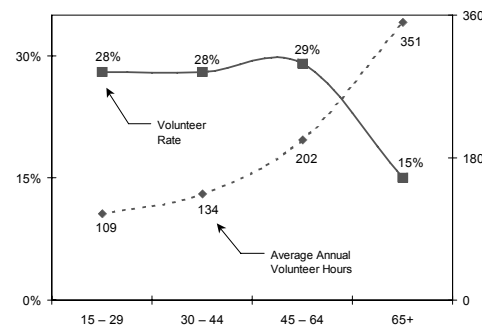
Although British Columbians with a university degree had the highest volunteer rate, volunteers with some post-secondary education contributed the most hours on average (212\*), followed by those with a post-secondary certificate or diploma (180).

Volunteers with some post-secondary education also accounted for a disproportionately large percentage of the total hours volunteered. They made up only 15% of volunteers, but contributed 19%\* of all volunteer hours.

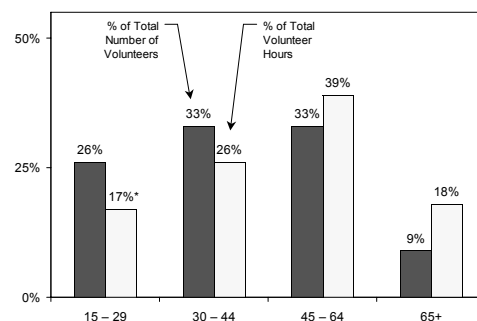
<sup>1</sup> NSGVP estimates are based on reports of charitable giving and volunteering over a one-year period by Canadians aged 15 and older.

\* Sample size limitations affect the reliability of this estimate.

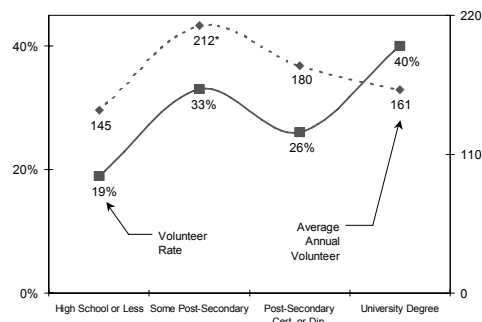
Volunteer Rate and Average Annual Volunteer Hours by Age



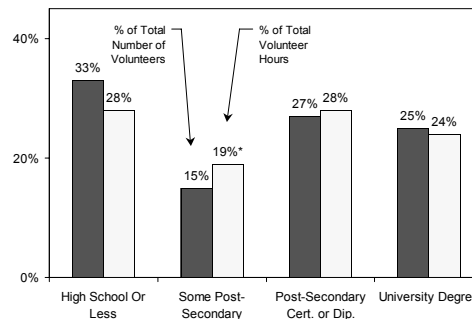
Percentage of Volunteers and Percentage of Total Volunteer Hours by Age



Volunteer Rate and Average Annual Volunteer Hours by Education



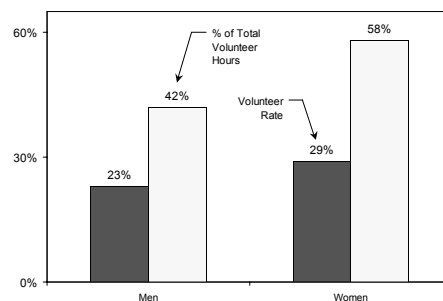
Percentage of Volunteers and Percentage of Total Volunteer Hours by Education



**Sex**

Women in British Columbia were more likely than men to volunteer (29% of women volunteered, compared to 23% of men) and contributed more hours on average than did men (171 versus 165). Women also accounted for a higher percentage of the total hours volunteered (58% versus 42%). British Columbia is the only province where female volunteers contributed more hours, on average, than did male volunteers.

**Volunteer Rate and Percentage of Total Volunteer Hours by Sex**



**Labour force status**

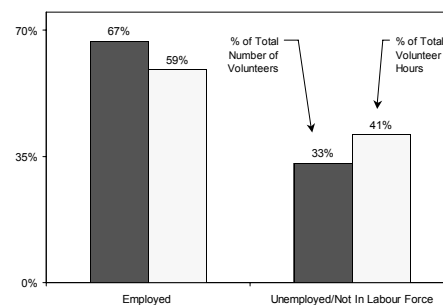
Employed British Columbians were more likely to volunteer (29%) than were British Columbians who were unemployed or not in the labour force (22%).

**Volunteer Rate and Average Annual Volunteer Hours by Labour Force Status**



However, volunteers who were unemployed or not in the labour force contributed more hours on average (210), than did those who were employed (148).

**Percentage of Volunteers and Percentage of Total Volunteer Hours by Labour Force Status**

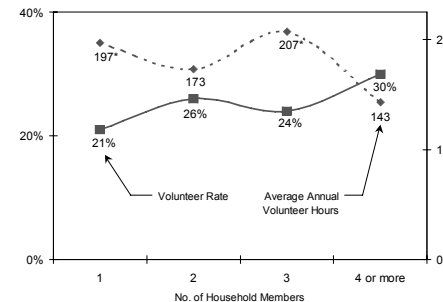


Volunteers who were unemployed or not in the labour force also accounted for a disproportionately large percentage of the total hours volunteered. Although they made up 33% of volunteers, they contributed 41% of all volunteer hours.

**Household size**

Three in ten (30%) of those living in households with four or more members volunteered, while just over two in ten (21%) of those living in single-member households did so.

**Volunteer Rate and Average Annual Volunteer Hours by Number of Household Members**



However, volunteers living in households with three members contributed the most hours on average (207\*), while those living in households with four or more members contributed the fewest (143).

For more information on the 1997 and 2000 National Survey for Giving, Volunteering and Participating, including full text of the highlight report, *Caring Canadians*, *Involved Canadians*, please visit [www.givingandvolunteering.ca](http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca).

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