

# Giving, Volunteering, and Participating in Alberta

Findings from the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating

By  
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David Lasby  
Michael Hall



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## Statement on data quality

The results presented in this report are derived from a survey. As such they are estimates, not definite measures. Because of variation in the sample size involved with various questions, and variability in the answers given, some estimates are more precise than others. Estimates with a coefficient of variation less than 16.6% are unqualified. Estimates with a coefficient of variation between 16.6% and 33.3% are noted with an <sup>E</sup> and should be used with caution. Estimates with a coefficient of variation greater than 33.3%, or based on fewer than 30 respondents are not presented and are represented in tables and figures with the symbol ... For more detailed information concerning data quality, readers are referred to Appendix B of *Concerned Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights of the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* (Hall, Lasby, Gumulka & Tryon, 2006).

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# Executive Summary

Over the course of their daily lives, many Albertans take the time to help others and better their communities by making charitable donations, volunteering for charitable or nonprofit organizations, helping others directly, or participating in various community groups or organizations. Collectively, these four actions are known as forms of 'social involvement' or 'pro-social activities'. This report is based on the findings from the Canada Survey of Giving Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP), a comprehensive survey that provides a snapshot of the state of social involvement in Canada. As part of the CSGVP, roughly 1,600 telephone interviews were conducted with a representative sample of Albertans aged 15 and older between mid-September and December of 2004. This report focuses on the survey results for the province of Alberta.

The report shows the extent to which Albertans make in-kind and financial donations, volunteer their time to charitable and nonprofit organizations, help others directly in their community, and participate as members of organizations and groups. It explores the types of organizations that Albertans are most likely to support and how supporters are most effectively recruited. It also discusses the personal and economic characteristics of those who are most likely to donate, volunteer, help others directly, and participate in groups and organizations. Finally, it provides insights into what motivates Albertans to engage in the various pro-social activities as well as what limits or prevents their participation.

Most Albertans (79%) made a donation to a charitable or nonprofit organization in 2004. On average, Albertans donated \$500 annually, for a total of over \$1 billion. Despite the fact that most Albertans make a charitable donation, the bulk of the financial support that charitable and other nonprofit organizations receive comes from a small group of donors; in 2004, 82% of all the money donated came from just 25% of donors.

Donors tend to be middle-aged, female, married or in common-law unions, and employed. They also tend to have pre-school-aged children in their household as well as higher levels of formal education and income. In addition, donors who are actively involved in their religion are more likely to donate and tend to donate significantly more than those who are not active participants in their religion.

Albertans donate to a wide variety of charitable and nonprofit organizations, though not all organizations receive the same amount of support. Albertans are most likely to donate to organizations devoted to health, social services, and religion. Albertan donors are the most generous when supporting religion organizations, giving an average of \$588. Some types of organizations receive relatively small donations from a large number of donors whereas others receive relatively large donations from a small number of donors. For instance, 59% of Albertans donated to health organizations, but their donations amounted to just 18% of all the donations made in Alberta. In contrast, religion organizations were supported by just one third (33%) of the population but received nearly half (49%) of all the money donated provincially.

Donors in Alberta typically give for altruistic reasons: they feel compassion for those in need, they believe in the cause that the organization supports, and they want to contribute to their community. Albertan donors most commonly report

that they do not give more because they cannot afford to do so or because they are happy with what they have already given. Albertans who do not donate anything at all say that this is because they either cannot afford to give anything or because no one asked them to donate.

Although Albertans are less likely to volunteer than they are to make a charitable donation, the level of voluntarism in the province is nevertheless impressive. Roughly 1.2 million Albertans (48% of the population) volunteered 214 million hours to charitable and nonprofit organizations in 2004, or the equivalent to more than 111,000 full-time jobs. In contrast to formally volunteering with an organization, 81% of Albertans helped other community members directly by doing, for example, household chores, paperwork, or shopping. As was the case with charitable giving, a small group of volunteers contributes the majority of the hours volunteered: 75% of all hours volunteered in Alberta came from just 25% of volunteers. Volunteers tend to be female, middle-aged, married or in common-law unions, employed, and actively involved in their religion. They also are likely to have children in their household and higher levels of education and income.

Although Albertans contribute their time to a wide range of organizations, they are most likely to volunteer for organizations dedicated to sports and recreation, education and research, and social services. While volunteering, Albertans are often called upon to undertake a wide range of tasks. Those most commonly undertaken by Albertans are participating in fundraising efforts and organizing or supervising events. Albertans are motivated to volunteer in order to make a contribution to the community, to use their skills and experiences, and because they have been personally affected by the cause the organization supports. Despite their underlying motivations, many Albertans do not volunteer more of their time because they lack the time to do so or they are unable to make a long-term commitment.

In addition to volunteering, many Albertans pursue their interests and address issues and needs in their communities by belonging to or participating in a wide range of groups, organizations, and associations. Nearly seven in ten Albertans (69%) participated in at least one group or organization in 2004. Albertans are most likely to be members of sports and recreation organizations, professional associations or unions, and religious groups. Participants tend to be middle-aged and married or in common-law unions, and they also tend to have children in their household and have higher levels of education and income.

Albertans who engage in one form of social involvement are more likely to engage in others, and the amount of money Albertans give increases with the number of pro-social activities they take part in. For instance, those who engaged in one or two pro-social activities donated an average of \$239 annually compared to the \$713 donated by those who engaged in all four pro-social activities. An impressive 62% of Albertans were engaged in three or more forms of social involvement, demonstrating that there is a great number of individuals in the province who are committed to helping their fellow citizens and building strong and vibrant communities.

# Chapter 1 – Charitable Giving in Alberta

Virtually all Albertans (93%) support charitable or other nonprofit organizations by making financial or in-kind charitable donations. This chapter begins by exploring the level of support that Albertans provide to charitable and nonprofit organizations and the personal and economic characteristics of Albertan donors. Next, it shows how the support Albertans provide varies among different types of organizations. Finally, it addresses the motivations that underlie charitable giving and the barriers that prevent Albertans from giving more or giving at all.

## Giving in 2004: Key findings

- 93% of Albertans made either a financial or an in-kind donation.
- Nearly one in eight Albertans (79%) made a financial donation.
- The value of all charitable donations made by Albertans was just over \$1 billion; donors gave an average of \$500 each.
- The top 25% of Albertan donors (those who gave \$420 or more) accounted for 82% of all donations made in the province.
- Both the likelihood of donating and the amount donated tend to increase with education and household income.
- Individuals with lower incomes donated a greater percentage of their annual household income than did those with higher incomes.
- Nearly half (49%) of all the money donated by Albertans went to religion organizations; the average amount donated to these organizations was \$588.
- Albertans are more likely to give spontaneously than to plan their giving in advance, but those who plan ahead tend to make larger donations.
- The solicitation methods that are most likely to result in a donation are sponsoring someone, door-to-door canvassing, church collections, and mail requests.

## The support that Albertans provide

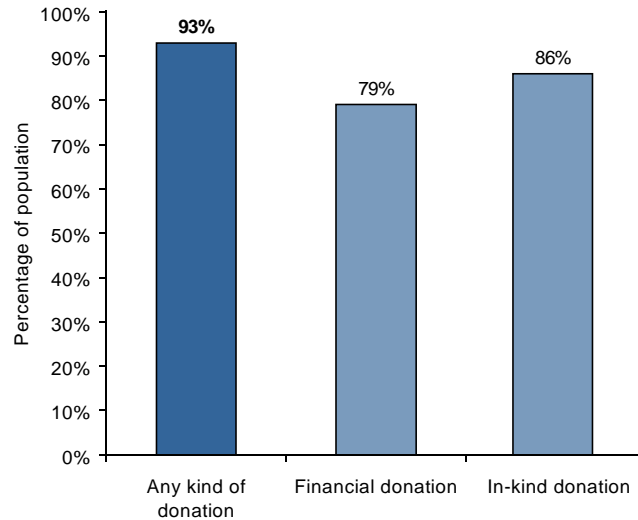
The vast majority (93%) of Albertans aged 15 and older made either a financial or an in-kind<sup>1</sup> donation to a charitable or nonprofit organization during the 12 months prior to be surveyed. Albertans are more likely to make an in-kind donation than they are to make a financial one (see Figure 1.1). Overall, 86% of Albertans made an in-kind donation compared to the 79% who donated

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<sup>1</sup> In-kind donations are gifts of clothing, toys, and other household items, and gifts of food.

financially. In terms of what sort of in-kind donations Albertans make, 79% donated clothing, toys, and other household items, and 68% donated food.

**Figure 1.1: Percentage of population donating to charitable and nonprofit organizations, by type of donation, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



In total, Albertans gave just over \$1 billion in financial support to charitable and nonprofit organizations in 2004 (see Table 1.1). Albertan donors gave an average of \$122 per donation and a total average of \$500 annually. Because averages can be affected by extreme values (for example, a few individuals who donate very large sums of money will cause the average annual donation to increase), the median<sup>2</sup> provides a better indication of the typical size of a donation. In Alberta, the median donation was \$150, meaning that half of all Albertans donated less than \$150 and half donated more.

**Table 1.1: Donors and donations, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**

<b>Rate of donating</b>		
Total population	(thousands)	2,573
Donors	(thousands)	2,045
Donor rate		79%
<b>Number of donations</b>		
Total number	(thousands)	8,350
Average number per donor		4.1
<b>Amount of donations</b>		
Total amount	(thousands)	\$1,021,435
Average annual amount per donor		\$500
Median annual amount per donor		\$150
Average amount per donation		\$122

<sup>2</sup> The median is the 'middle value' of a distribution and divides the distribution into two equal groups. The observations in one group will be greater than the median value, and the observations in the other group will be less than the median value.

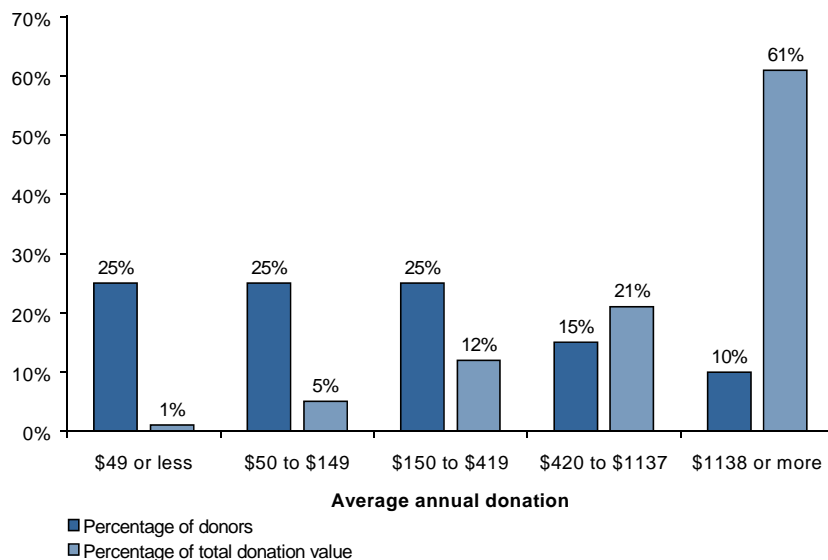
## Donating in Calgary and Edmonton

Residents of Calgary and Edmonton showed a slightly higher level of support for charitable and nonprofit organizations compared to the rest of Albertans. The donor rate for Alberta as a whole was 79%; the donor rate in both Calgary and Edmonton was 80%. The average annual donations in the two cities were also slightly higher than the provincial average of \$500; residents of Calgary donated an average of \$569 annually and residents of Edmonton donated \$543.

## The concentration of support

Although most Albertans make a financial donation to a charitable or nonprofit organization, a small group of donors provides the bulk of the money. Figure 1.2 divides donors into five categories based on how much they donated in 2004 and shows the percentage of the total value of all donations that each group contributed. For instance, the 25% of Albertans who gave \$49 or less in 2004 accounted for just 1% of the value of all donations made in Alberta that year. In contrast, the 10% of Albertans who gave \$1138 or more accounted for 61% of the value of all donations. When combined, the top 25%<sup>3</sup> of Albertan donors accounted for 82% of all the money donated.

**Figure 1.2: Distribution of donors and percentage of total annual donations, by amount of annual donations, donors aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



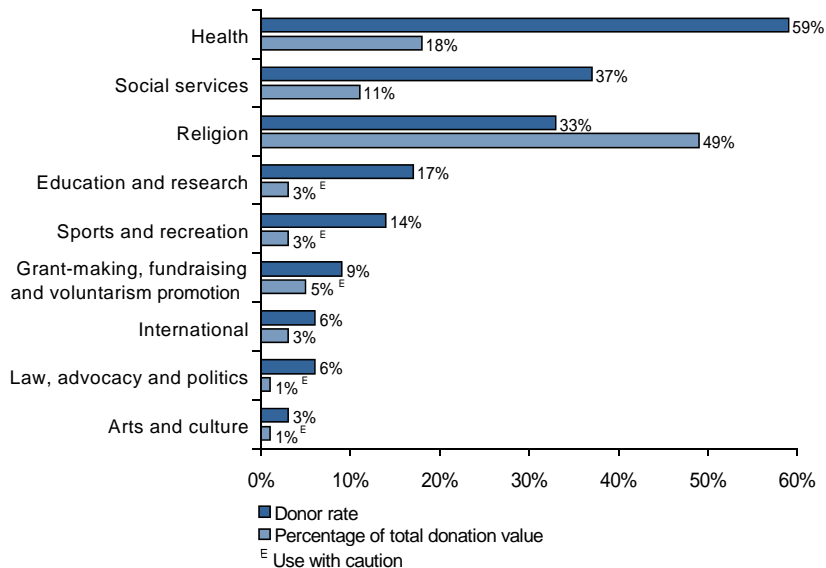
<sup>3</sup> The 15% who gave between \$420 and \$1137 and the 10% who gave \$1138 or more.

## The organizations supported by Albertan donors

Albertans support a range of charitable and nonprofit organizations, but not all types of organizations attract the same level of support. Religion organizations receive more money than any other type of organization in the province; they received over \$500 million, or roughly half (49%) of the value of all donations made in Alberta in 2004 (see Figure 1.3). Health organizations ranked a distant second with 18% of the total value of all donations (nearly \$190 million), and social services organizations were third with 11% (\$110 million).

Although religion organizations captured the largest percentage of the money donated, Albertans are far less likely to give to religion organizations than they are to health and social services organizations. Nearly 6 in 10 Albertans (59%) made a financial contribution to a health organization, and 37% made a donation to a social services organization, while only 33% donated to a religion organization. Other types of organizations received more modest levels of support; 17% of Albertans donated to organizations focused on education and research, 14% donated to sports and recreation organizations, and 9% donated to organizations devoted to grant-making, fundraising, and voluntarism promotion.

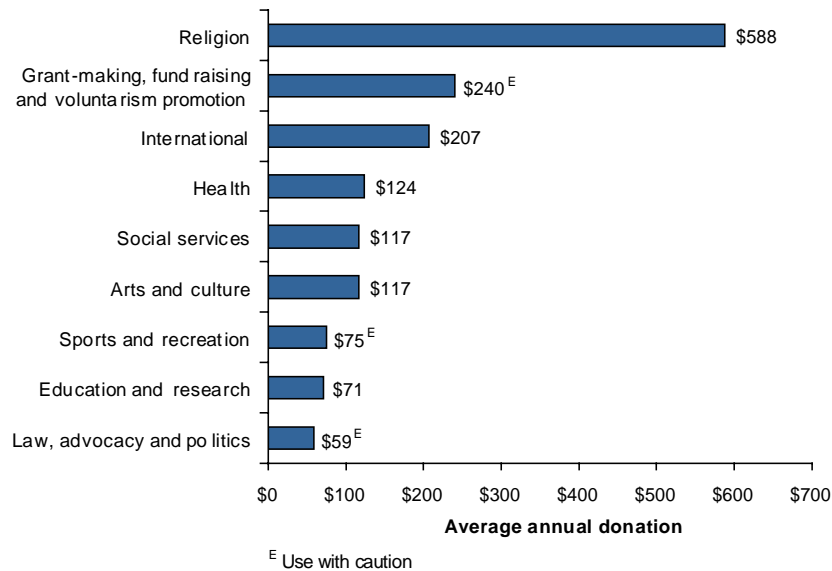
**Figure 1.3: Percentage of total donation value and donor rate, by selected organization type, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



The average amount that Albertans donate to different types of organizations varies widely. Albertans who donate to religion organizations make the largest annual donations (\$588; see Figure 1.4). In comparison, the average annual donation to health organizations is relatively small (\$124), even though more than half of Albertans (59%) support these organizations. Grant-making, fundraising, and voluntarism promotion organizations and those dedicated to international issues were much less popular among Albertans than were health

organizations, yet these organizations received significantly larger average annual donations (\$240<sup>E</sup> and \$207, respectively). Albertans made the smallest annual donations, on average, to organizations devoted to sports and recreation (\$75<sup>E</sup>), education and research (\$71), and law, advocacy, and politics (\$59<sup>E</sup>).

**Figure 1.4: Average annual donations, by selected organization type, donors aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



## A profile of Albertan donors

The decision to make a donation to any type of organization is a personal one. There are, however, certain personal and economic characteristics that appear to influence the likelihood of making a charitable donation and the amount donated. These characteristics include age, annual household income, level of formal education, employment status, sex, and marital status (see Table 1.2). Although these characteristics are discussed separately, it is important to note that they are often related. For example, income is often related to education, age, and sex.

Albertans aged 15 to 24 were least likely to make a financial donation (63%). The likelihood of donating increased until age 35 to 44 (89%), after which it declined steadily, albeit slightly, to 83% among Albertans aged 65 and older. Although Albertans between the ages of 35 and 44 had the highest donor rate, donors between the ages of 45 and 54 made the largest average annual donation (\$727). This age group made up only 19% of the population but it accounted for nearly \$300 million in total annual donations, or 29% of all donations made in Alberta.

Giving in Alberta increases with household income. The donor rate was lowest among Albertans with household incomes of less than \$20,000 (64%) and increased steadily to 88% among those with household incomes of \$60,000 to \$79,999, after which it levelled off. However, although donor rates levelled off at higher income levels, the average amount donated kept increasing. The average



annual donation rose from a low of \$178 among those with household incomes of less than \$20,000 to a high of \$760 among those with incomes of more than \$100,000. Despite the fact that donors with household incomes in excess of \$100,000 constituted only 22% of the population, they accounted for 37% of the total value of all donations made province-wide.

Individuals with higher levels of formal education are more likely to donate and tend to give more. Donor rates rose rapidly from 64% among Albertans with less than a high school education to 89% among those with some postsecondary, and Albertans with a university degree were the most likely to donate (93%). Average annual donations rose steadily as education levels increased, running from a low of \$273<sup>E</sup> among those with less than a high school education to a high of \$849 among those with a university degree. University graduates constituted only 21% of the population but accounted for 40% of the total value of all donations made in Alberta.

Employment status also appears to affect how likely individuals are to donate and how much they give. Albertans who are employed are more likely to donate (83%) than those who are not in the labour force (72%). Those who are employed also make larger average annual donations than those who are not in the labour force (\$541 vs. \$456, respectively).

Women are more likely to donate to charitable and nonprofit organizations than are men (83% vs. 76%, respectively) and they also make larger average annual donations than men (\$530 vs. \$467). Although men and women each accounted for 50% of the population in Alberta, women contributed 55% of the total value of all donations.

Generally speaking, Albertans who have children in their household are more likely to donate than those who do not have children in their household. Albertans with pre-school-aged children<sup>4</sup> in their household are the most likely to make a financial donation (91%) and Albertans without children in the household are the least likely (78%). Those with both pre-school and school-aged children make the largest average annual donations (\$632<sup>E</sup>).

Finally, marital status influences how likely individuals are to make a financial donation and how much they are likely to donate. Single Albertans are the least likely to donate (68%), while married individuals or those in common-law unions are most likely to give (86%). Married or common-law individuals also make much larger average annual donations than singles (\$596 vs. \$198). Widows and widowers make the largest average annual donations (\$728<sup>E</sup>). Albertans who were married or in common-law unions constituted 59% of the population but accounted for more than three quarters (76%) of the total value of all donations.

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<sup>4</sup> *Pre-school aged* is defined as ages 0 to 5, while *school aged* is defined as ages 6 to 17. Both *pre-school and school-aged children* indicates the presence in the household of at least one child from each age range (i.e., at least one child aged 0 to 5 and at least one child aged 6 to 17).

**Table 1.2: Donor rate and distribution of donations, by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**

	Donor rate	Average annual donations <sup>1</sup>	Median annual donations <sup>1</sup>	Total annual donations (millions)	Population distribution	Percentage of total donation value
<b>Total</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>\$500</b>	<b>\$150</b>	<b>\$1,021.4</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age</b>						
15 to 24	63%	\$138	\$56 <sup>E</sup>	\$42.2	19%	4%
25 to 34	75%	\$382	\$100	\$139.9	19%	14%
35 to 44	89%	\$498	\$160	\$229.1	20%	22%
45 to 54	85%	\$727	\$195	\$296.6	19%	29%
55 to 64	84%	\$685	\$255 <sup>E</sup>	\$167.9	11%	16%
65 and older	83%	\$563 <sup>E</sup>	\$170	\$145.8 <sup>E</sup>	12%	14%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	76%	\$467	\$135	\$460.8	50%	45%
Female	83%	\$530	\$155	\$560.7	50%	55%
<b>Marital status<sup>2</sup></b>						
Married or common-law	86%	\$596	\$174	\$773.2	59%	76%
Single, never married	68%	\$198	\$75	\$101.1	29%	10%
Separated or divorced	79%	\$582 <sup>E</sup>	\$130 <sup>E</sup>	\$78.0 <sup>E</sup>	7%	8% <sup>E</sup>
Widow or widower	75%	\$728 <sup>E</sup>	\$240 <sup>E</sup>	\$67.1 <sup>E</sup>	5%	7% <sup>E</sup>
<b>Education<sup>2</sup></b>						
Less than high school	64%	\$273 <sup>E</sup>	\$75 <sup>E</sup>	\$69.5 <sup>E</sup>	17%	7% <sup>E</sup>
Graduated from high school	70%	\$322	\$125 <sup>E</sup>	\$130.3	24%	13%
Some postsecondary	89%	\$505 <sup>E</sup>	\$160	\$76.9 <sup>E</sup>	7%	8% <sup>E</sup>
Postsecondary diploma	87%	\$501	\$140 <sup>E</sup>	\$308.4	30%	31%
University degree	93%	\$849	\$271	\$397.0	21%	40%
<b>Labour force status<sup>2</sup></b>						
Employed	83%	\$541	\$164	\$708.0	69%	76%
Unemployed	...	...	...	...	...	...
Not in the labour force	72%	\$456	\$100	\$210.5	28%	23%
<b>Household income</b>						
Less than \$20,000	64%	\$178	\$60 <sup>E</sup>	\$29.3 <sup>E</sup>	10%	3% <sup>E</sup>
\$20,000 to \$39,999	71%	\$359	\$110 <sup>E</sup>	\$144.3	22%	14%
\$40,000 to \$59,999	74%	\$457	\$140 <sup>E</sup>	\$155.1 <sup>E</sup>	18%	15%
\$60,000 to \$79,999	88%	\$416	\$159	\$154.2	16%	15%
\$80,000 to \$99,999	89%	\$590 <sup>E</sup>	\$155 <sup>E</sup>	\$156.4 <sup>E</sup>	12%	15% <sup>E</sup>
\$100,000 or more	89%	\$760	\$211	\$382.1	22%	37%
<b>Presence of children in the household<sup>3</sup></b>						
No children in household	78%	\$499	\$154	\$613.1	61%	60%
Pre-school-aged children only	91%	\$476 <sup>E</sup>	...	\$77.5 <sup>E</sup>	7%	8% <sup>E</sup>
Both pre-school and school-aged children	79%	\$632 <sup>E</sup>	\$180 <sup>E</sup>	\$81.3 <sup>E</sup>	6%	8% <sup>E</sup>
School-aged children only	80%	\$476 <sup>E</sup>	\$123	\$249.6 <sup>E</sup>	15%	24% <sup>E</sup>

<sup>E</sup> Sample size limited; use with caution.

... Sample size too small to be presented.

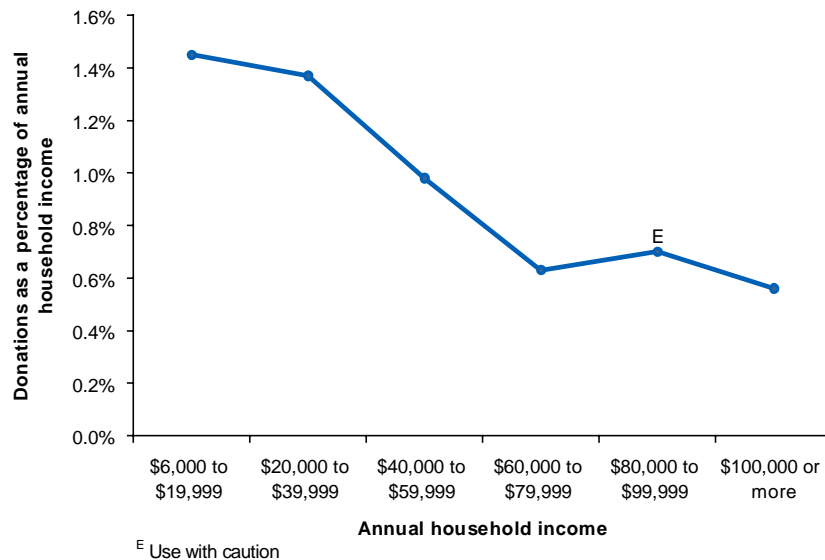
1. Estimates of average and median annual donations are calculated for donors only.
2. Respondents who did not provide this information are excluded from calculations. For this reason, the sum of annual donations by category does not add to the provincial total.
3. *Pre-school aged* is defined as ages 0 to 5, while *school aged* is defined as ages 6 to 17. *Both pre-school and school-aged children* indicates the presence in the household of at least one child from each age range (i.e., at least one child aged 0 to 5 and at least one child aged 6 to 17).

**Note:** Estimates may not add to totals due to rounding.

## Donations as a percentage of household income

Although Albertans with lower household incomes donate less in absolute terms, when their donations are expressed in relative terms, they actually tend to give more than those in higher income brackets. Figure 1.5 shows the average annual donation, expressed as a percentage of household income, for donors in each income category. Individuals with household incomes of less than \$20,000 donated 1.45% of their annual household income whereas those with incomes of more than \$100,000 donated just 0.56% of their income.

*Figure 1.5: Percentage of household income spent on donations, by level of household income, donors aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.*

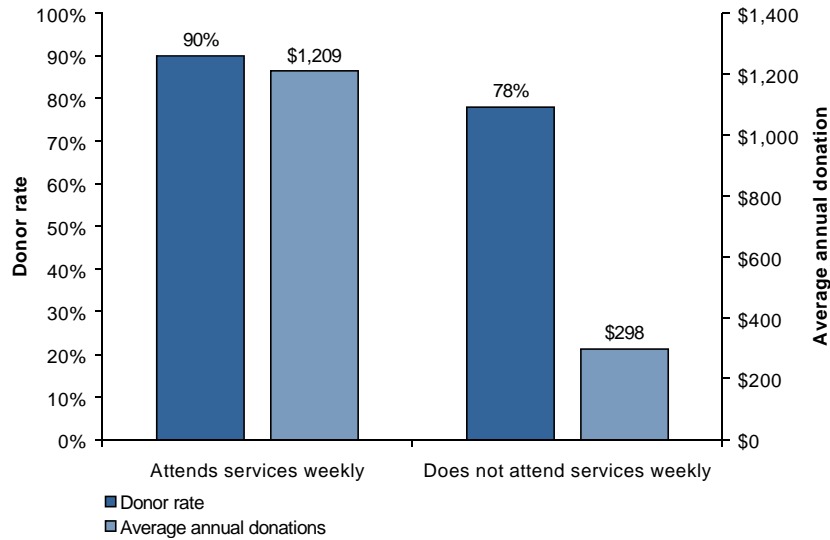


## The role of religion

Albertans who are actively involved<sup>5</sup> in their religion are more likely to donate and they also tend to give more. More than one fifth (21%) of Albertans reported that they attended religious services on a weekly basis. Ninety percent of these Albertans donated to charitable and nonprofit organizations compared to 78% of those who did not attend weekly religious services (see Figure 1.6). Those who attended religious services weekly also made substantially larger donations than those who did not (\$1,209 vs. \$298, respectively). Although donors who were actively involved in their religion were responsible for the majority of all donations to religion organizations (83%), they also contributed 30% of the total value of all donations to non-religion charitable and nonprofit organizations.

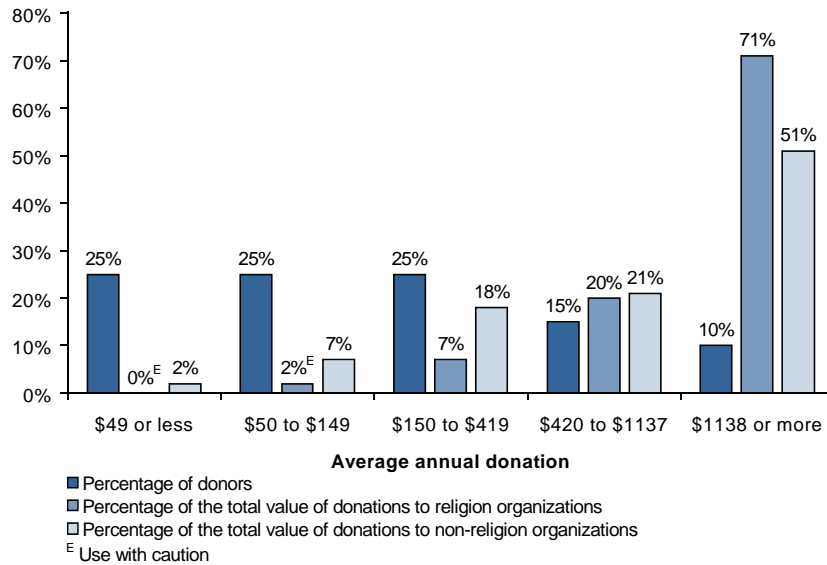
<sup>5</sup> Respondents were asked how often they attended religious services or meetings, excluding special occasions such as weddings, funerals, or baptisms. For the purposes of this report, those who responded that they attended religious services weekly are considered 'actively involved' in their religion.

**Figure 1.6: Donor rate and average annual donations, by weekly attendance at religious services, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



Top donors have a particularly significant impact on religion organizations. The top 25%<sup>6</sup> of donors accounted for 91% of all donations made to religion organizations, while the same proportion of donors accounted for just 72% of all donations made to non-religion organizations (see Figure 1.7).

**Figure 1.7: Distribution of donations to religion and non-religion organizations, by annual amount donated, donors aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**

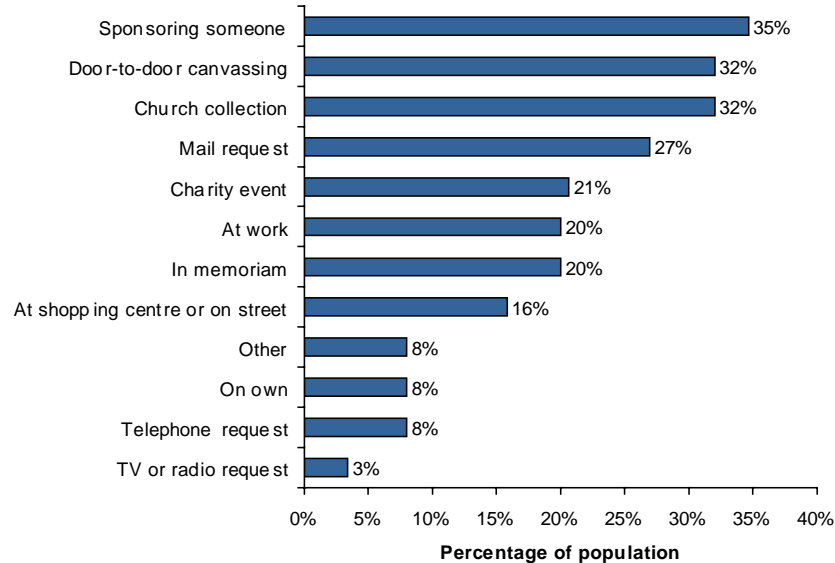


<sup>6</sup> The 15% who gave between \$420 and \$1137 and the 10% who gave \$1138 or more.

## How Albertans make financial donations

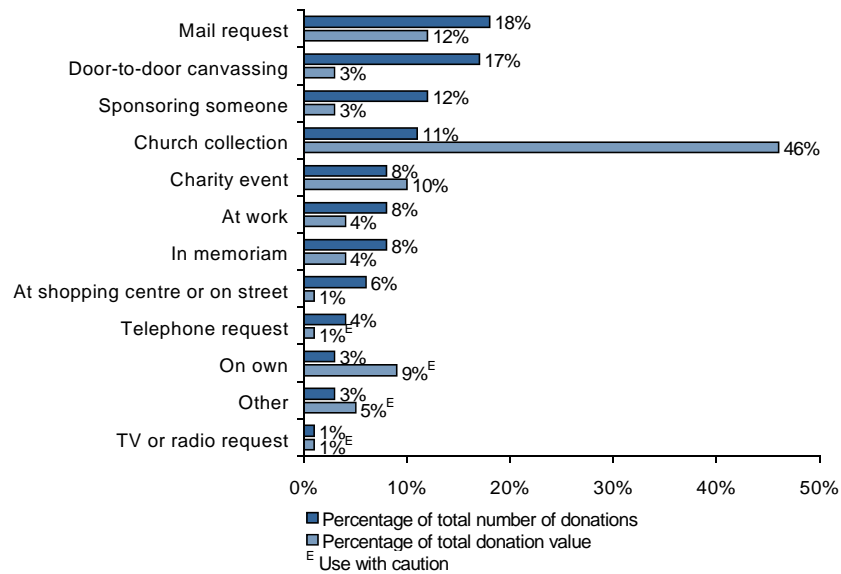
There are many ways in which Albertans can make donations to charitable and nonprofit organizations. They are most likely to make a donation as a result of being asked to sponsor someone in an event such as a walk-a-thon – 35% of donors said they made at least one donation in this way (see Figure 1.8). Other common ways in which Albertans make donations are in response to door-to-door canvassing (32%), through church collections (32%), and in response to mail requests (27%). Albertans are least likely to make a donation as a result of approaching an organization on their own (8%), in response to telephone requests (8%), and as a result of a TV or radio request (3%).

**Figure 1.8: Percentage of population making a charitable donation, by selected solicitation method, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



Although Albertans use some methods of giving more often than others, these methods do not necessarily generate the most money. For example, door-to-door canvassing and sponsoring someone in an event accounted for 17% and 12% respectively of the total number of donations made in Alberta but each method generated just 3% of the total value of all donations (see Figure 1.9). On the other end of the spectrum, church collections accounted for only 11% of the total number of donations made in Alberta but generated nearly half (46%) of the total value of all donations. Other methods that were successful in generating significant amounts of money were mail requests (12% of the total value of all donations), charity events (10%), and donations individuals made on their own (9%<sup>E</sup>).

**Figure 1.9: Percentage of total donation value and percentage of total number of donations, by selected solicitation method, donors aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



## Encouraging Albertans to give: giving spontaneously versus planning ahead

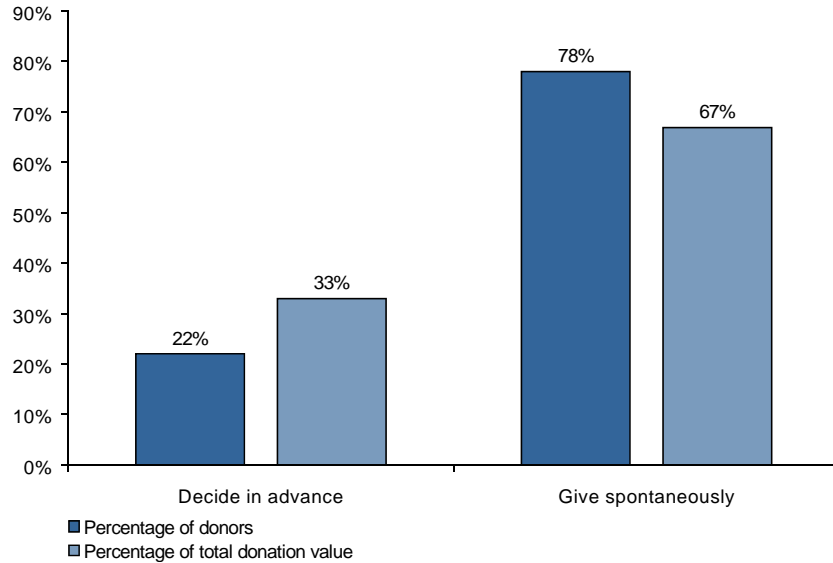
Most Albertans give spontaneously in response to a fundraising request rather than planning their giving in advance; however, those who plan ahead tend to give substantially more than those who do not. Only 22% of Albertan donors decided in advance how much money they were going to donate for the year, but these donors accounted for one third (33%) of the total value of all donations and made much higher average annual donations than donors who did not decide in advance (\$742 vs. \$432; see Figure 1.10).

The amount donated also varies depending on whether or not donors consistently support the same organizations. Donors who build lasting relationships with the organizations they support tend to make larger donations than those who vary the organizations they support. The 33% of donors who always gave to the same organizations accounted for 40% of the total value of all donations and donated an average of \$615 each year whereas the 25% of those who varied the organizations they gave to accounted for just 11% of the total donation value and donated an average of just \$227 (see Figure 1.11). The largest group of donors (42%) were those who gave consistently to some organizations and varied their giving to others; they accounted for nearly half (49%) of the money donated and made average annual donations of \$580.

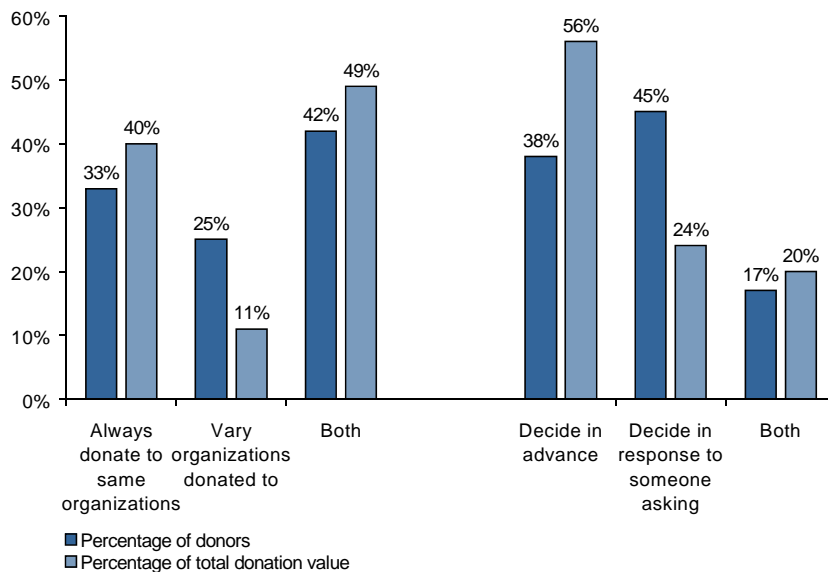
Nearly half of all Albertan donors (45%) reported that, for their larger donations, they gave spontaneously in response to being asked. Only 38% planned their larger donations in advance. Though fewer in number, those who plan their larger donations in advance tend to give significantly more than those who give spontaneously (\$761 vs. \$268). Albertans who planned

their larger donations in advance accounted for 56% of the value of all donations compared to 24% for those who gave spontaneously.

**Figure 1.10: Percentage of donors and percentage of total donation value, by ways in which donors decide to give, donors aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



**Figure 1.11: Percentage of donors and percentage of total donation value, by pattern of giving for all donations and ways in which donors decide to give larger donations, donors aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



## The reasons for making financial donations

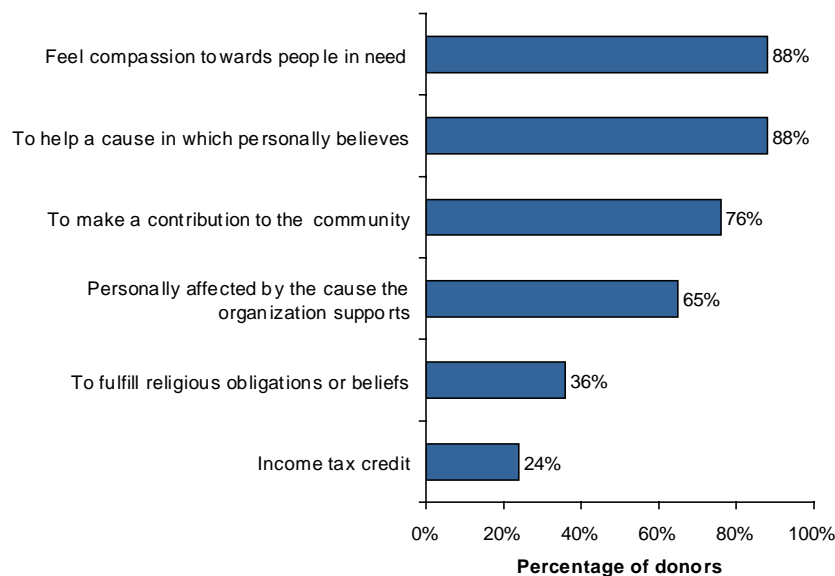
There are many different motivations that can influence the decision to make a charitable donation. There are also frequently barriers that prevent or dissuade

individuals from donating more or donating at all. Understanding why Albertans make charitable donations is valuable information for any charitable or nonprofit organization that hopes to garner financial support.

## Motivations

Albertans who donate to charitable and nonprofit organizations are most commonly motivated by altruistic reasons.<sup>7</sup> The most frequently endorsed reasons for making a financial donation to a charitable or nonprofit organization are feeling compassion towards people in need (88%), helping a cause in which one personally believes (88%), wanting to contribute to the community (76%), and having been personally affected (or knowing someone who has been affected) by the cause the organization supports (65%; see Figure 1.12). Donors are least likely to be motivated by a desire to fulfill religious obligations or beliefs (36%) and being able to claim a tax credit for their donation (24%).

*Figure 1.12: Reasons for making financial donations, donors aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.*



### *The role of tax credits*

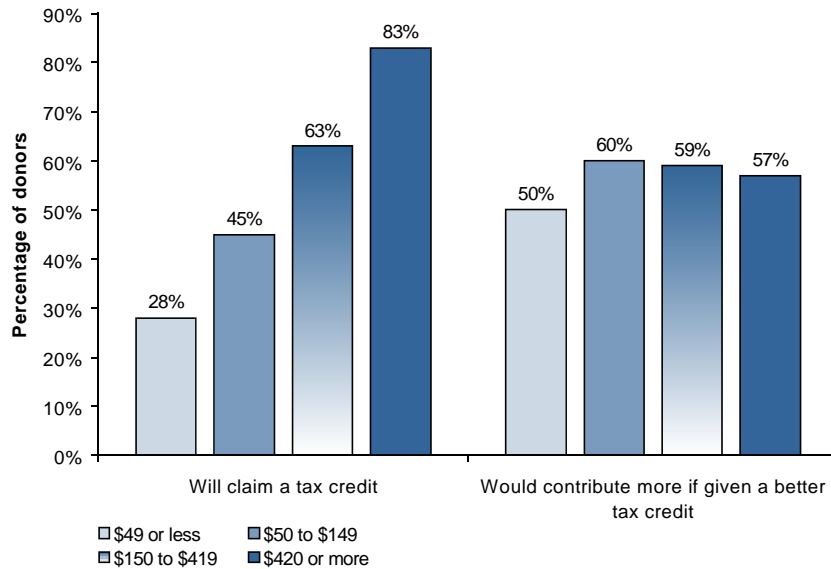
Donors to registered charitable organizations are eligible to claim income tax credits for their donations. Although only one quarter (24%) of donors identified tax credits as an important motivation for giving, 57% agreed that a better tax credit would motivate them to donate more. Overall, more than half (55%) of all donors reported that they would be claiming an income tax credit for their donations. The more money Albertans donate, the more likely they are to claim a

<sup>7</sup> Respondents to the CSGVP were asked whether each of six possible reasons for donating were important to them in their decision to make a charitable donation.



tax credit (see Figure 1.13).<sup>8</sup> The likelihood of claiming a tax credit ranged from a low of 28% among those who donated less than \$50 a year to a high of 83% among donors who gave \$420 or more.

**Figure 1.13: Percentage of donors who planned to claim a tax credit and percentage who would contribute more if given a better tax credit, by amount of annual donations, donors aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



## Barriers

The two most common reasons<sup>9</sup> donors did not give more are ones over which charitable and nonprofit organizations have little control. The majority of donors indicated that they did not give more either because they felt that they could not afford to (70%) or because they were happy with the amount they had already given (66%; see Figure 1.14). However, a significant number of donors indicated that they did not give more because they did not like the way requests were made (40%), and this is a barrier over which nonprofit organizations can exercise some control. Very few donors felt that not knowing where to make a contribution (12%) or having difficulty finding a worthwhile cause (8%) were important barriers to their donating more.

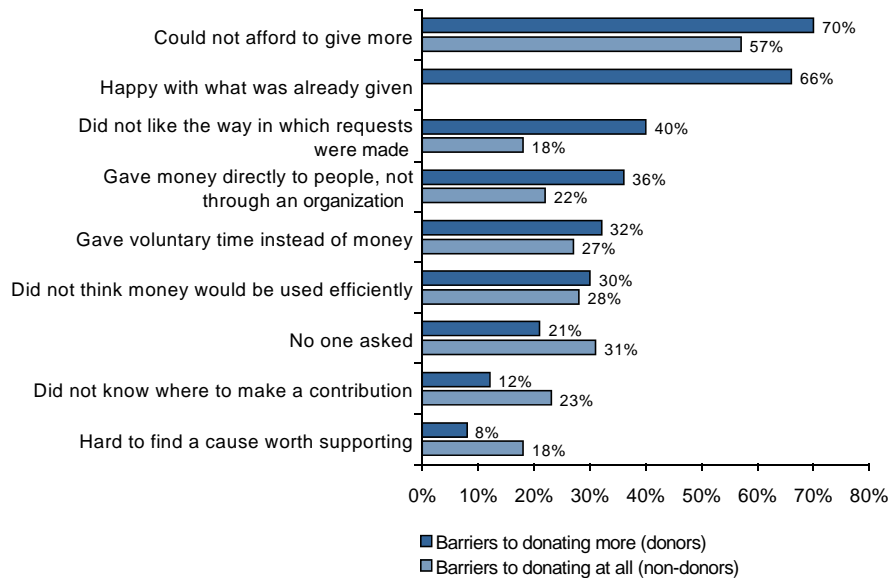
Just over one in five Albertans (21%) did not make a charitable donation in 2004. More than half of these non-donors (57%) indicated that they did not give because they could not afford to. Many of the other barriers non-donors identified were ones that organizations can work to improve, often through increased outreach efforts. For example, other commonly cited barriers for non-donors included: no one approached them for a donation (31%), they did not

<sup>8</sup> The results shown in Figure 1.13 are grouped into four categories based on how much Albertans donated in 2004. These are the same groups used previously in Figure 1.2, although the fourth and fifth categories of Figure 1.2 have been collapsed into one category in Figure 1.13. Each of the four categories accounts for 25% of donors.

<sup>9</sup> Respondents to the CSGVP were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of possible reasons for not donating more or not donating at all.

think their donations would be used efficiently (28%), and they did not know where to make a contribution (23%).

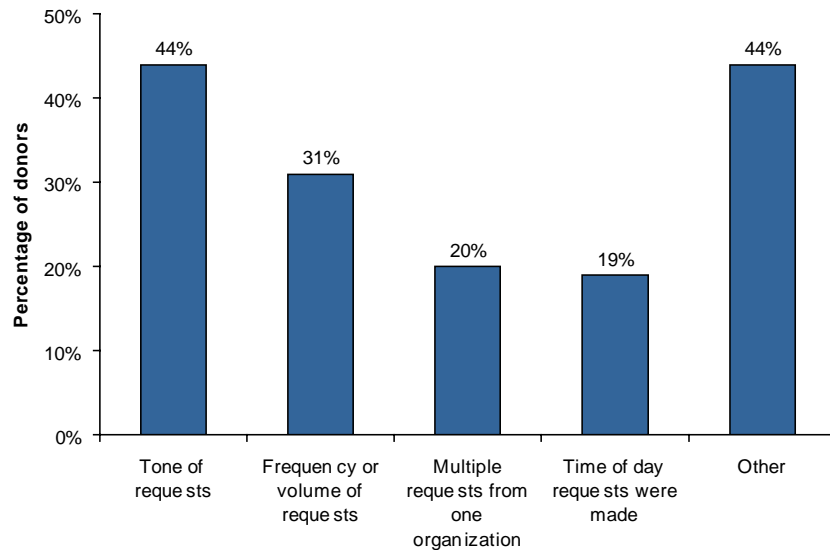
**Figure 1.14: Reasons for not making more financial donations and for not donating at all, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



### What prospective donors do not like about requests

Four in ten donors (40%) did not give more because they did not like the way in which requests were made, and it is therefore worth exploring what specifically they disliked about the requests they received. Forty-four percent reported that they did not like the tone of the requests (for example, they found them to be rude, obnoxious, or demanding), 31% disliked the frequency or volume of the requests they received from organizations overall, and 20% did not like getting multiple requests from the same organization (see Figure 1.15). Only 19% of these donors reported that they did not like the time of day when requests were made. Finally, 44% of these donors cited another unspecified factor as a reason why they did not like how requests were made, indicating a need for further investigation into this topic.

**Figure 1.15: Selected factors disliked about requests, donors aged 15 and older who did not like the way in which requests for donations were made, Alberta, 2004.**



## Differences between Alberta and the rest of Canada

Overall, Albertans are broadly similar to their Canadian counterparts in terms of charitable giving. Some of the most notable differences are outlined below.

- Albertans are less likely than other Canadians to make a financial donation (79% vs. 86%).
- On average, Albertans donate more annually than other Canadians (\$500 vs. \$390).
- Albertan women are more likely to donate and also donate larger amounts than men whereas nationally there are no discernible differences between the sexes.
- Compared to other Canadians, Albertans are less likely to give to the following types of organizations: social services (37% of Albertans vs. 44% of other Canadians), religion (33% vs. 39%), education and research (17% vs. 22%), and sports and recreation (14% vs. 18%).

- Albertans donate more, on average, than other Canadians to religion organizations (\$588 vs. \$377<sup>1</sup>), but make significantly lower average annual donations to arts and culture organizations (\$117 vs. \$275).
- The bottom 50% of Albertan donors (those who donated less than \$150) are more likely to claim a tax credit for their donation than are the bottom 50% of donors elsewhere in Canada (36% vs. 24%, respectively).
- Albertans are less likely than other Canadians to make a donation as a result of being approached on the street or at a shopping centre; just 16% of Albertans made a donation in this way compared to 32% of other Canadians.
- Compared to other Canadians, Albertans are more likely to say they did not donate anything at all because no one asked them (31% of Albertans vs. 23% of other Canadians) and because they did not know where to make a contribution (23% vs. 15%).

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<sup>1</sup> The average annual donation for the rest of Canada increases to \$490 per donor if Quebec is excluded, although this number is still substantially lower than the Albertan average. The average amount donated by residents of Quebec to religion organizations tends to be well below the national average. There are many factors contributing to Quebec's lower level of support for religion organizations, such as the effect of the province's large Catholic population. Catholics, in general, tend to donate much less than other religious denominations, both in terms of overall donations and donations to religion organizations. An in-depth discussion of these factors is beyond the scope of this report. For a detailed examination of religious giving, please refer to: *Religion, Participation, and Charitable Giving: A Report* (Bowen, 1999).

## Conclusion

In 2004, most Albertans (79%) made a donation to a charitable organization and gave an average of \$500. One quarter of donors accounted for 82% of the total value of all donations. Albertans were most likely to donate to health, social services, and religion organizations. Among the various types of organizations, religion organizations received the most financial support, and 91% of the money donated to these organizations came from just 25% of donors.

Albertans who are more likely to donate tend to be older, female, married or in common-law relationships, employed, and actively involved in their religion. They also tend to have pre-school-aged children in their household and to have higher levels of education and income. The most common reasons why Albertans make charitable donations are altruistic in nature, such as feeling compassion towards those in need and wanting to make a contribution to their community. Two barriers that were identified by those who did not donate at all were not having been approached to make a donation and not knowing where to make one.

# Chapter 2 – Volunteering in Alberta

Volunteers are the lifeblood of charitable and nonprofit organizations. Each year roughly 1.2 million Albertans donate their time, energy, experience, and passion to organizations throughout the province. This chapter explores many aspects of volunteering in Alberta, including the level of support that Albertans provide, the types of organizations they volunteer for, and the tasks volunteers perform. It also addresses what motivates Albertan volunteers as well as what prevents them from volunteering more. Finally, it discusses the extent to which Albertans volunteer their time to help others in their community directly rather than through an organization.

## Volunteering in 2004: Key findings

- 1.2 million Albertans volunteered their time to charitable and nonprofit organizations.
- Albertans volunteered 214 million hours – the equivalent of more than 111,000 full-time jobs.
- The top 25% of volunteers – those who volunteered more than 195 hours – accounted for 75% of all hours volunteered by Albertans.
- Not only are women in Alberta more likely than men to volunteer, but they also contribute more hours.
- Attending religious services or meetings on a weekly basis sizably increases both the likelihood of volunteering and the number of hours volunteered.
- Albertans volunteer most often for organizations working in the areas of sports and recreation, education and research, social services, and religion.
- The most common activities volunteers perform are fundraising; organizing or supervising events; sitting on a committee or board; and teaching, educating or mentoring.
- 93% of Albertans reported that wanting to make a contribution to the community was an important reason for volunteering.
- Many Albertans do not volunteer more often because they do not have enough time, they are not able to make a long-term commitment, or they are satisfied with the amount of time they have already given.
- 60% of Albertans helped someone in their community directly (for example, by doing housework, shopping, or banking) at least once a month in 2004.

## Volunteering in Alberta

Over 1.2 million Albertans – 48% of the population aged 15 and over – volunteered for a charitable or nonprofit organization in 2004. Collectively, these volunteers gave 214 million hours of their time and each contributed an average of 175 hours during the course of the year (see Table 2.1). To put these numbers in perspective, the total number of hours volunteered by Albertans in 2004 was equal to over 111,000 full-time jobs.

*Table 2.1: Volunteers and volunteer hours, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004*

<b>Rate of volunteering</b>		
Total population	(thousands)	2,573
Volunteers	(thousands)	1,227
Volunteer rate		48%
<b>Hours volunteered</b>		
Total hours volunteered	(millions)	214
Full-time year-round job equivalents <sup>1</sup>		111,718
Average hours volunteered per year		175

1. Assuming 40 hours of work per week for 48 weeks.

### Volunteering in Calgary and Edmonton

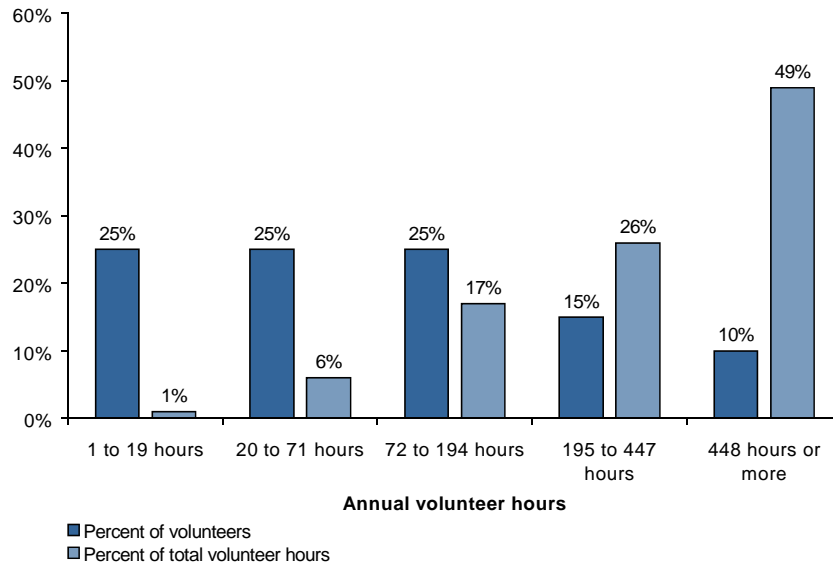
The volunteer rates in Calgary and Edmonton were slightly lower than the overall provincial rate of 48%. Edmonton's volunteer rate was 47% and Calgary's was 45%. Compared to the provincial average of 175 hours, volunteers in Edmonton contributed an average of 202 hours in 2004 while the average for Calgary volunteers was 143 hours.

### The concentration of support

Although Albertans collectively volunteer an impressive number of hours, the majority of those hours are contributed by a small group of volunteers. Figure 2.1 divides volunteers into five categories based on how many hours they contributed in 2004 and shows the percentage of all volunteer hours that each group contributed. The top 10% of volunteers alone accounted for nearly half (49%) of the total volunteer hours in 2004. More broadly, the top 25%<sup>10</sup> of volunteers contributed 75% of all the hours volunteered in Alberta, while the bottom 25% of volunteers (those who volunteered between 1 and 19 hours) accounted for just 1% of the total.

<sup>10</sup> The 15% who volunteered between 195 and 447 hours and the 10% who volunteered 448 hours or more.

**Figure 2.1: Distribution of volunteers and percentage of total volunteer hours contributed, by annual hours volunteered, volunteers aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**

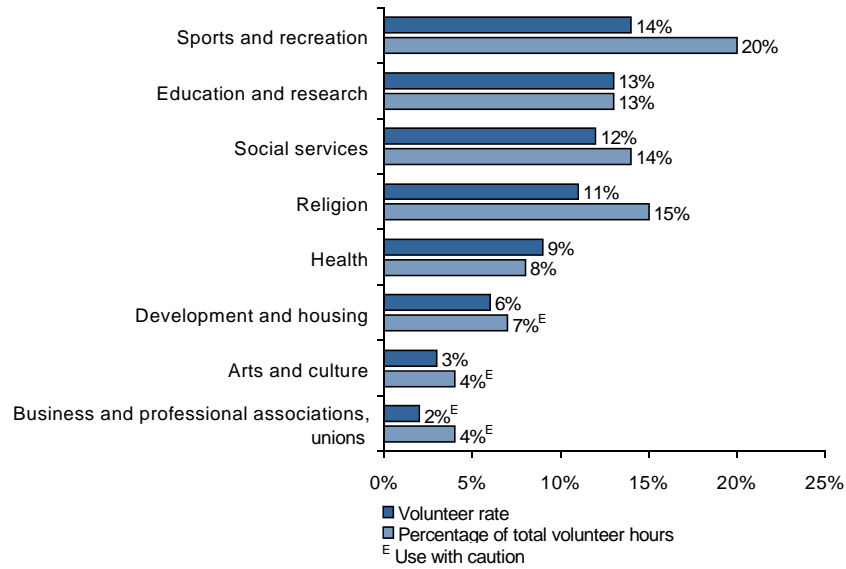


## The organizations supported by Albertan volunteers

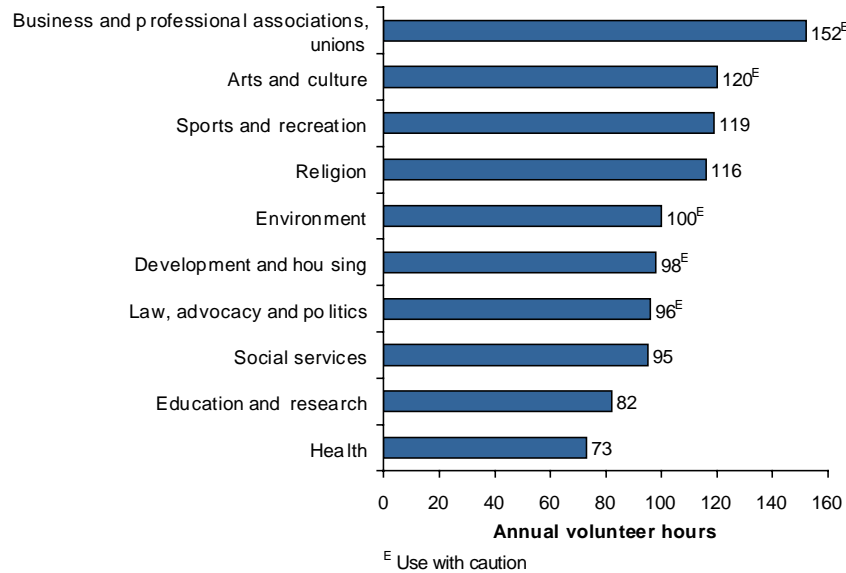
The majority of Albertan volunteers give their time to more than one type of organization. Indeed, 28% of Albertans volunteered for three or more organizations, 30% volunteered for two organizations, and 42% gave their time to just one organization. Although Albertans volunteer for a variety of types of organizations, they are most likely to volunteer for those dedicated to sports and recreation (14% of volunteers), education and research (13%), social services (12%), and religion (11%; see Figure 2.2). Together, these four organization types accounted for 62% of all the hours volunteered. Albertans are least likely to give their time to organizations focused on development and housing, arts and culture, and business and professional associations.

Although a large percentage of Albertans may volunteer for a particular type of organization, this does not necessarily translate into a proportionately large number of volunteer hours for that type of organization. Some types of organizations have a small number of volunteers who give a large number of hours, while others have many volunteers who give fewer hours. For example, only 2%<sup>E</sup> of Albertans volunteered for business and professional associations, yet these individuals contributed the greatest number of hours, with each volunteer giving an average of 152<sup>E</sup> hours in 2004 (see Figure 2.3). Other types of organizations with a high average annual number of volunteer hours were those working in the areas of arts and culture (120<sup>E</sup>), sports and recreation (119), and religion (116). On average, volunteers gave the fewest hours to organizations dedicated to social services (95), education and research (82), and health (73).

**Figure 2.2: Volunteer rate and percentage of total volunteer hours, by selected organization type, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



**Figure 2.3: Average annual volunteer hours, by selected organization type, volunteers aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



## A profile of Albertan volunteers

Some Albertans are more likely than others to volunteer for charitable and nonprofit organizations. Although personal and economic characteristics do not determine who will volunteer on an individual basis, there are some groups of individuals who are more likely to volunteer than others. Among the personal and economic characteristics that appear to be the most important for volunteers are: sex, the presence of children in the household, age, annual household income, level of formal education, and marital status (see Table 2.2). Although these



characteristics are discussed separately, it should be noted that many of them are related – for example, income is often related to factors such as education, age, and sex.

Women in Alberta are more likely to volunteer than men (51% vs. 44%, respectively) and volunteer more hours on average (189 vs. 159). Although men and women each made up 50% of the population, women accounted for 57% of the total volunteer hours.

The presence of children in the household, particularly school-aged children<sup>11</sup>, increases the likelihood of volunteering. Albertans with school-aged children and those with both pre-school-aged and school-aged children were the most likely to volunteer (60% and 59%, respectively), followed by Albertans with only pre-school-aged children (46%). Although Albertans who do not have children in their household were the least likely to volunteer (41%), on average they volunteered the greatest number of hours (209), while those with pre-school-aged children volunteered the least number of hours (107<sup>E</sup>).

There is no clear trend between age and volunteering in Alberta; rather, volunteer rates and hours volunteered tend to be concentrated in certain distinct age groups. Albertans aged 35 to 44 were the most likely to volunteer (59%), and the likelihood of volunteering declined thereafter until it reached a low of 34% for seniors (65 and older). The average number of hours volunteered annually ranged from a low of 143<sup>E</sup> among those aged 25 to 34 to a high of 254 hours among seniors.

Volunteer rates in Alberta tend to increase with household income; they ran from a low of 33% among those with annual household incomes of less than \$20,000 to a high of 60% among those with incomes of \$100,000 or more. There is, however, no clear trend linking income and the number of hours volunteered. Albertans with household incomes of less than \$20,000 volunteered the fewest hours on average (135), while Albertans with incomes of between \$40,000 and \$59,999 volunteered the most (199<sup>E</sup>).

In terms of education, volunteer rates were lowest among Albertans with a high school diploma (39%) and highest among those with a university degree (62%). Although high school graduates were the least likely to volunteer, on average they volunteered the greatest number of hours annually (205). Albertans with less than a high school diploma contributed the fewest hours (141<sup>E</sup>). Albertans with university degrees made up 21% of the population but contributed 28% of the total hours volunteered province-wide.

Albertans who are married or in common-law relationships are the most likely to volunteer. Slightly more than half (51%) volunteered for a charitable or nonprofit organization in 2004, compared to just 31% of widows and widowers. Despite being the least likely to volunteer, widows and widowers volunteered, on average, the greatest number of hours annually (213<sup>E</sup>).

Employment status also affects the likelihood of volunteering. Fifty-three percent of employed Albertans volunteered their time in 2004 compared to 47% of

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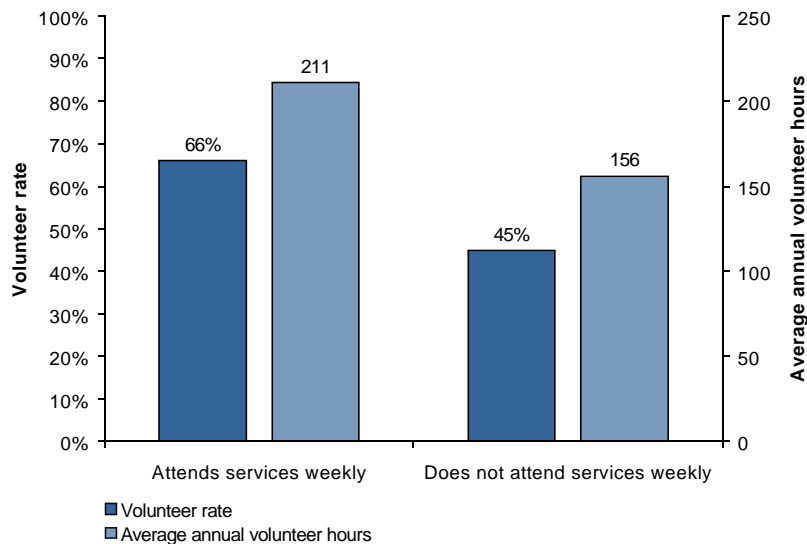
<sup>11</sup> *Pre-school aged* is defined as ages 0 to 5, while *school aged* is defined as ages 6 to 17. Both *pre-school and school-aged children* indicates the presence in the household of at least one child from each age range (i.e., at least one child aged 0 to 5 and at least one child aged 6 to 17).

Albertans who were not part of the labour force. Those not in the labour force, however, volunteered more hours than employed Albertans (207 vs. 156).

## The role of religion

Religious involvement<sup>12</sup> has an important influence on whether or not individuals volunteer and how many hours they contribute. In Alberta, 21% of the population attended weekly religious services. Albertans who attend weekly services are more likely to volunteer and also volunteer more than those who do not attend weekly services. Two thirds (66%) of Albertans who attended weekly religious services volunteered an average of 211 hours compared to the 45% of non-weekly attendees who volunteered an average of 156 hours (see Figure 2.4). Although they made up only 21% of the population, Albertans who attended religious services weekly accounted for 35% of the total number of hours volunteered in the province in 2004. It is important to note that these volunteers did not only support religion organizations; 58% of their volunteer hours were devoted to non-religion organizations. Overall, these volunteers accounted for 91% of all the hours volunteered to religion organizations and 24% of the hours volunteered to non-religion organizations.

**Figure 2.4: Volunteer rate and average annual volunteer hours, by weekly attendance at religious services, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



<sup>12</sup> The CSGVP grouped respondents into two categories: those who attended religious services weekly and those who did not.

**Table 2.2: Volunteer rate and distribution of volunteer hours, by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**

	Volunteer rate	Average annual volunteer hours <sup>1</sup>	Median annual volunteer hours <sup>1</sup>	Total annual volunteer hours (millions)	Population distribution	Percentage of total volunteer hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>214.5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age</b>						
15 to 24	51%	154	71 <sup>E</sup>	37.7	19%	18%
25 to 34	40%	143 <sup>E</sup>	46 <sup>E</sup>	28.4 <sup>E</sup>	19%	13% <sup>E</sup>
35 to 44	59%	158	72	47.9	20%	22%
45 to 54	50%	216	100	51.8	19%	24%
55 to 64	46%	158	64 <sup>E</sup>	21.4 <sup>E</sup>	11%	10%
65 and older	34%	254	98	27.3 <sup>E</sup>	12%	13% <sup>E</sup>
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	44%	159	60	91.4	50%	43%
Female	51%	189	77	123.1	50%	57%
<b>Marital status<sup>2</sup></b>						
Married or common-law	51%	187	72	143.4	59%	67%
Single, never married	45%	152	60	51.0	29%	24%
Separated or divorced	46%	144	76 <sup>E</sup>	11.2 <sup>E</sup>	7%	5% <sup>E</sup>
Widow or widower	31%	213 <sup>E</sup>	128 <sup>E</sup>	8.1 <sup>E</sup>	5%	4% <sup>E</sup>
<b>Education<sup>2</sup></b>						
Less than high school	42%	141 <sup>E</sup>	40 <sup>E</sup>	23.4 <sup>E</sup>	17%	12% <sup>E</sup>
Graduated from high school	39%	205	80	46.4 <sup>E</sup>	24%	23%
Some postsecondary	58%	171 <sup>E</sup>	90 <sup>E</sup>	17.1 <sup>E</sup>	7%	9% <sup>E</sup>
Postsecondary diploma	51%	161	72	58.1	30%	29%
University degree	62%	176	78	55.4	21%	28%
<b>Labour force status<sup>2</sup></b>						
Employed	53%	156	71	129.7	69%	67%
Unemployed	...	...	...	...	...	...
Not in the labour force	47%	207	75	62.7	28%	32%
<b>Household income</b>						
Less than \$20,000	33%	135	50 <sup>E</sup>	11.5 <sup>E</sup>	10%	5% <sup>E</sup>
\$20,000 to \$39,999	40%	196	80 <sup>E</sup>	45.1	22%	21%
\$40,000 to \$59,999	46%	199 <sup>E</sup>	80	42.1 <sup>E</sup>	18%	20%
\$60,000 to \$79,999	52%	159	63 <sup>E</sup>	34.9	16%	16%
\$80,000 to \$99,999	48%	161	80 <sup>E</sup>	22.9	12%	11%
\$100,000 or more	60%	172	65 <sup>E</sup>	58.0	22%	27%
<b>Presence of children in the household<sup>3</sup></b>						
No children in household	41%	209	75	136.2	61%	63%
Pre-school-aged children only	46%	107 <sup>E</sup>	40 <sup>E</sup>	8.7 <sup>E</sup>	7%	4% <sup>E</sup>
Both pre-school and school-aged children	59%	160	95 <sup>E</sup>	15.5 <sup>E</sup>	6%	7% <sup>E</sup>
School-aged children only	60%	136	72	54.1	26%	25%

<sup>E</sup> Sample size limited; use with caution.

... Sample size too small to be presented.

1. Estimates of average and median annual volunteer hours are calculated for volunteers only.
2. Respondents who did not provide this information are excluded from calculations. For this reason, the sum of annual volunteer hours by category does not add to the provincial total.
3. *Pre-school aged* is defined as ages 0 to 5, while *school aged* is defined as ages 6 to 17. Both *pre-school and school-aged children* indicates the presence in the household of at least one child from each age range (i.e., at least one child aged 0 to 5 and at least one child aged 6 to 17).

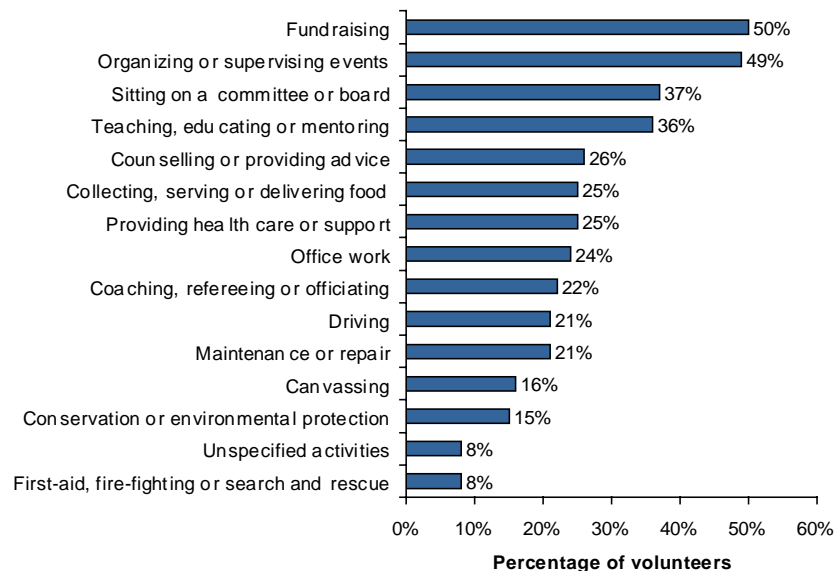
**Note:** Estimates may not add to totals due to rounding.

## What volunteers do

Volunteers contribute their time in a variety of ways. Albertan volunteers are most likely to engage in fundraising activities (50% of all volunteers) and organizing or supervising events (49%; see Figure 2.5). Other common tasks that volunteers perform for Albertan charitable and nonprofit organizations are sitting on a committee or board (37%) and teaching, educating or mentoring (36%). The activities least commonly performed by volunteers are canvassing (16%), conservation or environmental protection (15%), and first-aid, fire-fighting or search and rescue (8%).

Many Albertans carry out their volunteering activities as part of a group project. Just under half (45%) of all Albertan volunteers contributed some or all of their time as part of a group of friends, neighbours, or colleagues, while 28% volunteered with members of their immediate family. The Internet also plays an important part in the volunteer experience of Albertans; nearly one fifth (19%) of volunteers used the Internet in some way while performing their volunteer activities.

**Figure 2.5: Distribution of type of volunteer activity, volunteers aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



To get a better idea of how volunteers spent their time, the CSGVP asked respondents how much time they dedicated throughout the year to each of the various activities discussed above.<sup>13</sup> Of all the hours volunteered province-wide, the largest percentage (17%) was devoted to organizing or supervising events (see Figure 2.6). Teaching, educating, and mentoring accounted for 13% of the total hours volunteered, sitting on a committee or board accounted for 12%, and

<sup>13</sup> This question took into account only the time volunteers gave to the organization for which they volunteered the most hours.

fundraising accounted for 10%. The activities to which volunteers collectively dedicated the fewest hours were environmental conservation or protection, driving, and canvassing.

**Figure 2.6: Distribution of annual volunteer hours, by type of volunteer activity, volunteers aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



## How volunteers become involved

Albertan volunteers are more likely to become involved because someone asked them to volunteer (most commonly someone from the organization itself) than they are to approach the organization on their own initiative.<sup>14</sup> Half (50%) of Albertan volunteers were asked by someone to volunteer. Nearly three quarters (73%) of these volunteers were approached by someone from the organization and 17% were asked by a friend or relative.

In comparison, somewhat fewer Albertan volunteers (43%) reported that they had approached the organization on their own initiative. These volunteers contributed more hours annually than those who did not approach the organization on their own (142 vs. 104, respectively). It is not entirely clear how these volunteers became aware of the volunteer opportunity because 79% of the volunteers who approached the organization on their own said they found out about the volunteer opportunity in some way that was not specified in the CSGVP. Fourteen percent reported that they found out about the opportunity through an advertisement such as a poster or a newspaper.

<sup>14</sup> This question applied only to how volunteers became involved with the organization for which they volunteered the most time.

## Mandatory community service

Some people are required to perform mandatory community service by their school, their employer, the charitable or nonprofit organizations with which they are involved, or some other authority. Just over one in ten Albertan volunteers (11%) were required to volunteer for the organization to which they contributed the most hours. Nearly two thirds (64%) of Albertans who were required to provide mandatory community service were required to do so by the group or organization itself.<sup>1</sup> Albertans who were required to provide mandatory community service contributed fewer hours annually than those who were not (100 vs. 123).

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<sup>1</sup> 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 condition of their children's participation.

## The reasons for volunteering

Volunteers have many reasons for deciding to give their time. For some, volunteering is a practical way of developing their skills and gaining experience while for others, it is a social activity or a way to connect with and contribute to their community. Volunteers also face certain barriers that may prevent them from giving more (or any) of their time.

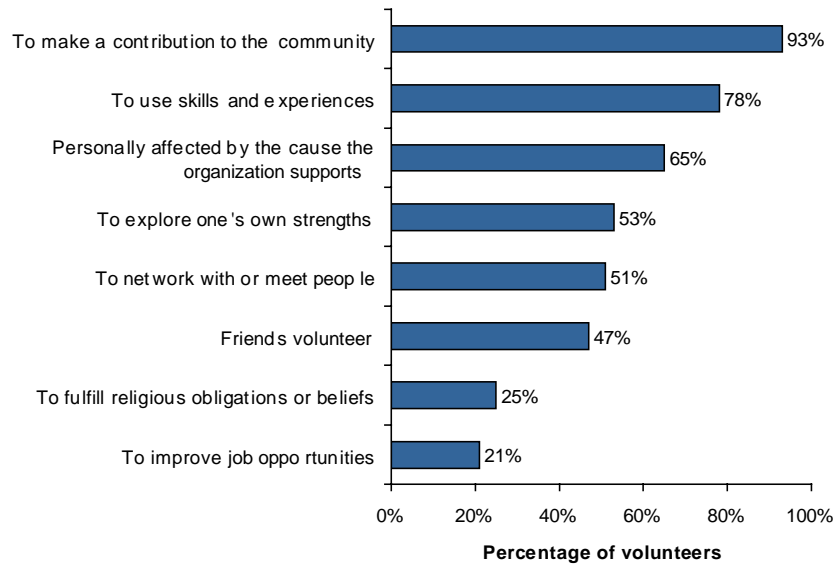
### Motivations

Albertan volunteers are most commonly motivated by the desire to make a contribution to their community; 93% said that this was an important motivation behind their decision to volunteer (see Figure 2.7).<sup>15</sup> Other common motivations among Albertan volunteers are the chance to use their skills and experience (78%) and having been personally affected by the cause the organization supports (65%). Volunteers are least likely to identify fulfilling religious obligations or beliefs (25%) and improving job opportunities (21%) as important motivations.

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<sup>15</sup> The CSGVP asked respondents whether any of eight potential motivations were important in their decision to volunteer for the organization to which they contributed the most hours.

**Figure 2.7: Reasons for volunteering, volunteers aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



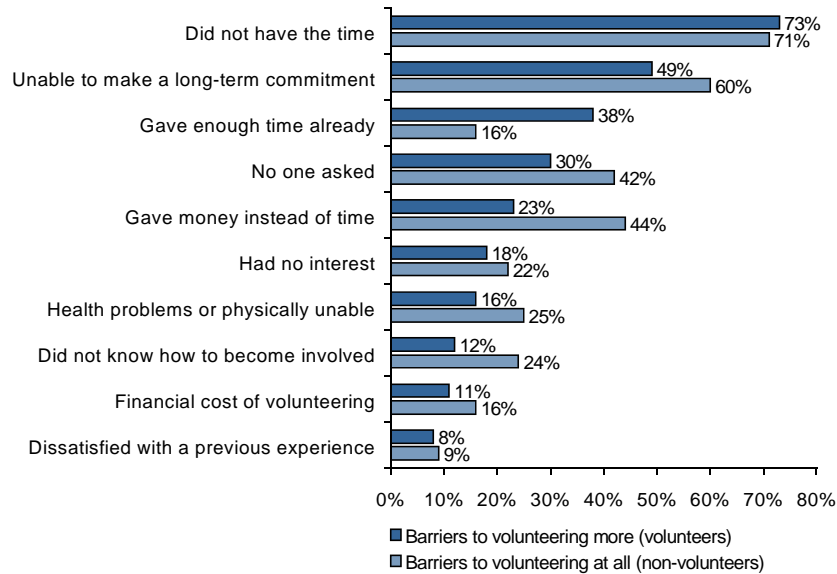
## Barriers

Despite the motivations that drive Albertans to volunteer, there are also barriers<sup>16</sup> that prevent them from giving more of their time. Just over seven in ten Albertan volunteers (73%) reported that they did not volunteer more because they did not have the time (see Figure 2.8). Nearly half (49%) did not volunteer more because they were unable to make a long-term commitment, 38% felt that they had given enough time already, and 30% did not volunteer more because no one asked them to do so. Albertan volunteers were least likely to cite not knowing how to become involved (12%), the financial cost of volunteering (11%), and dissatisfaction with a previous volunteer experience (8%) as barriers to their volunteering more.

Like volunteers, common barriers among non-volunteers include not having the time to volunteer (71%) and being unable to make a long-term commitment (60%). Forty-four percent of those who did not volunteer said they preferred to give money instead of time. The least common reasons for not volunteering at all were the financial cost of volunteering (16%), having previously given enough time already (16%), and dissatisfaction with a previous experience (9%).

<sup>16</sup> Respondents to the CSGVP were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of possible reasons for not volunteering more or not volunteering at all.

**Figure 2.8: Reasons for not volunteering more and for not volunteering at all, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



### Employer support for employee volunteer activities

Although work commitments can constrain the ability of many people to volunteer, some employers offer support and encouragement to employee volunteers. Over one in six (61%) Albertan volunteers who had an employer reported that they had received some form of employer support for their volunteering. The most common form of employer support was allowing employees to either change or reduce their work hours in order to volunteer (38%). Almost one third (31%) said that their employer allowed them to use work facilities or equipment for their volunteer activities and 26% received some sort of recognition or letter of thanks from their employer for their volunteer activities. Twenty-three percent of volunteers reported that their employer had given them paid time off to volunteer or the opportunity to volunteer on the job. Nearly one third (30%) of Albertans with employers said that their employers had a program or policy in place to encourage voluntarism among employees.

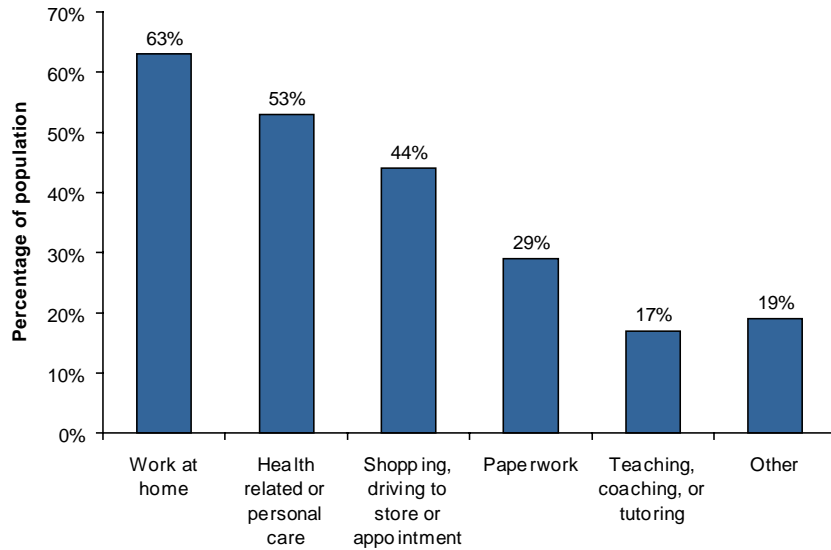
### Helping people directly: informal volunteering

In addition to formal volunteering, Albertans also provide a substantial amount of help directly to others in their community without going through a charitable or nonprofit organization. Direct helping encompasses the assistance Albertans give directly to others living outside their immediate household. More than eight in ten Albertans (81%) engaged in some form of direct help at least once in 2004.

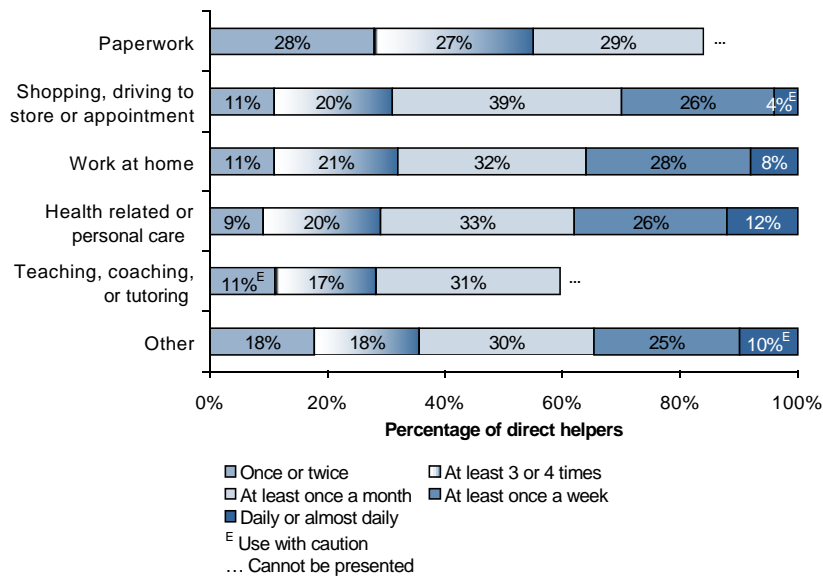


The most common form of direct help that Albertans provided was help with domestic tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, gardening, maintenance, or shovelling snow (63%; see Figure 2.9). More than half of all Albertans (53%) provided some sort of health-related or personal care, while 44% helped with shopping or driving, and 29% engaged in paperwork such as writing letters, doing taxes, filling out forms, or banking. Finally, 17% of Albertans taught, coached, or tutored others.

**Figure 2.9: Percentage of population helping others directly, by type of activity, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



**Figure 2.10: Frequency of helping others directly during the preceding year, by selected activity, direct helpers aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



Those who helped out in a health-related or personal care capacity were the most likely to do so on a daily basis (12%) while those who helped with domestic tasks were the most likely to do so weekly (28%; see Figure 2.10). Direct helping in the

form of paperwork was done the least frequently; 55% of Albertans engaged in this type of activity only a few times throughout the year.

Both the likelihood and the frequency of helping others directly are influenced by personal and economic characteristics, such as age, education, and income. For example, the likelihood of helping others decreases with age, ranging from a high of 88% among Albertans aged 15 to 24 to a low of 64% among Albertans 65 and older (see Table 2.3). Albertans aged 15 to 24 were the most likely to help others on a weekly basis (55%).

Albertans with less than a high school education were the least likely to provide direct help to others (74%) while those with some postsecondary education were the most likely to help (89%). Although individuals with less than a high school diploma were the least likely to provide direct help, they were the most likely to do so weekly (58%).

Albertans with annual household incomes of \$20,000 or less were least likely to help others directly (69%), and this number rose with household income until it reached a plateau of roughly 87% for those with household incomes of \$60,000 or more. Albertans with household incomes of between \$20,000 and \$39,999 were the most likely to help others on a weekly basis (50%).

**Table 2.3: Rate and frequency of helping others directly, by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**

	Rate of helping others directly	A few times a year	At least once a month	At least once a week
<b>Total</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Age</b>				
15 to 24	88%	20%	25%	55%
25 to 34	84%	26%	32%	42%
35 to 44	84%	30%	31%	39%
45 to 54	82%	27%	30%	43%
55 to 64	77%	22%	35%	42%
65 and over	64%	25%	24% <sup>E</sup>	52%
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	80%	30%	30%	40%
Female	83%	21%	29%	50%
<b>Education</b>				
Less than high school	74%	22% <sup>E</sup>	21% <sup>E</sup>	58%
Graduated from high school	77%	25%	31%	44%
Some postsecondary	89%	...	33% <sup>E</sup>	43%
Postsecondary diploma	86%	22%	31%	46%
University degree	87%	32%	32%	35%
<b>Household income</b>				
Less than \$20,000	69%	...	35%	49%
\$20,000 to \$39,999	76%	22%	29%	50%
\$40,000 to \$59,999	80%	22%	36%	43%
\$60,000 to \$79,999	87%	28%	25%	47%
\$80,000 to \$99,999	87%	31%	29%	40%
\$100,000 or more	86%	29%	28%	42%

<sup>E</sup> Sample size limited; use with caution.

... Sample size too small to be presented.

## Differences between Alberta and the rest of Canada

Although Albertans who volunteer and help others directly are similar to other Canadians, there are some slight differences:

- Albertans are slightly more likely than other Canadians to volunteer (48% vs. 45%).
- Volunteers in Alberta give more hours annually, on average, than other Canadians (175 vs. 167).
- Albertan volunteers are more likely than other Canadian volunteers to contribute their time to multiple organizations (58% of Albertans volunteered for two or more organizations compared to 49% of other Canadians).
- Albertans are more likely than other Canadians to volunteer for sports and recreation organizations (14% vs. 11%).
- Compared to volunteers elsewhere in Canada, Albertan volunteers give more hours annually to business and professional associations (152<sup>E</sup> vs. 100) but fewer hours to organizations dedicated to law, advocacy, and politics (96<sup>E</sup> vs. 126) and social services (95 vs. 120).
- Women in Alberta are more likely to volunteer than men and contribute more hours on average, whereas nationally there are no differences between the sexes.
- Albertan volunteers are more likely than other Canadian volunteers to engage in teaching, educating, or mentoring (36% vs. 30%) and providing health care or support (25% vs. 18%).
- Albertan volunteers are more likely than volunteers elsewhere in Canada to be required to provide mandatory community service (11% vs. 7%).
- The rate of direct helping in Alberta is somewhat lower than in the rest of Canada (81% vs. 83%).

## Conclusion

In 2004, nearly half (48%) of all Albertans engaged in formal volunteer activities that supported their communities. Additionally, more than eight in ten Albertans (81%) helped someone in their community directly. Albertans who are likely to volunteer for an organization tend to be female, married or in common-law unions, and employed. Volunteers also tend to have school-aged children at home and to have higher levels of income and education. Volunteers in Alberta are most likely to support organizations dedicated to sports and recreation, education and research, social services, and religion, and to engage in activities such as fundraising, organizing or supervising events, teaching, educating or

mentoring, or sitting on a committee or board. Nearly all volunteers agree that they gave their time because they wanted to make a contribution to their community. The two most common barriers to volunteering more time or volunteering at all are not having the time and being unable to make a long-term commitment.

# Chapter 3 – Participation

Albertans are members of or participate in a wide variety of organizations, groups, and associations, including neighbourhood associations, seniors' or youth groups, service clubs, hobby organizations, and professional associations. Participation allows individuals with similar interests to gather together and work collectively to address issues and needs in their communities. It can afford individuals a sense of fulfillment and foster stronger social bonds among participants, thus strengthening the social fabric of the community.

## Participation in 2004: Key findings

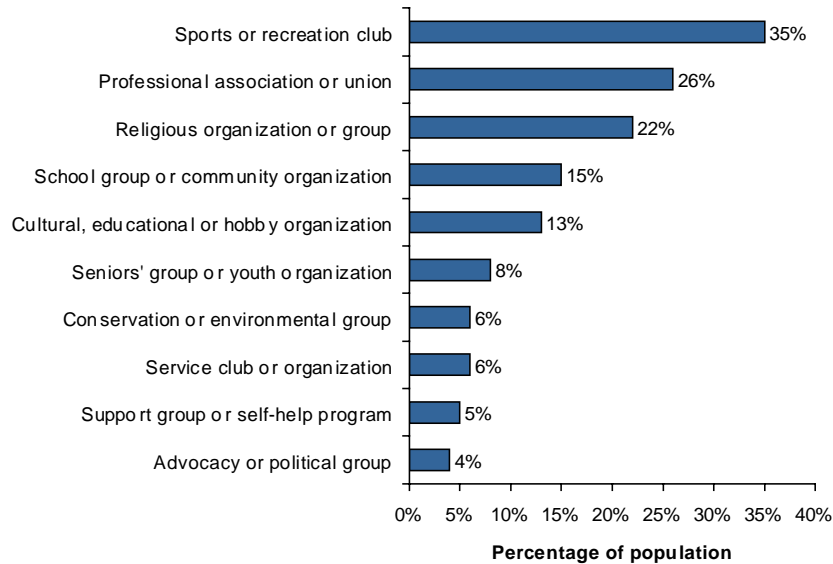
- 69% of Albertans belonged to a group, organization, or association in 2004.
- The four most common types of organizations to which Albertans belonged were sports and recreation clubs, professional associations or unions, religious organizations, and school groups or community organizations.
- 27% of Albertans participated in weekly organizational activities, such as meetings or social events.
- Slightly more than half of all Albertans belonged to one or two organizations.

## Participation in Alberta

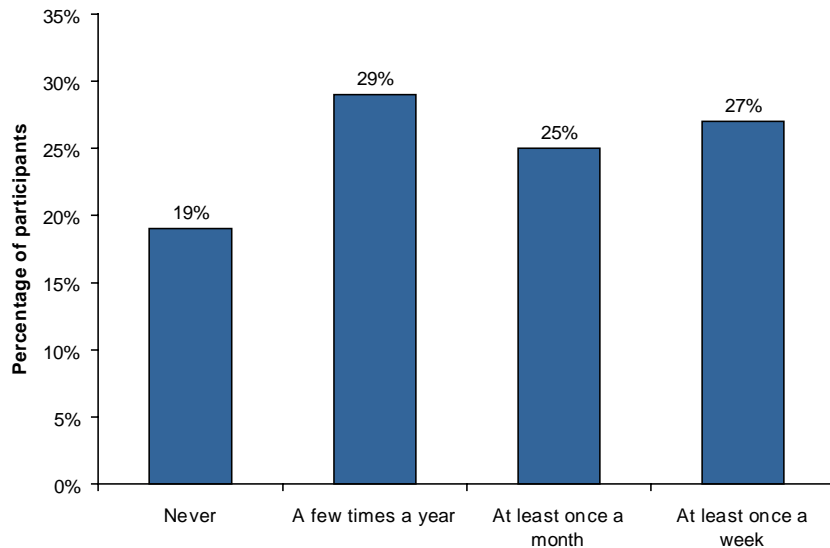
In 2004, nearly seven in ten Albertans (69%) belonged to at least one group or organization. Albertans were most likely to belong to one (29%) or two (22%) different organizations or groups, while 10% belonged to three organizations and 8% belonged to four or more. The most common type of organization or group that Albertans participate in is sports and recreation clubs – over one third (35%) of Albertans said that they participated in such an organization (see Figure 3.1). Albertans are also likely to participate in professional associations or unions (26%), religious organizations or groups (22%), and school groups or community organizations (15%). Albertans are least likely to participate in conservation or environmental groups (6%), service clubs or organizations (6%), support groups or self-help programs (5%), and advocacy or political groups (4%).

Nearly one third (29%) of Albertans aged 15 and over participated in organizational activities such as meetings and social functions a few times a year, 27% participated at least once a week, and 25% participated at least once a month (see Figure 3.2). Nearly one fifth (19%) said that although they were members of an organization or group, they had not attended any events or functions in 2004.

**Figure 3.1: Participation rate, by type of group or organization, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



**Figure 3.2: Frequency of participation in meetings or other organizational activities, participants aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



## A profile of Albertan participants

The likelihood of an individual participating in an organization and the frequency with which that individual participates are influenced by a variety of personal and economic characteristics, such as age, level of formal education, annual household income, employment status, and the presence of children in the household (see Table 3.1).

Participation rates by age broadly mirror volunteer rates by age. Albertans aged 35 to 44 (74%) were the most likely to participate while those aged 65 and older were the least likely to do so (62%). Youth (aged 15 to 24) were the most likely to participate once a week or more (37%).

The likelihood of participating increased with education. Albertans with less than a high school education were least likely to participate (56%), and the participation rate increased steadily to 87% among those with a university degree. Although individuals with less than a high school diploma were least likely to participate, they were the most likely to participate weekly (34%).

The likelihood of participating also rose with annual household income, from a low of 51% among those with incomes of less than \$20,000 to a high of 79% among those with incomes of \$100,000 or more. Although individuals with household incomes of less than \$20,000 a year were the least likely to participate, they were the most likely to participate weekly (32%<sup>E</sup>).

Labour force status also influences the likelihood that an individual will participate. Employed Albertans were the most likely to participate (74%) and those who were not part of the labour force were the least likely (62%). Those who were not in the labour force were the most likely to participate weekly (35%), despite being the least likely to participate in general.

Albertans who did not have any children in their household were the least likely to participate (67%) while those with pre-school-aged children<sup>17</sup> were the most likely (77%). Those without children in their household, however, were the most likely to participate weekly (28%) while those with school-aged children were the least likely to do so (25%).

## Differences between Alberta and the rest of Canada

There are only two significant differences in the participation of Albertans and other Canadians:

- Albertans have a higher participation rate than other Canadians (69% vs. 65%).
- Compared to other Canadians, Albertans are more likely to participate in sports and recreation organizations (35% of Albertans vs. 30% of other Canadians), religious organizations (22% vs. 16%), and school groups or community organizations (15% vs. 11%).

<sup>17</sup> *Pre-school aged* is defined as ages 0 to 5, while *school aged* is defined as ages 6 to 17. Both *pre-school and school-aged children* indicates the presence in the household of at least one child from each age range (i.e., at least one child aged 0 to 5 and at least one child aged 6 to 17).

**Table 3.1: Rate of participation in groups and organizations and frequency of participation in meetings or other organizational activities, by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**

	Rate of participation in organizations	Frequency of participation <sup>1</sup>			
		Never	A few times a year	At least once a month	Once a week or more <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Age</b>					
15 to 24	70%	19% <sup>E</sup>	25%	18% <sup>E</sup>	37%
25 to 34	66%	19% <sup>E</sup>	34%	24%	23%
35 to 44	74%	19%	29%	28%	24%
45 to 54	71%	17% <sup>E</sup>	31%	26%	27%
55 to 64	68%	...	21% <sup>E</sup>	33%	23% <sup>E</sup>
65 and older	62%	...	34%	26% <sup>E</sup>	26% <sup>E</sup>
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	68%	21%	31%	23%	25%
Female	69%	16%	28%	28%	28%
<b>Marital status</b>					
Married or common-law	72%	17%	30%	27%	26%
Single, never married	68%	22%	29%	21%	29%
Separated or divorced	63%	...	25% <sup>E</sup>	28% <sup>E</sup>	27% <sup>E</sup>
Widow or widower	56%	...	...	...	...
<b>Education</b>					
Less than high school	56%	...	...	26% <sup>E</sup>	34%
Graduated from high school	58%	25%	36%	14% <sup>E</sup>	25%
Some postsecondary	82%	...	34% <sup>E</sup>	...	...
Postsecondary diploma	73%	16%	27%	29%	28%
University degree	87%	16%	29%	31%	25%
<b>Labour force status</b>					
Employed	74%	19%	29%	27%	25%
Unemployed	...	...	...	...	...
Not in the labour force	62%	19%	25%	21%	35%
<b>Household income</b>					
Less than \$20,000	51%	...	24% <sup>E</sup>	24% <sup>E</sup>	32% <sup>E</sup>
\$20,000 to \$39,999	59%	20%	27%	24%	28%
\$40,000 to \$59,999	68%	21%	24%	25%	29%
\$60,000 to \$79,999	76%	19% <sup>E</sup>	28%	29%	24%
\$80,000 to \$99,999	76%	...	37%	25% <sup>E</sup>	20% <sup>E</sup>
\$100,000 or more	79%	15%	33%	24%	29%
<b>Presence of children in the household<sup>3</sup></b>					
No children in household	67%	20%	28%	24%	28%
Pre-school-aged children only	77%	...	35% <sup>E</sup>	27% <sup>E</sup>	...
Both pre-school and school-aged children	72%	...	...	...	...
School-aged children only	73%	...	30%	28%	25%

<sup>E</sup> Sample size limited; use with caution.

... Sample size too small to be presented.

1. Only those persons belonging to at least one organization are included in the frequency calculations. Note that it is possible to belong to an organization without participating in any activities.
2. Includes those who reported participating daily or almost daily as well as those who reported participating at least once a week.
3. *Pre-school aged* is defined as ages 0 to 5, while *school aged* is defined as ages 6 to 17. *Both pre-school and school-aged children* indicates the presence in the household of at least one child from each age range (i.e., at least one child aged 0 to 5 and at least one child aged 6 to 17).

**Note:** Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.



## Conclusion

Nearly one in seven Albertans (69%) participated in a group or community organization. Albertans are most likely to participate in sports and recreation organizations, professional associations, religious organizations, and school/community groups. Just over 50% of participants took part in weekly or monthly organizational activities. Albertans who participate in groups or organizations tend to be middle-aged, married or in common-law unions, university graduates, have pre-school aged children, and have a high level of income.

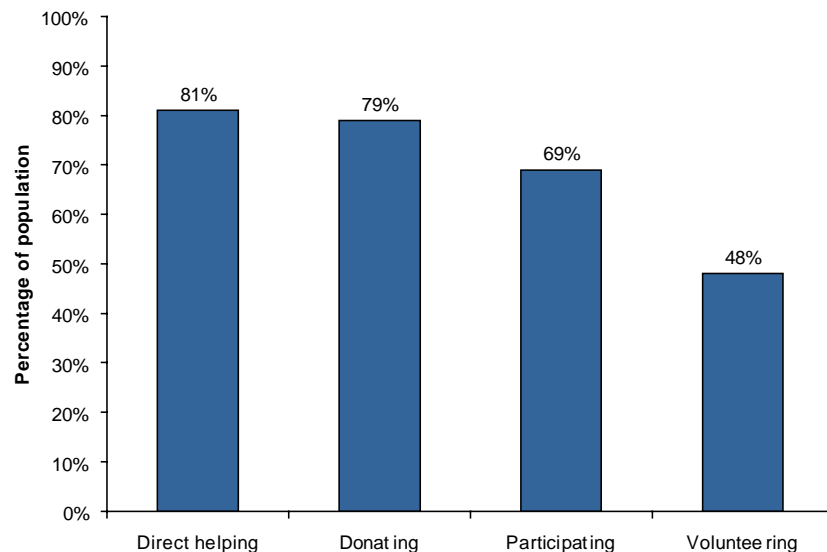
# Chapter 4 – Links between forms of social support

The 2004 CSGVP explored four forms of social involvement: charitable giving, volunteering, direct helping, and participating. This final chapter explores some of the linkages that exist between these forms of social involvement in Alberta and the extent to which individuals who engage in one form of social involvement are likely to engage in others.

## The prevalence of social involvement

Albertans are most likely to help others in their community directly by, for example, doing household chores or maintenance, assisting with paperwork, or providing health-related or personal care; 81% of Albertans aged 15 and over offered their help in this way at least once in 2004 (see Figure 4.1). The second most common form of social involvement is charitable giving; nearly one in eight Albertans (79%) made a donation to a charitable or nonprofit organization in 2004. Participating is the third most common pro-social activity in the province; 69% of Albertans participated in one or more organizations in 2004. Of the four forms of social involvement, Albertans are least likely to volunteer; less than half (48%) of Albertans volunteered their time with a charitable or nonprofit organization.

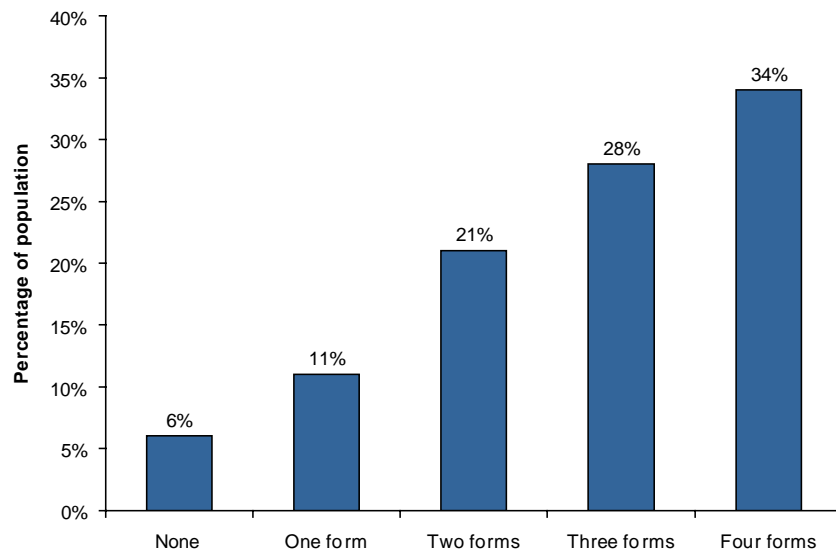
*Figure 4.1: Prevalence of different forms of social involvement, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.*



## The spectrum of social involvement

The four forms of social involvement in which Albertans engage do not exist in isolation, and the majority of Albertans (83%) engage in more than one form of social involvement (see Figure 4.2). Over one third (34%) of Albertans engaged in all four forms of social involvement, and 28% took part in three. Additionally, 21% of Albertans engaged in two of these activities, 11% in just one, and a mere 6% of Albertans did not participate in any form of social involvement at all.

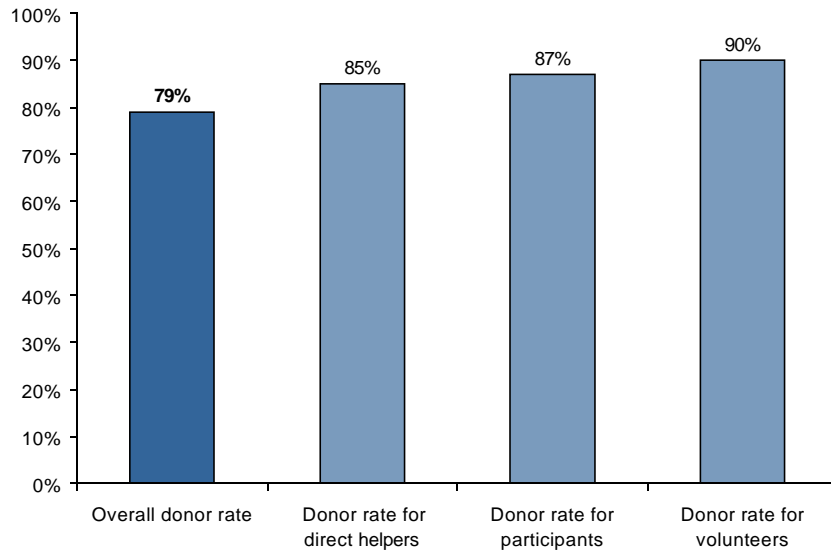
*Figure 4.2: Number of forms of social involvement undertaken, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.*



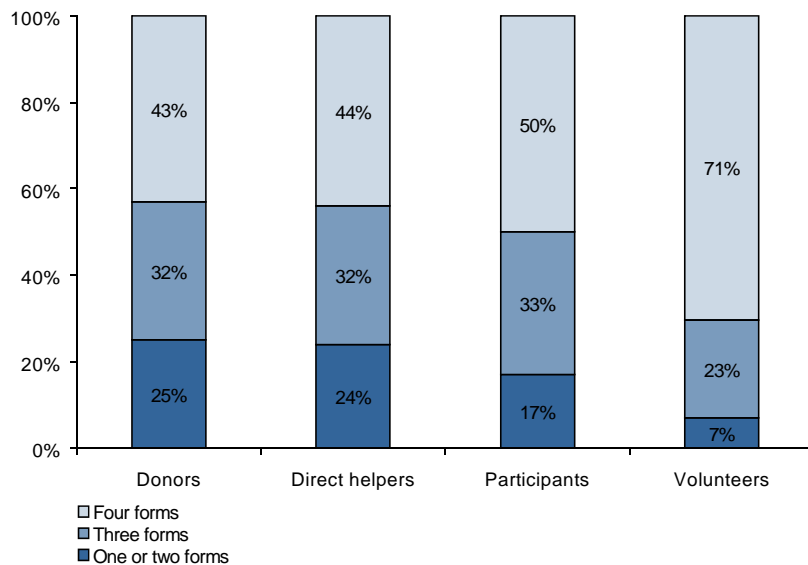
Albertans who engage in one form of social involvement are more likely to engage in others. Volunteers are consistently the most likely to engage in the other forms of social involvement, followed by participants, direct helpers, and donors. Using charitable giving as an example, 79% of Albertans in general – compared to 90% of Albertan volunteers – made a charitable donation (see Figure 4.3). Donor rates for direct helpers (85%) and participants (87%) were also higher than the overall donor rate but not as high as the donor rate for volunteers.

Not only are volunteers the most likely to engage in each of the other forms of social involvement, but they are also the most likely to engage in all four pro-social activities. Seventy-one percent of volunteers took part in all four forms of social involvement, and 23% took part in three forms (see Figure 4.4). Put another way, an overwhelming 94% of volunteers took part in three or more forms of social involvement. Albertans who participated in an organization or group had the next highest likelihood of engaging in three (33%) or four (50%) forms of social involvement. Donors and direct helpers were the least likely to engage in all four forms of social involvement (43% and 44%, respectively).

**Figure 4.3: Donor rate, for direct helpers, participants and volunteers, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



**Figure 4.4: Number of forms of social involvement in which donors, direct helpers, participants and volunteers engage, population aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**

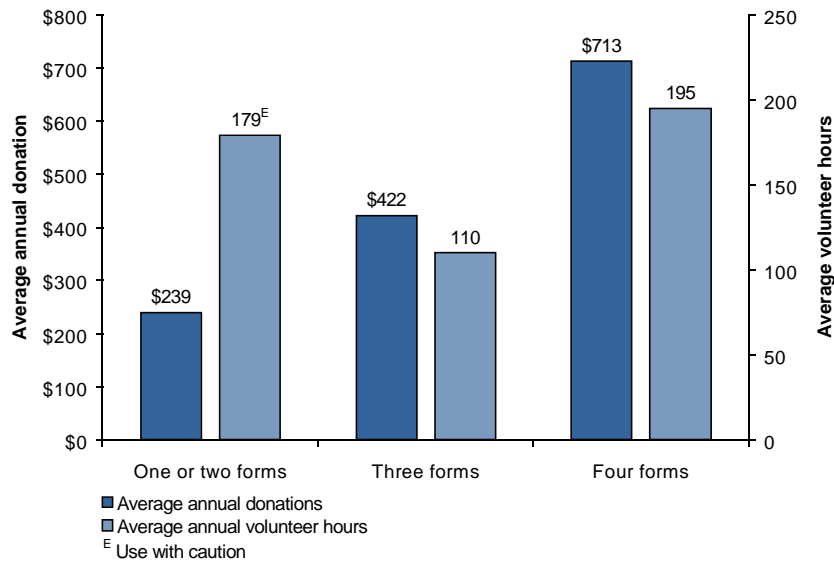


The more types of social involvement an individual participates in, the more money they tend to donate. Albertans who engaged in one or two forms of social involvement donated an average of \$239 to charitable and nonprofit organizations in 2004 whereas those who engaged in three forms donated \$422 (see Figure 4.5). Albertans who engaged in all four forms of social involvement donated by far the most money: \$713.

The average number of hours volunteered, however, did not follow the same pattern. Those who engaged in three pro-social activities volunteered the fewest hours – an average of 110 hours annually. Albertans who took part in one or two

forms of social involvement volunteered an average of 179<sup>E</sup> hours, and those who took part in all four forms volunteered the most time (195 hours).

**Figure 4.5: Average annual donations and average annual volunteer hours, by number of forms of social involvement, donors and volunteers aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



## Conclusion

The four forms of social involvement examined by the CSGVP are interconnected. Albertans who engage in any given pro-social activity are more likely to engage in others. Volunteers are most likely to engage in each of the other forms of social involvement, followed by participants, direct helpers, and donors. In addition, volunteers are most likely to engage in all four forms of social involvement. As Albertans engage in more forms of social involvement, the amount of money they donate to charitable and nonprofit organizations increases. The importance of those who give large sums of money and large amounts of time is quite striking when one examines the impact of the small group of Albertans who were top donors (the top 25% who donated \$420 or more) and who also volunteered. This group accounted for 38% of the hours volunteered and 61% of the money donated yet constituted just 17% of the population.

# Conclusions

In the course of their daily lives, the vast majority of Albertans endeavour to improve the lives of others and the community in which they live. Through activities such as making a charitable donation, volunteering their time, participating in a group or organization, helping others directly, or some combination of these activities, Albertans express important social values and establish themselves as caring and engaged members of their community.

Albertans are most likely to help others directly (81%) and slightly less likely to make a charitable donation (79%). They are least likely to participate in a group or organization (69%) and to volunteer their time (48%). Most Albertans engage in more than one form of social involvement. Indeed, 62% of Albertans engaged in three or four pro-social activities. Moreover, participation in one form of social involvement increases the likelihood of participating in the other three forms. For instance, those who volunteer are more likely than non-volunteers to make a charitable donation, participate, and provide direct help. Volunteers are also more likely to engage in multiple forms of social involvement; 94% of volunteers engaged in three or four pro-social activities.

Although virtually all Albertans (94%) engage in at least one form of social involvement, their level of engagement is typically quite modest. However, as is the case nationally, there is a core group of supporters in Alberta who donate considerable sums of money and contribute large amounts of time. This group accounts for the bulk of the money and time contributed to charitable and other nonprofit organizations and is crucial to the long-term sustainability of the province's charitable and nonprofit sector. The top 25% of donors accounted for 82% of the money donated, and the top 25% of volunteers contributed 75% of all the hours volunteered in Alberta.

Generally speaking, Albertans who are the most likely to donate and volunteer share many characteristics. Donors and volunteers tend to be female, university educated, between the ages of 35 and 44, employed, married or in common-law unions, and actively involved in their religion. They also tend to have children in their household and to have a relatively high annual household income. However, some individuals contribute more than others and there are some differences between those who donate the most and those who volunteer the most. Those who make the largest donations tend to be between the ages of 45 and 54, employed, widowed, female, university graduates, and actively involved in their religion. Albertans who donate the most also tend to have children in their household and annual household incomes in excess of \$100,000. In contrast, Albertans who volunteer the greatest number of hours tend to be seniors (age 65 and over), female, widowed, not part of the labour force, high school graduates, and actively involved in their religion. They are also likely to have annual household incomes of between \$40,000 and \$59,999 and to not have children in their household.

The report also explored motivations for and barriers to giving and volunteering. Many Albertans are motivated to make a donation because they feel compassion for those in need, personally believe in the cause, or wish to contribute to their community. Volunteers are motivated by the desire to contribute to their community, to use their skills or experience, or because they have been personally affected by the cause the organization supports. The main barriers to

giving and volunteering more or at all are similar, such as not being able to afford to give more time or money or being content with what they have already given. A significant number of Albertans also reported that they did not give or volunteer more or at all because they did not like the way donation requests were made, did not know where to make a donation or how to become involved as a volunteer, and had not been asked to donate or volunteer more.

The broad spectrum of social involvement in which Albertans engage is an essential part of daily life in the province. The social values that matter most to Albertans are expressed and strengthened through the donations they make, the time they volunteer, the help they provide to members of their community, and their participation in community groups and organizations. Albertan donors, volunteers, direct helpers, and participants each contribute positively in their own unique way to the overall health and sustainability of the communities in which they live.

# References

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