
STATISTICS CANADA SURVEY ON GIVING AND VOLUNTEERING RELEASED

*By Ryan M. Prendergast**

A. INTRODUCTION

On March 21, 2012, Statistics Canada released its report *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating: Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Tables Report, 2010*¹ (the “Report”). As its title suggests, the Report addresses how Canadians support each other directly or by volunteering at or donating to charitable and non-profit organizations. The conclusions in the Report are based on data for the year 2010, as well as comparisons of data collected in the years 2007 and 2010. Interviews of participants were conducted from September 14, 2010 to December 10, 2010 regarding the preceding 12 month period. The Report is available online at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=89-649-XIE>.

This *Charity Law Bulletin* provides a brief review of the findings of the Report. The Report provides important information for charities and non-profit organizations about the trends in giving and volunteering by Canadians.

B. VOLUNTEERING HOURS REMAIN STABLE

Since 2007, the total number of volunteer hours has remained relatively stable. While the number of volunteers increased slightly from 12,478 to 13,282 (in thousands), the total number of hours volunteered

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¹ Statistics Canada, *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating: Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Tables Report, 2010* (Minister of Industry, 2012).

remained basically static from 2007 at 2,067 hours (in millions).² Canadians volunteered almost 2.1 billion hours in 2010. According to the Report, this amount is equivalent to almost 1.1 million full-time jobs.³

In addition, the Report states that Canadians volunteered an average of 156 hours in 2010. As with the number of volunteers and volunteer hours, the amount is relatively unchanged from 2007. However, a smaller proportion of Canadians volunteered several hours, while the bulk of Canadians volunteered for a few hours. In this regard, volunteers with the most hours were older, widowed and no longer employed. These same individuals were also more likely to not have children at home and to attend weekly religious services or meetings.⁴

C. INCREASE IN DONATIONS

According to the Report, the total amount of money donated by Canadians has remained generally the same from 2007. There was a slight increase of donors from 22,841 (in thousands) in 2007 to 23,789 (in thousands) in 2010. This increase in donors was accompanied by an increase of donations from \$10,429,330 (in millions) in 2007 to \$10,609,533 (in millions) in 2010. As well, the percentage of the population donating also remained much the same.⁵ Consistent with the data collected in 2007, 84% of Canadians, aged 15 and over made a financial donation to a charitable or non-profit organization in 2010.

The average annual donation in 2010 was \$446 per donor. This was comparable to the average annual donation in 2007. Consistent with past reports released by Statistics Canada, donors that gave the most were more likely to be older. However, the Report provides further insight by indicating that donors that gave the most were also more likely to have a higher household income and formal education, or to attend weekly religious services or meetings.⁶

D. GEOGRAPHIC TRENDS ACROSS CANADA

The Report has a table for each province and territory that addresses the donor rate and distribution of donations, by personal and economic characteristics. The age of the survey pool was 15 years and older. The

² *Ibid.*, at 10.

³ *Ibid.*, at 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, at 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, at 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, at 8.

Report defines donor rate as the percentage of a given population that made at least one donation to a charitable or non-profit organization in the 12-month reference period preceding the survey.⁷

The Atlantic provinces rated the highest with regard to the donor rate to charitable and non-profit organizations, but donors from the Western provinces tended to donate higher average amounts. The donor rates in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut were the lowest with only 60% and 59% of the surveyed population making donations in 2010, respectively.⁸ Average donations were the lowest in Newfoundland (\$331), Nunavut (\$344) and Québec (\$208).⁹

With regard to Ontario, the average donor rate was 84.4%. Consistent with recent trends, older Canadians in Ontario had not only higher donor rates, but they also donated more. Ontarians aged 25 to 34 had a donor rate of 80.2% and donated a total annual amount of \$451.90 (in millions). In comparison, Ontarians aged 45 and older had a donor rate in the range of 87.7% to 89.3% and donated a total annual amount in the range of \$1,061.40 to \$1,305.30 (in millions).¹⁰

The Report also has a separate table for Canada and each province and territory that addresses the volunteer rate and distribution of volunteer hours, by personal and economic characteristics. The age of the survey pool was 15 years and older. Volunteer rate is the percentage of a given population that performed a service without pay, on behalf of a charity or other non-profit organization, at least once in the 12-month reference period preceding the survey.¹¹

The provinces with the highest volunteer rates were Saskatchewan (58.2%) and Prince Edward Island (55.7%), which were well above the national average of 47%.¹² Nova Scotia had the highest average number of volunteer hours (207), which was also above the national average of 156 hours.¹³ Québec ranked the lowest concerning both average volunteer hours (128) and volunteer rate (36.7%).¹⁴ Interestingly, comparably low volunteer rates were also present in the Northwest Territories (36.5%) and Nunavut

⁷ *Ibid.*, at 41.

⁸ *Ibid.*, at 24-25.

⁹ *Ibid.*, at 13, 17 and 25.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, at 18.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, at 42.

¹² *Ibid.*, at 26, 29, and 35.

¹³ *Ibid.*, at 26 and 30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, at 32.

(41.2%). However, the average number of volunteer hours in Québec was outranked by both the Northwest Territories (173 hours) and Nunavut (152 hours).¹⁵

E. CONCLUSION

In general, the Report presents a positive outlook on the state of volunteerism and giving in Canada. The recent trend of higher donations by older Canadians has been reinforced by the Report's findings. As well, other geographic trends relating to the donor rate, volunteer rate and the amount of donations and hours volunteered were also established by the report. It will be interesting to see whether and how this data may change in the coming years if current initiatives to revise charitable giving incentives are implemented.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, at 39-40.