

Why Do People Volunteer?

Sarah and Mike got involved in the local environmental group because they wanted to help make their community, and the planet, a healthier place to live.

As a former competitive soccer player, Steve volunteered to be an assistant coach so he could share his knowledge of the game with his daughter's soccer team.

Close to one-third of Canadians over the age of 15 volunteers.¹ Some volunteers get involved to change the world, others want to share or gain knowledge and expertise, while others simply want opportunities to meet friends and socialize.

Knowing why people give of their time and talents can help you plan for volunteer involvement.

A TIME TO REFLECT - REASONS FOR VOLUNTEERING

When reading through the following statistics and trends, think about your own group. Use the following worksheet to assess your group's ability to respond to an individual's reasons for volunteering.

Reasons for Volunteering

The number one reason people volunteer is to contribute to a cause in which they believe.

What cause does your group promote or address?

Eight out of ten people want to put their skills and experience to use.

What types of skills or abilities are needed to volunteer with your group?

Younger volunteers are more likely than any other age group to volunteer to improve their job opportunities or explore their own strengths.

Can you make this a job-training experience for youth? If so, how?

People say they don't have enough time to volunteer.

What are some alternate ways of involving volunteers that help ensure they don't have to commit too many hours per week?

People are unable to make a year-round commitment.

Do you have short-term projects for those who are not able to make a long-term commitment? If not, what could you do to change this?

More...

¹ Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating. Canadian Centre for Philanthropy. Volunteer Canada. Canadian Heritage. Health Canada. Human Resource Development Canada. Statistics Canada. 2000. (www.nsgvp.org)

Most people don't volunteer because "they were not personally invited" (especially young people).

Do you make an extra effort to invite people to join your group? If not, what could you be doing?

On average, each volunteer contributes 162 hours over the year. That's approximately three hours per week.

Do you ask volunteers to commit to more than that? If so, how can you balance out the workload and not overextend your volunteers?

A small group of volunteers contributes most of the volunteer hours accounted for in Canada: 7% of all Canadians contributed 73% of all volunteer hours. If this is true in your group, you may know the definition of "volunteer burnout".

What recruitment measures will you put in place to attract new volunteers and avoid "volunteer burnout"?

People look to volunteerism as a way to participate and connect with individuals, groups and communities. Volunteer centres link people with groups and organizations like yours to support your programs and services in the community.

There is an approach to finding, involving and keeping dedicated volunteers. It's called **Volunteer Development** and it is made up of five stages. This **Fact Sheet** (no. 2 of 14) addresses the importance of **planning for volunteer involvement**.

For more information on the Volunteer Development Cycle or Volunteer Involvement, contact your local Volunteer Centre (www.volunteer.ca/volunteercentres).

Volunteer Development Cycle



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