The Volunteering Lens of COVID-19: DATA HIGHLIGHTS

Optique du bénévolat en temps de pandémie : FAITS SAILLANTS

Statistics Canada and Volunteer Canada
June 26, 2020
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Enquête sociale générale sur le don, le bénévolat et la participation
Statistics Canada | Statistique Canada
Volunteer Canada

Our Vision

Involved Canadians. Resilient communities.

A vibrant Canada.

Our Mission

To provide national leadership and expertise on volunteering to enhance the participation, quality, and diversity of volunteer experiences to build strong and connected communities.
VOLUNTEER CANADA

Volunteering Lens of COVID-19 Survey – Volunteers

June 24, 2020

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Volunteer Canada commissioned Ipsos to conduct research to understand the impact of COVID-19 on Volunteer Organizations and Volunteers.

This report presents select findings from the Volunteer Survey.

Ipsos executed a survey among volunteers and those who have attempted to volunteer to gather data on the inspiration and source of their volunteer opportunity, their ability to volunteer during COVID-19, the experience of current volunteers during COVID-19, the experience of those who could not volunteer and those who were unsuccessful in their attempt to volunteer, and post-COVID intentions.
Survey Methodology

• The findings of this report are based on an 8-minute survey among n=604 volunteers. Surveys were conducted online via an open link. Volunteer Canada placed the open link to the survey on its website and on its Facebook Page.

• Online fieldwork took place between May 27, 2020 and June 12, 2020.

• Note: throughout this report, ▶️ / ▼️ indicate where the results for a sub-group are significantly higher or lower, respectively, than the results for at least one comparator sub-group.

Throughout the report totals may not add to 100% due to rounding or because the question is a multi-select question, where respondents were permitted to choose more than one response.
• COVID-19 has taken a toll on volunteering, with nearly all activities having declined from pre-March 2020 levels

• Wanting to support their community, wanting to use their skills and experience or having time available to volunteer now, are the most common inspirations for volunteers to be volunteering or having tried to volunteer during COVID-19.

• Online or Google search or through Volunteer Canada's website are the most common ways that volunteers found their COVID-19 volunteer opportunity.

• Comfort with and access to technology and having time are the most common factors in giving volunteers the ability to volunteer during COVID-19.
• Being over the age of 65 or living with a person of this age, their health issues or the health of those they live with, and lack of knowledge of where to find COVID-19 volunteering opportunities or not knowing how to help are the most common factors that deter volunteers’ ability to volunteer during COVID-19.

• The most common changes in volunteering since COVID-19 has been cessation in volunteering or volunteering remotely.

• Large majorities express confidence in the decisions the organization made regarding cancelling, postponing or suspending programs, the measures in place to manage risks for any continued activity and the communication with volunteers.

• Most volunteers who are unable to volunteer currently say they will return to the organization that they volunteered with pre-COVID-19 or will return as long as they are comfortable that health and safety practices are in place.
KEY FINDINGS (3)

• A majority (67%) of volunteers who are volunteering currently say they were prepared well for their volunteer role (67%), but fewer (45%) say they were prepared well for the additional health and safety practices required to address COVID-19. A majority (69%) say they have access to appropriate technology at home.

• When asked if their opinion of their organization/neighbourhood group based on their management of the impacts of COVID-19, most (63%) active volunteers say their opinion has not changed, while non-active volunteers offer a mixed opinion with half (52%) who say it has improved and a slightly smaller proportion (47%) who say it has not changed.
Volunteer Survey Profile (1)

### Volunteer Behaviour

- **Active prior to COVID-19**: 80%
- **Non-active prior to COVID-19**: 20%

#### I am helping out in my neighbourhood
- 23%

#### I am not a volunteer now because I was unsuccessful in finding a...
- 18%

#### I am volunteering with new organization
- 9%

#### I am volunteering in a new or adapted role with the same organization
- 16%

#### I continue to volunteer in the same role with the same organization
- 21%

#### I am volunteering for the first time (because of COVID-19)
- 16%

#### I volunteered sometime in the past and am now volunteering again
- 27%

#### I am helping out in my neighbourhood
- 5%

#### I tried unsuccessfully to volunteer during COVID-19
- 24%

#### I volunteered sometime in the past but was unsuccessful in my attempt to volunteer during this time
- 28%

#### I am helping out in my neighbourhood
- 5%

### Gender

- **Male**: 73%
- **Female**: 23%
- **Other**: 1%
- **Prefer not to answer**: 3%

### Age

- **15-19**: 15%
- **20-24**: 19%
- **25-34**: 19%
- **35-54**: 22%
- **55-64**: 55%
- **65-74**: 8%
- **75 and over**: 6%

### Location

- **British Columbia**: 15%
- **Alberta**: 14%
- **Manitoba/Saskatchewan**: 3%
- **Ontario**: 59%
- **Quebec**: 6%
- **Atlantic Canada**: 2%
- **Territories**: ≤ 1%

*Less than 1%
Volunteering Pre-March 2020 versus During COVID-19

When volunteers (except those who were unsuccessful in their attempt to volunteer for the first time during COVID-19) were asked to compare their volunteering prior to March 2020 to during COVID-19, nearly all activities have declined from pre-March 2020 levels, the only exception is the proportion who say they help or help out in their neighbourhood, which has remained fairly stable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Pre-March 2020</th>
<th>During COVID-19</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was/am an active volunteer (at least once a month)</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I volunteered/volunteer with a group</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I volunteered/volunteer seasonally</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I volunteered/volunteer for an annual or short-term activity</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I volunteered/volunteer with my family/friends</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I helped/help out in my neighbourhood</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I volunteered/volunteer with support of my employer</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did/do not volunteer</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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Q5. Compare your volunteering before March 2020 and now:  
Base: Active and non-active volunteers (except non-active volunteers who tried unsuccessfully to volunteer for the first time during COVID-19) (n=574)
Inspiration to Volunteer during COVID-19

Wanting to support their community and wanting to use their skills and experience, followed by having time available to volunteer now, wanting to improve their sense of well-being or health or the need for their current role not changing are the most common inspirations for volunteers to be volunteering during COVID-19 or having tried to volunteer.

- I wanted to support my community while some volunteers are not able to do so: 60%
- I wanted to use my skills and experience: 59%
- I have time available to volunteer now: 57%
- I wanted to improve my sense of well-being or health: 37%
- The need for my current role did not change: 28%
- Media requests for volunteers: 15%
- I wanted to volunteer with my family/friends: 14%
- I know someone affected by COVID-19: 11%
- Someone I know asked me to volunteer: 10%
- My employer supported me to volunteer: 7%
Factors in Your Ability to Volunteer during COVID-19

Being comfortable using technology to volunteer, having access to technology or having more time to volunteer now are the most common factors in giving volunteers the ability to volunteer during COVID-19.

Being over the age of 65, not knowing where to find COVID-19 volunteering opportunities, living with someone over the age of 65, their health issues, not knowing how to help or living with someone with health concerns are the most common factors that deter volunteers’ ability to volunteer during COVID-19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS THAT HELP</th>
<th>FACTORS THAT DETER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am comfortable using technology to volunteer</td>
<td>I am over the age of 65</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have access to technology</td>
<td>I did not know where to find COVID-19 volunteering opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have more time available to volunteer now</td>
<td>36%</td>
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Q8. Have any of the following circumstances been a factor in your ability to volunteer during COVID-19? Base: All those who are currently volunteering or helping in their neighbourhood or not able to volunteer during COVID-19 (n=453)

Please note that the graphs only include responses of 3% or higher.
How has Your Volunteering Changed since COVID-19?

Active volunteers were asked to think about the organization or group where they volunteered before March 2020 and asked how their volunteering has changed during COVID-19.

Four in ten (39%) say they have stopped volunteering completely; this figure is highest in British Columbia (49%). Two in ten (20%) indicate that they volunteer remotely now. Smaller proportions of about one in ten each mention other changes, and six percent say there has been no change.

- I stopped volunteering completely (39%)
- I volunteer remotely now (20%)
- I continue to volunteer for my organization and I am helping out in my neighbourhood (8%)
- I chose to volunteer for a different organization because of COVID-19 (7%)
- I reduced my volunteer hours (7%)
- I am no longer volunteering for my organization, and I am helping out in my neighbourhood (7%)
- I increased my volunteering with the same organization (6%)
- No change (6%)

Q9. Thinking about the organization or group where you volunteered before March 2020, how has your volunteering changed during COVID-19? Base: Active Volunteers - those who were volunteering prior to March 2020 (n=481)
Plan to Return to Organization - Volunteered pre-March 2020

Active volunteers who are unable to volunteer during COVID-19 were asked if they plan to return to volunteer at the organization where they volunteered pre-March 2020.

About four in ten (43%) say yes, while a similar figure (41%) provide a tentative “yes” and add that they will return as long as they are comfortable that health and safety practices are in place. Twelve percent are not sure and only four percent do not plan on returning.

Q13. Do you plan to return to volunteer at the organization where you volunteered pre-March 2020, in the future?
Base: Active Volunteers who were not able to volunteer during COVID-19 (n=149)
Experience Applying for Volunteer Position During COVID-19

Volunteers who were unsuccessful in their attempt to get a volunteer position were asked to describe their experience, they are most likely to say they submitted their application, but have not heard back from the organization (56%), followed by they did not meet the criteria for the role (27%), the volunteer role for which they applied was currently full (24%) or they had issues submitting their online application (15%).

Among those who say they did not hear back from the organization or say the role they applied for was full, their most common next action was they planned to check back later with the organization (50%), followed by they applied to volunteer with a different organization (28%), they stopped applying for volunteer opportunities (28%) or they helped out neighbours or friends (24%).

Among those who say they did not hear back from the organization to which they applied, their most common feelings were they understood and plan to try again later (33%), followed by they wondered if there really is a need for volunteers at this time (20%), felt their help was not needed (19%) or felt their skills did not match with the organization’s needs.
Q & A

• Please type your questions in the Chat Box.
More information …

• The Volunteering Lens of COVID-19: Survey Results
  Tuesday, July 7 at 1:00 p.m. EST

• **Today’s presentation and recording**: Volunteer Canada website

• **Statistics Canada Study**: [Volunteering in Canada: Challenges and opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200626/dq200626c-eng.htm)

Questions? Contact:

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  Valerie du Plessis, Analyst, 2018 GSS-GVP: [valerie.duplessis@canada.ca](mailto:valerie.duplessis@canada.ca)