




The Benefits of Volunteering

Fact Sheet #8

Volunteers report benefits

Canadian volunteers engage in activities that are of benefit not only to charitable organizations, individuals, and society as a whole, but also to volunteers themselves, according to data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP).¹

Top benefits of volunteering

-  Three-quarters of volunteers (76%) reported gaining interpersonal skills such as understanding people better, motivating others, and dealing with difficult situations.
-  Two-thirds of volunteers (66%) said they developed communication skills in public speaking, writing, conducting meetings, and public relations.
-  Sixty-four percent reported an increase in their knowledge about such issues as health, women, politics, criminal justice, or the environment.

Demographics and benefits

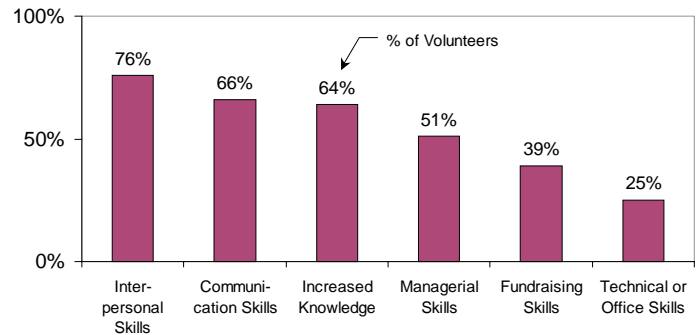
While younger volunteers (those aged 15-24) were more likely to report gaining interpersonal and communication skills (83% and 77%, respectively), these benefits were also reported by the majority of volunteers in all age groups.

Unemployed volunteers were more likely than employed volunteers and those not in the labour force to report gaining interpersonal and communication skills, and an increase in their knowledge.

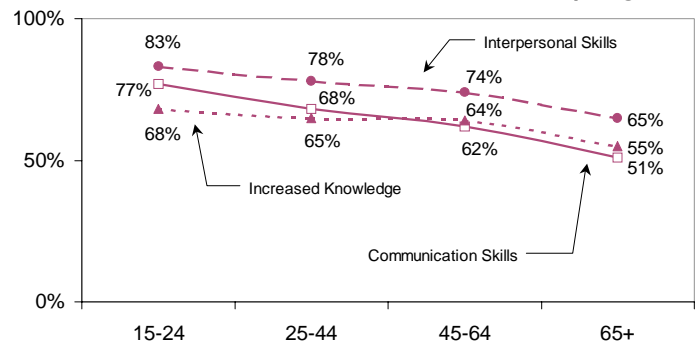
Volunteers who contributed at least 177 hours per year—that is, the top 25% of volunteers—were more likely to report gaining benefits than the 75% of volunteers who contributed between 1 and 176 hours annually. These findings suggest that the more Canadians volunteer, the more opportunity they have to benefit from the experience.

1. Findings from the NSGVP are based on reports of charitable giving during the one-year period from November 1, 1996 to October 31, 1997 by Canadians aged 15 and older.

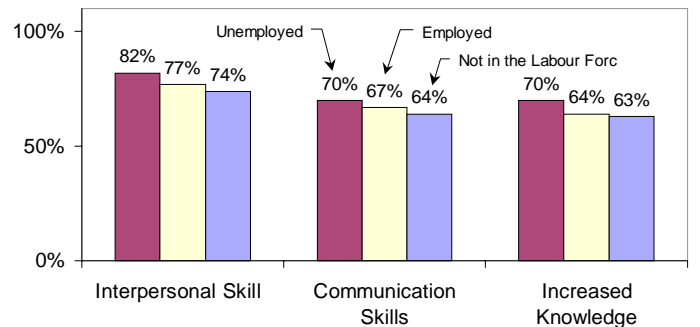
Percentage Who Report Gaining Skills from their Volunteer Activities



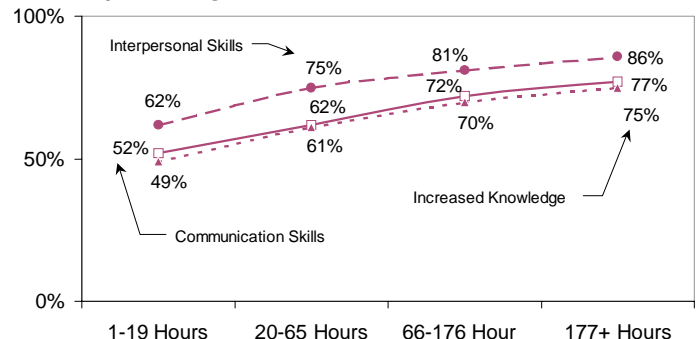
Percentage Who Report Gaining Skills from their Volunteer Activities by Age



Percentage Who Report Gaining Skills from their Volunteer Activities by Employment Status



Percentage of Volunteers Who Report Gaining Skills from their Volunteer Activities by Average Skills Number of Hours Volunteered



Job prospects and job attainment

Volunteer work was often seen as a step to paid employment and a chance to improve job prospects:

More than half of unemployed volunteers (54%) believed that volunteering would increase their chances of finding a job.

As shown in the accompanying charts, this belief rose to 65% among 15-24 year-olds and decreased steadily with age. Volunteers who contributed at least 177 hours per year were also more likely to hold this belief than those who contributed 176 hours or less.

The belief that volunteering leads to employment may not be misplaced:

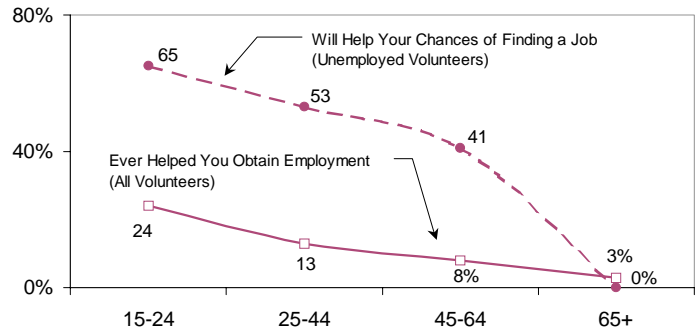
12% of volunteers stated that their volunteer activities had helped them obtain employment.

This belief was more significant among 15-24 year-olds (24%) than among older respondents. Unemployed volunteers (18%)—compared to those who were employed or not in the labour force—were more likely to endorse this belief. Those who volunteered 177 hours or more annually (16%) were more likely to hold this belief than those contributing less than 177 hours.

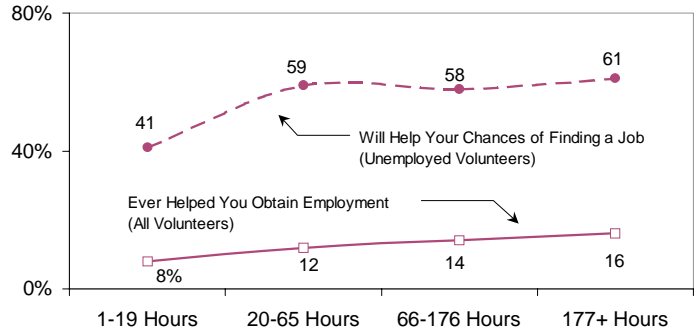
QUICKfacts...

One-third (34%) of employed volunteers reported gaining job-related skills. This was strongest for: volunteers who were 15-24 years-old (46%); those who worked part-time (40%); or those who volunteered at least 177 hours annually (50%).

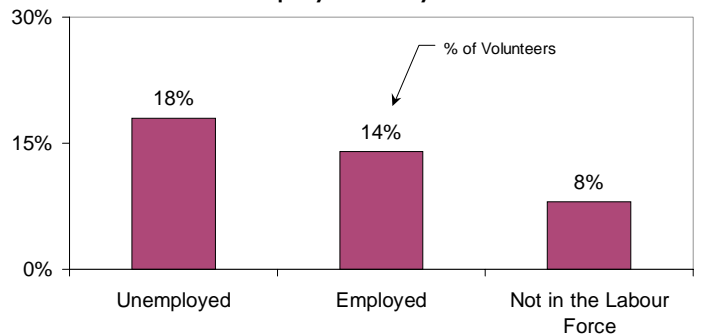
Percentage Who Believe Volunteering had Helped Them Obtain Employment and that Volunteering would Improve Job Prospects, by Age



Percentage Who Believe Volunteering had Helped Them Obtain Employment and that Volunteering would Improve Job Prospects, by Average Number of Hours Volunteered



Percentage Who Believe Volunteering had Helped Them Obtain Employment, by Labour Force Status



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More information on the results of the NSGVP, including the full text of the highlight report *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians*, is available online at our Website: www.nsgvp.org

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