

## Volunteering in Newfoundland and Labrador

The 4,300+ voluntary, community-based organizations (VCBOs) in Newfoundland and Labrador make an enormous contribution to social and economic development. Extensive consultation and research reveals that many groups struggle with common challenges. Most rely heavily on volunteers for their very existence, so it is essential to understand the factors that influence volunteer recruitment and retention.

### CSC SURVEY OF ORGANIZATIONS AND RESIDENTS

In 2002 / 2003, the Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador (CSC) conducted surveys with **1554 individuals and 872 voluntary organizations** in communities around the province to:

- Ascertain the need for volunteers and board members among VCBOs;
- Initiate an inventory of potential volunteers;
- Consider how to link organizations with people who wish to volunteer;
- Explore with VCBOs some methods of working cooperatively to build volunteer resources; and
- Update CSC's existing directory of VCBOs to build regional profiles of the sector.

### SURVEY RESULTS

#### Individuals' Rate of Volunteering

- 828 of 1549 individuals responding (53%) are currently volunteers. (In contrast with the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP), which suggested that only 31% of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians over the age of 15 are active volunteers.)
- 534 respondents (35%) said they were interested in becoming active or more involved as volunteers.
- 252 people (16% of those surveyed) were willing to be listed in an inventory of potential volunteers.

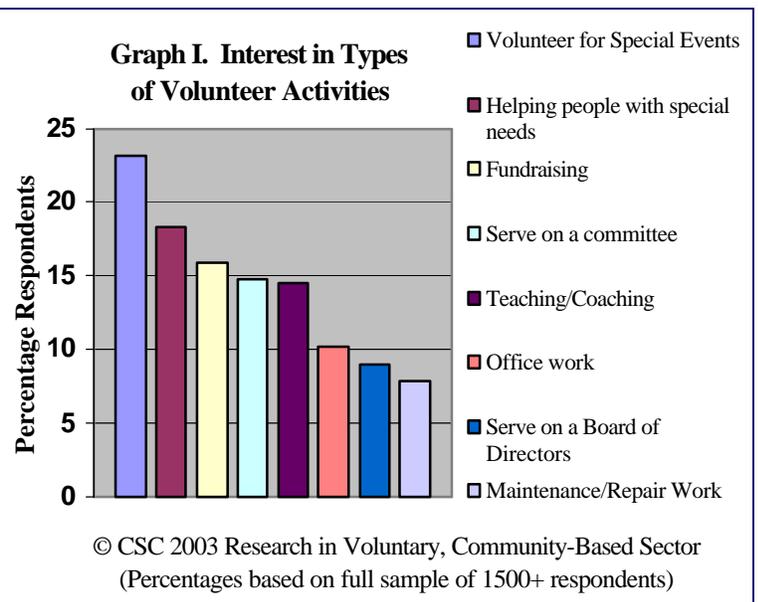
#### Organizations' Need for Volunteers

- 59% of organizations responding said they needed more volunteers.
- 38% of organizations experience difficulties recruiting people to serve on their boards.

#### Inventory of Potential Volunteers

Graph I shows the types of volunteer activities that respondents, willing to be more active as volunteers, were interested in. The specific activities were suggested by the interviewer.

Table I presents some possible reasons why people do not volunteer. These received the highest percentage of 'Yes' responses from a list of 14 possible reasons suggested by the Interviewer.



| Table I. Possible Reasons Why People Don't Volunteer                             | Yes Responses |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Not enough time for long term commitment                                         | 83% (1268)    |
| Some people are not interested                                                   | 78% (1181)    |
| Expenses such as child care and travel                                           | 70% (1057)    |
| Have not been personally asked                                                   | 62% (954)     |
| Do not believe they have the right skills                                        | 60% (914)     |
| Feel unwelcome because of age, income or disability                              | 56% (850)     |
| Not enough promotion of organizations or volunteer opportunities                 | 53% (798)     |
| Same people run many organizations and it is hard for new people to get involved | 50% (756)     |
| Possibility of being held legally responsible                                    | 46% (699)     |
| Think volunteers are not appreciated                                             | 42% (641)     |
| Lack of training for volunteers                                                  | 42% (640)     |

© CSC 2003 Research in Voluntary, Community-Based Sector

researcher  
investigator  
observer  
facilitator  
partner  
service-provider  
advocate  
problem-solver  
consultant  
promoter  
social activist  
organizer  
founder  
bridge-builder  
pioneer  
networker  
ground-breaker  
incubator  
analyst  
catalyst  
strategist  
supporter  
resource leader  
independent  
collaborator  
link participant  
independent

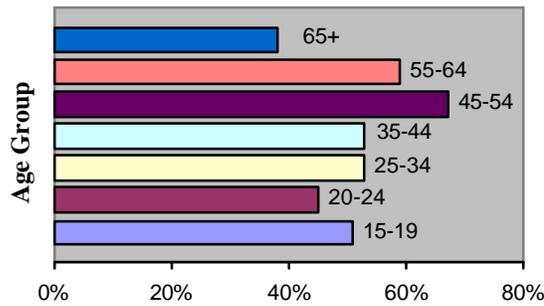


### Rate of Volunteering by Age

The percentage of respondents that volunteer with an organization in their community varied from 38% for age 65 and over to 67% for ages 45-54, with 59% of ages 55-64 volunteering. (See Graph II.) This is in contrast with the NSGVP, which suggests that the 45-64 age group has the lowest rate at 32%.

It is commonly said that young people do not volunteer. In fact, 51% of 15-19 year-olds and 45% of 20-24 year-olds surveyed by the CSC reported that they are active volunteers.

**Graph II. Percentage of Respondents that Volunteer According to Age**



© CSC 2003 Research in Voluntary, Community-Based Sector (Sample size = 763)

**Table II. Most Often Cited as Recruitment Methods that Work**

- Word of mouth
- Personal contact
- Asking people to help
- Targeting Specific populations
- Targeting Members
- Agencies / Referrals / Other Groups

© CSC 2003 Research in Voluntary, Community-Based Sector

**Table III. Frequently Suggested Ways to Promote Volunteer Opportunities**

|                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Networking          | Better Communications  |
| Meetings            | Database of Volunteers |
| Promotion Campaigns | Regional Coordinator   |
| Presentations       | Merging Organizations  |
| Sharing Information | Appreciate Volunteers  |

© CSC 2003 Research in Voluntary, Community-Based Sector

### Volunteer Appreciation

Of responding organizations, 84% hold events or make gestures of appreciation to thank their volunteers. At times, some organizations cover expenses incurred by volunteers, such as transportation (54% of respondents), meals (49%) and accommodations (42%). Child-care expenses may occasionally be covered (8%). Some groups (12%) have paid honorariums to volunteers.

### Recruitment Methods

Organizations were asked which volunteer recruitment methods worked best. The most frequent responses are shown in Table II. When asked how volunteer opportunities could be promoted in the community, the suggestions revolved around cooperative strategies. (See Table III.)

### Volunteer Opportunities at [www.enVision.ca](http://www.enVision.ca)

During Volunteer Week 2003, CSC launched an online listing of volunteer opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador, broken down into six regions and located at [www.volunteer.enVision.ca](http://www.volunteer.enVision.ca). Organizations may submit their opportunities directly online or fax or mail them to CSC. Individuals interested in volunteering may check the site for opportunities in their area. Visitors to this site can choose from the following menu items:

- View Volunteer Opportunities
- Post Volunteer Opportunities
- Create Volunteer Job Descriptions
- Build a Resume Through Volunteering
- Learn More about the Voluntary Community-based (VCB) Sector

[www.enVision.ca](http://www.enVision.ca), the vortal for the VCB Sector in Newfoundland and Labrador, provides information on many topics (Writing Job Descriptions for Volunteers and Board Members, Volunteer Recognition Ideas, etc.), and the CSC Volunteer Centre offers a series of workshops in Volunteer Management which will soon be available online.

### Why Volunteer?

- Express your talents and interests
- Help your community
- Interact with others
- Gain experience, references and contacts
- Learn new skills

Visit [www.envision.ca](http://www.envision.ca) today, or contact:

Community Services Council Volunteer Centre  
 Suite 201, Virginia Park Plaza, Nfld. Drive  
 St. John's, NL A1A 3E9  
 Tel: (709) 753-9860 Fax: (709) 753-6112  
 Toll free: 1-877-753-9190  
 Email: [volunteer-centre@csc.nf.net](mailto:volunteer-centre@csc.nf.net)