

# Giving and Volunteering for Social Services Organizations in Alberta

Findings from the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating

By  
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David Lasby



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# Acknowledgements

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This report was made possible by the generous financial support of the *Wild Rose Foundation*.

## Statement on data quality

The results presented in this report are derived from a survey. As such they are estimates, not definite measures. Because of variation in the sample size involved with various questions, and variability in the answers given, some estimates are more precise than others. Estimates with a coefficient of variation less than 16.6% are unqualified. Estimates with a coefficient of variation between 16.6% and 33.3% are noted with an <sup>E</sup> and should be used with caution. Estimates with a coefficient of variation greater than 33.3%, or based on fewer than 30 respondents are not presented and are represented in tables and figures with the symbol ... For more detailed information concerning data quality, readers are referred to Appendix B of *Concerned Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights of the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* (Hall, Lasby, Gumulka & Tryon, 2006).

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## Introduction

Social Services organizations<sup>1</sup> are an important source of support for many Albertans and play an important role in Albertans' daily lives. These organizations make up the fifth largest segment of the nonprofit and voluntary sector in Alberta, ranking just behind those working in the areas of Sports and Recreation; Arts and Culture; Grant-making, Fundraising, and Voluntarism Promotion; and Religion, according to the 2003 National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (Hall, de Wit, Lasby, McIver, Evers, et al., 2005). The approximately 1,800 Social Services organizations in Alberta account for 9% of the nonprofit and voluntary organizations in the province and 10% of all nonprofit revenues (Roach, 2006). Yet little is known about how and to what extent Albertans support these organizations through voluntary contributions of time and money.

This report uses findings from the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating (CSGVP) to provide information on the Albertans who contribute time or money to Social Services organizations, how much they give, how they make their donations, how they become involved and what they do as volunteers, their motivations for supporting these organizations, and the barriers they face.

The CSGVP, conducted by Statistics Canada, asked Canadians about their charitable giving and volunteering, as well as about the way they help their friends and neighbours and connect with one another through a wide array of organizations, associations, and clubs. As part of the CSGVP, telephone interviews were conducted with approximately 1,600 Albertans aged 15 and over. Respondents were contacted between mid-September and December of 2004 and were asked about their activities during the previous one-year period.

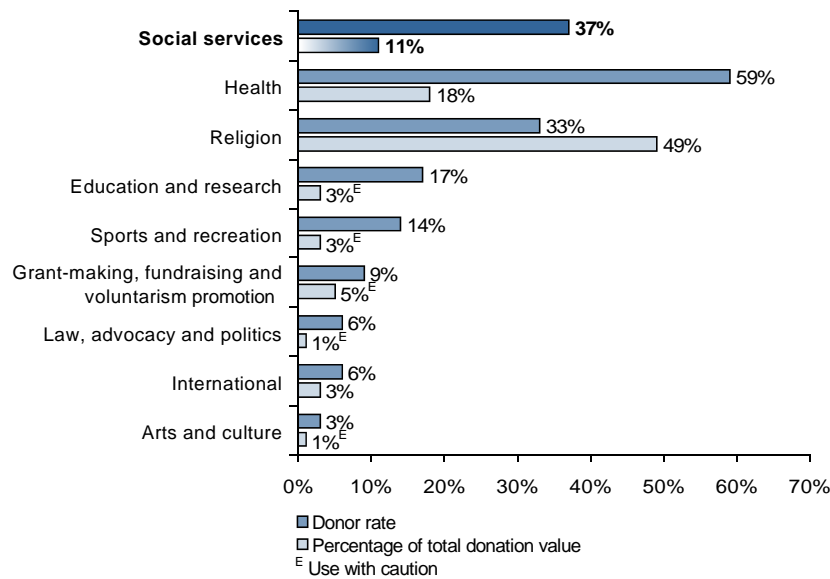
## Charitable Giving to Social Services Organizations

Social Services organizations in Alberta attract the second largest pool of donors in the province and the third largest percentage of charitable dollars, but Social Services donors make relatively modest donations. In 2004, more than one third (37%) of Albertans made a charitable donation to a Social Services organization (see Figure 1). Only Health organizations attracted a higher level of support (59% of Albertans donated to a Health organization). On average, Social Services donors gave \$117 annually (see Figure 2), for a total of over \$110 million, or 11% of the value of all charitable donations in the province. Albertans were slightly less likely to donate to Social Services organizations than were other Canadians, but made larger average annual donations; 43% of Canadians donated an average of \$80 to Social Services organizations, or 10% of all charitable donations made in Canada (Hall, et al., 2006).

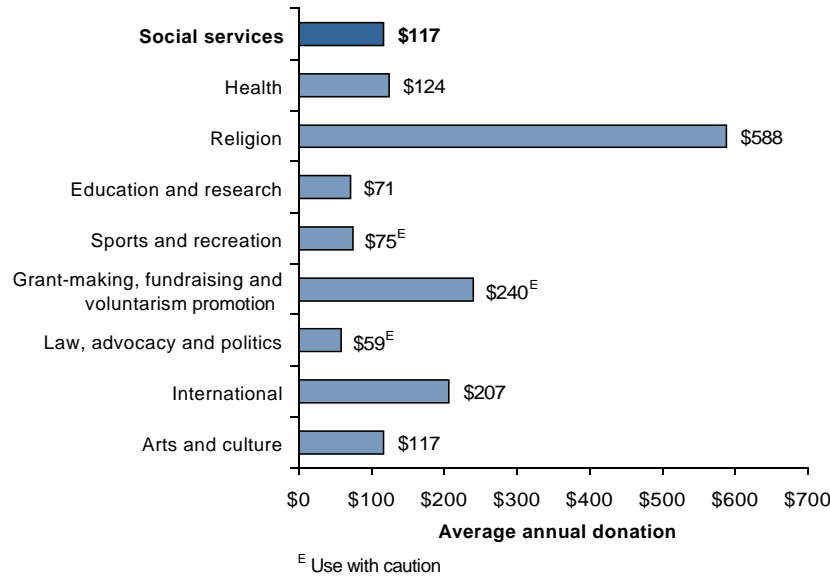
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<sup>1</sup> Social Services organizations provide human and social services to a community or a specific population within a community, such as children, youth, families, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities. The services these organizations provide are diverse, including emergency support and relief, income support, food banks, women's shelters, and life skills programs. This definition is based on the International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations (Salamon & Anheier, 1997). The modified classification used here divides nonprofit organizations into 13 different groups – where fewer than 13 groups are presented in this report, it is due to sample size limitations.

**Figure 1: Percentage of total donation value and donor rate, by selected organization type, population aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



**Figure 2: Average annual donations, by selected organization type, donors aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**

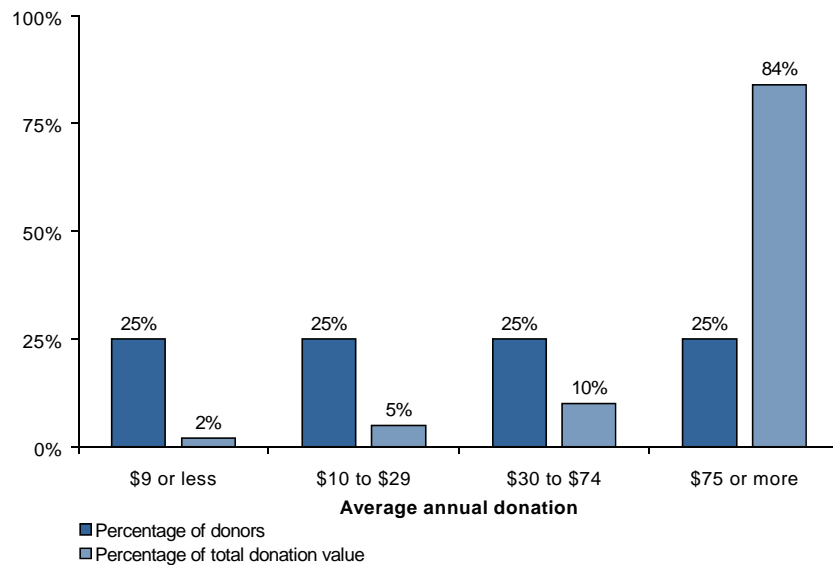


## The concentration of support

Although more than one third of Albertans support Social Services organizations financially, the bulk of this support comes from a small minority of donors. Fully 84% of the value of all donations made to Social Services organizations came from the 25% of donors who gave \$75 or more annually (see Figure 3). An additional 10% came from those who donated between \$30 and \$74, and 5% came from those who gave between \$10 and \$29. Just 2% of the total value of all donations came from the 25% of donors who donated less than \$10. This degree

of concentration appears to be fairly typical of charitable and nonprofit organizations in Alberta and Canada; nationally and provincially, the 25% of donors who made the largest donations accounted for 82% of the value of all donations (Hall, et al., 2006).

**Figure 3: Distribution of donors and percentage of total annual donations, by amount of annual donations, Social Services donors aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



## Who gives to Social Services organizations?

Although the decision to donate to a charitable or nonprofit organization is a personal one, there are some personal and economic characteristics that appear to be associated with the likelihood of supporting Social Services organizations in Alberta and with the extent of that support. The most significant of these are age, marital status, formal education, annual household income, the presence of children in the household, and religious attendance (see Table 1).

The likelihood of donating to Social Services organizations and the average amount donated increase with age. Albertans aged 15 to 34 were the least likely to donate to Social Services organizations (23% made a donation), and Albertans aged 55 and older were the most likely to give (48%). Similarly, Albertans aged 15 to 34 gave the least (\$48 annually), and those 55 and over gave the most (\$153<sup>E</sup>).

Albertans who were separated or divorced were the most likely to give to Social Services organizations (45% donated), followed closely by those who had been widowed (44%), and those who were married or in common-law unions (43%). Only 22% of single Albertans donated to Social Services organizations. Those who were married or in common-law relationships made larger annual donations (\$118) than did single Albertans (\$56<sup>E</sup>).

<sup>E</sup> Use with caution.

**Table 1: Social Services donor rate and average Social Services donation, by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**

	Social Services donor rate	Average annual Social Services donation
<b>All Albertans</b>	11%	\$117
<b>Age</b>		
15 to 34	23%	\$48
35 to 54	43%	\$130
55 and over	48%	\$153 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	34%	\$122
Female	39%	\$113 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married or common-law	43%	\$118
Single, never married	22%	\$56 <sup>E</sup>
Separated or divorced	45%	...
Widow or widower	44%	...
<b>Education</b>		
High school or less	27%	\$82 <sup>E</sup>
Postsecondary	43%	\$113 <sup>E</sup>
University degree	45%	\$188 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Labour force status</b>		
Employed	37%	\$132
Unemployed	...	...
Not in the labour force	36%	\$89 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Household income</b>		
Less than \$40,000	33%	\$84 <sup>E</sup>
\$40,000 to \$79,999	35%	\$123 <sup>E</sup>
\$80,000 or more	41%	\$138
<b>Presence of children in household</b>		
No children in household	34%	\$127
Children in household	42%	\$96
<b>Religious attendance</b>		
Attends religious services weekly	43%	\$174 <sup>E</sup>
Does not attend religious services weekly	35%	\$103

<sup>E</sup> Sample size limited; use with caution.

... Sample size too small to be presented.

Those who had a high school diploma or less were much less likely than other Albertans to donate. Forty-five percent of Albertans with a university degree and 43% with some postsecondary education or a postsecondary degree or diploma donated, compared to 27% of those with a high school diploma or less. University graduates gave the most (\$188<sup>E</sup> annually), and Albertans with a high school diploma or less gave the least (\$82<sup>E</sup>).

Wealthier Albertans were more likely to donate to Social Services organizations and also made larger donations. Forty-one percent of Albertans with annual

household incomes of \$80,000 or more donated an average of \$138, compared to the 33% of Albertans with incomes of less than \$40,000 who donated an average of \$84<sup>E</sup>.

Women were more likely to donate than men (39% vs. 34%) though men tended to give larger donations (\$122 vs. \$113<sup>E</sup> for women).

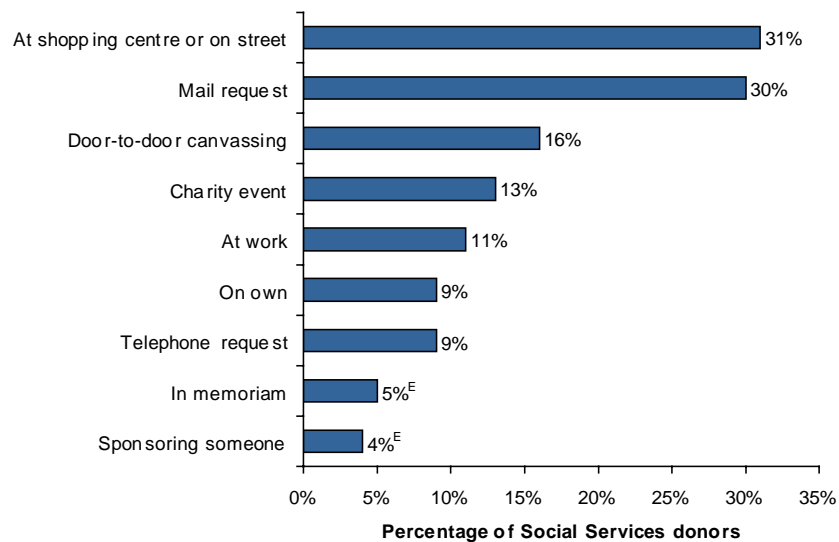
Albertans with children in their household were more likely to donate than were those with no children in the home. Two fifths (42%) of those with children in their household donated, compared to a third (34%) of those without children. However, those who did not have children in the household gave more than those who had children (\$127 vs. \$96, respectively).

Finally, Albertans who attended religious services weekly were more likely to donate to Social Services organizations than were those who did not (43% vs. 35%) and tended to give more (\$174<sup>E</sup> vs. \$103).

### How do Social Services donors make their donations?

Albertans make their charitable donations in a variety of ways and in response to a variety of kinds of requests.<sup>2</sup> Social Services donors were most likely to make a donation as a result of being approached in a public place, such as a shopping centre or on the street (31% donated in this way) or after receiving a request in the mail (30%; see Figure 4). Other ways Social Services donors tended to give were in response to door-to-door canvassing (16%), by paying to attend a charity event (13%), and by donating at their place of employment (11%). Social Services donors were least likely to make a donation in someone’s memory (5%<sup>E</sup>) or by sponsoring someone in an event such as a walk-a-thon (4%<sup>E</sup>).

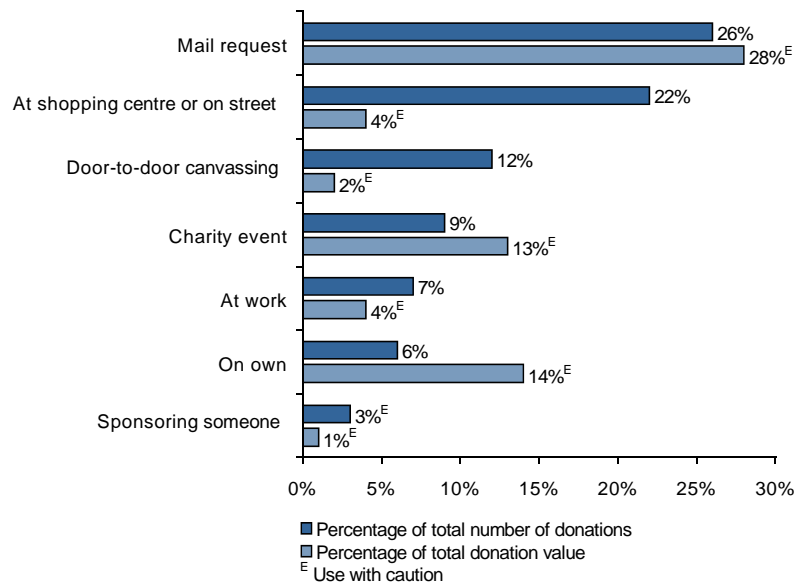
**Figure 4: Percentage of donors contributing by selected donation method, Social Services donors aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**



<sup>E</sup> Use with caution

Although Alberta Social Services donors used some methods of donating more frequently than others, these methods did not necessarily generate the most money. For example, donations made in a public place such as at a shopping centre or on the street accounted for 22% of all the donations made to Social Services organizations but generated only 4%<sup>E</sup> of the value of Social Services donations (see Figure 5). Conversely, charity events accounted for only 9% of the total number of donations made to Social Service organizations but generated 13%<sup>E</sup> of the total value of Social Services donations, and donations that Albertans made on their own accounted for 6% of all donations but 14%<sup>E</sup> of the total value.

**Figure 5: Distribution of number of donations and total value of donations, by donation method, Social Services donors aged 15 and older, Alberta, 2004.**

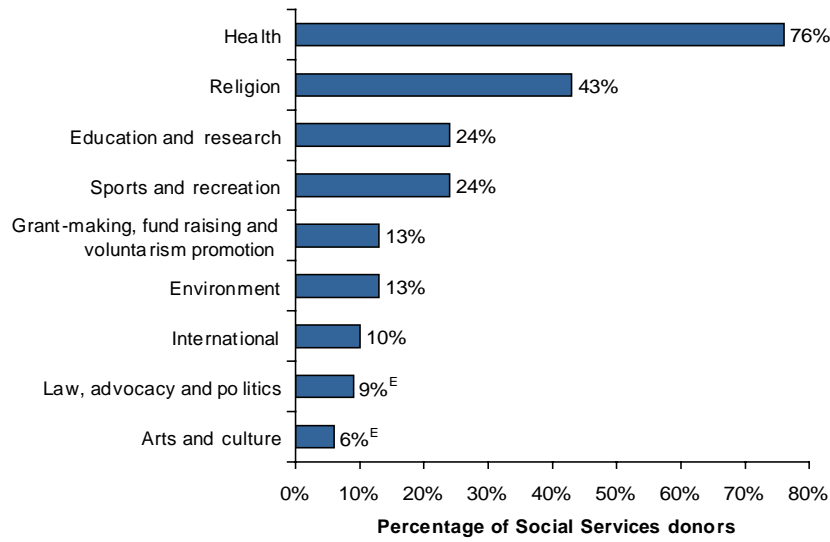


## What other causes do Social Services donors contribute to?

Social Services donors do not limit their support to one type of organization. In 2004, they made donations to an average of two other types of organizations in addition to the donations that they made to Social Services organizations. Social Services donors in Alberta were most likely to also support organizations working in the areas of Health (76%), Religion (43%), Education and Research (24%), and Sports and Recreation (24%; see Figure 6). They were less likely to support organizations devoted to International issues (10%), Law, Advocacy, and Politics (9%), and Arts and Culture (6%<sup>E</sup>).

<sup>2</sup> Respondents were asked about 12 different ways of making donations but due to limited sample sizes only the results shown here can be presented.

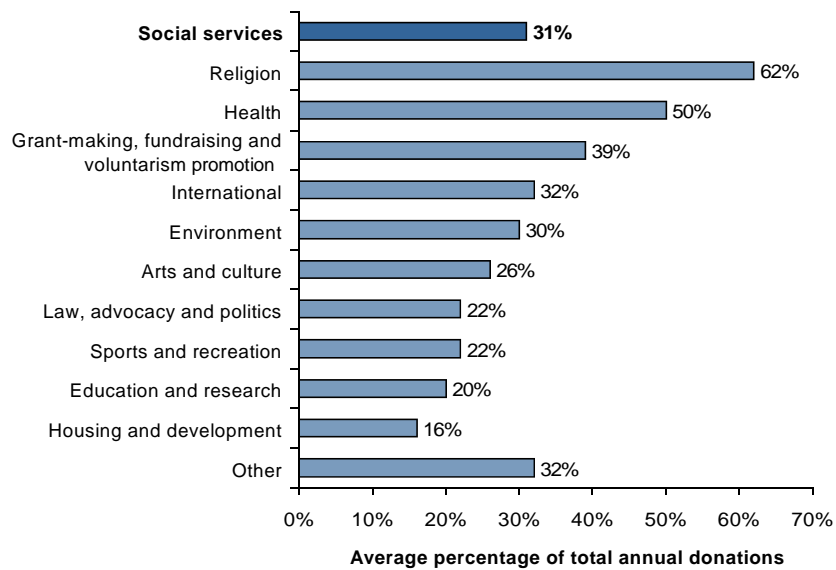
**Figure 6: Rate of donation to other organization types, Social Services donors aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



<sup>E</sup> Use with caution

Donations to Social Services organizations represent only a relatively small percentage of the total money donated annually by Social Services donors. On average, Social Services donors gave just under one third (31%) of their charitable dollars to Social Services organizations; the remaining 69% went to other types of organizations (see Figure 7). By comparison, Religion donors gave an average of 62% of their total donations to Religion organizations, and Health donors gave an average of 50% of their total donations to Health organizations.

**Figure 7: Average percentage of monies devoted to organization type by supporters of organization type, donors aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



## What motivations and barriers do Social Services donors experience?

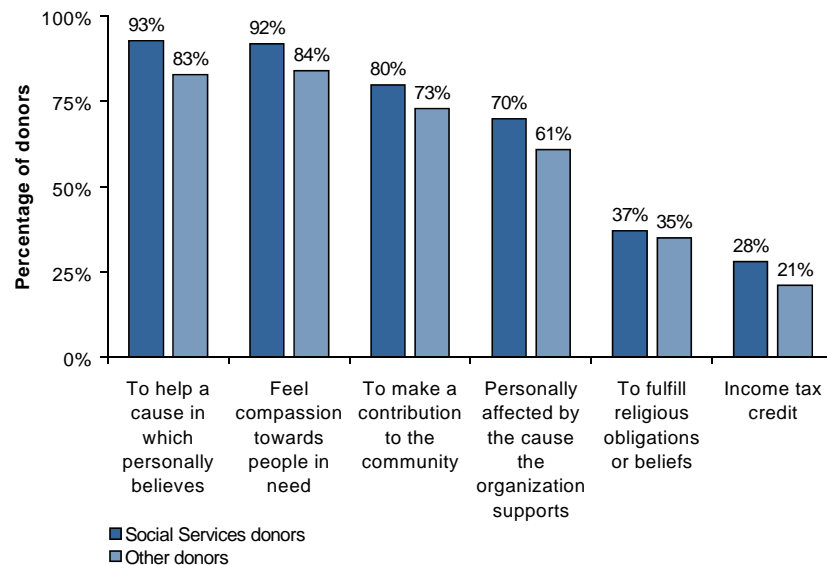
There is a wide range of factors that may influence people to give to charitable or other nonprofit organizations or prevent them from giving more or giving at all. Understanding these factors can be useful to organizations seeking financial donations or to those who are interested in knowing why some individuals choose to support certain types of organizations.

### *Motivations for donating*

In general, Social Services donors and donors to other types of organizations tend to be motivated by similar factors to similar degrees.<sup>3</sup> Both groups of donors were most likely to be motivated by wanting to help a cause in which they believe and feeling compassion for those in need (see Figure 8). In addition, both groups of donors were least likely to be motivated by the desire to fulfill religious obligations or because of income tax credits they will receive.

However, there are a few notable differences between Social Services donors and other donors. Social Services donors were more likely than other donors to make a charitable donation because they personally believed in the cause (93% vs. 83%, respectively) and because they had been personally affected by the cause the organization supports (70% vs. 61%).

**Figure 8: Reasons for making financial donations, donors to Social Services organizations and donors to other organizations aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



### *Barriers to donating more*

Broadly speaking, Albertans who donated to Social Services organizations and other Albertan donors identified similar barriers.<sup>4</sup> Both groups were most likely

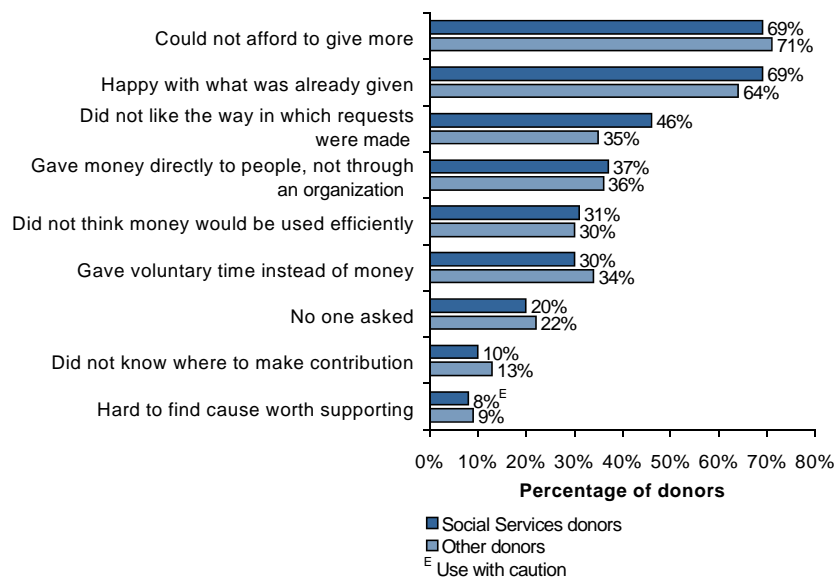
<sup>3</sup> In order to explore why Albertans make charitable donations, the CSGVP asked respondents whether any of six possible motivations played an important role in their decision(s) to donate. It is important to note that these questions apply to donations generally, rather than donations to Social Services organizations in particular.

<sup>4</sup> The CSGVP asked donors whether any of nine potential barriers prevented them from donating as much as they otherwise would have. It is important to note that these questions apply to donations generally, rather than specifically to Social Services donations.

to say they did not give more because they could not afford to do so or because they were happy with what they had already given (see Figure 9). It was relatively uncommon for either group to report that they did not donate more because they did not know where to make a contribution or because they had difficulty finding a worthwhile cause.

There were some notable differences, however. Social Services donors were more likely than donors to other organizations to say that they disliked the way in which requests were made (46% vs. 35%), indicating that donation requests to Social Services donors should be carefully crafted. Other donors, however, were somewhat more likely to report that they did not give more because they contributed voluntary time (34% of other donors vs. 30% of Social Services donors).

**Figure 9: Reasons for not making more financial donations, donors to Social Services organizations and donors to other organizations aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



### What role does prior planning play?

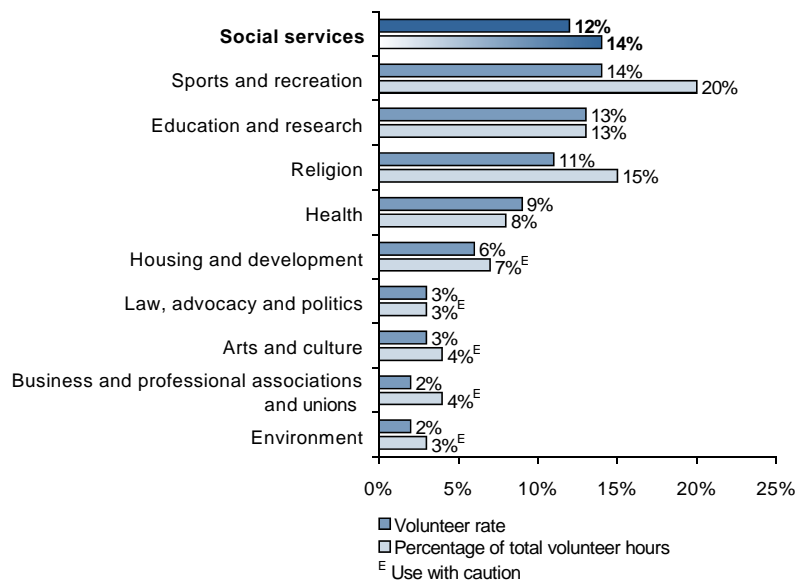
Social Services donors were more likely than other donors to plan certain elements of their giving. Nearly one quarter (24%) of Social Services donors decided in advance how much money they were going to contribute for the year, compared to 21% of other donors. Additionally, 40% decided which organizations they would support with their larger donations in advance, rather than deciding spontaneously in response to a request; this compares to 36% of other donors. Social Services donors were more likely than other donors to contribute to a mixture of different organizations and organizations that they customarily supported, over a period of time (48% vs. 37% for other donors).

## Volunteering for Social Services Organizations

Volunteering is important to the functioning of Social Services organizations – according to the NSNVO, 65% of the total hours worked by Social Services organizations in Alberta came from volunteers. However, volunteering also represents a significant challenge for these organizations – 59% reported difficulties recruiting the types of volunteers the organization needs, and 62% said that they had difficulty retaining volunteers (Roach, 2006).

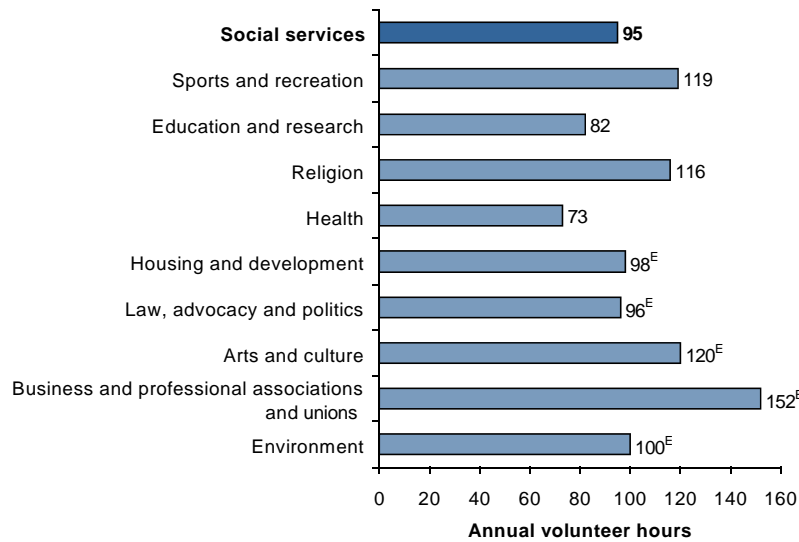
Social Services organizations attract the third largest pool of volunteers in Alberta and the third largest percentage of total volunteer hours (see Figure 10). In 2004, 12% of Albertans volunteered an average of 95 hours for Social Services organizations (see Figure 11), for a total of over 29 million hours, or 14% of all the hours volunteered province-wide and the equivalent of approximately 15,500 full-time jobs.<sup>5</sup> Albertans were slightly more likely than other Canadians to volunteer for Social Services organizations, but contributed fewer hours on average. In 2004, 11% of Canadians volunteered an average of 117 hours for Social Services organizations, accounting for 17% of all the hours volunteered nationally (Hall, et al., 2006).

**Figure 10: Percentage of total hours volunteered and volunteer rate, by selected organization type, population aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



<sup>5</sup> Assuming a 40-hour work week and 48 work weeks per year.

*Figure 11: Average annual hours volunteered, by selected organization type, volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.*

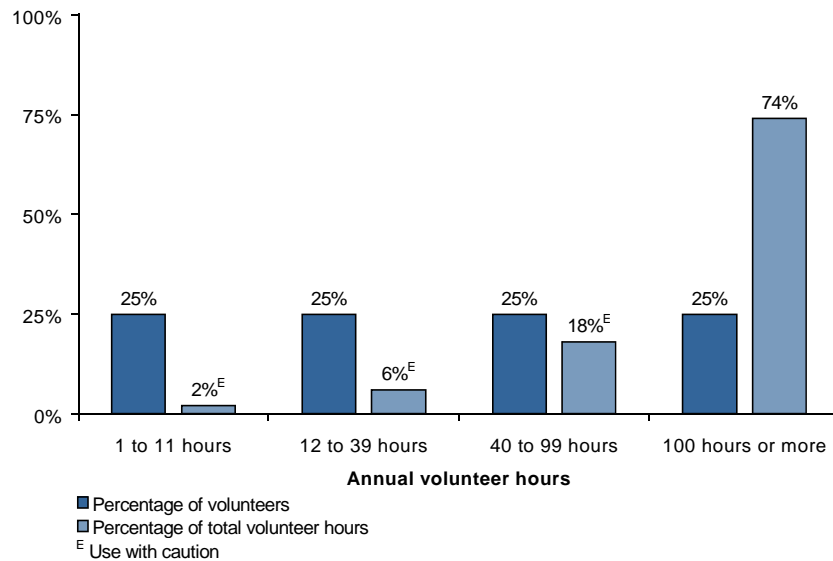


<sup>E</sup> Use with caution

## The concentration of support

Although Albertans were more likely to volunteer for Social Services organizations than they were for most other types of organizations, the bulk of the volunteer support came from a small group of volunteers. Nearly three quarters (74%) of all the hours volunteered to Social Services organizations came from the 25% of volunteers who gave 100 hours or more (see Figure 12). By extension, 3% of Albertans accounted for almost three quarters of volunteering for Social Services organizations. A further 18%<sup>E</sup> came from volunteers who gave 40 to 99 hours, and 6%<sup>E</sup> from those who gave 12 to 39 hours. The 25% of volunteers who contributed 11 hours or less accounted for just 2%<sup>E</sup> of all the hours volunteered for Social Services organizations. This degree of concentration is fairly typical – provincially 75% of hours came from the top 25% of volunteers, while nationally, 78% of total hours volunteered for all organizations came from the top 25% of volunteers (Hall, et al., 2006).

**Figure 12: Distribution of volunteers and percentage of total annual hours volunteered, by amount of annual hours, Social Services volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



## Who volunteers for Social Services organizations?

Although the decision to volunteer is above all a personal choice, there are some personal and economic characteristics that appear to be associated with the likelihood of volunteering for Social Services organizations in Alberta and with the extent of that support. The most significant of these are age, level of formal education, religious attendance, and the presence of children in the household (see Table 2).

Albertans between the ages of 35 and 54 were the most likely to volunteer for Social Services organizations (14% volunteered), while those aged 15 to 34 and 55 years and older were less likely to volunteer (11%<sup>E</sup> of both groups volunteered). Although Albertans aged 55 and older were among the least likely to volunteer for Social Services organizations, they gave the most time annually, on average (109 hours).

University graduates were noticeably more likely to volunteer for Social Services organizations (16% volunteered) while Albertans with a high school diploma or less were the least likely to do so (11%). Albertans who had a postsecondary degree or diploma or some postsecondary education volunteered the most hours, on average (105<sup>E</sup>), followed by those with a university degree (100<sup>E</sup>).

Albertans who attended religious services weekly were more likely to volunteer for Social Services organizations than were those who did not attend religious services weekly (18% vs. 11%). However, those who did not attend weekly religious services volunteered more time, on average (98 hours vs. 81 hours).

**Table 2: Social Services volunteer rate and average Social Services volunteer hours, by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**

	Social Services volunteer rate	Average annual Social Services hours
<b>All Albertans</b>	12%	95
<b>Age</b>		
15 to 34	11%	77 <sup>E</sup>
35 to 54	14%	104 <sup>E</sup>
55 and over	11% <sup>E</sup>	109
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	12%	102
Female	13%	89
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married or common-law	12%	95
Single, never married	13%	77 <sup>E</sup>
Separated or divorced	16% <sup>E</sup>	...
Widow or widower	...	...
<b>Education</b>		
High school or less	11%	73
Postsecondary	12%	105 <sup>E</sup>
University degree	16%	100 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Labour force status</b>		
Employed	13%	93
Unemployed	...	...
Not in the labour force	12%	91
<b>Household income</b>		
Less than \$40,000	12%	101
\$40,000 to \$79,999	12%	98 <sup>E</sup>
\$80,000 or more	12%	87 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Presence of children in household</b>		
No children in household	12%	109
Children in household	13%	63 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Religious attendance</b>		
Attends religious services weekly	18%	81
Does not attend religious services weekly	11%	98

<sup>E</sup> Sample size limited; use with caution.

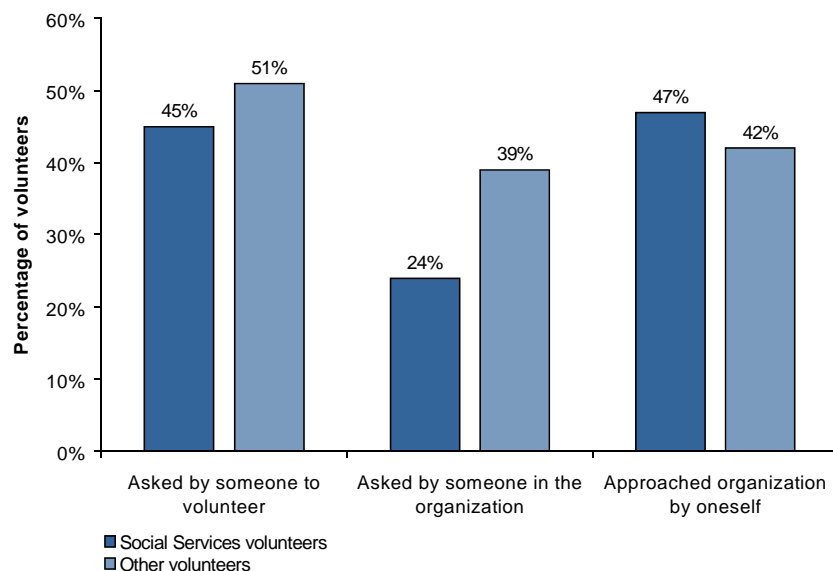
... Sample size too small to be presented.

Finally, Albertans who had children in their household were slightly more likely to volunteer for Social Services organizations than those who did not have children in the household, although they volunteered significantly fewer hours on average. Thirteen percent of Albertans with children volunteered an average of 63<sup>E</sup> hours per year for Social Services organizations while 12% of Albertans who did not have children in the household volunteered 109 hours annually.

## How do Social Services volunteers become involved?

More Social Services volunteers in Alberta became involved by approaching an organization on their own than in any other way. Social Services volunteers were also more likely than other volunteers to become involved in this way. Nearly half (47%) of Social Services volunteers became involved by approaching the organization on their own, compared to the 42% of volunteers for other types of organizations (see Figure 13). Social Services volunteers were less likely than other volunteers to get involved because someone asked them to volunteer (45% vs. 51%).

*Figure 13: Method of initial involvement with organization, Social Services volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.*



Social Services volunteers in Alberta who had been asked to volunteer were less likely than other volunteers to have been asked by someone in the organization.<sup>6</sup> Just over half (54%) of Social Services volunteers who were asked to volunteer were approached by someone in the organization, compared to more than three quarters (76%) of other volunteers. Overall, 24% of all Social Services volunteers and 39% of all other volunteers were asked to volunteer by someone in the organization.

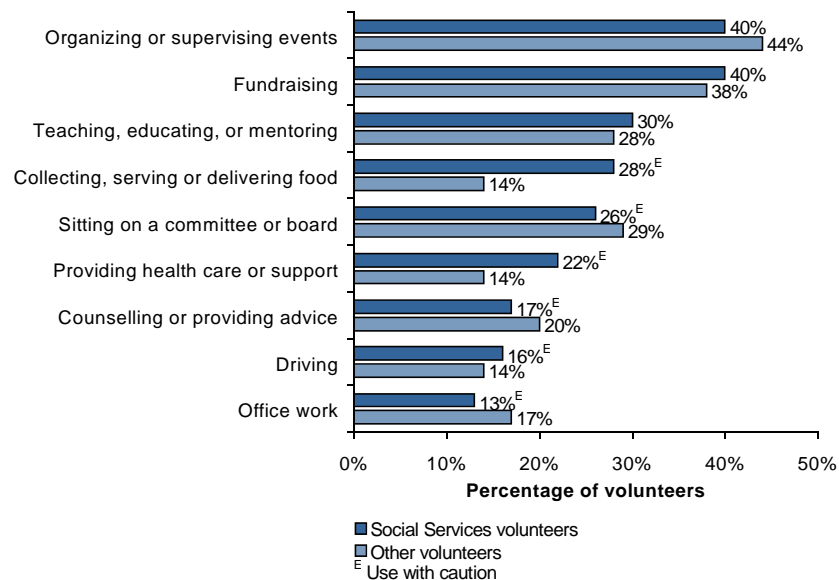
<sup>6</sup> Respondents were asked about other classes of individual who might have asked them to volunteer but sample size limitations made it impossible to present the results in this report.

## What do Social Services volunteers do?

Albertan volunteers who devoted most of their volunteer time to Social Services organizations undertook a variety of activities<sup>7</sup> but were most likely to engage in organizing or supervising events (40% did so), fundraising (40%), and teaching, educating, or mentoring (30%). They were least likely to provide counselling or advice (17%<sup>E</sup>), drive (16%<sup>E</sup>), and do office work (13%<sup>E</sup>; see Figure 14).

There are some notable differences between Social Services volunteers and those who devoted most of their volunteer time to other types of organizations. Compared to other volunteers, Social Services volunteers were much more likely to collect, serve, or deliver food (28%<sup>E</sup> vs. 14%) and provide health care or support (22%<sup>E</sup> vs. 14%) and were less likely to do office work (13%<sup>E</sup> vs. 17%).

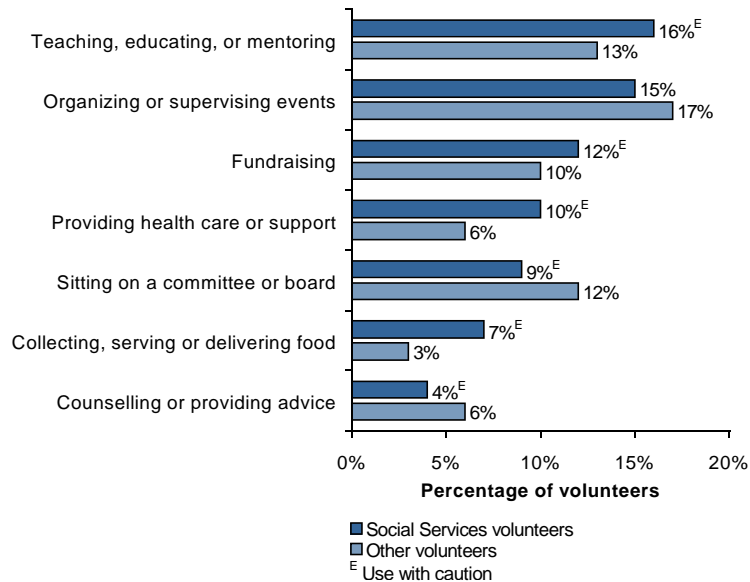
**Figure 14: Distribution of type of volunteer activity, Social Services volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



Social Services volunteers tended to devote the greatest proportion of their time to the most common activities in which they engaged: teaching, educating, or mentoring (16%<sup>E</sup> of all the hours contributed by Social Services volunteers), organizing or supervising events (15%), and fundraising (12%<sup>E</sup>; see Figure 15). In comparison, Social Services volunteers spent the least amount of their time collecting, serving, or delivering food (7%<sup>E</sup>) and counselling or providing advice (4%<sup>E</sup>). Compared to other volunteers, Social Services volunteers devoted more of their time to teaching, educating, or mentoring; providing health care or support; and collecting, serving, or delivering food.

<sup>7</sup> Respondents were asked about 15 different volunteer activities but due to limited sample sizes only the results shown here can be presented.

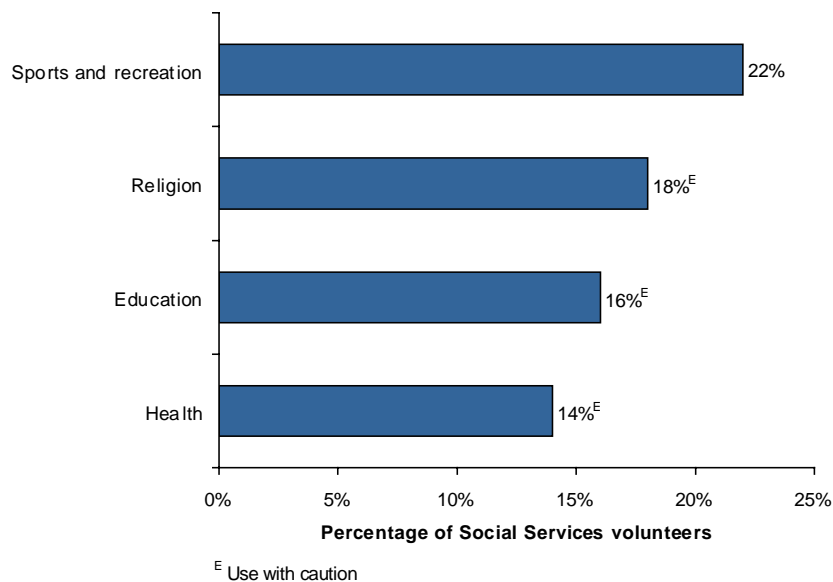
**Figure 15: Distribution of annual volunteer hours, by type of volunteer activity, Social Services volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



### What other organizations do Social Services volunteers support?

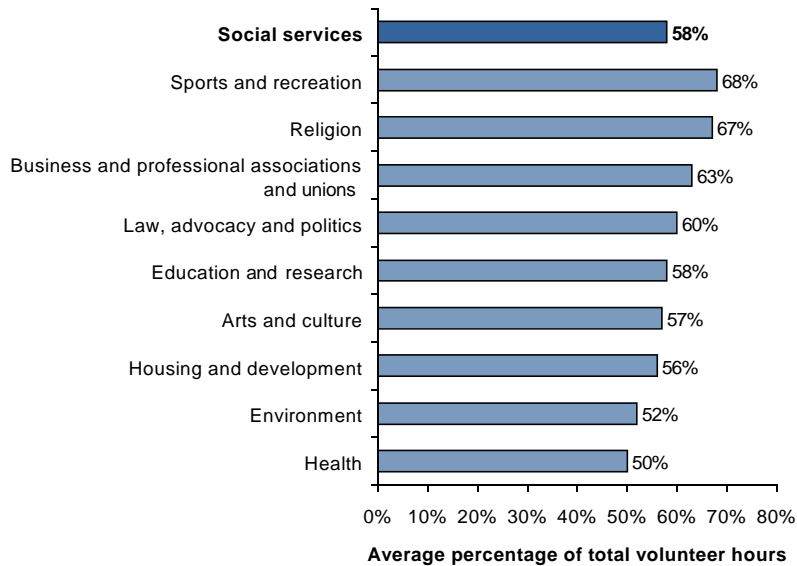
Many Social Services volunteers in Alberta did not limit their support to one kind of organization. Rather, they volunteered for an average of one other type of organization in addition to their support for Social Services organizations. In addition to volunteering for Social Services organizations, they were most likely to also volunteer for organizations focused on Sports and Recreation (22% volunteered), Religion (18%<sup>E</sup>), Education and Research (16%<sup>E</sup>), and Health (14%<sup>E</sup>; see Figure 16).

**Figure 16: Rate of volunteering for other types of organizations, Social Services volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



Social Services volunteers focused more than half of their volunteer support on Social Services organizations. On average, 58% of their volunteer hours were devoted to Social Services organizations, and the remaining 42% were devoted to other types of organizations (see Figure 17). This compares to Sports and Recreation volunteers, who devoted 68% of their volunteer time to Sports and Recreation organizations and Religion volunteers who devoted 67% of their volunteer time to Religion organizations. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Health volunteers devoted an average of just 50% of their volunteer time to Health organizations.

**Figure 17: Average percentage of hours devoted to organization type by supporters of organization type, volunteers aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



## What motivations and barriers do Social Services volunteers experience?

There is a wide range of factors that may motivate individuals to volunteer or prevent them from volunteering more time or volunteering at all. Understanding these factors is important for any organization that wants to better recruit and retain volunteers.

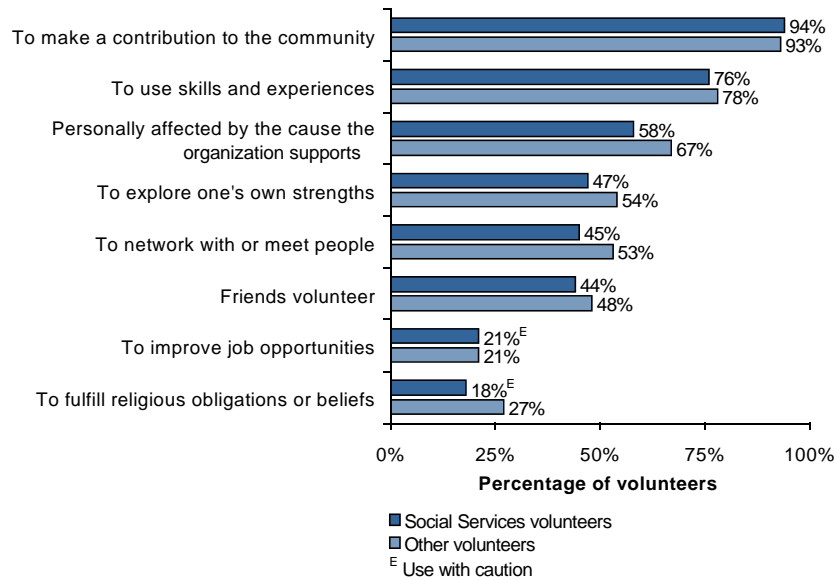
### *Motivations for volunteering*

Social Services volunteers and volunteers to other types of organizations were both most likely to volunteer because they wanted to make a contribution to their community (94% of Social Services volunteers and 93% of other volunteers) and they wanted to use their skills and experiences (76% and 78%, respectively; see Figure 18).<sup>8</sup> Both groups were least likely to volunteer in order to improve their job opportunities or to fulfill religious obligations or beliefs.

<sup>8</sup> The CSGVP asked volunteers whether any of eight potential motivations were important in their decision to volunteer for the organization for which they volunteered the most hours. These potential motivations tie directly to the type of

However, there were some differences between Albertans who volunteered for Social Services organizations and those who volunteered for other organizations. Social Services volunteers were less likely than other volunteers to give their time because they had been personally affected by the cause the organization supports (58% of Social Services volunteers vs. 67% of other volunteers) and because they wanted to fulfill religious obligations (18%<sup>E</sup> vs. 27%).

**Figure 18: Reasons for volunteering, Social Services volunteers and volunteers for other organizations aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



### *Barriers to volunteering more*

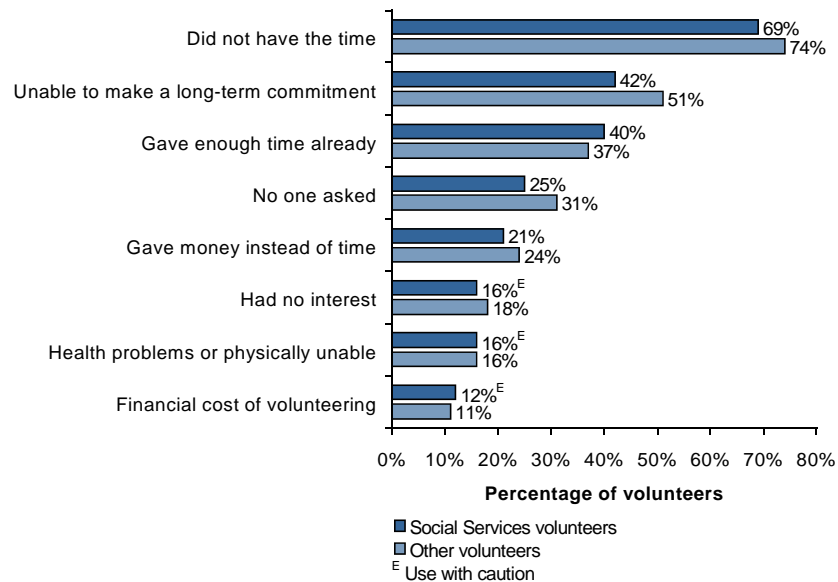
Social Services volunteers and volunteers to other types of organizations identified the same top three barriers:<sup>9</sup> lack of time, inability to make a long-term commitment, and having given enough time already (see Figure 19). The least commonly cited barrier for both groups was the financial cost of volunteering.

However, there were a number of differences in the barriers faced by Social Services volunteers compared to volunteers for other organizations. Social Services volunteers were slightly more likely than other volunteers to say that they had given enough time already (40% vs. 37%) and less likely to say that they did not volunteer more because they are unable to make a long-term commitment (42% vs. 51%), because no one asked them (25% vs. 31%) or because they did not have the time (69% vs. 74%).

organization to which the respondent contributed the most hours – by extension the motivations discussed here pertain directly to volunteering for Social Services organizations.

<sup>9</sup> The CSGVP asked whether any of 10 potential barriers kept volunteers from volunteering more time than they might otherwise have contributed. Due to sample size limitations it is only possible to discuss eight of these potential barriers in this report. Note that barriers to volunteering more cannot be linked specifically to volunteering for particular organization types. Instead, potential barriers apply to all episodes of volunteering that the volunteer may have engaged in.

**Figure 19: Reasons for not volunteering more, Social Services volunteers and volunteers for other organizations aged 15 and over, Alberta, 2004.**



## Summary and Conclusions

Social Services organizations in Alberta receive considerable support from Albertans. More than one third (37%) of Albertans donated an average of \$117 to Social Services organizations in 2004, for a total of more than \$110 billion. In addition, 12% of Albertans volunteered an average of 94 hours for these organizations in 2004, for a total of over 29 million hours or the equivalent of 15,500 full-time jobs. The majority of this support came from a small group of volunteers and donors. Nearly three quarters (74%) of the hours volunteered came from the top 25% of volunteers, and fully 84% of all the money donated came from the top 25% of donors.

Albertans who donated to Social Services organizations tended to be over the age of 35, separated or divorced, and actively involved in their religion. They also tended to have children in the household and higher levels of formal education and household income. Those who were likely to volunteer for Social Services organizations tended to be between the ages of 35 and 54, university graduates, and actively involved in their religion. They also tended to have children in their household.

Albertans were most likely to make a Social Services donation after being approached at a shopping centre or on the street or after receiving a mail request. These methods, however, did not generate the most money. Donations made as a result of charity events and donations individuals made on their own accounted for greater percentages of the total dollars donated to Social Services organizations than did donations made after being approached at a shopping centre or on the street.

With respect to volunteer recruitment, volunteers to Social Services organizations were slightly more likely to approach the organization by themselves than they

were to be asked by someone to volunteer. Those who were asked to volunteer were most likely to be approached by someone inside the organization.

Social Services donors and volunteers tend to be driven by altruistic motivations. For instance, believing in or having been affected by the cause the organization supports and wanting to make a contribution to their community were important motivations for both donors and volunteers. Among the most commonly cited barriers identified by volunteers and donors were not being able to afford to give more time or money and being satisfied with what they had already given.

Social Services organizations play an important role in the daily lives of many Albertans. The in-depth examination of Social Services donors and volunteers offered in this report gives these organizations a better understanding of who supports them and why so that they may be better informed when generating and maintaining more donor and volunteer support in the future.

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