

Study: The diverse volunteering contributions of racialized Canadians, 2023

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In 2023, 70% of racialized Canadians gave their time, expertise and skills to a range of benevolent causes in the previous 12 months.

Most of this help was arranged informally, mirroring overall patterns in volunteering. In 2023, 64% of racialized Canadians reported helping people directly or improving the community on their own. Meanwhile, 29% of racialized Canadians reported volunteering through a charitable organization or group.

In recognition of International Volunteer Day, Statistics Canada is releasing a new study examining the volunteering contributions of racialized Canadians, entitled "[The diverse volunteering contributions of racialized Canadians](#)." This study uses data from the 2023 Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating, which was held from September 15, 2023, to March 30, 2024. This marks the first time this survey has collected data on racialized groups, allowing for an in-depth look at volunteering among these populations in Canada.

Particular attention is paid to differences in volunteering patterns between racialized Canadian-born and racialized immigrant populations given that three-quarters of racialized individuals were born outside Canada.

Among racialized individuals, those born in Canada are most likely to volunteer

Racialized populations in Canada are diverse in terms of their ethnic and cultural origins and their immigrant status. Some people are newcomers, others long-established residents, and many were born in Canada. These differences are reflected in volunteering patterns.

Overall, in 2023, volunteering was more common among racialized individuals born in Canada (79%) compared with racialized immigrants (67%), both recent (66%) and established (67%) immigrants. The volunteering rate for Canadian-born racialized individuals (79%) also surpassed the volunteering rates for non-racialized, non-Indigenous populations born in Canada (74%) and those born outside of Canada (70%).

This higher rate of volunteering among Canadian-born racialized individuals was seen across all racialized groups. For example, among South Asians—who had one of the highest volunteering rates—82% of those born in Canada volunteered in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared with 69% of South Asian immigrants.

Religious and social services are the most common sectors receiving help from racialized volunteers

When racialized Canadians volunteered on behalf of an organization or group in the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey, the religious and social service sectors emerged as the most common areas of involvement. Overall, 25% of racialized volunteers gave their time to religious organizations. This proportion is similar to that of racialized volunteers who provided support to social services (24%), which can include organizations providing services for families, emergency and relief, and income support.

Among racialized volunteers, the level of volunteering was greatest in the religious sector, with the total number of volunteering hours in this sector surpassing that of all other sectors. This contrasts with the patterns observed for non-racialized, non-Indigenous volunteers, for whom the total hours dedicated to the religious sector did not significantly differ from that of other sectors.

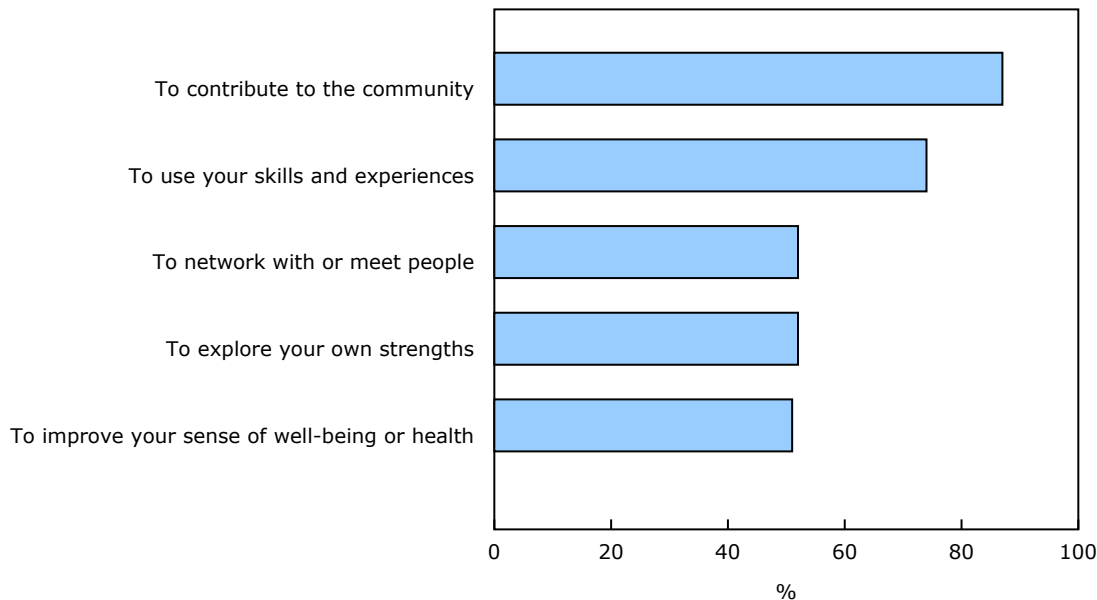
The greater involvement of racialized volunteers in the religious sector was driven by racialized immigrant volunteers (28%), who were more likely than racialized Canadian-born volunteers (19%) to dedicate time to this sector. Meanwhile, Canadian-born racialized volunteers were more likely than racialized immigrant volunteers to dedicate time to the education and research sector (23% compared with 11%) and the sports and recreation sector (17% compared with 10%).



Contributing to the community is a leading reason for volunteering

When asked about the reasons for volunteering on behalf of an organization or group in the 12 months preceding the 2023 survey, contributing to the community (87%) and wanting to use one's skills and experience (74%) were the top reasons given by racialized volunteers. Networking and meeting new people were other common motivations, reported by 52% of racialized volunteers, with there being no difference by place of birth (in or outside of Canada). One difference, however, was the higher likelihood of volunteering to improve job opportunities among Canadian-born racialized individuals (48%) than among racialized immigrants (28%).

Chart 1
Top five reasons for formal volunteering among racialized volunteers, 2023



Source(s): Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2023 (4430).

As for barriers to volunteering, Canadian-born racialized individuals (particularly Chinese and Black populations) were slightly more likely (95%) to report facing at least one challenge, compared with racialized immigrants (92%). There were no other differences across other population groups.

Not having enough time was the leading barrier to volunteering across all groups, though this barrier was more often reported by racialized individuals born in Canada (82%) than by racialized immigrants (74%). Knowledge, access and information barriers were more commonly reported by racialized immigrants (42%) than by racialized individuals born in Canada (36%).

Note to readers

The study is based on data from the 2023 Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (SGVP). The target population for the 2023 SGVP is all persons 15 years of age and older living in the 10 provinces of Canada, excluding full-time residents of institutions and residents of First Nations reserves.

Canadians refers to all people living in Canada, regardless of citizenship status.

Racialized population: The concept of "racialized population" or "racialized group" is derived directly from the concept of "visible minority" in the 2021 Census of Population. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in racialized group or non-white in colour." It consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese. Indigenous people are not included among the racialized population in the current analysis.

Immigrant refers to a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group.

- **Recent immigrant** refers to a person who obtained a landed immigrant or permanent resident status up to five years prior to the survey.
- **Established immigrant** refers to a person who obtained a landed immigrant or permanent resident status more than five years prior to the survey.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [4430](#).

The article titled "[The diverse volunteering contributions of racialized Canadians](#)" is now available in *Insights on Canadian Society* ([75-006-X](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).