

# Charitable donors, 2017

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Friday, February 8, 2019

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Donating to a recognized charity or organization which issues tax receipts serves two purposes: it allows individuals to reduce the amount of income tax they have to pay while also giving them a way to help others in need.

## Fewer in number, but increasing in generosity

Total donations reported by Canadian tax filers rose to \$9.6 billion in 2017, up 7.7% from 2016. This increase more than offset a 2.6% drop in donations in 2016, which was associated with slower economic growth that year for provinces rich in natural resources. Trends in total charitable donations do not always reflect trends in the overall economy, however, a similar rebound in donations was observed following the 2008 economic downturn.

British Columbia had the largest increase for charitable donations (+18.9%) which followed a strong increase the previous year (+7.1% from 2015 to 2016). Nunavut (+13.5%) followed by Alberta and Nova Scotia (both up 9.1%) also experienced notable increases. For Alberta, this was in sharp contrast to the decrease the previous year (-10.7% from 2015 to 2016).

While the dollar amount of charitable donations increased in 2017 over the previous year, the number of donating tax filers fell by 48,840 (-0.9%) to 5,348,220, continuing a trend which started in 2011. The number of donors fell in all provinces and territories, except Quebec which experienced a modest increase (+1.0%). The largest decrease in donors was in Alberta (-4.4%) followed by Newfoundland and Labrador (-4.0%). Even in British Columbia, where the increase in the dollar amount of charitable donations was largest, the numbers of tax filers making donations fell slightly (-0.2%).

Nationally, the median donation was \$300 in 2017, meaning that half of those claiming a donation tax credit made donations of more than \$300, while the other half donated less than \$300. Nunavut had the highest median donation (\$560) followed by Alberta with \$480 and British Columbia with \$460. The lowest median donation amount was in Quebec (\$130).

Among census metropolitan areas (CMAs), donors in Abbotsford–Mission, British Columbia, had the highest median charitable donation at \$840. This was the 16th consecutive year that Abbotsford–Mission led the country with the highest median donation. Donors in Lethbridge, Alberta had the second highest median charitable donation (\$700) among CMAs, followed by Saskatoon (\$480), Vancouver (\$480) and Calgary (\$470).

## Seniors are the most generous donors

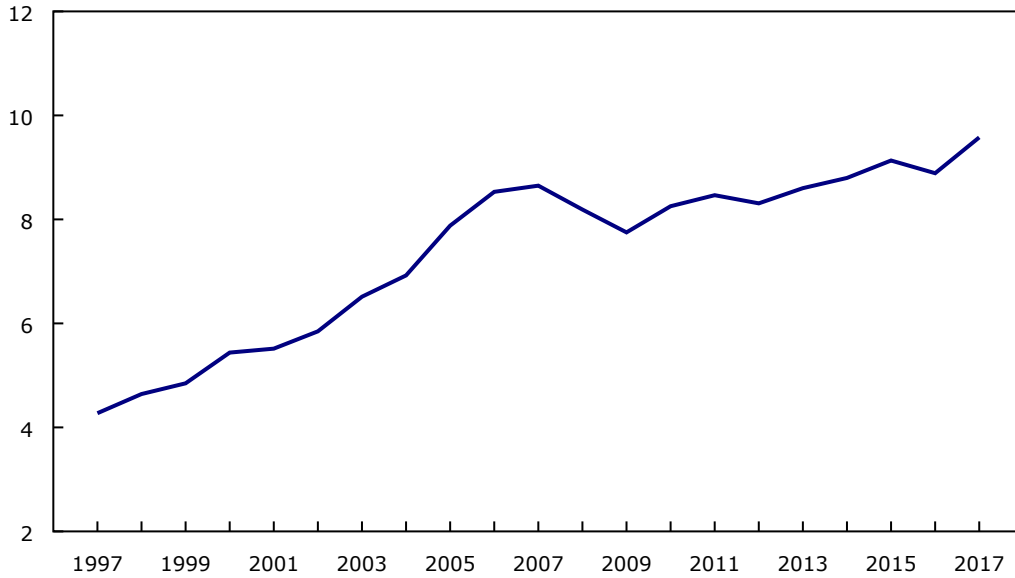
Tax filers age 65 and older have seen a gradual increase in their relative importance among donors. In 2007 they represented 24% of all donors, compared with 30% in 2017. This increase was accompanied by an even stronger increase in their share of the overall donations amount. In 2007 they were responsible for 30% of the total donation amount, while in 2017 they represented 42% of the total donation amount. Tax filers age 65 and older also had the highest average donation among tax filers in 2017 (\$2,500).

From 2007 to 2017, the strongest decrease in the proportion of donors was for tax filers aged 45 to 54. In 2007, they represented 24% of all donors, compared with 19% in 2017.



**Chart 1**  
**Total charitable donations of tax filers, 1997 to 2017**

billions of dollars



Source(s): Table 11-10-0130-01.

**Table 1**  
**Charitable donations – Canada, provinces and territories**

	Donors		All tax filers	Donations		Median donations
	2017	2016 to 2017	2017	2017	2016 to 2017	2017
	number	% change	%	thousands of dollars	% change	dollars
<b>Canada</b>	<b>5,348,220</b>	<b>-0.9</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>9,576,975</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>300</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	73,920	-4.0	17.9	80,970	-1.0	370
Prince Edward Island	24,230	-1.6	21.3	33,685	5.2	440
Nova Scotia	133,130	-2.2	18.5	198,510	9.1	360
New Brunswick	106,070	-3.6	17.9	150,435	-1.0	340
Quebec	1,219,000	1.0	19.0	900,630	1.7	130
Ontario	2,122,600	-0.6	20.9	4,099,990	5.5	390
Manitoba	219,540	-1.1	23.2	462,295	8.2	450
Saskatchewan	166,980	-3.5	20.6	309,275	-0.5	440
Alberta	585,490	-4.4	19.8	1,566,425	9.1	480
British Columbia	687,620	-0.2	19.0	1,758,465	18.9	460
Yukon	4,500	-2.4	16.5	7,015	6.0	450
Northwest Territories	3,690	-3.9	12.4	6,205	0.0	400
Nunavut	1,450	-0.7	7.0	3,075	13.5	560

Source(s): Table 11-10-0130-01.

**Table 2**  
**Charitable donations – Census metropolitan areas**

	Donors		All tax filers	Donations		Median donations
	2017	2016 to 2017	2017	2017	2016 to 2017	2017
	number	% change	%	thousands of dollars	% change	dollars
<b>Canada</b>	<b>5,348,220</b>	<b>-0.9</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>9,576,975</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>300</b>
St. John's	27,230	-3.3	17.7	30,140	-1.0	330
Halifax	62,250	-2.7	20.7	92,870	0.1	360
Moncton	22,640	-3.6	20.1	29,255	1.3	280
Saint John	20,100	-2.3	20.8	29,510	-6.6	350
Saguenay	25,800	-2.7	20.0	8,460	-4.3	100
Québec	150,370	1.8	23.7	74,390	5.2	120
Sherbrooke	33,250	4.0	19.8	20,185	-7.0	110
Trois-Rivières	23,640	1.5	18.7	9,295	0.4	100
Montréal	598,480	1.3	18.9	612,635	2.5	150
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	219,360	-2.0	22.4	324,795	4.0	340
Ottawa part	175,710	-2.0	24.0	294,550	4.4	400
Gatineau part	43,640	-2.0	17.7	30,245	0.1	190
Kingston	26,670	-3.1	22.5	42,295	-3.3	350
Belleville	16,500	-10.1	20.1	23,335	-3.1	300
Peterborough	18,220	-2.3	21.3	27,925	5.0	330
Oshawa	54,740	-1.0	19.9	76,905	-7.0	310
Toronto	902,150	0.5	20.1	2,108,005	6.0	430
Hamilton	120,420	-2.4	21.7	213,920	4.0	360
St. Catharines–Niagara	66,470	-2.3	21.2	114,645	0.6	380
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	88,240	-1.7	22.4	185,100	12.1	410
Brantford	19,970	-2.7	19.3	35,145	-0.9	360
Guelph	27,620	1.2	24.1	47,250	-0.3	370
London	81,710	-1.3	21.8	138,980	6.9	370
Windsor	52,800	-3.1	20.6	72,970	3.8	310
Barrie	25,260	-1.2	17.7	39,210	9.5	300
Greater Sudbury	25,530	-1.9	20.5	25,375	-4.3	240
Thunder Bay	21,090	-1.9	23.1	23,565	5.3	270
Winnipeg	143,040	-0.6	24.2	296,645	8.8	410
Regina	37,640	-3.7	21.4	64,385	-10.1	420
Saskatoon	46,340	-2.2	21.3	108,715	7.5	480
Lethbridge	18,600	-2.0	21.6	60,455	15.4	700
Calgary	213,050	-4.3	21.0	664,255	12.6	470
Edmonton	196,180	-4.4	20.3	439,170	6.4	440
Kelowna	29,630	-0.2	19.1	72,830	-0.8	450
Abbotsford–Mission	25,330	-1.0	18.8	96,395	13.9	840
Vancouver	366,200	-0.2	19.1	1,093,415	25.9	480
Victoria	64,730	0.6	22.8	139,150	17.4	440

**Note(s):** Go online to view the census subdivisions that comprise the [census metropolitan areas](#), according to Standard Geographic Classification 2016.

**Source(s):** Table [11-10-0130-01](#).

**Table 3**  
**Distribution of donors by age, Canada**

	Donors	0 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and older
	number	%					
2007	5,795,210	3	12	18	24	20	24
2016	5,397,060	3	11	16	19	22	29
2017	5,348,220	3	11	16	19	22	30

**Source(s):** Table [11-10-0002-01](#).

**Table 4**  
**Distribution of the total donations amount by age, Canada**

	Donations	0 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and older
	thousands of dollars	%					
2007	8,648,660	1	7	15	25	22	30
2016	8,888,325	1	6	12	18	24	40
2017	9,576,975	1	5	11	17	23	42

Source(s): Derived from Table [11-10-0130-01](#).

### Note to readers

Canadians contribute in many ways to charitable organizations. These data include only amounts given to charities and approved organizations for which official tax receipts were provided and claimed on tax returns. To verify if a charity is registered under the Income Tax Act, tax filers can consult the [Charity Listings](#) available from the Canada Revenue Agency webpage. It is possible to carry donations forward for up to five years after the year in which they were made. Therefore, donations reported for the 2017 taxation year could include donations that were made in any of the five previous years. According to tax laws, tax filers are permitted to claim both their donations, and those made by their spouses to receive better tax benefits. Consequently, the number of people who made charitable donations is higher than the number who claimed tax credits.

Charitable donations promoted through crowdfunding platforms for individuals or organizations who are not linked to charities registered under the Income Tax Act are not captured in this data release. Such donation methods may be more commonly used by younger tax filers. Donations for small amounts such as donation by text message where no tax receipts are issued are also not covered.

Another source of donation data at Statistics Canada is the General Social Survey – Giving, Volunteering and Participating. This survey collects information on all monetary donations reported by individuals, regardless of whether or not the donation resulted in a tax credit.

All data in this release have been tabulated according to the 2016 Standard Geographical Classification used for the 2016 Census.

A census metropolitan area (CMA) is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (also known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in the core.

**Available tables:** [11-10-0002-01](#), [11-10-0003-01](#), [11-10-0047-01](#) and [11-10-0130-01](#).

**Definitions, data sources and methods:** survey number [4106](#).

Data on *Charitable Donors* ([13C0014](#), various prices) and *Canadian Taxfilers* ([17C0010](#), various prices) are now available for Canada, provinces and territories, economic regions, census divisions, census metropolitan areas, census agglomerations, census tracts, and postal-based geographies. These custom services are available upon request. Tables for this release are available for free on the Statistics Canada website for Canada, province and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations.

The document *Technical Reference Guide for the Preliminary Estimates from the T1 Family File (T1FF)* ([11260001](#)), presents information about the methodology, concepts and data quality for the data available in this release.

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; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).