

Article

Employer support of volunteering

by *Matt Hurst*

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- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
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- ^p preliminary
- ^r revised
- x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published

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Introduction

Across Canada, employers often offer a range of programs and policies to help employees volunteer in their community. Benefits for employers may include better employee morale and increased productivity, as employees can develop additional skills through their volunteer activities. Supporting volunteering may also be a non-monetary incentive employers use to meet the needs of prospective or existing employees who wish to give back to their community.¹ At the same time, employees may feel that volunteering helps them improve their work performance and enrich their social network and well-being.

This article focuses on volunteers who are employed, comparing those who receive support from their employers for their volunteer activities with those who do not. It first examines the proportion of volunteers who said that, to their knowledge, their employer had a program or policy to encourage them to volunteer. It then looks in more detail at formal employer supports, such as the possibility of changing one's work hours, the offer of paid time off, the use of facilities or equipment, or letters of recognition for volunteering. Other aspects are examined: how does employer-supported volunteering vary by industry? What are the possible effects of formal employer support? For example, do volunteers who

receive support from their employers give more hours on average, volunteer for a greater variety of organizations or for a wider range of activities?

The second part of the article discusses the occupational benefits of these formal employer supports and of volunteering in general from the employees' perspective: what kind of skills do they report accessing through volunteering? Do employees report that their volunteer activities improve their chances of success in their job? Most importantly, is employer support for volunteering positively related to that perception?

For more information on the data, concepts and definitions used in this article, see "What you should know about this study". For general information on volunteering in Canada, see M. Vézina and S. Crompton, "Volunteering in Canada", in *Canadian Social Trends*.

Programs and policies to encourage volunteering

In 2010, about one-third (33%) of volunteers who were employed said their employer had a program or policy to encourage volunteering. This is up from 29% in 2004. Examples of such programs or policies include employers offering professional services at no charge to non-profit organizations or helping to connect them with employees who are interested in volunteering. Also, some employers might donate money to an organization based on the amount

of hours their employees volunteered. Among employees in 2010 who said their employers had a program to encourage them to volunteer, 19% reported their employers had made such a donation.

Most employees who volunteer receive formal support from their employer

While not all employers have a program or policy to encourage volunteering, many volunteers report that their employers provide specific formal support mechanisms such as changing work hours, paid time off, use of facilities, or recognition for volunteering. In 2010, 57% of employees who volunteered said they had received one or more formal supports from their employer, unchanged from 2004. Also known as "employer-supported volunteering" (ESV),² these formal supports may lower barriers to volunteering arising from scheduling conflicts,³ high workloads, or lack of resources or recognition.

Employer support varied by region in 2010: Ontario employees had high rates of formal employer support (62%) compared with British Columbia (54%), Northwest Territories (49%), Manitoba (50%) and Quebec (51%) (Chart 1).

To place these figures in an international context, other research has noted that compared with the United Kingdom, the United States, and other European countries,

What you should know about this study

This study is based on data from the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP), which was conducted in 2010 on a sample of persons aged 15 and over, totaling 15,482 respondents. The article focuses on volunteers who are also employed—people who reported in 2010 that they had volunteered and also worked at a paid job or business (excluding self-employment) in the 12 months preceding the survey. Hence, the analysis is restricted to the 4,926 respondents aged 15 and over who volunteered and were also employed. They represented 59% of all volunteers.

The analysis is limited by the fact that the survey asks only employees who volunteer—but not those who do not volunteer—if their employer supports volunteering. Thus one can examine how employer support programs might affect employees who volunteer but not how such programs relate to overall volunteer rates among employees. One cannot determine if employer support programs might be an incentive to volunteer for people who might otherwise not do so.

The CSGVP was held previously in 2007 and 2004 but the questions on employer support of volunteering were only included in 2004. Therefore, this article only contains comparisons between 2010 and 2004 data.

Definitions

Volunteers who are employed: People aged 15 and over who did any unpaid activities on behalf of a group or an organization and also worked at a paid job (excluding self-employed) in the previous 12 months. The volunteer activities include any unpaid help provided to schools, religious organizations, sports or community associations

Formal employer support, or employer-supported volunteering (ESV):

Support for volunteering was identified by respondents who answered “yes” to any of the following questions: Please tell me about any formal support provided by your employer in the past 12 months. Did your employer give you? 1) use of facilities or equipment for your volunteer activities; 2) paid time off or time to spend volunteering while on the job; 3) approval to change work hours or reduce work activities to volunteer; 4) recognition or a letter of thanks for your volunteer activities; 5) donated prizes, gift certificates, food, etc.; 6) donated t-shirts, company goods, etc.; 7) donated financially to the organization; 8) provided transportation; 9) sponsored an event, paid entry fee, membership fee, etc.; 10) other.

Industry: Industry groups were derived from 18 aggregate groups of the 2002 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Industries with samples too small to analyze individually were grouped with other industries.

Canada’s uptake of employer-supported volunteering is lower.⁴ Previous research also found that 3% of companies in Canada had a formal policy, codified in writing, on employer-supported volunteerism.⁵

Certain types of employer support are more common than others. Specifically, just over one-third (34%) of volunteers said their employers helped by approving changes to their work hours or reducing their work activities—the most common type of support. Somewhat less common was providing facilities or equipment for volunteer activities (29%), giving recognition or a letter of thanks (24%)

and providing paid time off or time to spend volunteering while on the job (20%). Far less common—less than 2% each—were volunteers whose employers formally donated prizes, gift certificates, or food; donated financially to the organization; sponsored an event, paid an entry fee or membership fee; or donated company goods like t-shirts (Table 1).

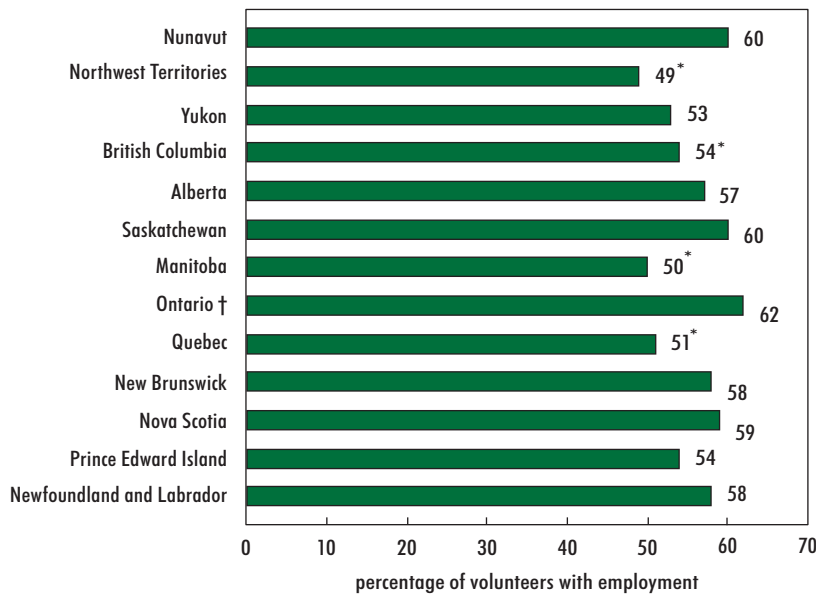
The percentage of volunteers who indicated they received only one type of formal support from their employer remained stable from 2004 to 2010 (24%). The same was true for volunteers receiving two different kinds of support (16%),

those receiving three (11% in 2004, 10% in 2010), and those receiving four or more (7%).

More hours volunteered by those with formal employer support than those without

Volunteers who are also employed appear to contribute more time to their organization of choice when they receive support from their employer. In 2010, volunteers who reported receiving formal employer support volunteered a median of 60 hours, compared with 40 hours for those who did not (Chart 2). (The median value is the statistical ‘halfway point’

Chart 1 Percentage of volunteers with employment who received any formal support from their employer, by province or territory, 2010



† reference group

* statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from the reference group

Note: Includes only volunteers aged 15 and over with employment.

Source: Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

Table 1 Types of formal employer support for volunteering, volunteers aged 15 and over with employment, 2004 and 2010

	2004	2010
	percentage	
Type of formal employer support		
Any type of support	57	57
Approval to change work hours or reduce work activities †	33	34
Use of facilities or equipment	31	29*
Recognition or letter of thanks	23*	24*
Paid time off or time to spend volunteering while on the job	21*	20*
Other	4*	4*
Donated prizes, gift certificates, food	2*	2 ^{E*}
Donated financially to the organization	2*	1 ^{E*}
Sponsored an event, paid entry fee or membership fee	1*	1 ^{E*}
Donated t-shirts or company goods	1*	1 ^{E*}
Provided transportation	0 ^{SE*}	1 ^{E*}

† reference group

* statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from the reference group

Note: Only respondents who answered all the questions on formal employer support are included.

Source: Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004 and 2010.

of a distribution of values. The median number of hours volunteered, for example, is the value for which one-half of volunteers report higher volunteer hours and one-half report lower volunteer hours.)

Employees who could change their work hours or reduce their workloads—the most common type of support—reported a higher median number of volunteer hours (75 hours) compared with those who did not receive this type of support (40 hours) (Chart 2). This support for flexible work hours and workloads may allow employees to volunteer on an ongoing basis and thus give more hours than they could with a more scheduled approach.

Volunteers whose employers provided facilities and equipment gave a median of 60 hours, compared with 46 hours for those without this type of help. Similarly, employees who were recognized for their volunteering or were given a letter of thanks reported volunteering more time than those who were not (a median of 60 hours versus 48 hours). Paid time off for volunteers was associated with a median of 55 hours of volunteering—about 5 hours more than the median for volunteers without paid time off.

Not surprisingly, the number of hours volunteered by employees was also related to the number of different types of formal support they could draw on. In 2010, employees volunteered a median of 54 hours if they received one type of formal support from their employer, 60 hours if they received two types of support, 78 hours if three, though only 62 hours if they received four or more (data not shown).

Volunteers receiving employer support volunteered fewer hours in 2010 than in 2004

In 2010, volunteers who received no support from their employers dedicated the same number of hours as they did in 2004 (median of 40 hours). However, among those who did receive some employer support,

fewer volunteer hours were reported in 2010 (a median of 60 hours, compared with 69 in 2004) (Chart 2).

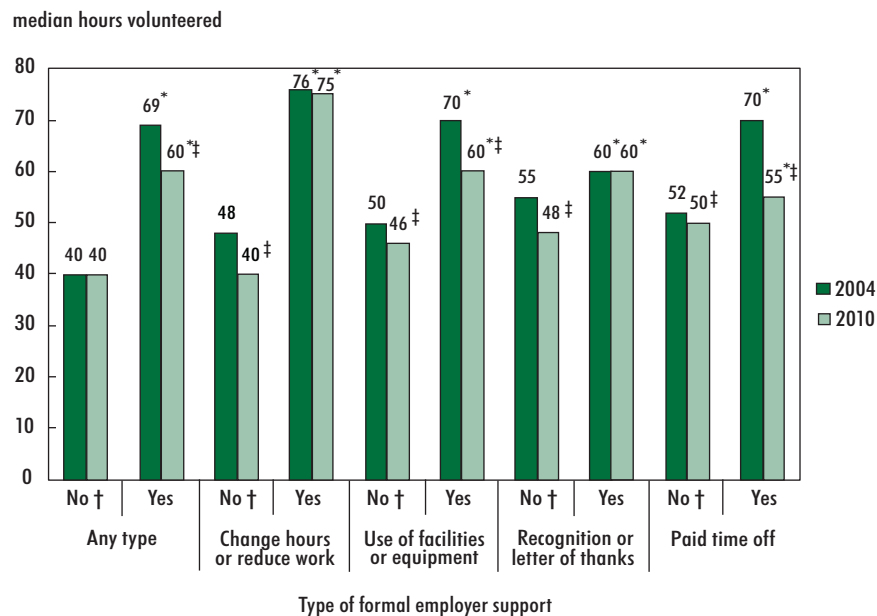
More specifically, the reduced median number of volunteer hours in 2010 was observed among employees who received help to access facilities or equipment and among those who arranged paid time off. In contrast, employees who received recognition for their volunteering gave the same median number of hours (60) in 2004 and 2010. Those who were supported by changing their work hours or reducing their workload also volunteered about the same median number of hours—76 in 2004 and 75 in 2010 (Chart 2).

Certain types of volunteer activities more common when employers provide support

Volunteers who were supported by their employer not only gave more hours than unsupported employees, they were also more likely to volunteer for certain types of activities. For example, 52% of employees with support gave at least some time to organize, supervise or coordinate activities or events, compared with 37% of those without employer support (Table 2). Volunteers who received support were also more likely to engage in activities related to teaching, educating or mentoring, to office work or bookkeeping, or to fundraising.

However, employer support was not related to the proportion of employees who volunteered to coach, referee or officiate. Volunteering for this type of activity might be driven more by being a parent than by whether someone receives employer support. Volunteers with employer support were also more likely to offer their services to certain types of organizations. Supported volunteers were more likely than unsupported ones to volunteer for social services organizations (27% versus 22%), education and research organizations (29% versus 24%), and philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism

Chart 2 Median hours volunteered by selected type of formal employer support, volunteers aged 15 and over with employment, 2004 and 2010



† reference group
 * statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from the reference group
 ‡ significantly significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from 2004
 Source: Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004 and 2010.

Table 2 Participation rate in different types of volunteer activities, by formal employer support, volunteers aged 15 and over with employment, 2010

Type of volunteer activity	Formal employer support	
	No †	Yes
	percentage	
Organizing events	37	52*
Fundraising	42	55*
Teaching or mentoring	25	36*
Office work, bookkeeping	17	26*
Collecting, serving or delivering food or other goods	24	32*
Counselling or providing advice	22	30*
Sitting on a committee or board	25	33*
Maintenance or repair	11	17*
Driving	13	19*
Providing health care or support	14	19*
Environmental protection	14	18*
Canvassing	11	14*
First-aid, fire-fighting or search and rescue	6	9*
Coaching, refereeing or officiating	20	22
Other activities	15	14

† reference group
 * statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from the reference group
 Source: Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

organizations (9% versus 3%) (data not shown).

Formal support for volunteering high in public administration and utilities industries

Volunteer rates vary by sector (see “Volunteer rates highest in educational services industry”). Employer support for volunteering also differs from one industry to another. In 2010, volunteers were more likely to report receiving employer support when they worked in the public administration and utilities industry group (70%), as well as in the finance and insurance; real estate and rental and leasing group (66%). Lower levels were observed in industries related to manufacturing and wholesale trade (47%), and in the management, administrative and other support industry (45%) (Table 3).

These top sectors identified by employees in terms of volunteer support—public administration and utilities, as well as finance/insurance/real estate—are dominated by large enterprises with well-developed human resource departments. These large-scale organizations may be more likely to have established corporate social responsibility strategies. Another factor may be that these industry groups use employer-supported volunteering to attract and retain skilled employees. There is some support for this as university degrees are more common in the public administration and utilities group (40%) and the finance and insurance, real estate and rental and leasing group (38%) compared with manufacturing and wholesale trade (20%) and management, administrative and other support (15%).

In most industries, changing hours or reducing work activities was the most prevalent type of formal support reported by volunteers: the percentage who received support in this way varied from about 30% to 45%. Volunteers employed in the educational services industry were an exception: 19% said their employers allowed a change in hours or workload to accommodate volunteering.

Educational services workers, however, were the most likely to say that their employer provided them with facilities and equipment for their volunteer activities. In 2010, 47% of volunteers employed in educational services indicated their employers helped them in this manner, compared with 17% of those in manufacturing and wholesale trade (Table 3).

Table 3 Selected types of formal employer support, by industry, volunteers aged 15 to 75 with employment, 2010

Industry or industry group	Any formal support	Type of formal employer support			
		Change hours or reduce work	Use of facilities or equipment	Recognition or letter of thanks	Paid time off
		percentage			
Public administration; and utilities	70	40	34	30	41
Finance and insurance; real estate and rental and leasing †	66	45	34	37	38
Professional, scientific and technical services	63	41	31	23 ^E	28 ^{E*}
Retail trade; and accommodation and food services	62	43	20*	20*	14 ^{E*}
Other services	61	38	34	29 ^E	20 ^{E*}
Information and cultural; and arts, entertainment and recreation	61	35	37	25 ^E	21 ^{E*}
Educational services	60*	19*	47*	32	14*
Transportation and warehousing	58	39	31 ^E	25 ^E	21 ^{E*}
Health care and social assistance	53*	34	29	23	11*
Construction; agriculture, forestry and fishing; and mining, oil and gas	49*	27*	25 ^E	17 ^{E*}	19 ^{E*}
Manufacturing; and wholesale trade	47*	30	17*	18 ^{E*}	16 ^{E*}
Management, administrative and other support	45 ^{E*}	32 ^E	16 ^{E*}	F	22 ^{E*}

† reference group

* statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from the reference group

Note: Only respondents who answered all the questions on formal employer support are included.

Source: Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

Volunteer rates highest in educational services industry

Canadians work in a broad range of industries, from education to manufacturing. Within these industries, employees' personal and economic characteristics can vary substantially. This can have an effect on volunteering, as people with a university degree and a higher level of household income are significantly more likely to volunteer.¹

In 2010, workers in educational services were the most likely to volunteer, at 73%—a higher volunteer rate than the average for all workers (51%) (box table). This might be a result of a strong volunteer ethic among teachers and expectations within the school environment that they volunteer. For

Volunteer rate by industry, employed Canadians aged 15 to 75, 2010

Industry or industry group	Volunteer rate percentage
All industries †	51
Educational services	73*
Information and cultural; and arts, entertainment and recreation	62*
Public administration; and utilities	58*
Finance and insurance; and real estate and rental and leasing	56
Other services	54
Health care and social assistance	53
Professional, scientific and technical services	52
Management, administrative and other support	46
Transportation and warehousing	45
Retail trade; and accommodation and food services	44*
Construction; agriculture, forestry and fishing; and mining, oil and gas	44*
Manufacturing; and wholesale trade	38*

† reference group

* statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from the reference group

Note: Excludes those who were self-employed.

Source: Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

example, some 19% of employees in the educational services industry volunteered to coach or referee after-school activities, a higher proportion than in all other industries except the information and culture, and arts, entertainment and recreation industry group (data not shown).

Volunteer rates were also above average in the information and culture, and arts entertainment and recreation sector (62%), and in public administration and utilities (58%).

In contrast, lower volunteer rates were found in sectors related to retail trade, accommodation and food services (44%), and in sectors related to construction, agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, oil and gas (44%) (box table). The manufacturing and wholesale trade industry group had the lowest rate (38%).

Overall, there is an association between an industry's volunteer rate and the rate of employer support for volunteering. Volunteer rates tended to be higher in industries with higher rates of employer support.

In general, there is a correlation between the proportion of employees with a university degree in an industry and its volunteer rate. For example, employees in educational services, who were the most likely to volunteer, were also the most likely to have a university degree (66%, data not shown). In comparison, 11% of employees in the construction, agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, oil and gas industry group had a university degree as did 14% of those in the retail trade, accommodation and food services industry group—and these two industry groups also had lower than average volunteer rates. In many of the industries with higher than average volunteer rates, the proportion of employees with a household income of \$100,000 or more was also above average. Higher levels of household income are related to higher volunteer rates.

1. M. Vézina and S. Crompton. 2012. "Volunteering in Canada, 2010." *Canadian Social Trends*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-008. No. 93.

Recognition of volunteer activities was highest (37%) in the finance/insurance/real estate sector, which also had a high overall rate of formal employer support. Educational services also had a high rate of employer recognition, with 1 in 3 (32%) employees indicating they received this kind of support.

Paid time off for volunteering was mentioned by fewer than 1 in 5 volunteers employed in a number of industries. This type of formal support was much more common in the public administration and utilities industry group (41%) and the finance/insurance/real estate industry group (38%).

Gaining work-related skills more common among volunteers with employer support

Employees can gain a number of different work-related skills through volunteering, including office, managerial, communication and interpersonal skills. CSGVP respondents were asked if they had acquired certain skills from their volunteer activities in the previous 12 months.

In 2010, a larger proportion of employees reported having gained work-related skills from volunteering when their employers had provided formal support. For instance, 51% of employer-supported volunteers reported gaining organizational or managerial skills—such as how to organize people or money, be a leader, or plan or run an organization—compared with 35% of those without support (Table 4). These types of managerial skills have been identified as lacking within volunteer organizations,⁶ which points to how employer-supported volunteering could benefit not only employers and workers, but recipient organizations as well. Additionally, volunteers with employer support were also more likely to report having acquired office, communication and interpersonal skills than those without support.

Younger Canadians more likely to report that volunteering helped them with their jobs

Apart from receiving employer support, age is a factor associated with gaining work-related skills from volunteering. Younger employees who volunteer tend to have less experience on the job and are more likely to report gaining work skills from volunteering. Some 89% of those aged 15 to 24 reported gaining at least one skill from volunteering, compared with 72% of those aged 25 to 34 and 70% of those aged 35 and over. Similarly, it was more common for employees aged 15 to 24 to say volunteering helped them succeed on the job (52%) than it was for those aged 25 to 34 (40%) or those aged 35 and over (37%) (data not shown).

Younger employees were also more likely to cite “improving job opportunities” as a reason for volunteering. About 54% of employees aged 15 to 24 who volunteered said that one of their motivations was to improve job opportunities, compared with 23% of those aged 25 to 34 and 11% of those aged 35 and over (data not shown). Other research has found that skills acquisition is a strong incentive for volunteering among younger workers, whereas older workers are more interested in gaining contacts.⁷

Gaining work-related skills also associated with sex, education level and type of industry

Men were less likely than women to report acquiring work-related interpersonal skills from volunteering, though they were more likely to say they gained office skills. Level of education also made a difference. University graduates aged 25 to 34—a time during which a degree may have the greatest impact—were more likely to report, managerial and communication skills from volunteering, compared with non-university graduates and those with less than a high school diploma.

Acquiring work-related skills through volunteering was commonly reported by employees in the information and cultural; and arts, entertainment and recreation industry group (83%); and the retail trade; and accommodation and food services industry group (81%). It was less likely to be reported by those working in the transportation and warehousing industry (66%), or in management, administrative and other support industry (62%). Though volunteers working in the finance, insurance and real estate industry group reported high levels of employer support compared with other industries, they reported lower rates of skills acquisition (68%).

Employees receiving employer support more likely to report that volunteering improved their chances of job success

Apart from wanting to develop new skills, employees may volunteer in order to improve their chances of success in their job. Supports offered by employers seem to facilitate this goal. For example, among volunteers who were allowed to use employer-provided facilities or equipment for their volunteer activities, 52% reported that these activities helped their chances of success in their job. This compares with 34% of employees who did not get this kind of support (Table 5).

The effects of these supports on perceptions of increased job success are inter-related: when considered at the same time, some supports may be more important than others. A logistic regression model was used to investigate which of the top four types of employer-supported volunteering remain important when the others are held constant. Results indicate that, of the top four types, only paid time off is not significantly related to reporting that volunteering improved chances of job success (Table 5, Model 1).

Table 4 Work-related skills gained from volunteering, by selected characteristics, volunteers aged 15 and over with employment, 2010

	Any work-related skill	Office skills	Managerial skills	Communication skills	Interpersonal skills
	percentage				
Formal employer support					
No †	68	26	35	37	59
Yes	82*	32*	51*	55*	74*
Personal and economic characteristics					
Sex					
Men †	72	29	39	43	62
Women	75*	25*	40	45	67*
Age					
15 to 24 years †	89	41	60	63	77
25 to 34 years	72*	26*	40*	41*	65*
35 years and over	70*	23*	33*	39*	60*
Highest level of education¹					
Less than postsecondary diploma †	70	23 ^E	30	31	62
Postsecondary diploma or certificate	68	22	37	38	60
University degree	77	32	48*	52*	69
Industry or industry group²					
Construction; agriculture, forestry and fishing; and mining, oil and gas	70*	24	36*	35*	57*
Manufacturing; and wholesale trade	69*	25	34*	41*	61*
Retail trade; and accommodation and food services †	81	29	50	50	72
Transportation and warehousing	66*	29	39	41	57*
Finance and insurance; real estate and rental and leasing	68*	27	42	46	60*
Professional, scientific and technical services	70*	18*	30*	37*	60*
Management, administrative and other support	62*	31 ^E	32 ^{E*}	40	54*
Educational services	77	36	45	49	68
Health care and social assistance	78	33	42	50	70
Information and cultural; and arts, entertainment and recreation	83	36	50	47	72
Other services	81	30	48	59	72
Public administration and utilities	76	27	41	50	67

† reference group

* statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from the reference group

1. People aged 25 to 34 years only.

2. People aged 15 to 75 years only.

Note: Office skills refers to technical or office skills such as first aid, coaching techniques, computer skills or bookkeeping. Managerial skills refers to organizational or managerial skills such as how to organize people or money, be a leader, plan or run an organization. Communication skills refers to public speaking, writing, public relations or conducting meetings. Interpersonal skills refers to understanding people, motivating people, or handling difficult situations with confidence, compassion or patience.

Source: Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

Table 5 Percentage reporting that volunteering improved their chances of job success, by selected characteristics, volunteers aged 15 to 75 with employment, 2010

	Unadjusted percentage	Unadjusted	Model 1 odds ratio	Model 2
Type of formal employer support				
Use of facilities or equipment				
Yes	51.5*	2.08*	1.68*	1.49*
No †	33.8	1.00	1.00	1.00
Paid time off				
Yes	45.2*	1.37*	0.83	0.96
No †	37.5	1.00	1.00	1.00
Approval to change work hours or reduce work activities				
Yes	47.9*	1.75*	1.58*	1.22
No †	34.4	1.00	1.00	1.00
Recognition or letter of thanks				
Yes	53.0*	2.13*	1.64*	1.50*
No †	34.5	1.00	1.00	1.00
Number of hours volunteered				
	...	1.10*	...	1.01
Work-related skills gained from volunteering				
Office skills				
Yes	54.6*	2.50*	...	1.40*
No †	32.4	1.00	...	1.00
Managerial skills				
Yes	53.7*	3.02*	...	1.40*
No †	27.7	1.00	...	1.00
Communication skills				
Yes	52.9*	3.09*	...	1.61*
No †	26.7	1.00	...	1.00
Interpersonal skills				
Yes	46.9*	2.94*	...	1.32
No †	23.1	1.00	...	1.00
Type of volunteer activity				
Canvassing				
Yes	43.1	1.21	...	0.96
No †	38.5	1.00	...	1.00
Fundraising				
Yes	43.6*	1.47*	...	1.03
No †	34.5	1.00	...	1.00
Sitting on a committee or board				
Yes	50.7*	2.00*	...	1.53*
No †	33.9	1.00	...	1.00
Teaching or mentoring				
Yes	53.4*	2.40*	...	1.43*
No †	32.4	1.00	...	1.00
Organizing events				
Yes	49.0*	2.16*	...	1.13
No †	30.7	1.00	...	1.00
Office work, bookkeeping				
Yes	49.3*	1.72*	...	1.03
No †	36.1	1.00	...	1.00

Table 5 Percentage reporting that volunteering improved their chances of job success, by selected characteristics, volunteers aged 15 to 75 with employment, 2010 (continued)

	Unadjusted percentage	Unadjusted	Model 1	Model 2
			odds ratio	
Industry or industry group				
Construction; agriculture, forestry and fishing; and mining, oil and gas	27.3*	0.39*	...	0.56*
Manufacturing; and wholesale trade	28.8*	0.42*	...	0.59*
Retail trade; and accommodation and food services	41.8	0.74	...	0.83
Transportation and warehousing	23.4 ^E	0.32*	...	0.41*
Finance and insurance; real estate and rental and leasing	38.6*	0.65	...	0.70
Professional, scientific and technical services	30.1*	0.44*	...	0.61
Management, administrative and other support	29.1 ^E	0.42*	...	0.75
Educational services †	49.2	1.00	...	1.00
Health care and social assistance	42.8	0.77	...	0.90
Information and cultural; and arts, entertainment and recreation	44.8	0.84	...	0.90
Other services	40.7	0.71	...	0.72
Public administration; and utilities	40.0*	0.69*	...	0.78
Industry unknown	42.7	0.77	...	0.82
Personal and economic characteristics				
Region of residence				
Atlantic	43.2	0.96	...	1.04
Quebec	22.6*	0.37*	...	0.41*
Ontario †	44.1	1.00	...	1.00
Prairies	41.4	0.90	...	0.93
British Columbia	41.5	0.90	...	0.97
Territories	34.7*	0.67*	...	0.74
Sex				
Men †	37.6	1.00	...	1.00
Women	40.3	1.12	...	0.93
Highest level of education				
Less than high school †	44.5	1.00	...	1.00
High school diploma	38.7	0.79	...	0.92
Some postsecondary	41.5	0.89	...	1.10
Postsecondary diploma or certificate	32.9*	0.61*	...	0.98
University degree	43.2	0.95	...	1.22
Age in decades	...	0.66*	...	0.70*
Age in decades squared	...	1.06*	...	1.04
Constant	0.42*	0.42*

† reference group

* statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from the reference group

Source: Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

Many other factors—such as number of hours volunteered, skills obtained from volunteering, type of volunteer activity, industry, and sociodemographic characteristics—are also associated with the likelihood of thinking that volunteering improved one's chances of success in the job. When all these factors were held constant in a logistic regression analysis, two types of employer support remained significant—use of facilities and equipment and recognition of volunteering or letters of thanks (Table 5, Model 2).

The following section discusses factors, other than employer support, associated with a greater likelihood of perceiving job success as a consequence of one's volunteer activities—factors also identified as significant in the logistic regression model.

Gaining office, managerial or communication skills from volunteering associated with perceived job success

The type of job skills that volunteers acquire—specifically office, managerial or communication skills—is associated with their perceptions of improved chances of job success. Some 54% who gained managerial skills said volunteering improved their chances of success on the job, compared with 28% who did not gain such skills. Similarly, it was more common for employees who gained office or communication skills to say their volunteering had improved their chances of success on the job.

The type of volunteer activity also had an impact. Employees who volunteered on a committee or did board work were more likely to say their volunteering helped them succeed in their job (about 51% compared with 34% who did not volunteer this way). Those who provided teaching or mentoring were also more likely to perceive increased chances of job success. As well as picking up valuable skills from these

types of activities, volunteers can make key contacts that may help them improve their performance or even lead to other employment opportunities.

Certain industries may encourage types of volunteer activities that develop skills related to job success; employers in some industry sectors may also consider volunteer experience when deciding on promotions, salary increases, and other indicators of job success. Employees in educational services were more likely (49%) to say their volunteering improved their chances of job success, compared with employees in the construction, agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, oil and gas industry group (27%), in the manufacturing and wholesale trade industry group (29%), or in the transportation and warehousing industry (23%).

Employees in the early part of their career benefited more, in terms of job success, from their volunteering. About one-half (50%) of volunteers aged 15 to 24 who were employed said volunteering helped improve their chances of success in their job. This compares with 39% of those aged 25 to 34, and 35% of those aged 35 and over (data not shown). These results are consistent with those showing that younger employees were more likely to have gained work-related skills from their volunteer activities (Table 4).

Summary

There are a variety of ways employers can facilitate volunteering among their employees. Employers may have programs or policies that encourage employees to volunteer, such as making donations to organizations for which their employees volunteered, based on the number of hours they gave. More often, employers provide formal supports that reduce barriers to volunteering, such as lack of resources or time, scheduling conflicts, or lack of recognition. In

2010, well over one-half (57%) of employees who volunteered said their employers provided at least one type of formal support. These volunteers gave higher median hours than those who were not supported by their employers.

The most common type of formal support was employer approval to change work hours or reduce work activities in order to volunteer. This type of support was received by 34% of employees who volunteered and was the most strongly associated with a high number of volunteer hours (75 median hours, compared with 40 hours for those without it).

Volunteers were most likely to report that their employers supported them if they worked in the public administration and utilities industry group or in the finance/insurance/real estate industry group. Volunteers who received employer support were more likely to report that their volunteer activities helped them acquire work-related skills (office, managerial, communication and interpersonal skills).

Employer support was also associated with employees' perception that volunteering improved their chances of succeeding in their job. In this regard, the most important employer supports were the use of facilities and equipment for volunteer activities and recognition or letters of thanks. Other factors also related to perceptions that volunteering improved job success were gaining work-related-skills—specifically office, managerial, or communication skills—and volunteering for activities that involve committee or board work or teaching. As well, younger employees were more likely to report that their volunteering had helped their chances of job success.



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