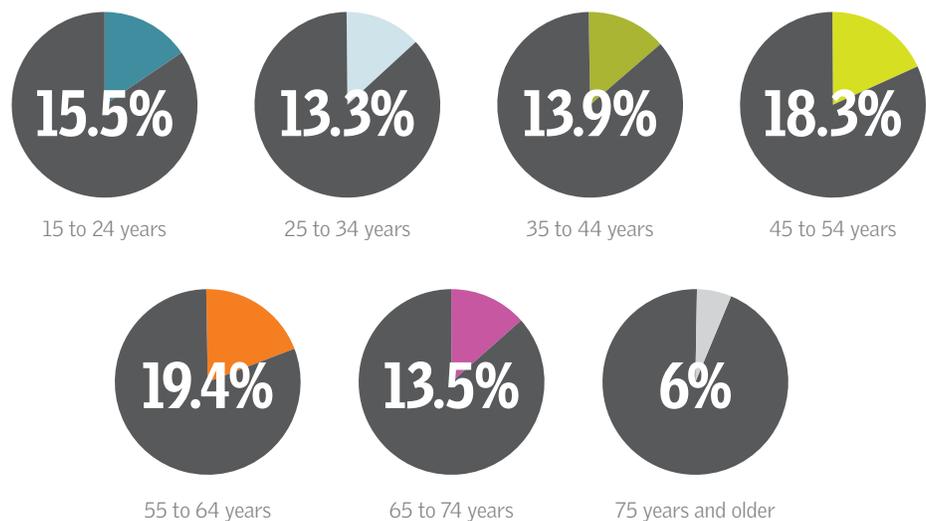


# INTRODUCTION

Volunteer management, managing people; it can't be that hard, can it? Carefully considering other people's schedules, personalities, skill sets and motivations, volunteer management is like a big game of Tetris. Finding the right role for volunteers, finding the right volunteer for a role or organization, all of this takes lots of time and planning before you take your first step into recruiting the right people.

There is a common misconception that volunteers and their time are free, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Organizations need to spend money on hiring someone to plan for and manage volunteers, recruitment material, training spaces, T-shirts, appreciation events and much more. The payback though can be really big; in 2013 alone, Statistics Canada reported almost two billion logged volunteer hours across our country! What's even more surprising is that the percentage of total volunteer hours was almost evenly split between the ages of 15 to 75+ (Figure 1). That's a lot of people from all walks of life who potentially want to contribute to your organization, and you will need to harness that interest and passion.

**FIGURE 1: BY AGE—STATISTICS CANADA, GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY ON GIVING, VOLUNTEERING AND PARTICIPATING, 2013**



Volunteers can bring diversity and a fresh set of eyes to organizations that make a broad outreach and thoughtful selection. From basic roles like helping with event set-up to supervisory roles to even becoming board members, volunteers contribute at all levels. Their investment in your organization through their time means that they can be your strongest assets and most honest critics. The passion and dedication that volunteers exude can lead to the best form of marketing, word of mouth. It's important then to keep volunteers happy, and that's often the job of the volunteer manager or coordinator.

If it's your first time in the role of volunteer manager, coordinator or assistant, the task can be overwhelming. Depending on the size of your organization and its volunteer needs, your job can range from planning a few envelope-stuffing shifts per month to recruiting, orienting and training hundreds of volunteers for a large-scale festival or event. No matter the level of volunteerism in your current situation, you will hopefully find at least a few things in this manual that will inspire you to take a look at and evaluate your organization's volunteer program.

From tips on how to plan and organize your program to innovative ways of working with diverse community partners and marketing your volunteer opportunities, this manual provides a great outline on how to shape a program that's best for you and your organization.

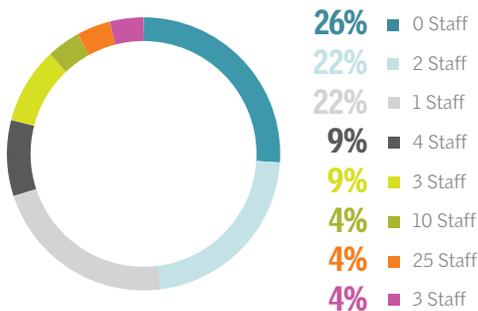
This project wouldn't have happened without the amazing community support I received from many cultural organizations, wonderful staff, fellow volunteer managers and coordinators, friends, and of course, our volunteers! To give you an idea of some of the people we have been chatting with about volunteerism, the following are results from a 2014 survey that was conducted with the participation of 25 cultural organizations. From volunteer managers, coordinators and festival administrators to executive directors, general managers and board members, these results give us a glimpse into volunteer management for cultural organizations.

The following information provides a glimpse into the questions we asked organizations and volunteers. Please refer to Figure 2 and Figure 3 in the appendices for a detailed look at both surveys.

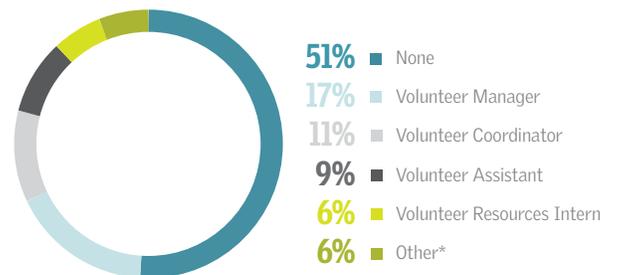
**FIGURE 2: SELECT RESULTS FROM ORGANIZATIONAL SURVEY**

To give you an idea of some of the people we have been chatting with about volunteerism, the following are results from a 2014 survey that was conducted with the participation of 25 culturally based organizations. From volunteer managers, coordinators and festival administrators to executive directors, general managers and board members, these results give us a glimpse into volunteer management for cultural organizations.

At peak operations, how many staff members are dedicated to volunteer management within your organization (i.e. Volunteer Manager, Coordinator, Assistant, etc)?

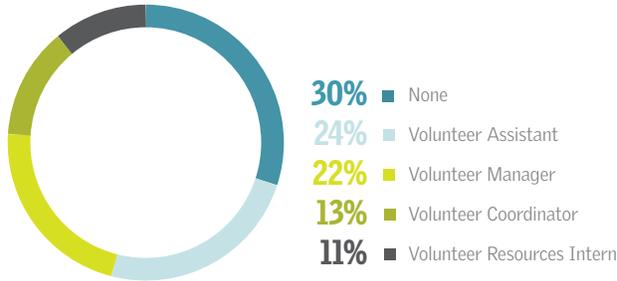


Which of these positions are full time (Monday to Friday)?

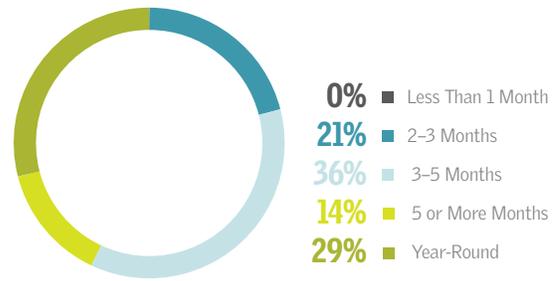


\*Other included Volunteer Outreach

Which of these positions are seasonal/contract?



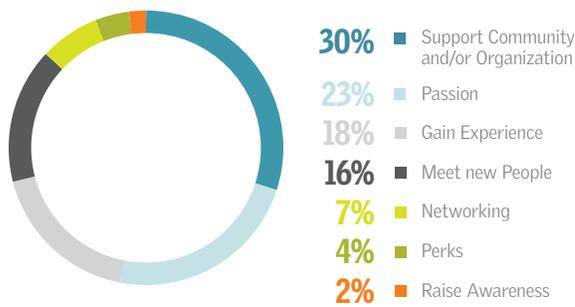
If the position is seasonal/contract, what is the average length of the contract for a staff member dedicated to the volunteer program?



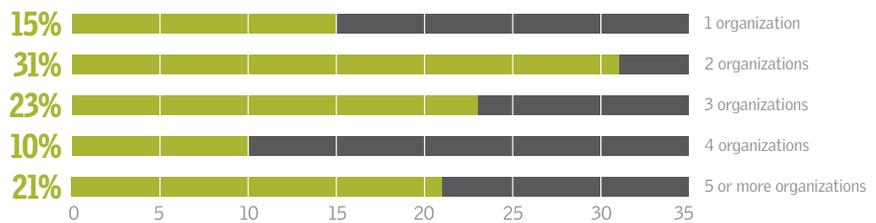
**FIGURE 3: SELECT RESULTS FROM VOLUNTEER SURVEY**

In March of 2015, data was collected from volunteers in an online survey that was administered for the whole month. The participants ranged in age as well as the types of organizations they volunteer with, although a large proportion of participants volunteered their time with arts and cultural organizations. With just over 270 participants, the following is a breakdown of the survey results.

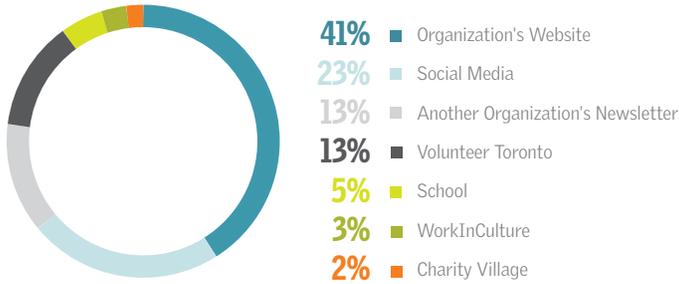
Motivations for volunteering



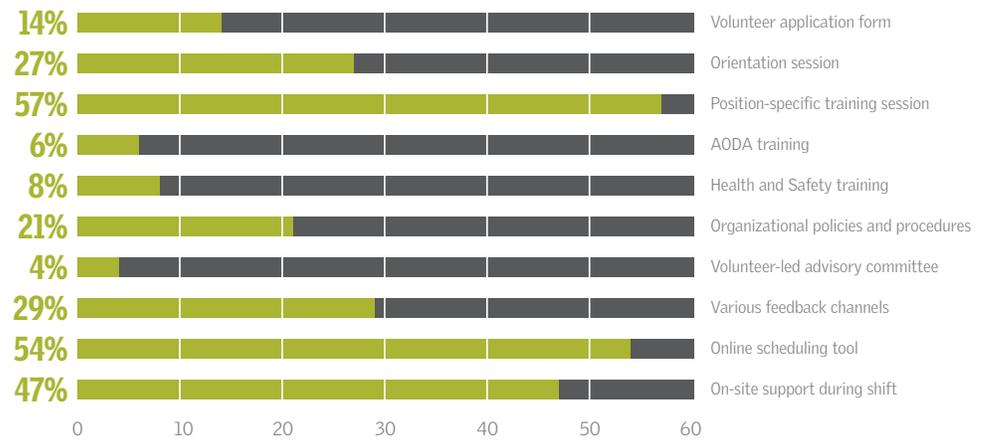
The number of organizations to which volunteers donate their time annually



The best way to hear about an organization



The tools that volunteers require from a volunteer program



## *Best Practices For Volunteer Programs*

In a continued effort to further develop and maintain strong partnerships within its community, Hot Docs has always welcomed resource sharing in the general operations of a festival, and most recently, operating a cinema year round. In 2003, Hot Docs developed *Festival Volunteer Programs: Best Practices and Planning Manual*, a composite of 10 best practices to implement in cultural organizations that program an annual festival. These 10 steps were critical in the changing landscape of volunteerism, and since then Hot Docs has continued to improve and expand its volunteer program based on these 10 best practices:

- 1 The value of volunteers should be officially recognized by the festival's senior management and its Board of Directors.
- 2 A festival staff member should be assigned responsibility for the management of the volunteer program.
- 3 A festival should develop policies and procedures that will govern volunteer involvement in their organization.
- 4 The festival should implement a formal and consistent recruitment and screening procedure for all volunteers.
- 5 A festival should assign volunteers to roles that take advantage of their skills and experience, while also matching their interests and requests.
- 6 A festival should organize volunteer orientation meetings, and provide volunteers with appropriate training and informative background materials.
- 7 A festival should provide volunteers with an enjoyable and safe working environment, arrange supervision where appropriate and track volunteers' performance.
- 8 A festival should develop a formal acknowledgement and benefits program for volunteers, that recognizes their work and commitment.
- 9 A festival should develop conflict resolution strategies, train volunteers and staff to meet these guidelines and set clear standards for dismissal.
- 10 A festival should solicit feedback and collaboration from volunteers, and consider each volunteer to be an equal member of the organization's team.

It should be mentioned that each practice offers an opportunity to build greater diversity and inclusion into your organization as you consider existing biases or barriers, and look for ways to expand your volunteer base.

The attitudes surrounding volunteer management are shifting. The 1990s ushered in full college degrees being offered in volunteer management, leading to the development of the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement. In the last decade, Volunteer Canada has seen volunteer management practices focus on the needs and

interests of the volunteer in addition to accomplishing the goals of the organization. This idea of balancing the needs and interests of both parties is part of the major evolution in the field.

While the motivations and personal goals of volunteers from different ages and cultures differ, Volunteer Canada identified six common characteristics of volunteers today:

- Highly educated with professional backgrounds
- Goal-oriented with highly organized career, family and social lives
- Sense of mobility (transient in terms of school, residence and work)
- Technologically skilled and comfortable participating in social networks
- Individualistic with a strong desire for autonomy
- Multiple interests and identities linked to many communities and causes

Professionals in the field are also investing time researching who their volunteers are. It's important to understand who your volunteers are in addition to why they dedicate their time to your organization. Greater efforts are also being made to improve volunteer diversity. You'll want to determine how to create a volunteer team that is not only representative of the communities you serve, but one where everyone is recognized for the expertise they bring.

With numerous online resources and organizations devoted to it, it will soon be hard to argue against a dedicated full-time position of volunteer manager or coordinator in the not-for-profit world. A 2003 study entitled *Managers of Volunteers: A Profile of the Profession*, shows the reality of volunteer management in our Canadian landscape. The survey sampled 6,152 Canadian volunteer organizations and elicited 1,203 successful respondents from a variety of:

- Organizations (incorporated, unincorporated, charity, etc.)
- Areas of activity (social services, health, arts and culture, etc.)
- Revenue levels
- Employee numbers
- Volunteers numbers
- Volunteer program budgets
- Provinces

Some interesting results from the survey indicated that:

- The chances of having a full-time paid position with a higher salary increased with the size of the organization and the size of the volunteer program budget.
- The number of volunteers an organization has and the size of the volunteer program budget are closely related to the size of the organization.
- The title given to the person who manages an organization's volunteers may also suggest the importance or value of volunteers within an organization.

It's not hard to conclude, then, that an organization that is looking to grow needs to continue investing in its volunteer program. If volunteers are a truly crucial aspect of an organization, it's equally as important to define a job specifically related to volunteer management.

The most frequently mentioned challenge was volunteer recruitment (cited by 32 per cent of respondents as their biggest challenge). The five top challenges reported were:

- Volunteer recruitment (32 per cent)
- Time constraints (14 per cent)
- Assigning volunteers to tasks (four per cent)
- Lack of funds or money (four per cent)
- Volunteer retention (four per cent)

This manual hopes to touch upon some of these findings and provide volunteer managers, coordinators and assistants with a tool for creating a volunteer program, but also a little inspiration for improving the program already in place.

