



A Portrait of  
**SPORTS AND RECREATION  
ORGANIZATIONS**  
in Canada

Imagine  Canada  
Give. Volunteer. Engage.  
Donner. S'engager. Agir.



# Executive Summary

The 2003 *National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO)* is the first comprehensive survey of Canada's nonprofit sector. It provides key data about nonprofit organizations including: their numbers; geographic distribution; areas of activity; the populations they serve; the extent to which they provide public benefits; the financial and human resources on which they rely; and problems they report in their capacity to fulfill their missions.

Undertaken by a consortium of nine organizations, the **NSNVO** was led by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (now Imagine Canada). Participating organizations included l'Alliance de recherche universités-communautés en économie sociale, Université du Québec à Montréal; Canada West Foundation; Canadian Council on Social Development; Capacity Development Network, University of Victoria; Community Services Council, Newfoundland and Labrador; School of Policy Studies, Queen's University; the Voluntary and Non-profit Sector Organization of Manitoba; and Statistics Canada. It was based on a representative sample of approximately 13,000 nonprofit organizations.

To be included in the survey, organizations had to be: non-governmental; non-profit distributing; self-governing; voluntary; and formally incorporated or registered. Organizations meeting these criteria were asked about their activities over the 12 month period prior to the survey.

The 2000 *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP)* provides a comprehensive look at the contributions that Canadians make to one another and their communities. Respondents were asked a series of questions about: how they give money and other resources to individuals and to charitable and nonprofit organizations; volunteer time to nonprofit organizations and directly to individuals; and participate in groups, organizations, and associations by becoming members.

[www.givingandvolunteering.ca](http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca)

[www.imaginecanada.ca](http://www.imaginecanada.ca)

[www.nonprofitscan.ca](http://www.nonprofitscan.ca)

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Imagine Canada  
425 University Avenue, Suite 900  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1T6  
Tel.: (416) 597-2293  
Fax: (416) 597-2294  
[www.imaginecanada.ca](http://www.imaginecanada.ca)  
[info@imaginecanada.ca](mailto:info@imaginecanada.ca)  
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# The Results

Sports and Recreation organizations promote and provide amateur sports, training, fitness, and wellness services; organize sporting competitions and events; operate recreational facilities; and provide a variety of other services to communities. Using data from the 2000 *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP)* and the 2003 *National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO)*, this report provides a portrait of the many Sports and Recreation organizations in Canada, their donors, their volunteers, and the challenges they face as they work to fulfill their missions.

According to the **NSNVO**, Sports and Recreation organizations are the most common type of nonprofit organization in Canada. There are approximately 33,600 Sports and Recreation organizations, accounting for 21% of the country's estimated 161,000 nonprofit organizations. Sports and Recreation organizations are very member oriented – 86% of organizations report having people as members, and 55% of those organizations say that their members<sup>1</sup> are the primary beneficiaries of their services. This is much higher than in the sector as a whole (39%).

Sports and Recreation organizations also tend to be well-established. Almost two-thirds (63%) have been in operation for 20 years or more and 23% have been in operation for 40 years or more. They tend, however, to be smaller than nonprofit organizations in general, with just over half (55%) reporting annual revenues less than \$30,000. Most are completely dependent on volunteers, with almost three-quarters (73%) saying they have no paid staff.

## Quick Facts:

### Characteristics Of Sports And Recreation Organizations

- Sports and Recreation organizations are the most common type of organization in Canada – 21% of organizations, or 33,600 of a total of 161,000 nonprofit organizations.
- Organizations tend to be small – 55% of Sports and Recreation organizations have annual revenues under \$30,000.
- They are heavily dependent on volunteers – 73% of Sports and Recreation organizations have no paid staff.
- Organizations are very member oriented – 86% have people as members, and 55% of these say members are the primary beneficiaries of the organization's activities.

Relatively few Sports and Recreation organizations (27%) are registered charities. This is significant because charitable status allows organizations to issue tax receipts for donations and access foundation funding; by extension this means that 73% of Sports and Recreation organizations cannot issue tax receipts to donors or apply for grants from foundations.

<sup>1</sup>Sports and Recreation organizations report a total of 33 million individuals and 130,000 organizations as members.

# Financial Resources

In the nonprofit sector as a whole, revenues tend to be concentrated among a small percentage of larger organizations. The same pattern exists in the Sports and Recreation subsector, where the 3% of organizations with revenues over \$1 million account for 60% of revenues.

Collectively, Sports and Recreation organizations report a total of \$6.1 billion in annual revenues, and account for about 5% of total nonprofit sector revenues. However, most Sports and Recreation organizations have quite modest revenues. More than half (55%) report annual revenues of less than \$30,000 and more than three-quarters (77%) report annual revenues of less than \$100,000.

In terms of funding sources, Sports and Recreation organizations rely more on earned income (e.g., membership fees and fees for goods and services) than is the case in the sector as a whole. Earned income accounts for 65% of total revenues of Sports and Recreation organizations, compared to 35% for the sector as a whole. This potentially allows them greater flexibility than organizations that are more reliant on government funding or individual donations. Sports and Recreation organizations also receive 15% of their revenues in the form of corporate sponsorships, donations, and grants – more than

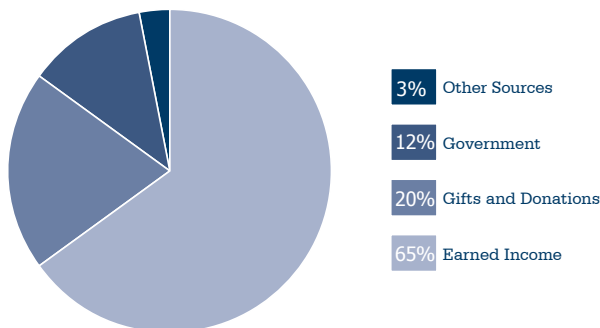
## Quick Facts:

### Financial Resources

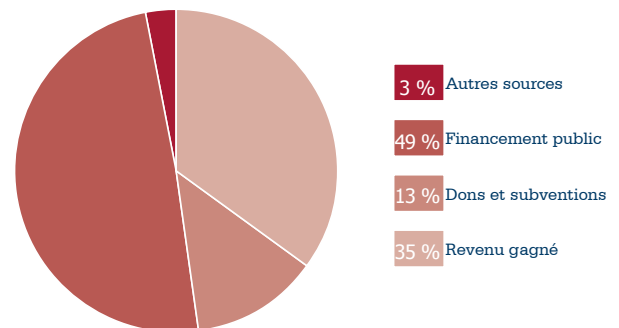
- Sports and Recreation organizations reported \$6.1 billion in annual revenues – 5% of total nonprofit sector revenues.
- 65% of revenues for Sports and Recreation organizations from earned income
- 15% of revenues come from corporate sponsorships, donations, and grants – more than any other type of organization
- 12% of Canadians aged 15 and over each donated an average of \$40 annually to Sports and Recreation organizations in 2000

any other type of organization. However, Sports and Recreation groups are less likely than most other types of nonprofit organizations to report that their revenues increased between 2000 and 2003. Only 30% report increased revenues, compared to 36% of all nonprofit organizations.

Sources of revenue: Sports and Recreation organizations and all nonprofit organizations, 2003.



Sports and Recreation Organizations



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## Who Donates To Sports And Recreation Organizations?

Sports and Recreation donors tend to be men, aged 35 to 54, married or in common-law relationships, with post-secondary educations, employed, and with annual household incomes over \$60,000. Sports and Recreation donors are more likely than other donors to be motivated by a sense of commitment to their community and less likely to be motivated by religious obligations.

### Tips For Attracting And Keeping Donors:<sup>2</sup>

- To attract new donors, target your fundraising campaign to this audience.
- Community profiles (demographic details gathered from Census information) can help you get a good understanding of the pool of potential donors in your area. Visit the Statistics Canada's Community Profiles database at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca).
- Spend 70% of your fundraising resources on informing and involving your current, loyal donors, and 30% attracting new donors.
- Sport tournaments, games, or recreational events are good opportunities to fundraise, as they give your organization a face in the community. Ensure that you collect the names and addresses of people who purchased tickets so that you can contact them again.
- Welcome new donors and acknowledge all gifts promptly.
- Remember: fundraising isn't just about getting people's money; it's about getting their support.

**Donations and Donors.** The **NSGVP** estimates that 12% of Canadians aged 15 and over made a donation to a Sports and Recreation organization in 2000. On average, each Sports and Recreation donor gave \$40 annually. In comparison, donors to Religious organizations gave \$310 each, on average. In total, Sports and Recreation organizations receive 2% of the total value of individual donations made to nonprofit organizations.

The top 25% of donors to Sports and Recreation organizations (those who donated \$30 or more per year) contributed 78% of the total value of donations in 2000. This means that 3% of Canadians contributed 78% of the total value of donations to Sports and Recreation organizations. This finding is consistent with the pattern observed in the sector as a whole, and indicates that there is opportunity for organizations to expand their donor bases. Overall, Sports and Recreation organizations received only 5% of all donations and 2% of the total value of all donations made to nonprofit organizations in Canada.

**Financial Challenges.** Approximately half of Sports and Recreation organizations report difficulties obtaining funding from other organizations, earning revenues, competing with other organizations, and obtaining funding from individuals. Organizations with annual revenues between \$250,000 and \$1 million, and organizations dependent on government funding were typically most likely to report these challenges. Over half of Sports and Recreation organizations that received external funding during the previous three years reported difficulties arising from reductions in government funding, over-reliance on project funding, and the unwillingness of funders to support core operations. Organizations with annual revenues between \$250,000 and \$10 million, and organizations dependent on gifts and donations were most likely to report these challenges.

<sup>2</sup>McClintock, N. (2004). *Understanding Canadian Donors: Using the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating to Build your Fundraising Program*. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

# Human Resources

**Paid Staff.** The **NSNVO** found that Sports and Recreation organizations employed more than 130,000 people in 2003. This represents 6% of the total nonprofit sector workforce of two million people. Sports and Recreation organizations are less likely to have paid staff than other types of nonprofits. In fact, 73% of Sports and Recreation organizations have no paid staff, and are run solely by volunteers. This is markedly higher than in the nonprofit sector as a whole (54% of all nonprofit organizations have no paid staff).

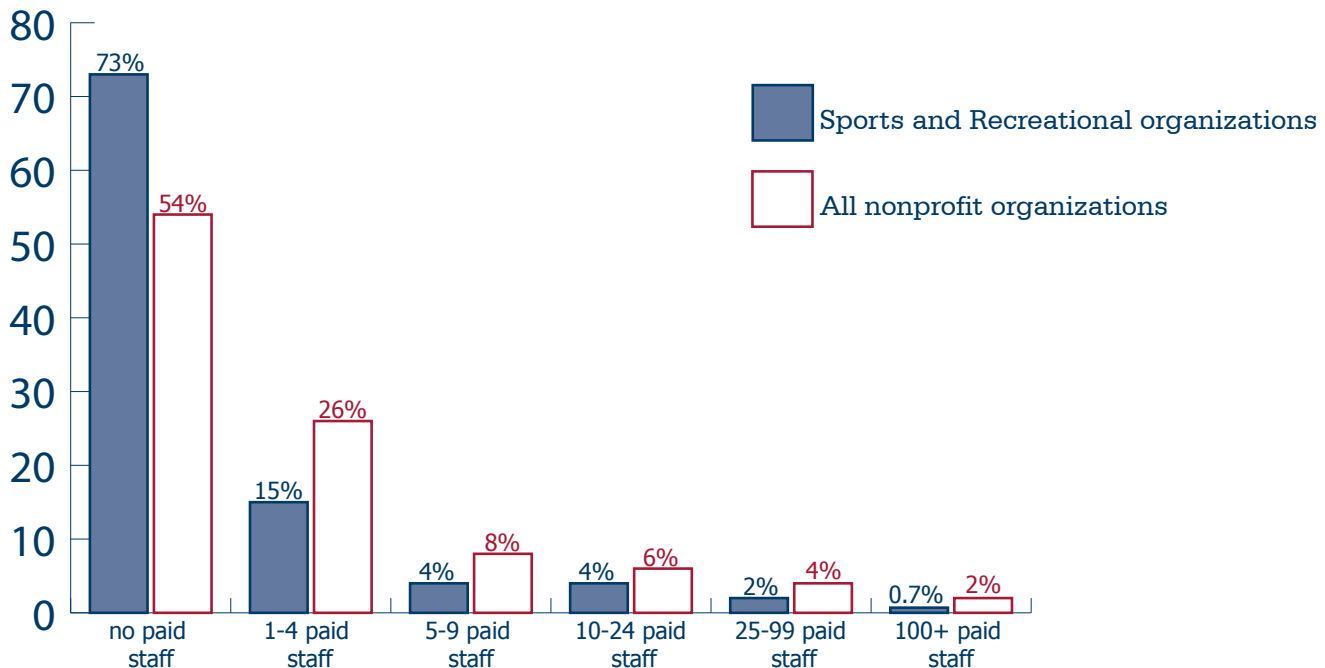
Sports and Recreation organizations *with* paid staff are also more likely than other organizations to have small staff contingents - only 11% have more than four staff members, compared to 20% of nonprofit organizations, generally.

## Quick Facts:

### Human Resources

- 1.7 million Canadians volunteered for Sports and Recreation organizations in 2000.
- 7% of Canadians volunteered for Sports and Recreation organizations, and each contributed an average of 133 hours annually.
- Sports and Recreation organizations have approximately 131,000 paid staff.

**Paid staff levels in Sports and Recreation organizations and all nonprofit organizations, 2003.**



## Who Volunteers for Sports And Recreation Organizations?

Sports and Recreation volunteers tend to be men, aged 35 to 54, married or in common-law relationships, with post-secondary educations, employed, and with household incomes of more than \$60,000 per year. Sports and Recreation volunteers are less likely than other volunteers to cite religious obligations as a motivation for their volunteer activity. They are most likely to be motivated by a personal belief in the cause they are supporting, and to use their skills and experience to help others.

### Tips for Recruiting Sports and Recreation Volunteers:<sup>3</sup>

- Advertise volunteer opportunities in local clubs, recreation centres, community swimming pools, etc.
- Encourage parents and family members of participants to get involved.
- Consider new retirees as potential volunteers, as they may be looking for opportunities to engage socially and get involved in their communities. The “personal ask” method of recruitment works best with this age group.<sup>4</sup>
- Tell potential volunteers about the advantages of volunteering for your organization (teaching others, setting goals, being outdoors, motivating and encouraging people, getting exercise, or making new friends).
- Engage a local business to sponsor employee volunteers for your tournament or event.

**Volunteers.** Volunteers play a major role in Sports and Recreation organizations. According to the **NSGVP**, 7% of Canadians aged 15 and over volunteered for a Sports and Recreation organization in 2000. These volunteers gave an average of 133 hours each, and together they contributed a total of 221 million hours in 2000. In total, Sports and Recreation organizations received 21% of total volunteer hours contributed by Canadians in 2000.

The top 25% of volunteers for Sports and Recreation organizations contributed 68% of total volunteer hours in 2000. By extension, this means that 2% of Canadians account for 68% of total Sports and Recreation volunteer hours.

**Human Resources Challenges.** Probably because of their reliance on volunteers, Sports and Recreation organizations are far more likely than other nonprofit organizations to report problems relating to volunteers and board members. For example, 65% of Sports and Recreation organizations said that they have difficulty obtaining the type of volunteers they need, 64% said they have difficulty obtaining board members, and 58% said they have difficulty retaining volunteers. In comparison, only 19% report problems obtaining paid staff and providing staff training. Larger organizations, those that are dependent on government funding, and those that have experienced changes in revenues (either positive or negative) are more likely to report human resources problems.

<sup>3</sup>McClintock, N. (2004). *Understanding Canadian Volunteers: Using the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating to Build your Fundraising Program*. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

<sup>4</sup>*Volunteer Connections: New Strategies for Involving Older Adults*, Volunteer Canada, 2001.

# **S**trengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

The key strengths of Sports and Recreation organizations appear to be the dedication of their volunteers and their reliance on earned income, which potentially allows them greater flexibility than organizations that depend on government funding or on donations from individuals. In addition, Sports and Recreation organizations receive more of their revenues from corporate sponsorships, donations and grants than any other type of organization. This suggests that many Sports and Recreation organizations have well-developed relationships with corporate sponsors, and that many Canadian businesses support these types of activities in their communities.

However, Sports and Recreation organizations also face some serious challenges. They are, for example, very reliant on volunteers, which makes them vulnerable if volunteer rates decline. They also tend to be smaller than other nonprofits, which is significant because the majority of donor dollars and a third of volunteer hours flow to larger organizations. In fact, Sports and Recreation organizations were less likely than all organizations to report an increase in revenues between 2000 and 2003, which may present significant capacity challenges in the years to come.

Opportunities may exist for Sports and Recreation organizations to expand their support base by attracting donors and volunteers from demographic groups that are currently under-represented among their core contributors (e.g., women, young people, grandparents, people with lower education and income levels). However, there may also be opportunities to increase donations of time and money provided by existing supporters. By attracting new volunteers and by further developing existing sources of financial contributions, Sports and Recreation organizations can strengthen their capacity to provide important services and programmes to communities across Canada.

