



# Volunteerism in Saskatchewan: Technical Report

December 2022

## About this report

The Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership (SNP) partnered with Inshtrix Research Inc. to conduct a survey to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted volunteerism in Saskatchewan, and to determine motivations for and barriers to volunteering.

The online survey was conducted through the Inshtrix SaskWatch Research® Panel, ensuring a representative sample of the general population of the province was achieved. The survey was conducted in April 2022 with a sample size of 802 responses.

Refer to the *Volunteerism in Saskatchewan and the Impacts of COVID-19* report for a summary and analysis of the survey data.

Readers may use, share, or reproduce all or part of this report, giving credit to the Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, Government of Saskatchewan, for their financial support of this survey.

We would also like to thank Volunteer Canada for sharing their expertise in the conceptual stage of the survey.

## Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership

The Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership is an unincorporated partnership of organizations that collaborate towards the betterment of the nonprofit sector. Senior leaders of the following organizations serve as members of the Partnership:

- Boys and Girls Club of Saskatoon
- CFS Saskatoon
- Community Initiatives Fund
- Family Service Regina
- Heritage Saskatchewan
- SARC
- Saskatchewan Parks & Recreation Association

The mission of SNP is to benefit Saskatchewan's nonprofit sector through research, networking, public awareness, sector strategy development and thought leadership.

# Research Background, Methodology & Key Findings

In early 2022, the Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership (SNP) contracted Inshixtrix® Research Inc. (Inshixtrix) to conduct research with residents of Saskatchewan about volunteerism.

## Objectives



## Methodology

**Mode:** Online survey with residents of Saskatchewan, quotas set to ensure a representative sample of the general population of the province is achieved.

**Sample source:** Inshixtrix SaskWatch Research® Panel

**Sample size:** n=802; Response rate: 27%

## Key Findings

- COVID-19 greatly impacted volunteerism in Saskatchewan, with notable reductions in time spent volunteering during the pandemic. Health concerns and reduced opportunities are key reasons for the decline.
- However, attitudes toward volunteerism are positive. As post-pandemic uncertainty eases, community-related volunteer opportunities could provide individuals with a sense of reconnection.
- Outlook for the future looks positive as many intend on returning to pre-pandemic volunteer activities, with some looking to increase the amount of time they spend volunteering within the next six months.
- Many are also looking for new volunteering adventures, suggesting a transition may occur within the sector.
- Flexible roles that offer online / virtual volunteer work are likely to appeal to those with an interest in becoming more active in their community.
- While some may be apt to seek out volunteer roles, many will need to be presented with opportunities in order to become active volunteers. Social media campaigns and using current volunteers to spread messages about upcoming opportunities will likely be effective recruitment methods.

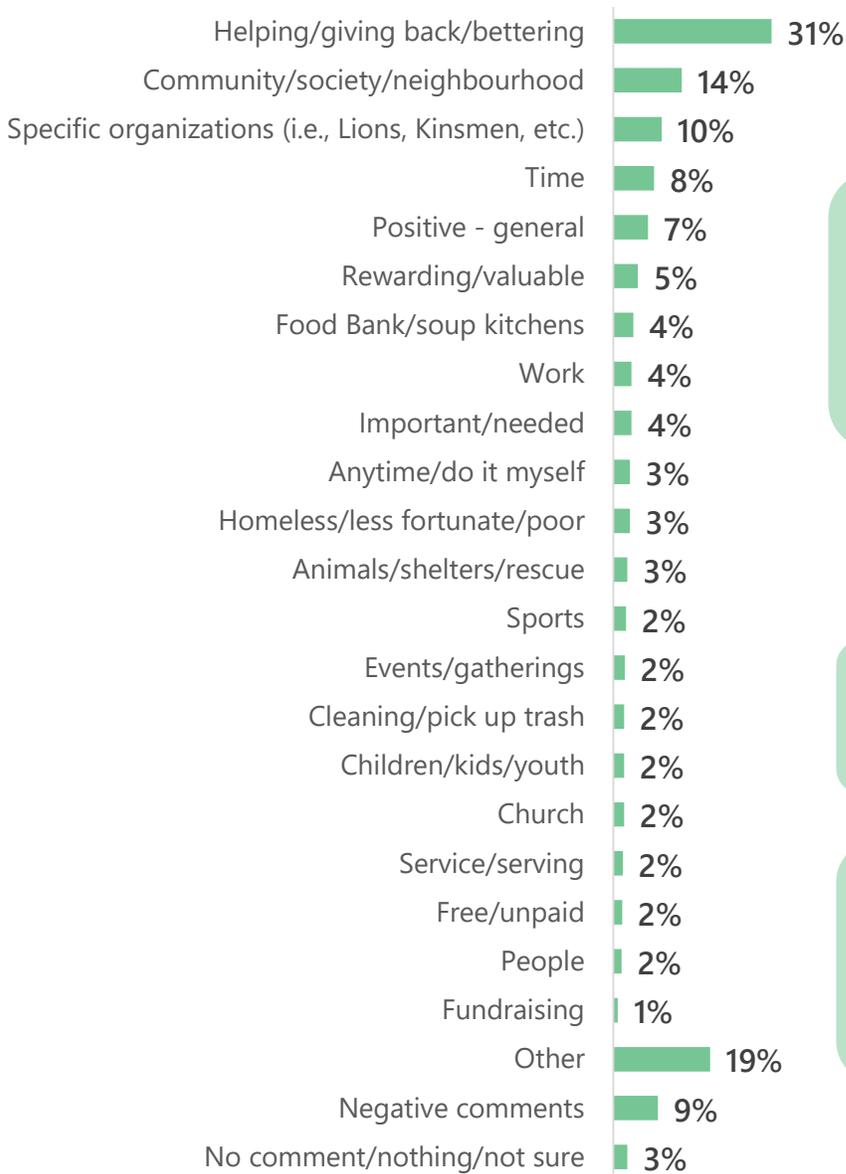
## Reporting Notes

- Statistically significant differences between sample subsets have been highlighted in this report with a "▲" or "▼". A standard alpha value of less than 0.05 is considered statistically significant. This means there is less than a 5% chance the results would have occurred by chance.
- Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%. Questions in which more than one response can be selected will result in totals of more than 100%.
- Open-ended questions have been themed and coded into categories. The percentages from individual codes will add to more than 100%, as comments from each respondent could be relevant to more than one code.

# Volunteerism Attitudes, Perceptions & Activities

# Top of Mind Thoughts About Volunteerism

Helping, giving back and bettering the community are the most common top-of-mind thoughts when it comes to volunteering in the community.



*Good way to **support & participate in all aspects of the community!***

***Genuine care and compassion for others.** Participating in or creating volunteer opportunities to support causes and organizations that are personally meaningful to the volunteer. Intrinsic reward of seeing impact of volunteering.*

***I wish that I could do more!***

***Non-profit organizations, churches, meals for people in need, cleaning up garbage in natural settings.***

*I used to **take blind people for mall walking.** They don't offer it anymore. I now think of things like **helping stock foods at food bank or helping with cats and dogs** at humane society.*

***Not enough people volunteer in my community.** If there were more volunteering groups, I feel like people may be more inclined.*

***Big time commitment and I am a busy working mom.***

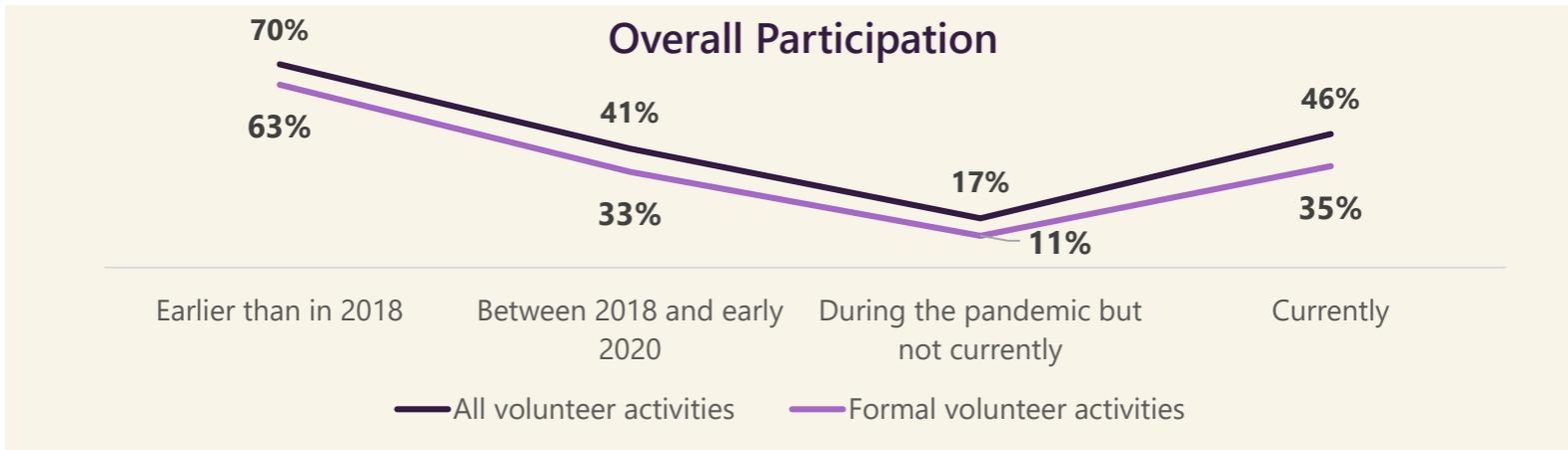
*I feel like some volunteer opportunities are not **as safe as they used to be** because of COVID.*

***It is something that I try to do;** mostly through our kids' sports teams.*

Q6: What first comes to mind when you think about volunteering in your community? (open-ended response) Base: All respondents, n=802.

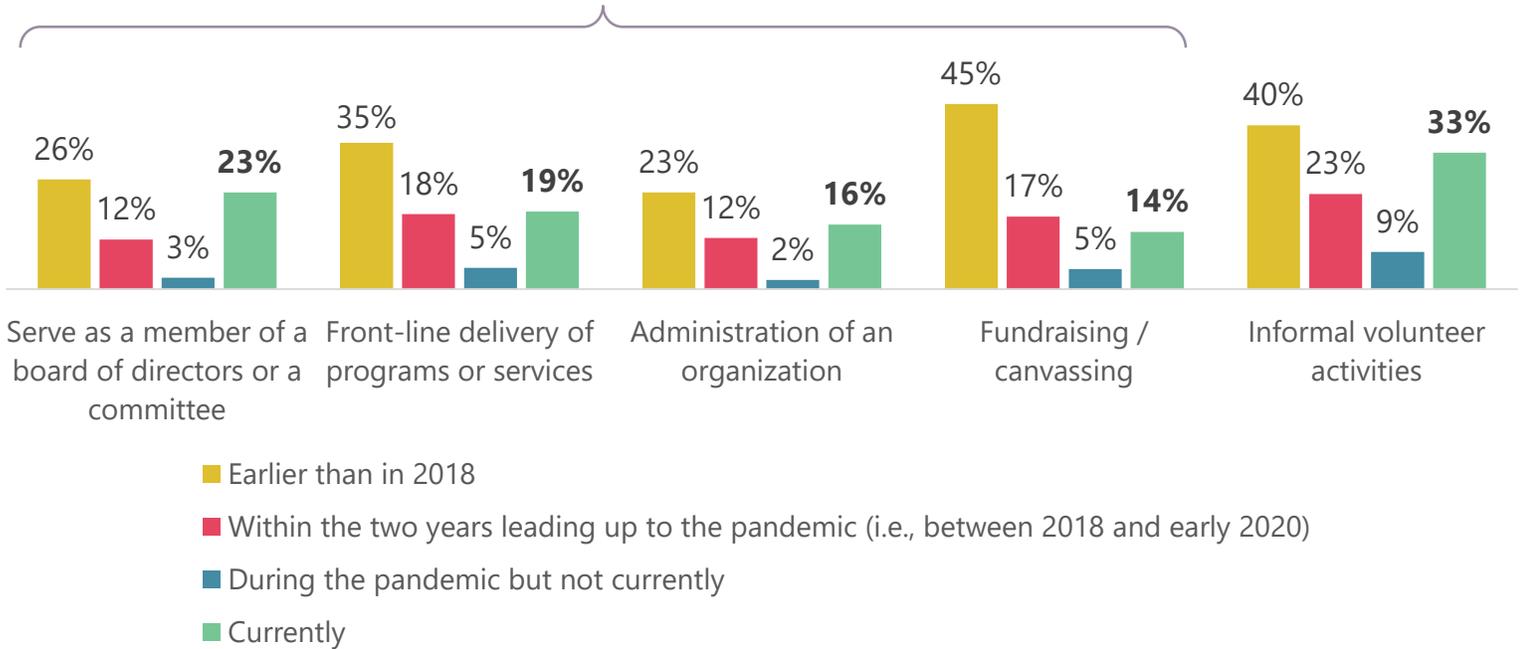
# Volunteer Activities

Almost half report currently taking part in formal or informal volunteer activities. Serving as a board / committee member is the most frequently reported current activity followed by frontline program or service delivery. Overall, reported participation in formal volunteer activities has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. A recent lift in informal volunteer activity is observed, indicating residents are increasingly contributing in ways that are independent of established organizations.



## Participation in Volunteer Activities

### Formal Volunteer Activities



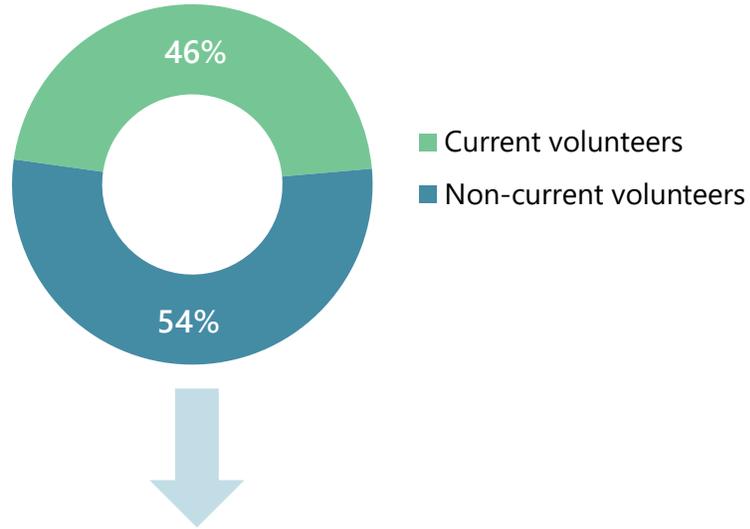
\* NOTE: Multiple responses possible, therefore the percentages add up to more than 100%.

Q7. Are you or have you done any of the following volunteer activities without pay on behalf of a group / organization? Base: All respondents, n=802. Q8. Informal volunteer activities could include helping people on your own and not on behalf of a group or organization, not including your own family and extended family. With this definition, have you done any informal volunteer activities? Base: All respondents, n=802.

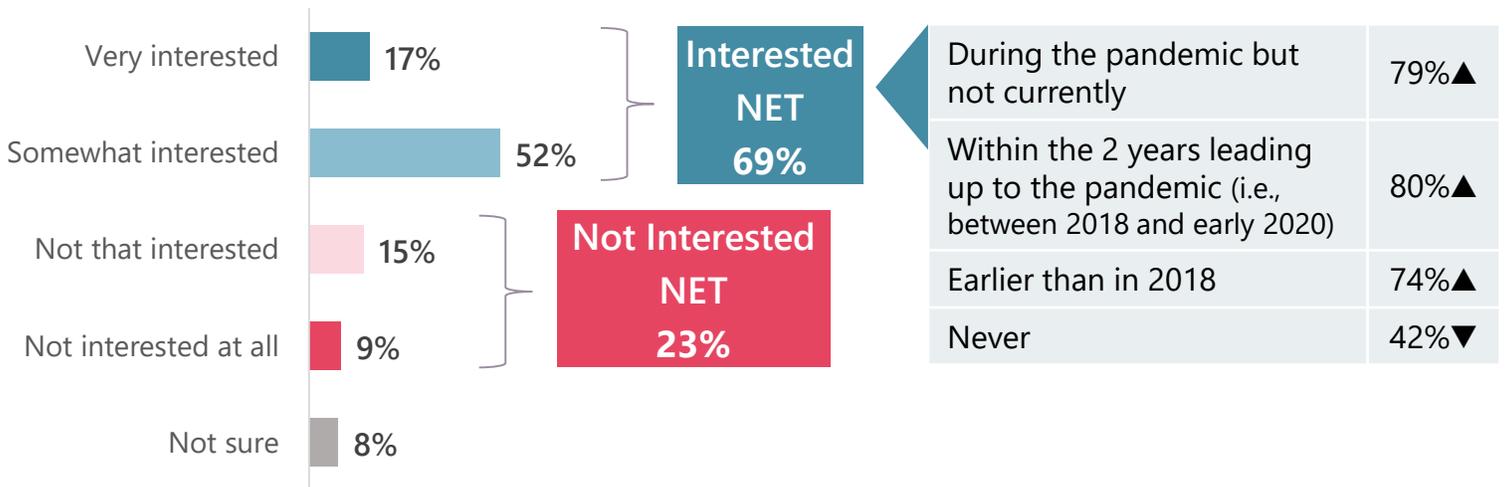
# Interest in Volunteerism

Just under half of residents report current involvement in volunteer activities. Interest in volunteerism is moderate among residents who do not currently volunteer, with most expressing soft sentiments about future intentions to volunteer. Those with more recent volunteering experience tend to show stronger interest in future opportunities.

## Current Volunteerism



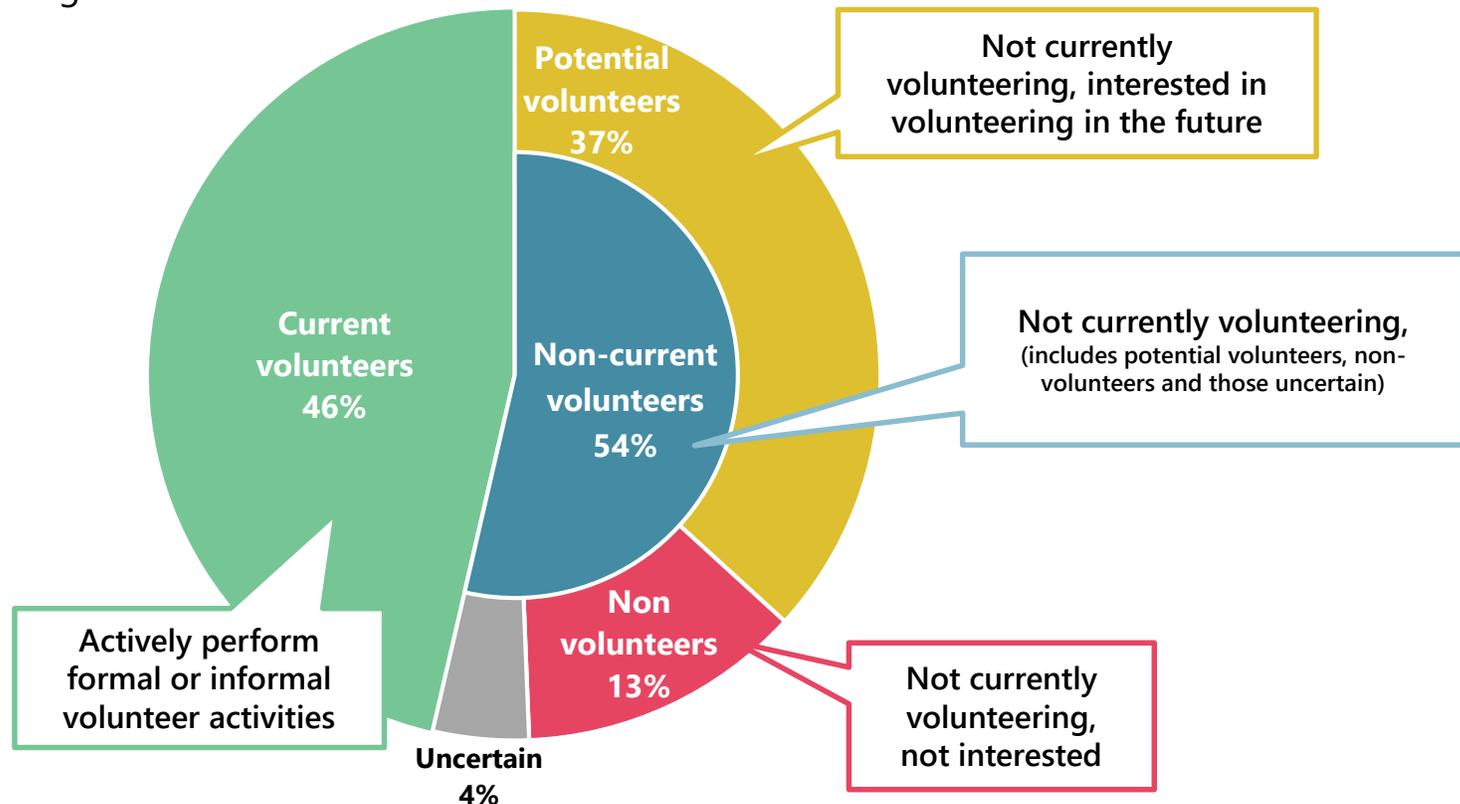
## Interest in Volunteerism (Among Non-Current Volunteers)



Q5: How interested are you in volunteering at some point in the future? Base: All respondents who do not currently volunteer, n=430. Q7. Are you or have you done any of the following volunteer activities without pay on behalf of a group / organization? Base: All respondents, n=802. Q8. Informal volunteer activities could include helping people on your own and not on behalf of a group or organization, not including your own family and extended family. With this definition, have you done any informal volunteer activities? Base: All respondents, n=802.

# Volunteer Group Profile

At present, close to half (46%) of the population currently volunteers while 54% are not currently volunteering. However, 37% are deemed to be potential volunteers, most commonly younger residents.



## Demographic Variances

Current Volunteers 46%	Age			With children under 18 in household	
	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+	Yes	No
	36%▼	51%▲	50%▲	52%▲	44%▼
Formal activities	26%▼	40%▲	37%▲		
Informal activities	24%▼	36%▲	37%▲		

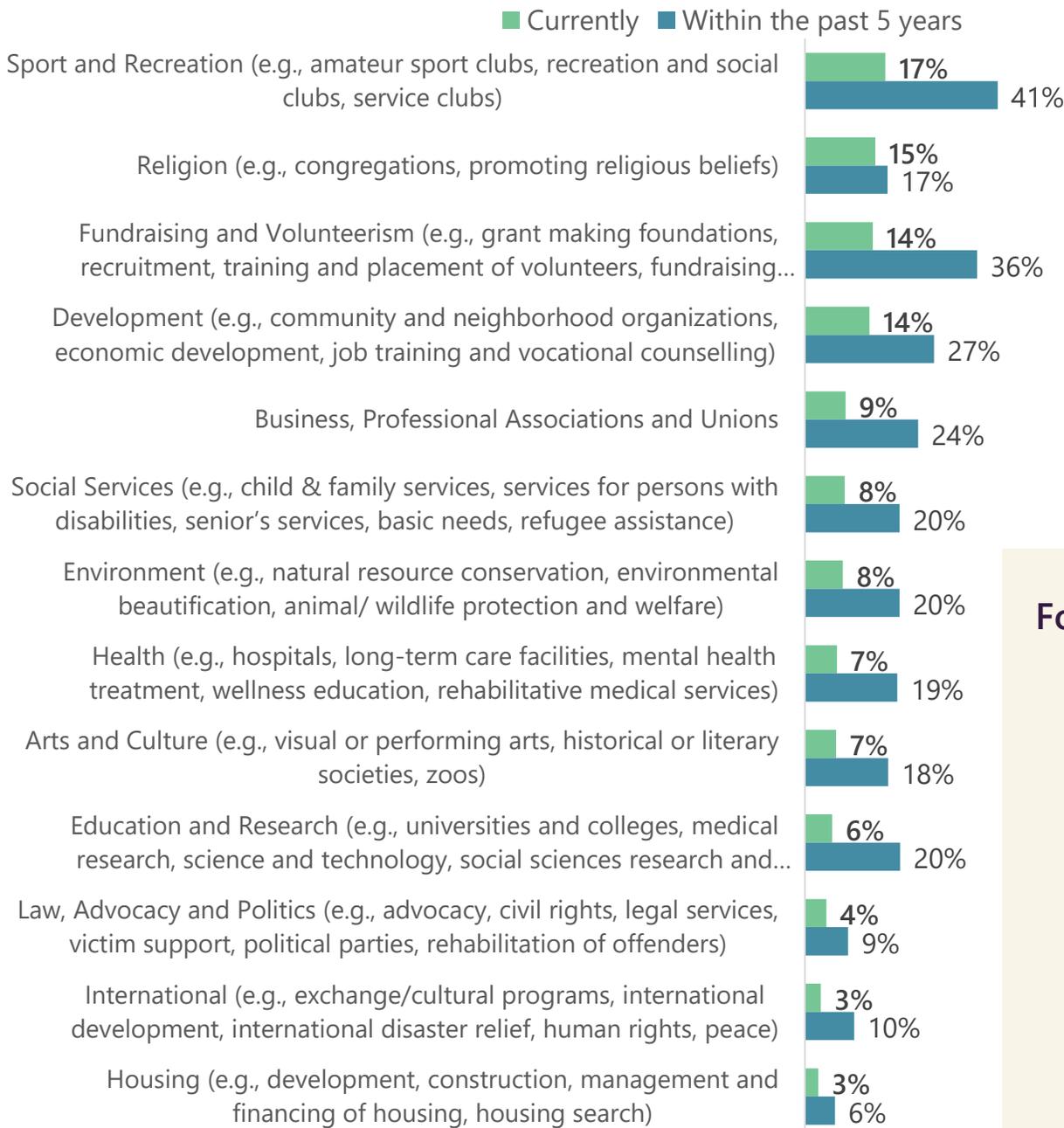
Potential Volunteers 37%	Age		
	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
	47%▲	32%▼	33%▼

Q7. Are you or have you done any of the following volunteer activities without pay on behalf of a group / organization? Base: All respondents, n=802. Q8. Informal volunteer activities could include helping people on your own and not on behalf of a group or organization, not including your own family and extended family. With this definition, have you done any informal volunteer activities? Base: All respondents, n=802. Q5: How interested are you in volunteering at some point in the future? Base: All respondents who do not currently volunteer, n=430.

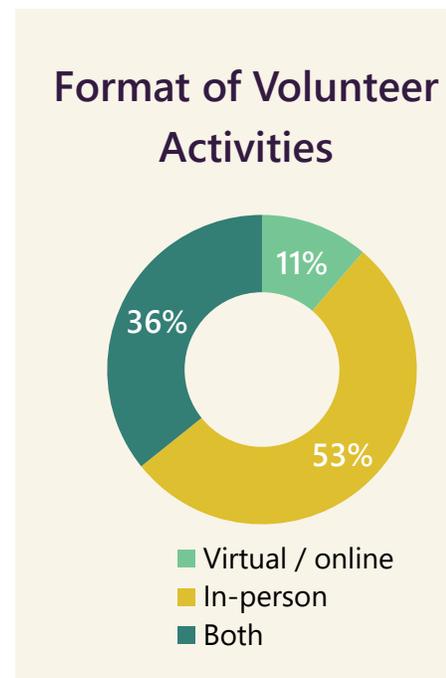
# Organization Types

Residents report a variety of interest areas in their volunteer activities, with sport and recreation topping the list of common volunteering organization types. As expected, volunteer involvement by type of organization has declined sharply since the pandemic. Current volunteers report a mix of virtual / online and in-person volunteer activities.

## Types of Organizations Volunteered With



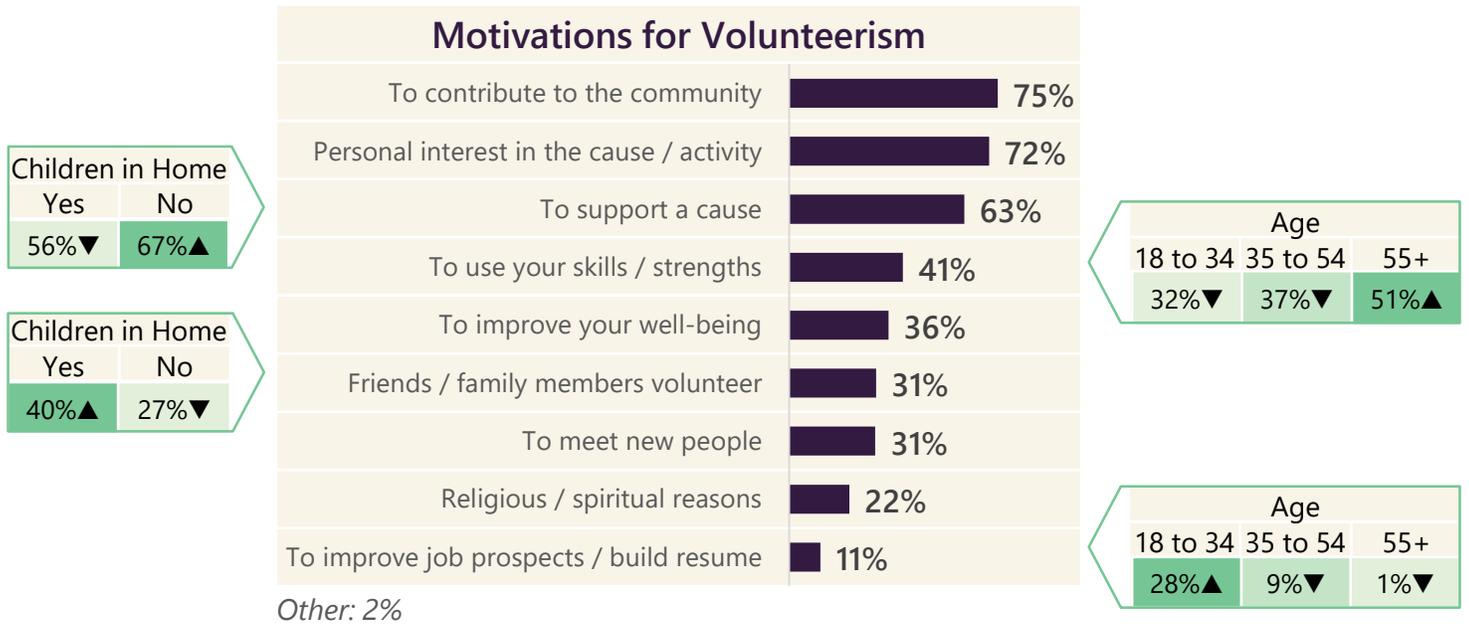
Other: 4-5%



Q9. Which of the following types of organizations have you in the past or do you currently volunteer with? Base: Respondents with volunteer experience, n=714. Q11. Are the volunteer activities you currently perform mainly... Base: Current volunteers, n=372.

# Motivations for Volunteerism

Contributing to the community, personal interest and support for a cause are the top motivators of volunteerism.



- Older adults are most likely to volunteer to use their skills and strengths whereas young adults tend to look for career-building volunteer opportunities.
- Families with children in the home may seek volunteer opportunities that present social opportunities with friends and family members.

Q14: What are the reasons you choose to volunteer? Base: Respondents with volunteer experience, n=714.

# Attitudes About Volunteerism

The vast majority agree that community issues are of personal importance. While most feel they are knowledgeable about issues facing their community, fewer say they are engaged in addressing such issues. Only a modest proportion say volunteer opportunities are easy to find, highlighting an opportunity to increase awareness of volunteering opportunities.



- Young adults are least likely to agree that volunteer opportunities are easy to find and that they are engaged in addressing issues in their community. Targeted outreach campaigns aimed at young adults may help boost volunteerism and secure a robust volunteer pool in the future.
- Knowledge about community issues increases with volunteer engagement, with those reporting weak knowledge levels also showing a lack of interest in volunteering. Increasing community awareness about current and local issues may help boost interest and likelihood of volunteering among less active groups.

## Demographic Variances (% Agree NET)

	Volunteer Group			Age		
	Current	Potential	Non-volunteer	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Issues facing my community are important to me	95%▲	92%▲	70%▼	48%▼	66%▲	72%▲
I find it easy to find volunteer opportunities in my community	78%▲	55%▼	41%▼	50%▼	63%▲	57%
I am knowledgeable about the issues facing my community	88%▲	70%	60%▼			
I am engaged in addressing the issues of my community	75%▲	51%	25%▼			

Q15: Please rate your agreement with the following... Base: All respondents, n=802.

# Barriers

Top barriers to volunteering / volunteering more often are related to time. Designing and highlighting volunteer opportunities that offer short-term commitments with flexible time requirements will be helpful in overcoming this challenge. Only one quarter cite health concerns related to COVID-19 as a barrier to volunteerism.



- Time constraints are of particular concern to younger generations and one quarter of young adults are concerned about the financial cost of volunteering.
- About one third of potential volunteers say they don't volunteer because no one asked or invited them.
- With the understanding that some groups may be less likely to independently seek out volunteer opportunities, targeting messaging about local volunteer opportunities may help increase participation.

Demographic Variances	Volunteer Group		
	Current	Potential	Non-volunteer
Too busy – not enough time	52%	56%	50%
Unable to commit long-term	37%	48%	41%
Health concerns related to COVID-19	22%▼	31%▲	22%
Already volunteering enough / doing my part already	40%▲	8%▼	8%▼
No one asked / invited me to volunteer	22%▲	27%▲	9%▼
Financial cost of volunteering	18%	20%	17%
Did not know how to get involved	15%▲	27%▲	2%▼
Not interested in current opportunities	13%▼	12%▼	32%▲
Health concerns not related to COVID-19	12%	15%	22%
Not asked to contribute in a way that is meaningful to me	15%	15%	8%
Dissatisfied with experience as a volunteer	8%	6%	4%

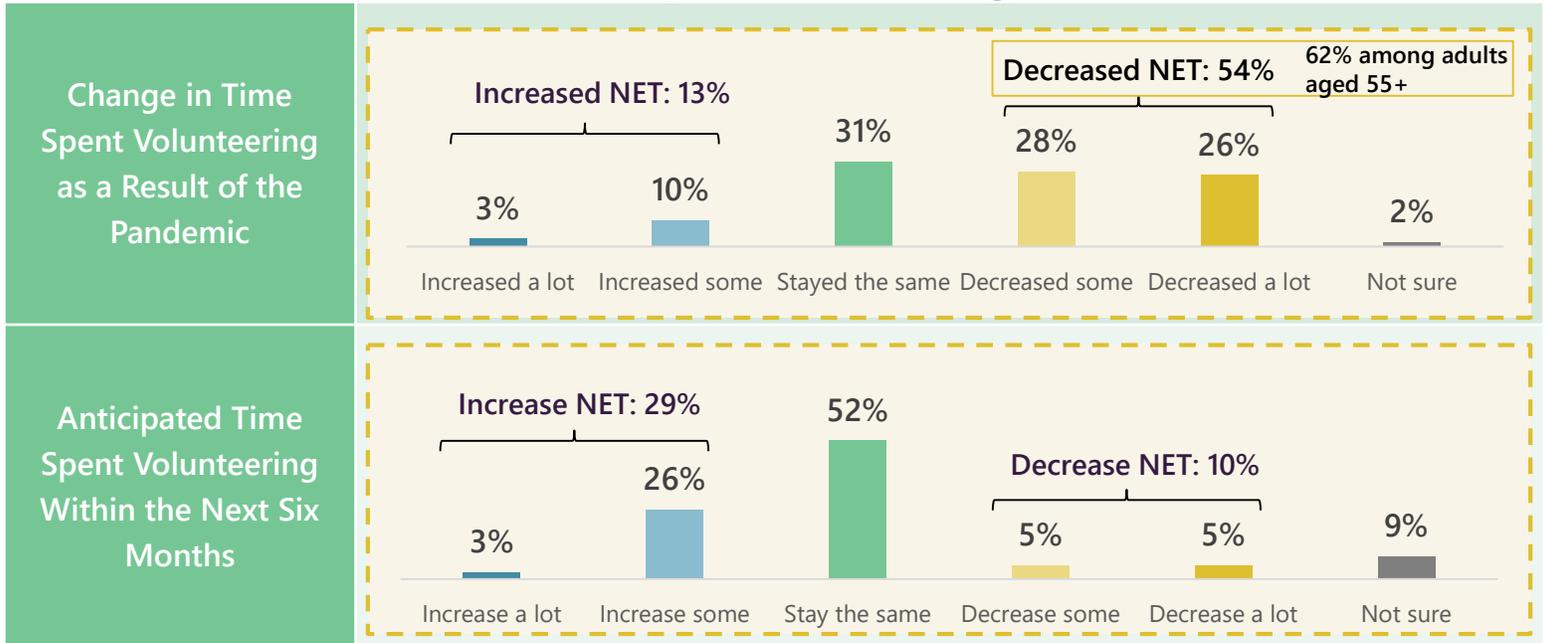
Q16: What are the main challenges / barriers you face that prevent you from volunteering / volunteering more often? Base: All respondents, n=802.

# Pandemic Impacts on Volunteerism

# Volunteerism and the Pandemic

Over half of those who volunteered within the past 5 years say they decreased the amount of time they spent volunteering as a result of the pandemic. This proportion is highest among older adults. However, three in ten plan to increase the amount of time they spend volunteering within the next six months.

## Time Spent Volunteering



### Top Reasons for Anticipated Increase in Volunteerism

1. More events / opportunities happening
2. COVID restrictions relaxed
3. More time available
4. To help / give back / get involved

As Covid improves so will other opportunities to get involved.

This survey reminded me that volunteering is a great thing that I never do anymore. I would like that to change.

The pandemic kept me away from the general public quite a bit to keep myself and my family safe. I am vaccinated and feeling more comfortable going out into the public, so volunteering will likely increase

### Top Reasons for Anticipated Decrease in Volunteerism

1. COVID-19
2. Health issues
3. Aging / getting older
4. Busy / lack of time

I choose to research more information regarding Covid and for now, I'll do whatever I can to reduce my chance of contracting the virus.

I'm getting old and cranky along with being disappointed at how little remains local or how little it effects the ongoing project or activity.

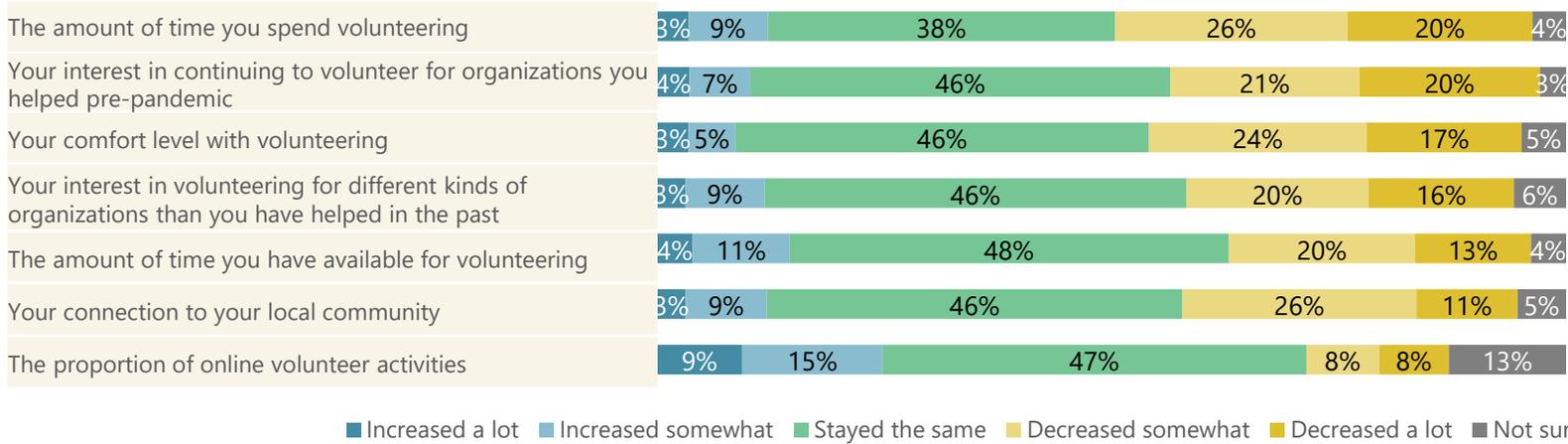
I work out of town during the week and return home on the weekends to run errands grocery shopping etc. No real time to volunteer.

Q10. As a result of the pandemic, would you say the amount of time you have spent volunteering has... Base: Respondents with volunteer experience since 2018, n=549. Q12. Within the next 6 months, do you anticipate the amount of time you spend volunteering to... Base: Respondents with volunteer experience, n=714. Q13. Why do you anticipate the amount of time you spend volunteering to increase / decrease? (open-ended response) Base: Respondents who anticipate change in volunteerism, n=74-205.

# Pandemic Impacts on Volunteerism in Saskatchewan

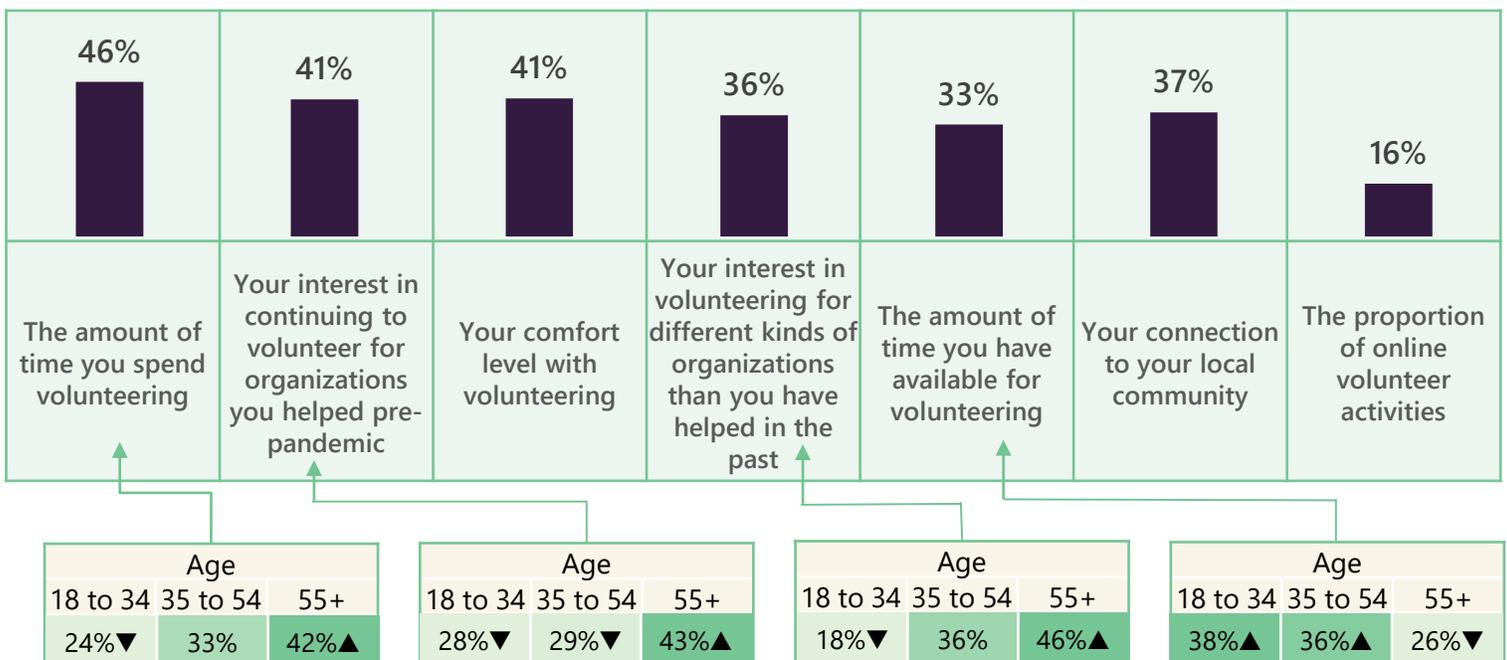
Data suggests the pandemic had a significant impact on volunteerism in the province. Four in ten report decreased comfort level with volunteering and similar proportions saying they have / spend less time volunteering. Residents also report the pandemic has weakened community connections and diminished interest in volunteerism. Few report an increase in volunteer behaviours as a results of the pandemic; however, some report an increase in online volunteer activities.

## Impacts on Volunteerism



- Older adults are most likely to report diminished interests in volunteering as a result of the pandemic. Additionally, they are most likely to report a reduction in the amount of time they spend volunteering.
- Young adults report a notable decrease in the amount of time available for volunteering.

### % Decrease NET



Q17: How would you say the COVID-19 pandemic impacted each of the following? Base: All respondents excl. "Not applicable", n=312-746.

# Volunteer Priorities

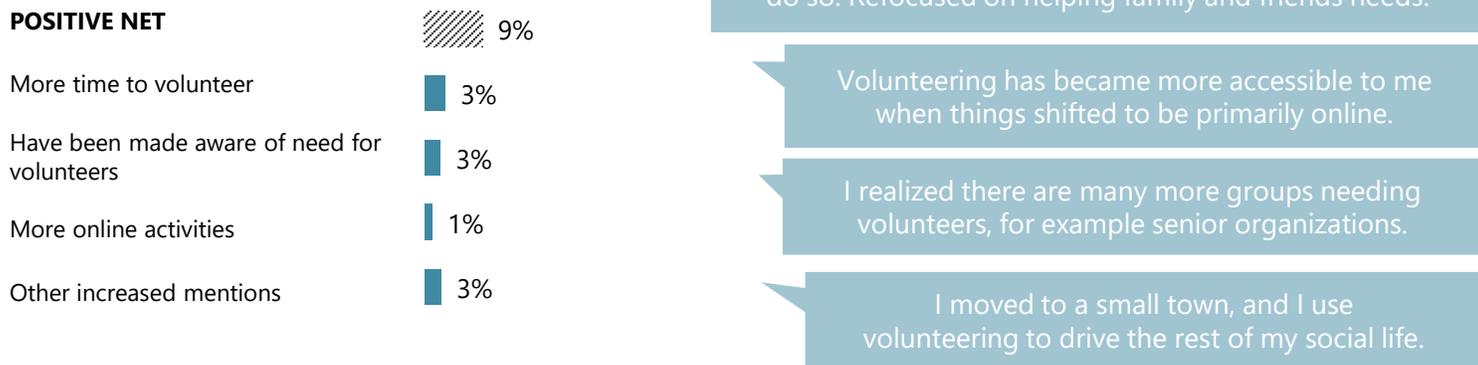
While some say they have more time to volunteer and increased awareness of the need for volunteers in society, health concerns, lack of opportunities and a shifting focus toward family have affected the amount of time spent volunteering.

## Pandemic Impacts on Volunteerism Priorities

### NEGATIVE NET



### POSITIVE NET



### NO CHANGE



It hasn't changed much, I'll do as much as I can for my community not just because of covid but because of other obvious reasons to me. There was already a pandemic in my community, which is drugs and alcohol and the lack of care for people with mental issues. Miḡwèṭch 🙏

Q20: In what ways has the pandemic changed your priorities as they relate to the time you spend volunteering and the types of activities you can / will perform? (open-ended response) Base: All respondents, n=802.

# Encouraging Volunteer Engagement During the Pandemic

Half say the organizations they volunteer with did not do anything differently to keep them engaged during the pandemic. Almost one quarter say increased safety protocols were implemented to encourage volunteerism and a similar proportion report more online / virtual volunteer opportunities.

## Organizational Actions to Encourage Volunteerism During the Pandemic

		Volunteer Group	
		Current	Pre-pandemic*
They haven't done anything differently	49%	34%▼	60%▲
Increased safety protocols	24%	32%▲	17%▼
Offered more online / virtual volunteer opportunities	23%	36%▲	14%▼
Increased flexibility (varying hours / times of day)	13%	16%	10%
Fewer hours / less commitment	12%	16%	9%
Changed / restructured volunteer roles	9%	12%▲	8%▼
Increased the frequency of communications	6%	7%	6%
Increased incentives	6%	5%	7%
Something else	4%	3%	4%

\*Pre-pandemic volunteers are those who volunteered leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, but became inactive during the pandemic.

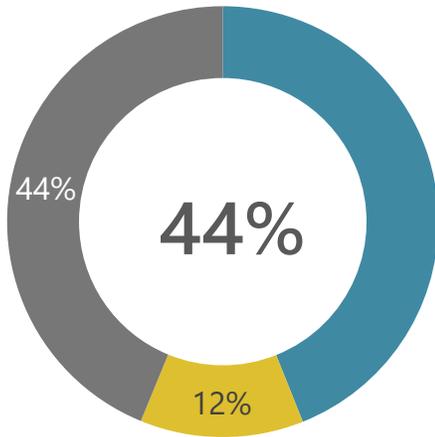
q21. What, if anything, have the organizations that you volunteer with done differently to keep you engaged during the pandemic and / or to encourage you to return to volunteer activities? Base: All respondents excl. "non-volunteers", n=776.

# Looking Ahead – Volunteerism in Saskatchewan

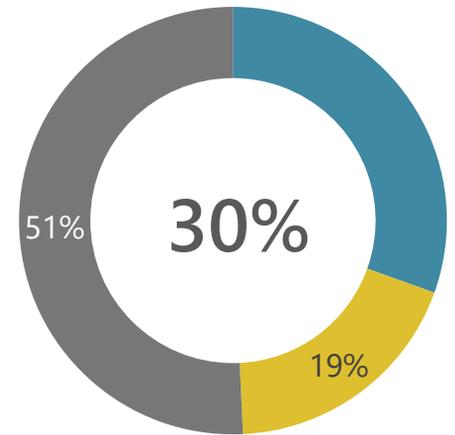
Volunteers express uncertainty about returning to pre-pandemic activities. While just under half say they are likely to return to organizations they have helped with in the past, a similar proportion say they are unsure. However, many say they are likely to seek out new opportunities as the pandemic subsides.

## Anticipated Changes as Pandemic Subsides

Return to Organizations  
Volunteered With in the Past



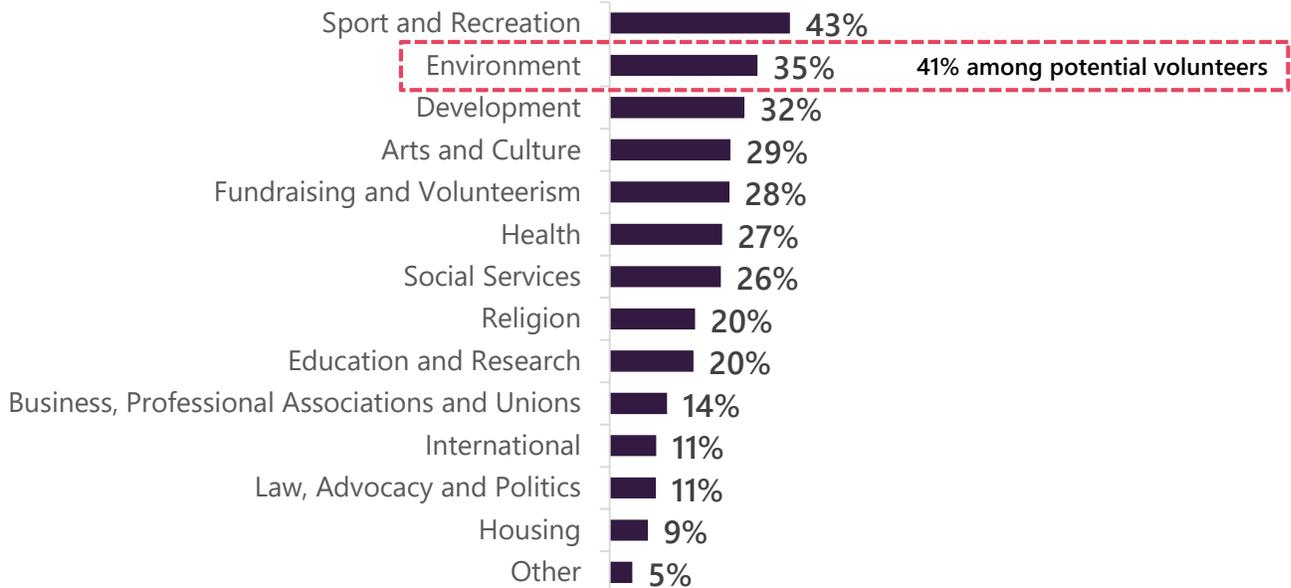
Seek Out New Volunteering  
Opportunities and Activities



Q18: *As the pandemic subsides do you think you will...* Base: All respondents excluding "Non-volunteers" n=669-735.

Volunteers in the province have a range of interests when it comes to future opportunities. While sport and recreation tops the list, organizations that focus on areas of lesser interest such as housing, law, advocacy, politics and international affairs may need to strategize to attract volunteers in the future.

### Volunteer Areas of Interest

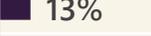
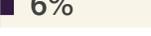


Q19: *Which of the following sectors would you be likely to volunteer with in the future?* Base: All respondents excl. "non-volunteer", n=752.

# Communication Preferences

Word of mouth is the most preferred source of information about volunteer opportunities, followed by social media.

## Preferred Information Sources About Volunteer Opportunities

		Age		
		18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Word of mouth	 67%	56%▼	68%▲	75%▲
Social media	 58%	64%▲	60%▲	50%▼
Posters / billboard ads	 27%	26%	27%	26%
Volunteer websites*	 21%	32%▲	18%▼	15%▼
Web-based ads	 13%	16%	13%	12%
Another way	 6%	2%	9%	7%

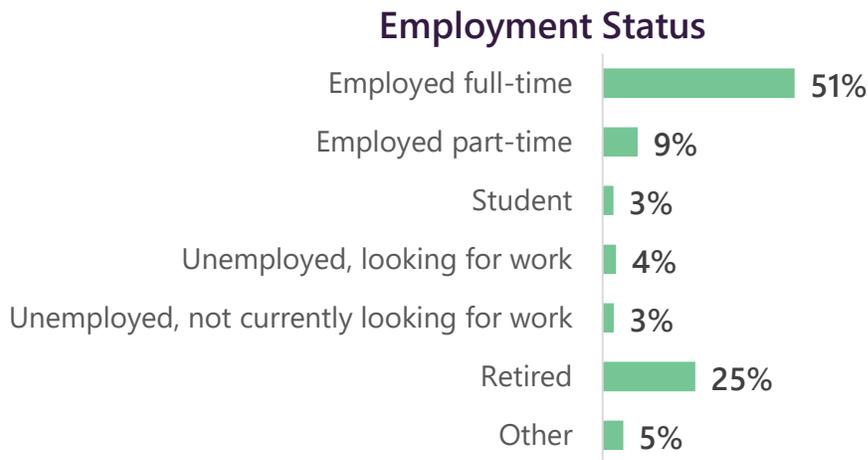
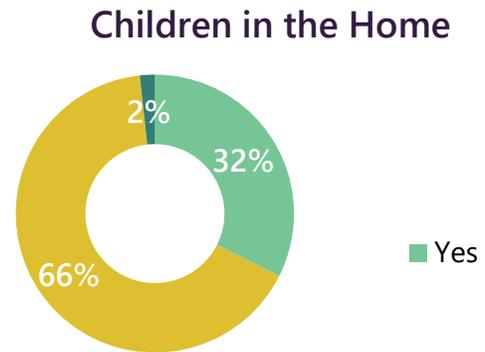
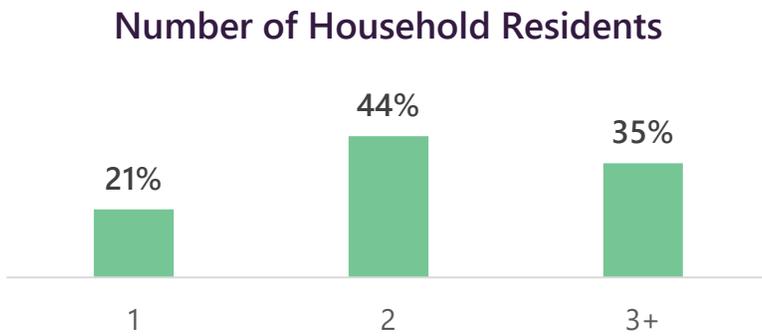
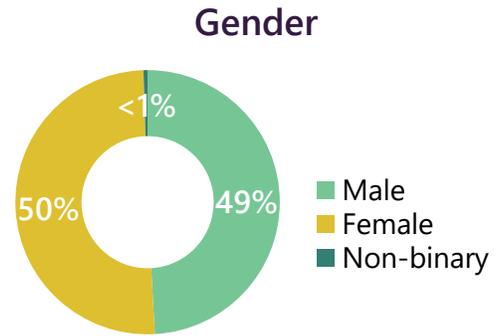
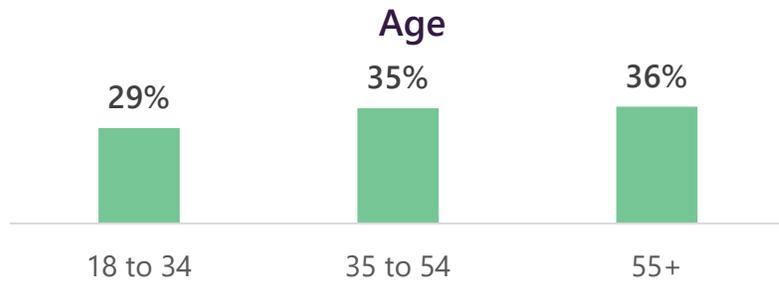
\*E.g., Volunteer Canada, Volunteer Connector, United Way, etc.

- Older generations tend to prefer learning about volunteer opportunities through word of mouth whereas young adults have a preference for social media and are more open to digital sources.

Q22: How do you prefer to hear about volunteer opportunities in your area? Base: All respondents currently or interested in volunteering, n=776.

# Respondent Profile

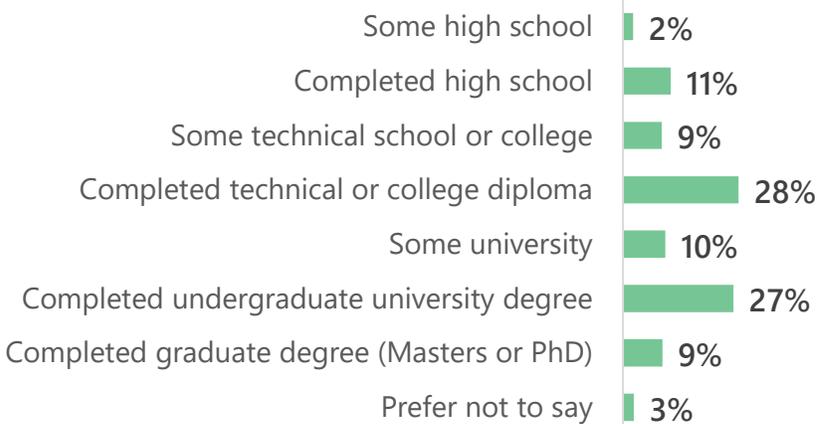
# Respondent Profile



### Self-Identified Demographics

Indigenous persons	8%
New to Canada (past 5 years)	2%

### Education



### Household Income

