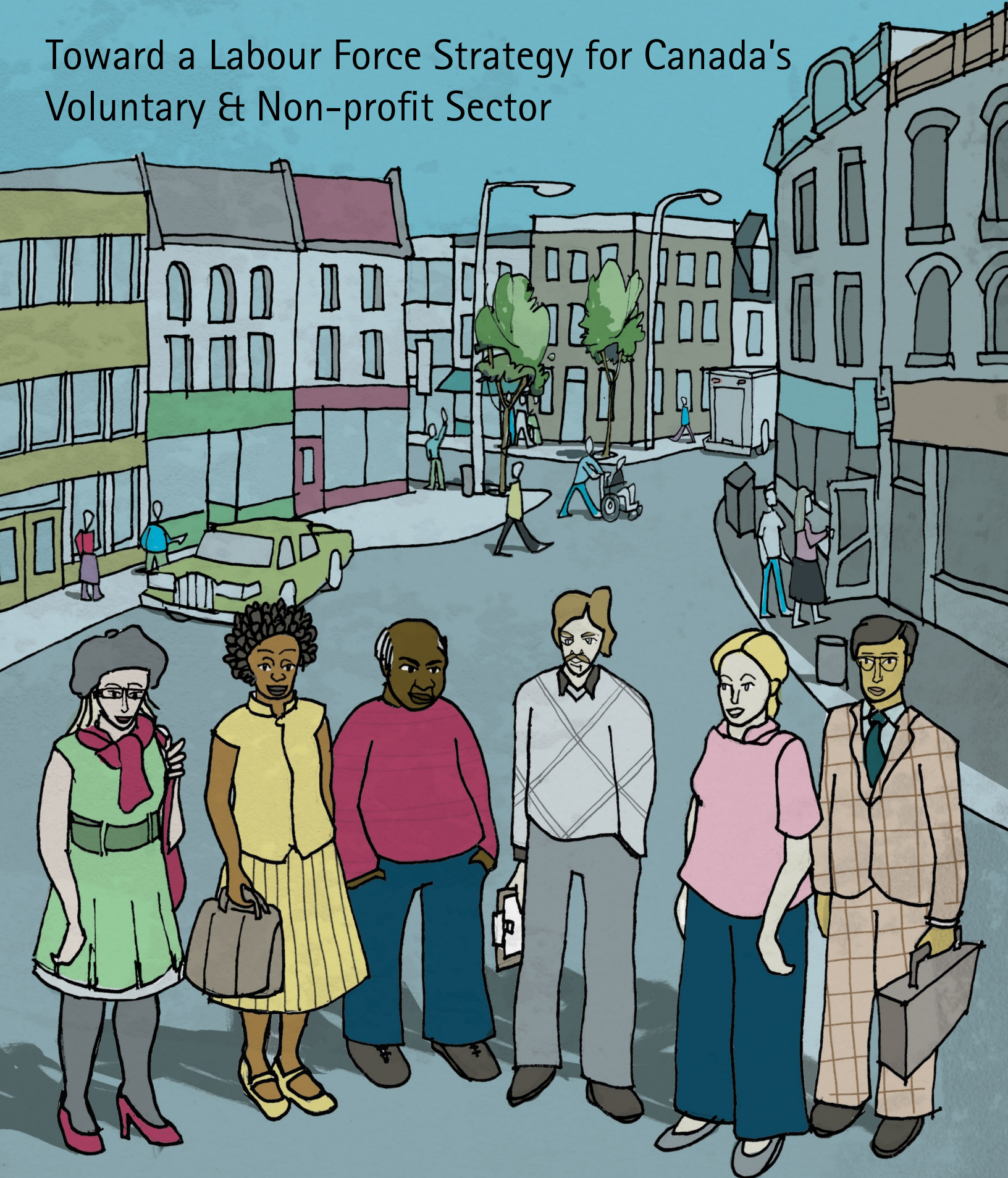


Toward a Labour Force Strategy for Canada's Voluntary & Non-profit Sector



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About the HR Council

The HR Council for the Voluntary & Non-profit Sector (HR Council) works with organizations, educators, labour and government to identify and address issues related to paid employment in the voluntary and non-profit sector.

Our priorities are to:

- Build and share knowledge
- Promote good HR practices
- Foster training and learning opportunities
- Provide leadership on HR issues
- Engage voluntary and non-profit organizations in our work



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Executive Summary

The surveys are integral to the HR Council's Labour Force Study, a comprehensive look at paid employment leading to a first-ever labour force strategy for the sector.

This second report (in a three-part series) released by the HR Council for the Voluntary & Non-profit Sector (HR Council) contains the key findings from Canada-wide Surveys of Employers and Employees. The Survey of Employers provides empirical evidence about the characteristics of organizations, their recruitment and retention practices and challenges, as well as their skills needs. The Survey of Employees provides new statistical information about the demographic characteristics of the people who work in the sector and examines some key aspects of the work they do. It also provides information about what employees like and don't like about their jobs and about their plans and expectations for the future.

These two surveys are an integral part of the HR Council's Labour Force Study, a comprehensive look at paid employment in the sector leading to a first-ever labour force strategy for the sector. The goal of a labour force strategy is to make sure that the sector has access to the people and skills it needs. The new information from this Labour Force Study will shape strategies to attract, develop, engage and retain appropriately qualified people to work in the sector.

The scope of the surveys corresponds to the HR Council's Labour Force Study.¹ The Study and the surveys cover most of the "core non-profit sector" as it is defined in Statistics Canada's Satellite Account of Nonprofit Institutions and Volunteering,² except that they do not include organizations in the category "professional associations, trade unions and cooperatives." Quasi-government organizations (such as hospitals, colleges and universities) are beyond the scope.

¹ The first report from the HR Council's Labour Force Study, "Toward a Labour Force Strategy for Canada's Voluntary & Non-profit Sector," provides more information about defining and classifying the sector. The report is available online at www.hrcouncil.ca.

² Statistics Canada (2007). Satellite Account of Nonprofit Institutions and Volunteering. Ottawa: Minister of Industry. Statistics Canada catalogue no. 13-015-XIE2007000. <http://www.statcan.ca/cgi-bin/downpub/listpub.cgi?catno=13-015-XIE2007000>

The HR Council commissioned Ipsos Reid to conduct the surveys between November 2007 and January 2008. Dr. Adam Lodzinski and Associates carried out the primary analysis of the survey findings. The HR Council's Labour Force Study is guided by a Steering Committee whose members come from stakeholder organizations across the country.

About the Canada-wide surveys of sector employers and employees

The intent of both the surveys is to provide an overall, national picture of employment in the sector (full-time, part-time, permanent or temporary) and compare across:¹

- Three size categories (small organizations with less than 10 employees; medium-sized organizations with 10 to 99 employees; and, large organizations with 100 or more employees)
- Seven geographic regions (Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba/Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories/Nunavut/Yukon²)
- Five areas of activity (Sports/Recreation, Health/Social Services, Development/Housing, Religion, Other types³)⁴

A weighted sample of 1 300 employers was drawn from a list of 34 000 voluntary and non-profit organizations. Individuals with responsibility for human resources completed the survey on behalf of these organizations either online or in a telephone interview.

The Survey of Employees covered individuals who are currently employed for pay by a non-profit organization, including full-time and part-time,

permanent and temporary workers at all levels within an organization. A total of 2 873 respondents completed online surveys yielding a weighted sample of 1 500.

Key findings from the Survey of Employers

Characteristics of organizations

- More than half of voluntary and non-profit organizations have existed for 28 years or more.
- In 60% of organizations, the responsibility for human resources management is one part of one person's job (Executive Director, CEO or senior manager) as opposed to a dedicated staff person with sole responsibility for human resources.
- Sector organizations employ a median of five people (including all full-time and part-time staff).
- More than one-third of small organizations do not offer any employee benefits. In contrast, more than 92% of large organizations provide one or both of life/disability insurance and a drug plan.

Recruitment and retention

- Both recruitment and retention present some degree of challenge; however, many more organizations report difficulty in recruitment than retention.
- Nearly half of employers reporting recruitment activity in the last 12 months say it was "difficult" or "very difficult" for their organization to find qualified people.

1 Notable differences in survey responses based on organization size, region or area of activity are presented in the full report. However, given the size of the survey sample there is a limit to how far the data can be broken down and still be reliable and valid. Comparisons between groups should be interpreted with caution when the number of cases (n) is small. It is also important to note that the sample sizes for these surveys do not generally support the analysis of differences within the subgroups.

2 The total number of employers from the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut combined is 16. This number is too small to be analyzed meaningfully. Results from this region are for descriptive purposes only and should not be viewed as reliable findings – either on their own or in comparison with other regions.

3 The "Other" category is made up of the following areas of activity: Arts and Culture; Education and Research; Environment; Grant-making and Voluntarism Promotion; Law, Advocacy and Politics; International; and uncategorized non-profit activity.

4 Quasi-government organizations (such as hospitals, colleges and universities), and organizations in the category "professional associations, trade unions and cooperatives" are beyond the scope of the HR Council's Labour Force Study and the surveys.

- When they are not able to find a qualified candidate, one-third of employers distribute the responsibilities among a number of existing staff.
- “Did not do anything” is the most common response to the question, “What did your organization do in the last 12 months to make your workplace more attractive?”

Skills needs

- Asked about the extent to which employees’ generic skills meet their organization’s needs, employers give high ratings for literacy and numeracy, as well as communication and the ability to work in teams. Generic skills most often identified as meeting an organization’s needs only “partly” or “not at all” are computer skills and time management skills.
- Employers indicate that their organization’s needs for several specific kinds of skills are mostly or fully met. These areas include: client service, working with a diverse population, management of paid staff, working in partnerships with other organizations, leadership, procurement and purchasing and management of volunteers. Employers also identify certain areas in which employees’ specialized skills meet their needs only “partly” or “not at all” (e.g., legal knowledge, marketing, research, fundraising/resource development).

Key findings from the Survey of Employees

Characteristics of employees and their jobs

- 76.4% of employees are female and 23.6% are male.
- Employees range in age from 19 to 76, with the mean age being 43.4.
- Nearly all employees have completed high school and over 70% of employees have post-secondary education.
- 89% of employees identify themselves as white/Caucasian.
- More than half (53.5%) have been with their current employer over five years and almost a third (29.6%) ten or more years.
- 80.8% of employees hold full-time¹ positions and 19.2% hold part-time positions.
- More than 1 in 5 full-time employees (22.6%) report that they hold more than one paid job (including self-employment). Not surprisingly, among part-time employees the percentage is considerably higher: 46.9% of part-time employees hold more than one job.
- Overall, 85.7% of employees are in permanent positions² and 14.3% are in temporary positions.
- 20.9% of employees are members of a union or covered by a collective agreement.
- 95.7% of employees feel either “somewhat” (30.8%) or “very committed” (64.9%) to their organization. Similarly, when asked about the value they place on working for a cause, employees report a high degree of attachment to their cause.

1 The definition of “full-time” is working 30 hours or more per week, either on-site or off-site.

2 The definition of “permanent” is that there is no set end date to the employment.

Job satisfaction

- Employees' ratings of overall job satisfaction are very positive.
- Job satisfaction varies for specific aspects of work. Employees identify some areas of dissatisfaction – specifically around compensation (for overtime, retirement savings options, pay, and benefits) as well as feedback and evaluation, and opportunities for advancement and career development and training.

Skills needs

- The vast majority (96.2%) of employees indicate that they believe their skills meet their organization's needs either “fully” (57.8%) or “mostly” (38.5%).
- The survey asked employees about the extent to which they believe the specific skills they actually use meet the requirements of their current job. More commonly used skills are typically rated higher (e.g., client services, leadership, monitoring and evaluation). However, strategic planning skills, while used by a significant number of employees (44.1%), are deemed to meet job requirements only “partly” or “not at all” by nearly one in five.

Future plans

- One quarter (24.6%) of employees indicate they are currently looking for a new job and the most frequent reason they give is dissatisfaction with salary.

Next steps

The survey findings contained in this report will provide the foundation for developing strategic recommendations. Input from sector stakeholders will strengthen the recommendations and the labour force strategy for the voluntary and non-profit sector. The third and final report from the HR Council's Labour Force Study, featuring these recommendations, will be released in March 2009.

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