

Highlights from London's Voluntary Sector Employment and Training Needs Study

Pillar - Voluntary Sector Network invited organizations in London's voluntary sector (charitable and non-profit sector) to complete a lengthy questionnaire in regards to their organization's human resource needs.

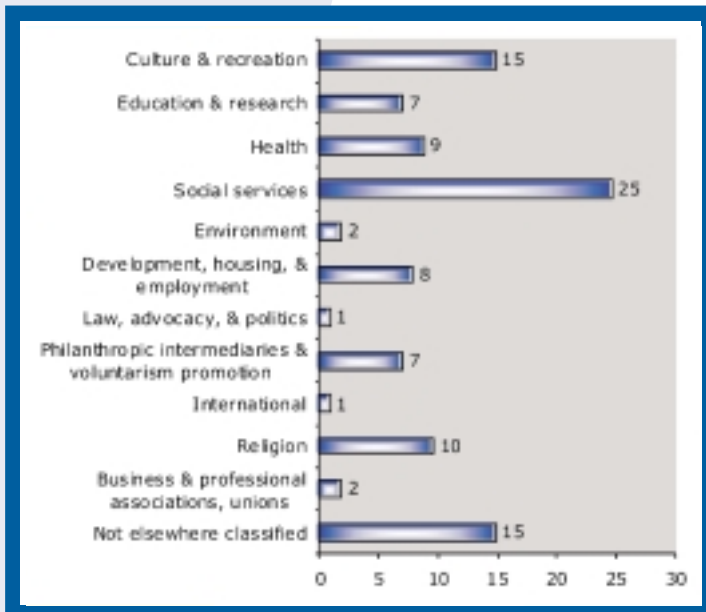
The objectives of Pillar's study were:

1. To develop a profile of the voluntary sector workforce
2. To identify labour force needs, anticipated shortages and changes in the workforce
3. To identify issues and challenges being faced by the voluntary sector
4. To document and prioritize required skill sets and training needs
5. To document the benefits and non-monetary rewards of working in the sector
6. To document optimal strategies and best practices for recruiting, hiring and retaining volunteers and employees

Approximately 10% of London's voluntary sector organizations completed the questionnaire, however not all respondents completed the entire questionnaire. The final report combines results with focus group responses and compares results to other studies conducted across Canada.

Profile

Classification of London voluntary sector organizations



London profiling results show:

- Most London organizations were formed and/or incorporated approximately 20 years ago
- 40% of organizations are mandated to serve the City of London including neighbouring counties and rural municipalities
- Almost half of all respondents indicated their organization was an 'incorporated non-profit' organization

Services Rendered Demand & Capacity

Most organizations forecasted an increase in the number of recipients served and/or services performed in 2003 & 2004.

More than 1 in 6 London voluntary sector organizations indicated they were unable to meet service demands in 2003 and another 25% of organizations projected they would be unable to meet service demands in 2004.

Overall, results show insufficient funds (58%) and a shortage of volunteers (42%) are the two main reasons why organizations are unable to meet current service demands.

Respondents identified three main challenges which would inhibit their ability to meet future service demands:

- Reduced support and funding from the government and philanthropic organizations (55%)
- A shift in funding towards specific projects rather than for core operations/services (49%)
- A decrease in funds from sources other than the government and philanthropic organizations (43%)

Without sufficient funding and dedicated volunteers, the sustainability and quality of service provided by London voluntary sector organizations may be in jeopardy.

Volunteers

Whether volunteers make up the entire organization or work together with employees of an organization, they are seen as invaluable by all respondents.

Survey results revealed:

- 92% of organizations have volunteers, other than board members, who volunteered with their organization in the last 12 months
- Organizations have a range in the number of volunteers from 1-5, to more than 500 who donated between 4 to 66 hours per year depending on the position held
- On average, 253 individuals volunteer per organization, however 1/2 of the organizations had more than 60 volunteers and another 1/2 had fewer than 60 volunteers

Most volunteers performed the following activities:

- Providing information
- Canvassing, campaigning and fundraising
- Organizing or supervising events
- Providing administrative support

Analysis reveals it would take 5 to 6 full-time employees per organization to replace the work of volunteers. Pillar calculated the economic contribution of London's volunteers to be over \$303 million annually.

75% of organizations indicated they have someone who is specifically responsible for coordinating and managing volunteers. Further research reveals that in most cases volunteer management becomes part of everyone's job instead of the sole responsibility of one person.

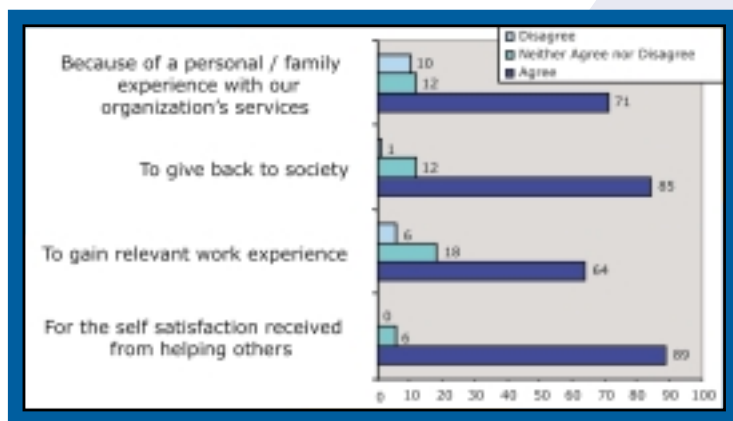
Even with an employee or volunteer assigned to manage volunteers:

- 49% of respondents indicated there were not enough funds and resources to effectively organize volunteer work
- 45% of respondents did not feel there was sufficient time to effectively organize volunteer work

Volunteer Challenges

- 1/3 of organizations reported that there was a shortage of skilled volunteers with appropriate education, experience and attitude
- The shortage of 'quality' volunteers and the increasing service demands have forced dedicated existing volunteers to contribute a higher number of hours leading to 'volunteer burnout'
- Respondents indicated finding leadership volunteers and managing high school volunteers continues to be a challenge in their organization

According to respondents, individuals volunteer for the following reasons...



Several suggestions for having an effective volunteer base arose from Pillar's focus groups including:

- Breaking large volunteer roles into smaller ones to encourage volunteers to take on leadership positions
- Implementing a 'virtual volunteering' program to accommodate more volunteers
- Recruiting a volunteer coordinator to match volunteers with positions, create clear job descriptions, actively recruit volunteers, and manage staff-volunteer relations
- Ensuring effective communication with volunteers
- Recognizing contributions of volunteers
- Providing training and support to volunteers

Suggestions for recruiting volunteers include:

- Posting volunteer opportunities on Pillar's website www.pillarv.com
- Using existing volunteers to identify other volunteers
- Targeting students
- Offering training and workshops
- Advertising in local media

Boards of Directors

Boards of Directors are an integral part of any voluntary sector organization.

- The average number of board members in London is 11.7 with a minimum required number of 9 and a maximum of 14 per organization
- London directors generally serve 3-4 years on a board
- Respondents indicated the skills of fundraising and revenue generation were lacking on their board
- London respondents noted there was a lack of representation on their board from some sectors of society

Employees

Many individuals tend to forget that the voluntary sector is composed of dedicated, compassionate employees in addition to volunteers.

- Approximately 3/4 of organizations surveyed employ paid staff
- The average number of employees per organization in London is 33 with 1/2 of the organizations employing more than 8 people and another 1/2 employing fewer than 8 people
- Most organizations employ 1-5 employees followed by 6-10 individuals

Contract employment in the voluntary sector is expected to rise more than 2% in 2004.

More than 1 in 7 people employed in London's voluntary sector are on contract; 29% work 'other' arrangements. Permanent positions are expected to decrease by almost 11% in 2004. The lack of permanent positions can lead many individuals to seek more secure positions elsewhere.

Full-Time vs. Part-Time Positions

- Full-time positions were forecasted to increase to 72% in 2004
- Part-time positions were forecasted to decrease to 28% in 2004
- Senior managers, clerical/administrative support, and professional staff are all forecasted to have higher part-time employment than full-time in 2004

Analysis reveals full-time contract positions are increasing due to the shift towards project specific funding rather than core funding.

Gender

- London study results reveal there are more females than males working in London's voluntary sector (65% female vs. 35% male)

Although a higher percentage of females work in the voluntary sector, females are more likely to work as clerical/administrative staff (90% female vs. 10% male) than as senior managers (58% female vs. 42% male)

Workforce Profile

- 48% of employees have a college certificate/diploma, and another 23% have a university degree
- Most employees in London's voluntary sector are aged 26-45 44% of employees are 35 or under
- Most senior managers are older than the average worker and are in the 36-55 age category
- London voluntary sector employees generally have between 1-5 years of work experience (28.4%), followed by more than 15 years of work experience (27.8%)

Although London voluntary sector organizations employ educated young individuals able to succeed those who retire, the challenge lies in retaining these individuals given the competition from the public and private sectors.

Shortage, Retention and Recruitment

Having a shortage of employees, facing challenges recruiting individuals, and overcoming obstacles in retaining employees have become an accepted way of doing business for voluntary sector organizations. Operating with fewer staff than needed, however, creates challenges for all existing employees that can lead to additional stress and other retention challenges.

- Approximately 36% of organizations indicated they have, or expect to have, vacancies for paid staff positions within the next 12 months
- Most organizations have a staff shortage of 1-2 employees. This result was consistent with the recruitment and retention sections as respondents indicated they would be hiring 1-2 individuals this year, and had 1-2 individuals leave their organization last year
- A shortage of even 1 employee can translate into over 13% of one's employee base given the small size of most voluntary sector organizations

Diversity

Employment vs. Volunteering for Diverse Categories

(Percent of organizations with paid staff or volunteers with at least one individual from the diverse category listed.)

Diverse Category	Volunteer	Employees
Newcomers	32%	16%
Visible Minorities	37%	19%
Aboriginals	9%	2%
Physical Disabilities	30%	18%
Developmental Disabilities	13%	6%
Consumers of Mental Health	12%	4.4%

- Organizations are more likely to have a greater level of diversity amongst their volunteer base than amongst their paid staff.
- Further analysis reveals that most organizations had volunteers who were similar to the individuals served.

Job Quality

Attracting vibrant individuals such as those working in London's voluntary sector is a challenge given the low salaries, lack of benefits, and strenuous working conditions.

Like with volunteering, most people work in London's voluntary sector for the self satisfaction received from helping others (84%) and to give back to society (80%).

Salaries

Improving salaries was one of the key ways respondents identified for alleviating retention challenges.

- Senior management salaries range from \$15,000 to \$114,999 with the median being in the \$55,000 - \$64,999 range
- Management employees are paid \$35,000 to \$54,999
- Senior administrative and clerical/administrative support salaries range from \$25,000 - \$34,999
- Professionals are in the \$25,000 - \$44,999 range
- Intermediate/technical staff are paid in the \$25,000 - \$34,999 range

Overall, most London voluntary sector full-time paid staff are paid \$25,000 - \$34,999 followed by the \$35,000 - \$44,999 category.

The average salary for full-time paid staff according to Statistics Canada was \$43,811 for the City of London

Benefits

Respondents indicated their organization could eliminate/alleviate their retention challenge by improving benefits.

- Mileage, personal health care days (sick days), and lieu time are the most common benefits offered to paid staff
- Flex time (or lieu time) was offered by over 34% of organizations employing paid staff making it one of the more common benefits offered
- Flex time and working from home can provide flexibility for people trying to juggle a career and family responsibilities leading to a positive work/life balance

Overtime

- London study results revealed that most employees are paid to work between 30 to 39 hours per week. The median figure for most occupational categories was 37.5 hours per week
- Most employees are compensated for overtime hours through compensatory time off (i.e., flex time)

Training

As noted by respondents, training staff is an important way to value the contribution made by an employee and to enhance the organization with new skills.

- 36% of organizations employing paid staff had at least one employee engage in training in the last 12 months
- Of organizations engaging in training, there were an average of 25 employees per organization that received training with a median figure of 5
- Common areas of training include: professional and personal development, group decision making or challenge-solving, and team-building leadership communication
- Training is primarily funded by the organization's core operations budget, however approximately 1 in 10 employees paid a portion of the training

The challenges organizations face training staff include:

- The high cost of training
- The lack of sufficient funds for training
- The inability to pay for the cost to replace staff who are undergoing training
- The time for staff to participate in training

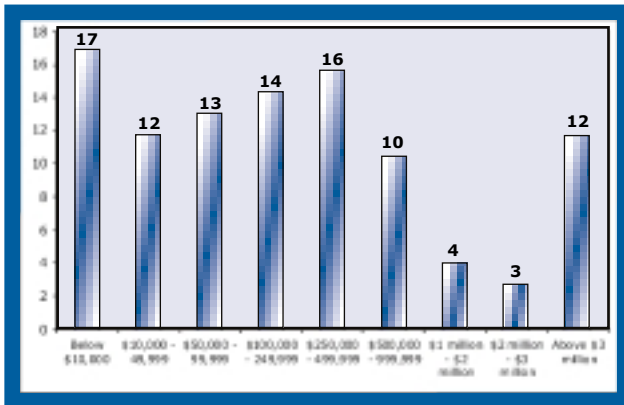
Technology

Approximately 1/2 of all respondents were surviving without simple technological innovations such as electronic mail, voicemail, and computer programs.

Funding was found to be the main challenge faced by over 1/2 of respondents when implementing technology. Other challenges when implementing technology include: underdeveloped skills of staff and volunteers, and a lack of support from board members in identifying technology as a priority.

Revenue and Expenditures

Operating Budget



- 17% of organizations completing the questionnaire had an operating budget below \$10,000
- Almost 3/4 of respondents (72%) had an operating budget of less than \$500,000
- Government, non-donated revenue, individuals, and membership dues make up the largest contributions to revenue

Expenditures

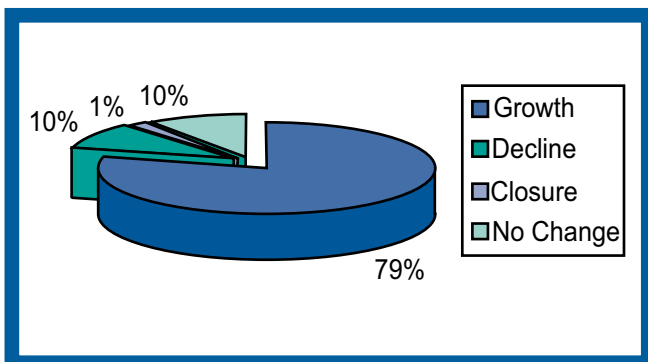
- Salaries and wages make up more than 1/2 of London voluntary sector expenditures
- Program and service delivery is the next largest expenditure making up 1/3 of expenses
- After these expenditures, organizations are left with few funding dollars for crucial costs such as professional development/training, fundraising, and volunteer expenditures

Changes in funding patterns toward short-term project funding has forced organizations to spend their time preparing grant proposals as insecurity looms amongst employees, volunteers, and clients.

The need for long-term, stable funding to cover operational costs has been emphasized by many voluntary sector respondents.

Sustainability

The majority of respondents indicated their organization would grow overall in the next five years, followed by decline, no change and closure.



Respondents stated that the following factors will contribute to their organization's growth in the next five years:

- Increasing skills to respond to the change in fundraising/resource generation (77%)
- Support from the government and other organizations (64%)
- Having a sufficient supply of volunteers (62%)
- Having a sufficient supply of paid staff (43%)

58% of Pillar respondents indicated that their organization faces competition for funding, and less than 1/2 indicated their organization has ongoing stable funding. Only 26% of organizations reported they were able to accept services downloaded by the government.

Over 18% of respondents indicated their organization did not have a strategic plan updated in the last 12 months.

Most organizations indicated the following tactics were important strategies for developing and strengthening London's voluntary sector:

- Improving networks
- Building partnerships
- Conducting training workshops and seminars
- Creating awards ceremonies
- Having job fairs

Respondents indicated the following resources and information would be important to their organization:

- Networking opportunities
- Media and publicity for promoting voluntary organizations in the London area
- Information on local training resources
- Seminars on new information, issues and trends in the voluntary sector

London study results found funding challenges prevent many organizations from recruiting individuals who are looking for secure employment opportunities with adequate compensation and benefits. The shortage of quality volunteers and the funds to maintain volunteers in an organization are also lacking amongst London's voluntary sector. This can affect an organization's ability to meet service demands. Overall, the self satisfaction from helping others, either as a volunteer or employee in a voluntary sector organization, is what motivates many individuals to contribute to this sector.

This communiqué has been compiled by Pillar - Voluntary Sector Network. Project funding has been provided by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Pillar - Voluntary Sector Network
 251 Dundas Street
 London, Ontario N6A 6H9
 (519) 433-7876 www.pillarv.com
 April 2004

