

DONORS TO ARTS AND CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS IN CANADA

NEW REPORT ANALYZES DONORS AND DONATIONS IN 2000 AND CHANGES SINCE 1997

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A new report prepared by Hill Strategies Research Inc. shows that 451,000 Canadians 15 years of age or older made direct financial donations worth about \$47.9 million to arts and culture organizations in 2000. The 451,000 arts and culture donors represent 2.4% of donors to all types of non-profit organizations and 1.8% of the Canadian population 15 years of age or older. The 451,000 arts and culture donors in 2000 represent a 21% decrease over the estimated 571,000 donors in 1997.

The \$47.9 million in donations to arts and culture organizations in 2000 represents 1.0% of financial donations to all types of non-profit organizations in Canada. Despite the decrease in the number of arts and culture donors between 1997 and 2000, the value of donations to arts and culture organizations increased significantly, from \$39.4 million in 1997 to \$47.9 million in 2000. This increase – 22% – is double the rate of increase in the value of donations to any type of non-profit organization (11%).

Thanks to the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Ontario Arts Council, the full report is available free of charge at the websites of these organizations (<http://www.culturescope.ca>, <http://www.canadacouncil.ca/artsinfo/research> and <http://www.arts.on.ca>) as well as Hill Strategies Research Inc.'s website (<http://www.hillstrategies.com/resources.html>). The report, the fifth in a series of statistical publications on the arts by Hill Strategies Research Inc., is based on custom tabulations from Statistics Canada's 1997 and 2000 National Surveys of Giving, Volunteering and Participating.

The number of donors and the value of donations place the arts and culture sector low on a ranking of donors and donations by type of non-profit organization. However, the average donation per arts and culture donor is fairly high compared to average donations to other types of non-profit organizations. In fact, the average donation per arts and culture donor increased from \$69 in 1997 to \$106 in 2000. The most generous quarter of arts and culture donors contributed three quarters of the total donations to arts and culture organizations in 2000. This reliance on relatively few donors could be a source of instability for arts and culture organizations in the future if some larger donors decide to stop contributing to arts and culture organizations.

The number of donors to arts and culture organizations – 451,000 – is less than half of an estimate of the number of Canadians who attend more than 10 arts performances, festivals and public art gallery exhibitions in a year. These figures appear to show that there is significant room for donor development in the arts and culture. With arts and culture organizations receiving reasonably high average donations, it appears that, for the sector as a whole, a greater focus should be placed on developing new donors than on increasing donations from current donors. Of course, each individual organization in the sector will have to assess its own situation and donor base.

Donor development work in the arts and culture can have many obstacles. Significant education work may be needed to dispel prevalent myths, including the perception that cultural organizations are poorly managed. It is also possible that even frequent arts goers may not realize that a large portion of the costs of arts and culture organizations is not covered by ticket prices, admission costs or government funding.

Much work may also be needed to attract young donors. The donor statistics by age and education, as well as similar volunteer statistics, show that arts and culture organizations attract relatively few young

adults, including high school and post-secondary students. Since younger donors usually contribute less money and volunteer time than others, the relative absence of these individuals may not have a significant impact on current donations or volunteer time. However, the difficulty in attracting younger adults could have a substantial impact on future donor and volunteer contributions to arts and culture organizations.

A recent report on arts and culture volunteers showed that 351,000 Canadians 15 or older volunteered for arts and culture organizations in 2000. A more detailed examination of these figures shows that volunteers and donors to arts and culture organizations appear, by and large, to be different people, with only about 50,000 Canadians both volunteering and donating in 2000. When combined, the volunteer and donor figures reveal that about 750,000 Canadians 15 or older volunteered time or donated money (or did both) for arts and culture organizations in 2000.

The report also examines the motivations and opinions of donors, as well as the demographic characteristics of arts and culture donors, including the distribution by sex, age, education, household income, employment status and marital status. Provincial estimates of the number of donors and the value of donations to arts and culture organizations in 2000 are also provided.

Hill Strategies Research Inc., publisher of the *Arts Research Monitor*, is a Hamilton-based arts research company. Please visit <http://www.hillstrategies.com> for more information.