

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fact sheets reveal rural volunteering and philanthropy trends

Guelph, Ontario, February 8, 2016. Generosity in rural communities has been quantified by a new set of *Focus on Rural Ontario* fact sheets. Volunteer and charitable giving data indicates 43 to 50 per cent of non-metropolitan individuals volunteer their time and up to 90 per cent contribute to charities.

Formal volunteering, known as unpaid work for a group or organization, is more likely among individuals between the ages of 35 and 54 and among those with a university degree. Community contribution and use of skills and experiences were the top two reasons individuals volunteered in 2013.

“Volunteer participation is important to the vitality of rural communities as it strengthens trust, solidarity and reciprocity,” says Norman Ragetlie, Director of Policy and Stakeholder Engagement, Rural Ontario Institute. “The non-profit sector has a substantive impact on improving quality of life, health and well-being.”

Annual donations per donor averaged \$534 in 2013. Health-related organizations, social services and religious groups receive the highest number of donations and the top reason donors make a contribution is their compassion towards people in need.

“Charitable giving and voluntary association is often used to indicate social capital, civic engagement and social cohesion in communities,” says Ragetlie.

Four fact sheets and data appendix information on these topics can be viewed at www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/focus-on-rural-ontario.aspx.

Focus on Rural Ontario fact sheets are based on Statistics Canada data and are provided by the Rural Ontario Institute to build understanding of key rural socio-economic trends.

The Rural Ontario Institute is a non-profit organization committed to developing leaders, initiating dialogue, supporting collaboration and promoting action on issues and opportunities facing rural Ontario.

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