

Volunteer Satisfaction and Experience Survey Report

December 2009



AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT)
Programs and Services Volunteer Program

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THE ONTARIO HIV TREATMENT NETWORK

VOLUNTEER TORONTO

AND A SINCERE AND HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALL OF THE VOLUNTEERS, PAST AND PRESENT, WHO HAVE SHARED WITH US THEIR TIME, ENERGY, SKILLS, AND SPIRIT.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Background on Volunteering in AIDS Service Organizations	5
About the Volunteer Program at the AIDS Committee of Toronto	6
ACT Programs and Services Volunteer Program Mission.....	6
ACT Volunteer Programs: Purpose and History.....	6
Program Structure.....	7
Becoming a Volunteer.....	7
Volunteer Training.....	7
ACT Program and Service Volunteer Opportunities.....	8
Survey Development and Implementation	9
Results: Survey One	9
Demographics: HIV status, age, gender, sexuality and ethnocultural group.....	11
Volunteer employment status.....	12
Volunteer activity.....	13
Volunteer Retention.....	15
Awareness of volunteering at ACT.....	16
Choosing to volunteer with ACT.....	17
Training.....	18
Communication with Volunteers.....	18
Open-Ended Responses.....	20
Results: Survey Two	21
Volunteer activity and tenure as an ACT volunteer.....	21
Active vs. non-Active volunteers.....	22
Volunteer Programs.....	22
Enjoyment and Volunteering at ACT.....	23
ACT Volunteer Training.....	23
Volunteering and the development and maintenance of social relationships.....	24
Volunteering and opportunities for personal achievement.....	25
Volunteering and opportunities for professional growth.....	25
Volunteering and “serving a community”.....	26
Volunteer appreciation.....	26
Discussion and Recommendations	27
Further Questions to Explore	29
References	30
Appendices	
Volunteer Application	XXXI
Volunteer Survey One - 2008	XXXVII
Volunteer Survey One - 2009	XLVI
Figure 1 - What is your age group?.....	10
Figure 2 - What is your sexual orientation?.....	10
Figure 3 - Which ethnic/cultural group do you most identify with?.....	11
Figure 4 - What is your employment status?.....	12
Figure 5 - What is your current employment status? (identified as HIV-positive).....	13
Figure 6 - On average, how many hours per month do you volunteer at ACT?.....	14
Figure 7 - How many hours per month do you volunteer at ACT? (identified as HIV-positive).....	14
Figure 8 - How long have you been a volunteer with ACT?.....	15
Figure 9 - How did you hear about volunteering with ACT?.....	16
Figure 10 - Why did you decide to volunteer with ACT?.....	17
Figure 11 - What training have you received from ACT to support you volunteer activities?.....	18
Figure 12 - How do you receive news or information about what’s happening at ACT?.....	19
Figure 13 - How long have you been a programs and services volunteer?.....	21
Figure 14 - For which program or service do you volunteer?.....	22

Executive Summary

Volunteers are an integral component of the HIV prevention and support services offered at the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT). Not only do volunteers support ACT in carrying out our programs in services, they help the organization build and maintain grounded connections with the communities we serve. This report outlines the results of two Volunteer Experience Surveys conducted by ACT, and a literature reviewⁱ focused on volunteering in AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs). The first survey was circulated to volunteers from September 2008 to January 2009. The second survey, which can be viewed as a follow-up to the first, was circulated over two weeks in August 2009.

The purpose surveying ACT volunteers was to gain an understanding of the satisfaction within the ACT programs and services volunteer pool generally and to identify the demographics, and training and support needs of the active ACT volunteers. The second survey was circulated to ACT volunteers in an effort to even better capture their experience and motivations for volunteering at ACT.

Survey One, which was completed by 130 volunteers, found that while ACT supports a diverse group of volunteers, the majority are gay men or lesbians who are employed full time. The survey also found that respondents were motivated to volunteer at ACT for a variety of factors and were referred from a variety of sources. The issues that were identified by survey respondents as key to shaping the volunteer experience included: the relationship between the volunteer and their specific program coordinator/supervisor, regular communication, volunteering for a specific program or service, staff turnover, and having a set space within ACT offices to carry out their volunteering.

Survey Two, which was completed by 55 volunteers, found that:

- 94% of respondents (n=43) agree that volunteering with ACT Programs and Services offers them opportunities for personal achievement
- 93% of respondents (n=41) enjoy volunteering at ACT
- 93% (n=41) think that they received adequate training from ACT to fulfill their volunteer position
- 86% of respondents (n=38) agree that they are able to serve a community as an ACT volunteer
- 84% of respondents (n=37) think that they are adequately recognized for their contribution to ACT
- 75% of respondents (n=33) agree that volunteering with ACT Programs and Services helps them to develop or maintain social relationships
- 67% of respondents (n=29) agree that volunteering with ACT offers them opportunities for professional growth

Overall, the two ACT volunteer experience surveys show that the majority of respondents are satisfied with their volunteering experience. The ACT volunteer program is successful in offering opportunities for developing and maintaining social relationships, personal and professional growth, and supporting a community. The three-stage selection and screening process allows the Program Volunteer Resources Manager to identify, with potential volunteers, the candidate's motivations and goals in volunteering, and ensure that a volunteer role can meet the candidate's needs. The training provided by ACT was reviewed positively by survey respondents and identified as sufficient for preparing volunteers for their roles and responsibilities. And both surveys show that the majority of volunteers remain active for several years (four+ years in Survey One and 1 to 3 years in Survey Two). The survey responses suggest that the structure of the volunteer program, and the process for volunteers (from the initial engagement, training, placement and ongoing volunteering) is working well.

ⁱThe literature review was conducted by staff at the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) as part of their Rapid Response Service. Through this service, ASOs can request a search of the scientific literature on an HIV-related topic and from the search, a summary or fact is developed on the requested topic.

provide meaningful and rewarding opportunities for volunteers. The survey analysis and conclusions provide possible directions for potential program enhancements and future research questions, which are outlined in the report recommendations.

BACKGROUND ON VOLUNTEERING IN AIDS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Volunteers play a key role in the HIV/AIDS service sector in Canada by filling many gaps that exist in health, support, prevention and community services. In the early nineties, it was estimated that the use of volunteers reduced the health care costs for a person with AIDS from \$150,000 to \$40,000 per year^{1,2}. Many community organizations that work with people living with and at risk for HIV began as volunteer-led groups. While many of these organizations have become more formalized over time, volunteers continue to contribute significantly to ASOs through administrative work, sharing expertise with people living with HIV (e.g. employment workshops) and offering prevention services such as outreach and community education³. The AIDS Committee of Toronto is an excellent example of such an organization. In the 2008-2009 fiscal year, volunteers contributed 32,899 hours – the equivalent of almost 17 full-time staff.

We looked at the literature on volunteering with AIDS Service Organizations (ASO) in order to develop a framework for understanding volunteer satisfaction and experience. Specifically, we were interested in what the literature could tell us about volunteer motivation and retention. We sought to understand why different people volunteer and what keeps them volunteering.

Volunteer turnover can lead to extensive recruitment and training costs for ASOs. Understanding what motivates volunteers to devote their time to an organization, community or cause, and how to best support volunteers is critical their recruitment, motivation and retention.

People enter into a volunteer-based relationship with an ASO with specific needs, expectations and characteristics. Research has documented a wide range of motivators to volunteer, summarized by Omoto & Snyder to include⁴:

- General Values (e.g., “I enjoy helping other people”)
- Understanding (e.g., “I want to learn how to prevent the spread of HIV”)
- Personal Development (e.g., “I want to meet new people”)
- Community Concern (e.g., “I worry about my community”)
- Esteem Enhancement (e.g. “I want to feel needed”).

Other motivating factors may include belief-system based values and socio-political values⁵, experience with “human suffering”⁶, a connection to the communities affected by HIV/AIDS, previous contact with a person living with HIV, a sense of altruism, or influences from faith-communities⁷. Motivation to volunteer appears to be affected by the type of agency one volunteers with⁸ and by social location⁹.

Factors that most often lead to a volunteer leaving their position in an organization include a lack of any feeling of effectiveness on the part of the volunteer and organizational-level challenges. Dissatisfaction with training can lead to higher levels of burnout, while satisfaction with the support provided by the organization to a volunteer (emotional and functional) can decrease¹⁰. As Crook et al note:

A successful retention strategy might benefit from continuous communication between volunteer and leader to ensure that the role is meeting current and emerging needs. This communication loop could be designed around both formal role reviews and informal discussions. To nurture the relationship and sustain its health, it seems fruitful to ensure that the organization is able to adapt to changing needs and at the same time provide individuals with feedback, relevant training or education, recognition, appreciation, meaning, and equity. (p. 44)

It is important that, at placement, organizations are clear about the volunteer's role and a discussion occurs around how such a role may or may not meet the volunteer's needs.

Literature from North America and England that addresses motivations for volunteering at ASOs, and investigates volunteer burnout, dropout, rewards and challenges identified key recommendations for ASOs interested in improving volunteer retention and motivation:

- An organization's ability to recognize and understand the needs of their volunteers is critical to retaining effective volunteers
- Motivation to remain as a volunteer with a particular ASO is linked to a volunteer's feeling of effectiveness and level of engagement with the agency
- Burnout and dropout are often linked to ineffective or insufficient training, ambiguity of the volunteer role, emotional stress and organizational-level factors, such as lack of adequate volunteer support
- Paying particular attention to the stresses placed on a volunteer is advocated in numerous studies, from the initial engagement through placement to termination.

The two surveys, which are the basis of this report, will shed light on ACT's success in adequately training, placing, and recognizing volunteers, and volunteer motivations.

ABOUT THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AT THE AIDS COMMITTEE OF TORONTO

ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MISSION

We are committed to involving volunteers in all of ACT's direction setting, decision making and service delivery. ACT recognizes that without the skill, generosity and commitment of our volunteers, it would be impossible to maintain either the range or quality of our services.

Volunteers have the right to be given meaningful assignments, to be treated as equal co-workers, to receive effective and ongoing supervision, the right to full involvement as members of the agency, and the right to ongoing support and recognition for their contribution to ACT.

In return, volunteers agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities, be accountable to the agency, and to remain faithful to the philosophies, policies and procedures of the agency

ACT VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS: PURPOSE AND HISTORY

The AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) was founded in 1983 by a group of volunteers—mostly gay men and lesbians working together to create a response to the HIV epidemic in Toronto. They came together to educate, provide support to and advocate for people affected by HIV. Since then, thousands of people have been a part of the ACT volunteer program.

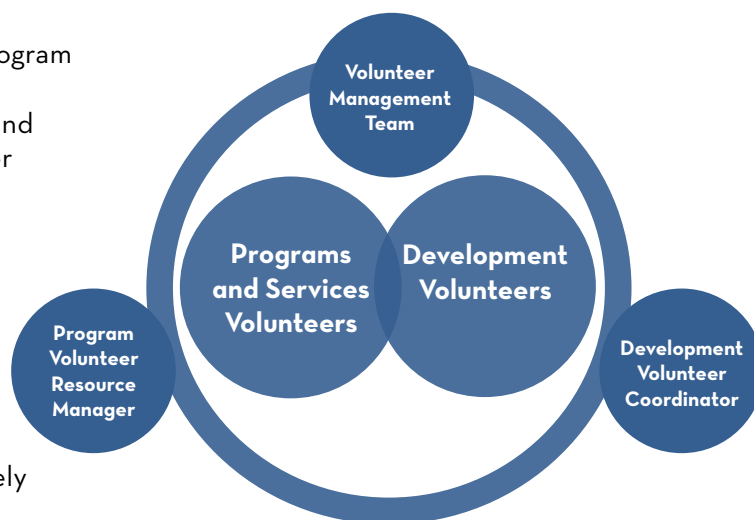
Volunteers continue to be essential to the work that ACT does. Volunteer contributions to the agency and the communities that ACT serves play an invaluable part in continuing efforts to address HIV and its effect on our communities, families and friends. ACT would not exist without the generosity, commitment and talents of their volunteers.

ACT relies on volunteers to:

- Deliver ACT's programs and services to individuals and communities
- Help raise the money to provide those services
- Govern and guide the agency through our Board of Directors and committees
- Contribute in many different ways to the vibrancy and well-being of the organization

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Currently, the Programs and Services Volunteer Program is part of ACT's Department of Employment and Volunteer Services. Responsible for coordinating and implementing the program is the Program Volunteer Resources Manager. This position is supported by the work of the Volunteer Management Team, a committee composed of staff from across the agency who are responsible for the supervision/coordination of programs and service volunteers. The Volunteer Management Team meet approximately once every 2 months.



Program Volunteer Resources Manager works closely with the Development Volunteer Coordinator, but is not responsible for those volunteers engaged only in development and fundraising activities.

BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

Most individuals who are interested in volunteering at ACT are invited to attend an information session on volunteering in the agency (there are about six info sessions held a year). These sessions serve as an introduction to the various volunteer roles, as well as the responsibilities and commitment required of programs and services volunteers.

Information sessions are followed by a three-stage screening and selection process. Those individuals still interested in volunteering with ACT are required to complete and submit a volunteer application form (Appendix I) (ACT receives between 150 - 200 applications a year). Individuals are asked to write about why they want to volunteer, what their expectations are, and to provide two references. Applications are reviewed by the Program Volunteer Resources Manager. If the skills and interests indicated on the application are a fit with the organization, potential volunteers are invited to participate in a screening interview (80 - 100 interviews will be conducted each year). During the interview, the Program Volunteer Resources Manager will assess the potential volunteer's comfort with the work of ACT (what do they know about HIV? Are they comfortable working in a sex-positive, LGBTQ positive space? Are they open to learn?), and works with the candidate to ensure that the volunteer positions available in the agency meet the individual's expectations. If there is an appropriate match between the individual and the agency, potential programs and services volunteers are required to participate in Core Skills Training, ACT's foundational workshop series for volunteers (40 - 50 individuals will participate in Core Skills each year). These training sessions help the individual identify which volunteer roles interest them and further helps the Program Volunteer Resources Manager assess an individual's readiness to volunteer.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Training is an important component of the volunteer program at ACT. ACT strives to ensure that volunteers feel capable to fulfill their roles in the agency, and are given opportunities to learn and develop skills. ACT offers volunteers three kinds of training opportunities: Core Skills, program specific training, and in-service training.

Core Skills is a compulsory hands-on training offered to all Programs and Services Volunteers that provides individuals with a baseline knowledge about issues that relate to general service delivery in most AIDS Service Organizations. The goal is to focus on the core competencies necessary to be an effective volunteer, to become more politicized and to generally gain greater experience so that volunteers can play a more meaningful role within the community based HIV/AIDS movement. Core Skills is also an orientation to the culture of the organization, which fosters discussions among volunteers about the nature and interpretation

of policies and procedures, confidentiality in the context of HIV/AIDS work and an examination of ACT's Volunteer Code of Conduct.

Core Skills is divided into six sessions or modules that take place over 2 full day and 3 evening workshops. Core Skills is a tremendous investment of resources on the part of the organization and it indicates a huge commitment to ACT on the part of the volunteer. The intensive training also creates an opportunity for people to bond with one another and to develop lasting relationships. Core Skills Training is also an excellent community development opportunity that creates partnerships with other AIDS Service Organizations. Toronto People With AIDS Foundation is the primary partner in the training, but volunteers from other organizations are also invited to participate.

Once the participants have successfully completed Core Skills, they are required to attend more specialized program-specific training in the area where they have identified an interest in volunteering. These trainings vary in length, and some require an equal time commitment as Core Skills.

ACT's Volunteer In-Service Training workshops are professional development opportunities for ACT staff and volunteers who have completed Core Skills and want to stay on top of emerging trends and issues in the HIV/AIDS field. The workshops are designed to build the capacity of individuals to take on leadership roles in the organization and in the local, national and global HIV/AIDS movement. Topics covered for these trainings included the community action of HIV non-disclosure, maintain personal boundaries and understand trans needs and experiences.

ACT PROGRAM AND SERVICE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

ACT offers opportunities for volunteering in its various programs and services areas. These areas include:

- Access Centre/Front Desk
- Board of Directors
- Book AIDS
- Buddy Program
- Condom Stuffing
- Employment Action: Computer class trainer
- Employment Action: Computer class coordinator
- Employment Action: Resume coach
- Employment Action: Interview coach
- Employment Action: ESL tutor
- Finance Assistant
- Furniture Bank
- Gay Men's Outreach
- Gay Men's Community Education
- Harm Reduction: Gay men and youth
- HIV and Dementia Program
- Hot Lunch Program
- Income Tax Clinic
- Library
- Medical Drives Program
- Portuguese-Speaking Community Education
- Portuguese-Speaking Men's Outreach
- Positive Youth Outreach (PYO)
- Program Volunteer Resources
- Research
- Support Group Facilitation

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Volunteer Satisfaction Survey has been a long process, and has followed some recent restructuring of the volunteer program at ACT. The initial purpose of Survey One was to develop a snapshot of ACT's programs and services volunteer pool and get feedback from the volunteers on their level of satisfaction volunteering with ACT. Since the initial discussions, the vision for this project has evolved to exploring the reasons why we asked the survey questions and what the responses mean programmatically. This is the context that prompted the development of a second survey and informed the final report.

Survey One (Appendix II) was circulated to volunteers in order to learn about: how volunteers were informed of the volunteer program at ACT, why they choose to volunteer, training, recognition, motivation and overall satisfaction. Survey One also surveyed frequency of volunteering and tried to solicit responses from non-active volunteers.

Survey One was circulated from September 2008 to January 2009. Volunteers were sent an email inviting them to complete a survey online. This invitation was sent to the 290 individuals on the volunteer email list, and a total of 130 surveys were completed, a 44.8% response rate.

Survey Two (Appendix III) was developed after reviewing the Survey One responses. This second survey was developed in August 2009, and was circulated for about two weeks (August 15 - September 1). Again, volunteers were sent an email inviting them to complete a survey online. This invitation was sent to the 290 individuals on the volunteer email list, and 55 volunteers responded, a response rate of 18.9%

Survey Two focused on: why inactive volunteers have not volunteered in the past twelve months, and how volunteering at ACT may support the development or maintenance of social relationships, offer opportunities for personal or professional growth, and help to strengthen one's community. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide open-ended comments at the end of questions.

RESULTS: SURVEY ONE

DEMOGRAPHICS: HIV STATUS, AGE, GENDER, SEXUALITY AND ETHNOCULTURAL GROUP

ACT's volunteer program is peopled by those affected by and living with HIV. While ACT serves a diversity of clients through our range of programs and services, the majority of volunteers who responded to the survey were between the age of 40 and 59 (50%) and identified as male (73%).

ACT is committed to GIPA and the meaningful involvement of people living with HIV in its volunteer program. When appropriate, we support our service users in becoming more involved in the organization and the HIV movement through volunteering at ACT. Volunteering has been shown to have positive psychosocial impact on people living with HIV¹¹, and PHAs are able to participate and contribute to the programs and services designed to meet their needs. Of those volunteers who responded to our question about HIV status, just under half (43%) of respondents identified as HIV positive. 53% identified as HIV negative and 5% did not know their status.

40% of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 39, while 10% of respondents identified as being 60 years old or older. Only one respondent reported being aged less than 20 years old.

What is your age group?

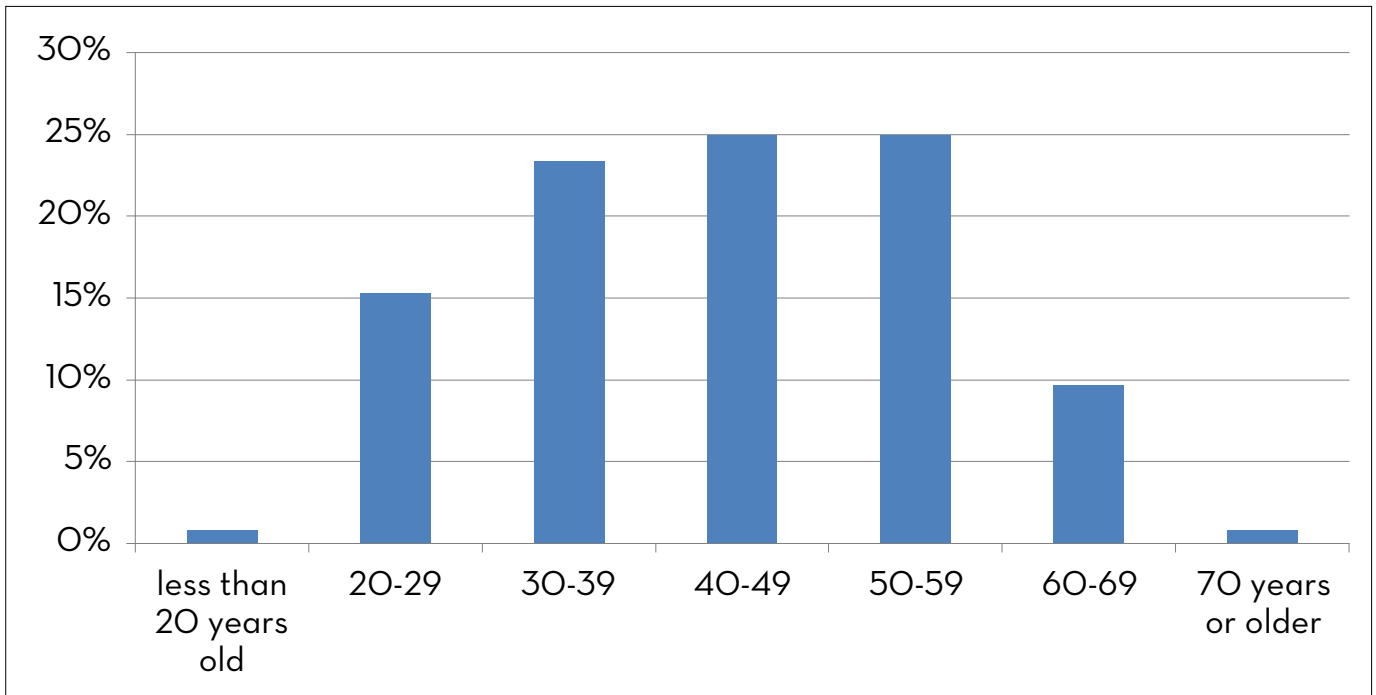


FIGURE 1 - SURVEY ONE:

What is your sexual orientation?

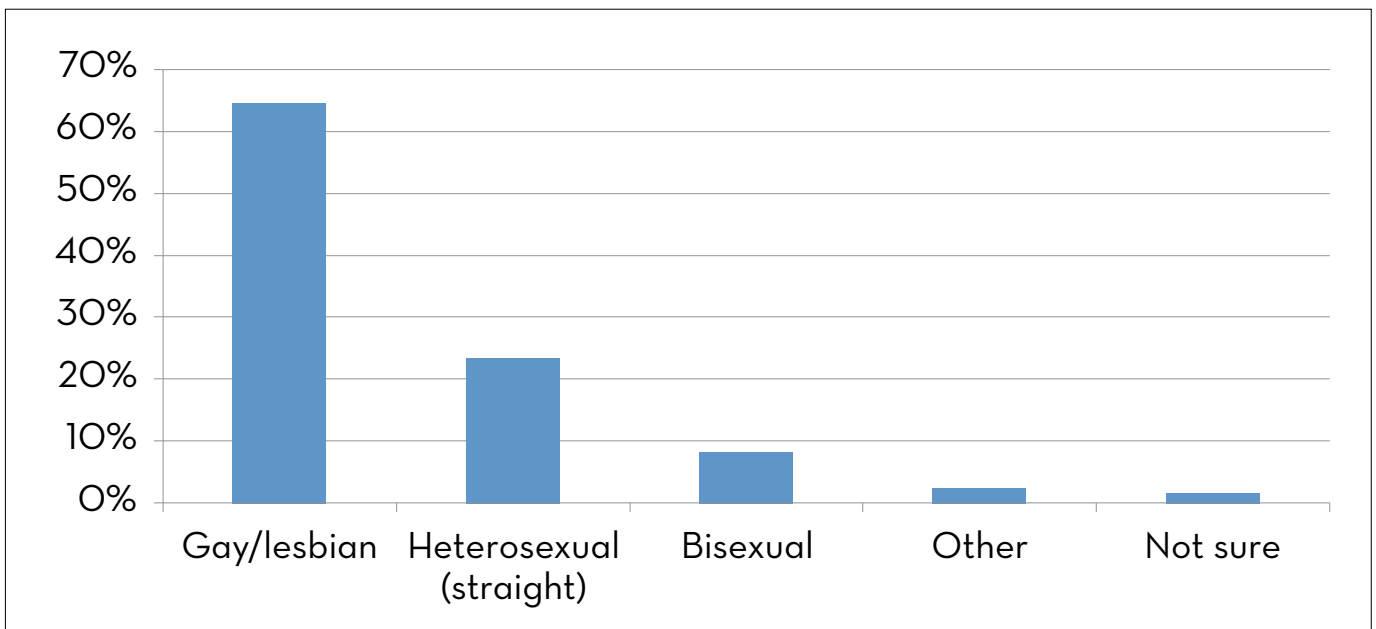


FIGURE 2 - SURVEY ONE

27% of respondents identified as female and, while ACT is aware of some current and past volunteers at ACT identify as transgender, no survey respondents identified this way.

Which ethno/cultural group do you most identify with?

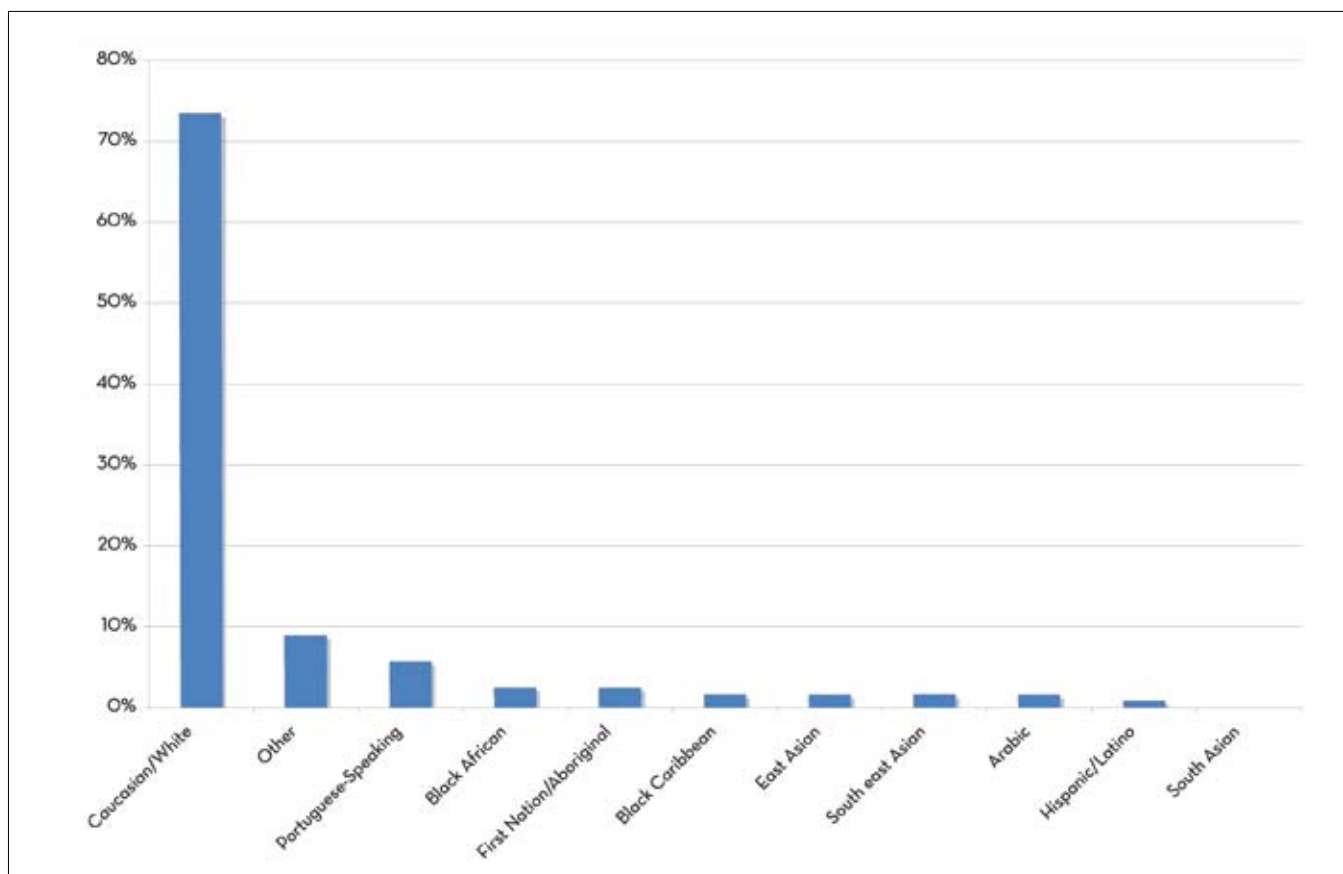


FIGURE 3 - SURVEY ONE

Anecdotally, ACT volunteers display diversity in sexuality and ethnocultural community of origin or identity. However, the majority of respondents identified as gay or lesbian (65%) and Caucasian/White (74%). Given the nature of the survey and how it was distributed (online only), these results may or may not reflect the demographics of the overall pool of ACT programs and services volunteers. In order to understand how representative the demographic profile produced by Survey One is, an analysis of the entire programs and service volunteer pool would have to be undertaken. In an attempt to improve our knowledge and recording of who is participating in the Programs and Services Volunteer Program an open-ended question about volunteer's ethnocultural background has been added to the standard Volunteer Intake Form.

VOLUNTEER EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Knowing a volunteer’s employment status allows the volunteer program to get a sense of the kind of time commitment volunteers can make to ACT, and some idea of their motivations for volunteering (developing new skills, gaining Canadian experience, creating social connections). Many of ACT’s volunteers are employed full-time (42%), but some respondents identified as working part-time (12%), or as self-employed (7%). ACT also works with volunteers who are on disability support (18%), are retired (14%) or unemployed (10%). ACT is welcoming to students who are looking for volunteer opportunities. 11% of survey respondents identified as students.

What is your employment status?

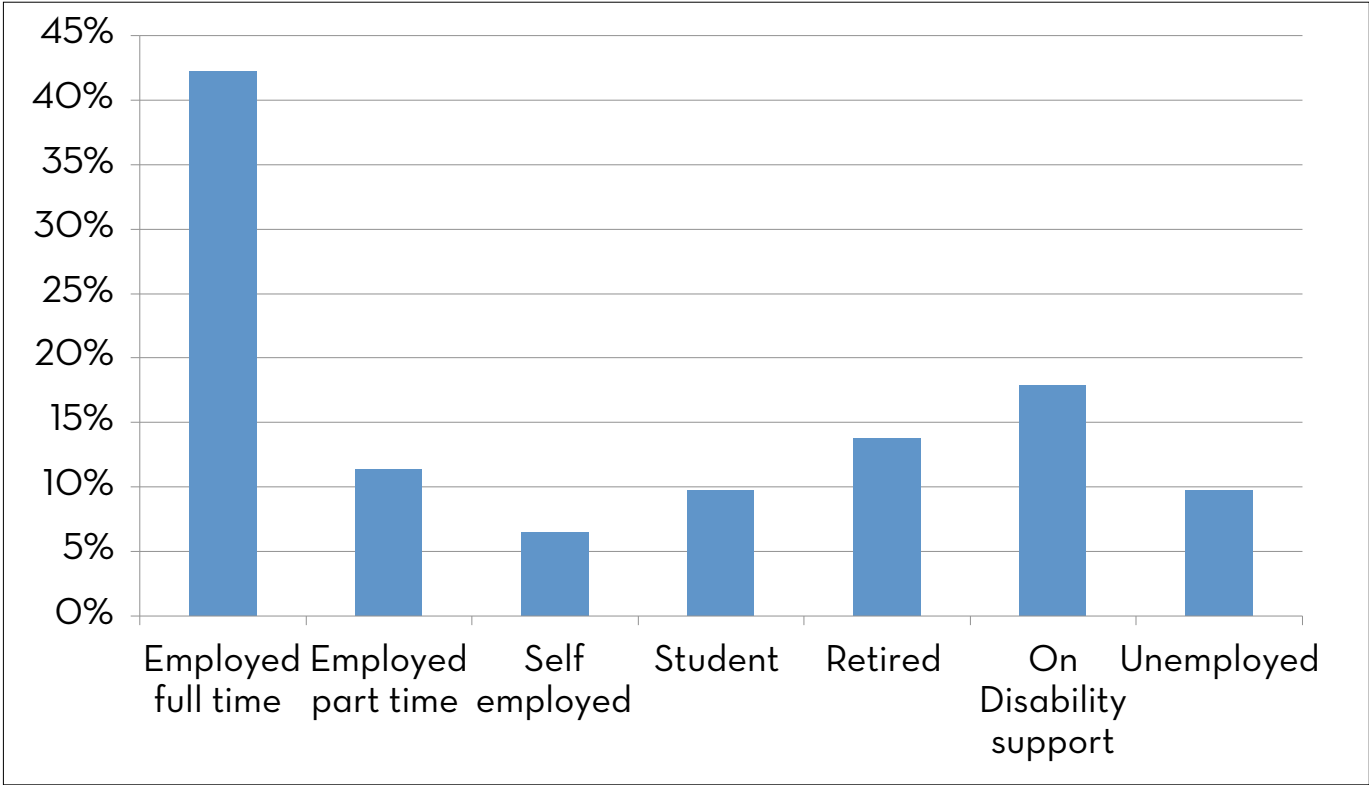


FIGURE 4 - SURVEY ONE

This distribution looked different for the 51 respondents who identified as HIV-positive. The majority of HIV-positive respondents identified as being on disability supports (37%), followed by working full-time and unemployed (both 20%).

What is your current employment status? (identified as HIV-positive)

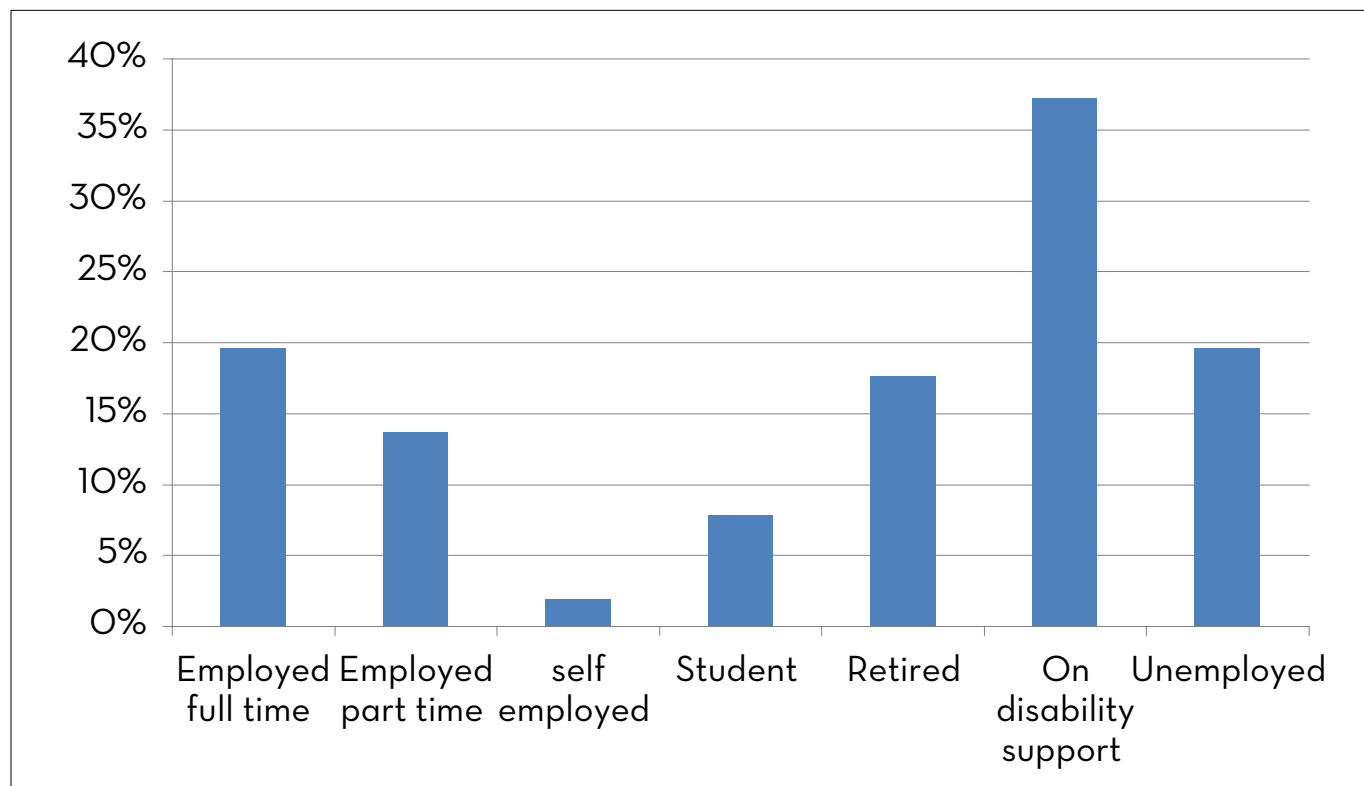


FIGURE 5 - SURVEY ONE

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

The majority of respondents who filled out the volunteer experience survey were active volunteers sometime in the six months preceding the survey (83%).

It is important to note that volunteer roles vary in terms of the time commitment required. For instance, volunteer support group facilitators commit 3 hours a week for 10 weeks to a year, while a volunteer in the Gay Men's Outreach Program may commit 5 hours each month, ongoing. Before a volunteer can take on a role within the agency, the time commitment is discussed and agreed upon with the Program Volunteer Resources Manager and/or the staff member responsible for volunteer supervision for a specific program or service. The overall time commitment will be considered if a volunteer wants to take on addition roles.

A majority of respondents volunteer between 5 and 9 hours per month. Of those respondents who do volunteer for more than 14 hours per month, 74% were either retired (n=9) or on disability support (n=11), and 19% (n=5) were unemployed.

On average, how many hours per month do you volunteer at ACT?

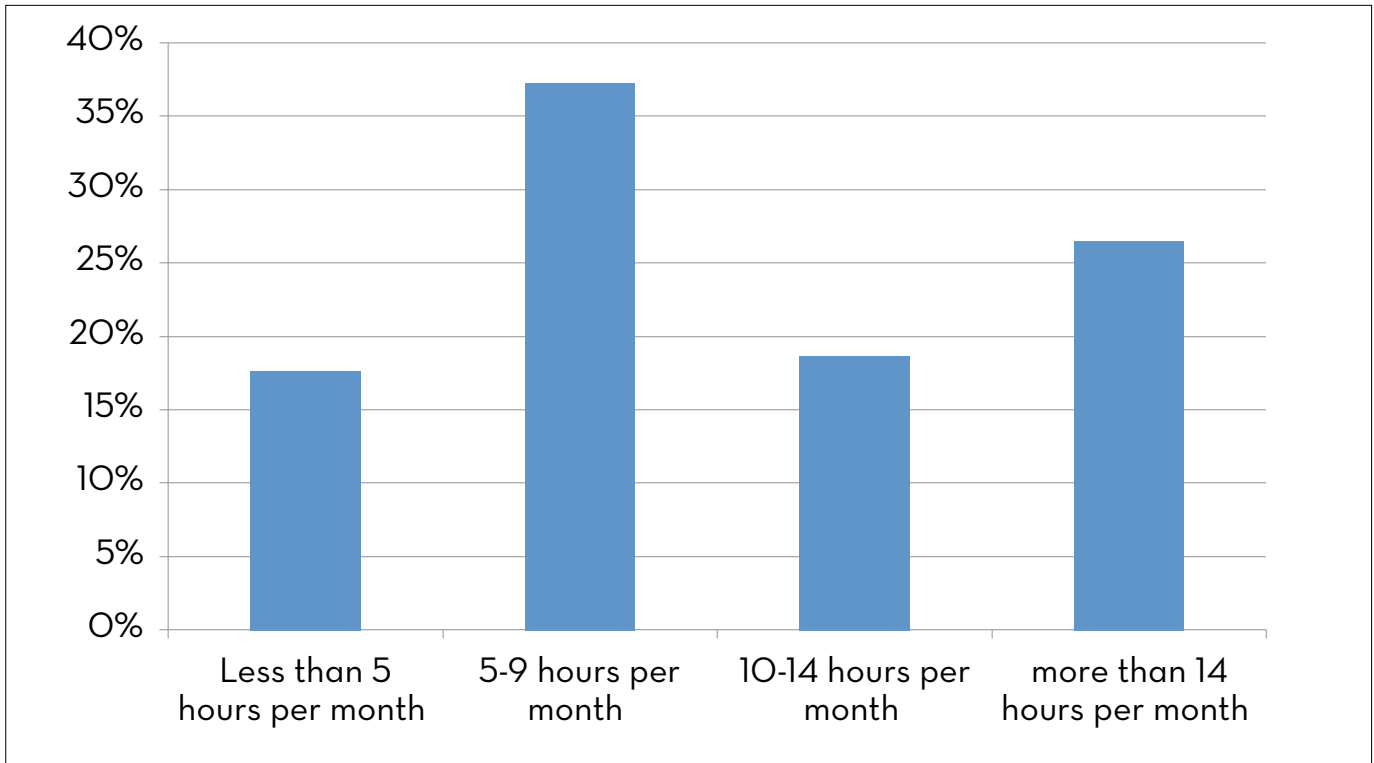


FIGURE 6 - SURVEY ONE:

This distribution also looked different for respondents who identified as HIV-positive. The majority of HIV-positive respondents identified as volunteering more than 14 hours a month (41%) followed by 5-9 hours a month (26%) and 10 - 14 hours a month (24%).

How many hours per month do you volunteer at ACT? (identified as HIV-positive)

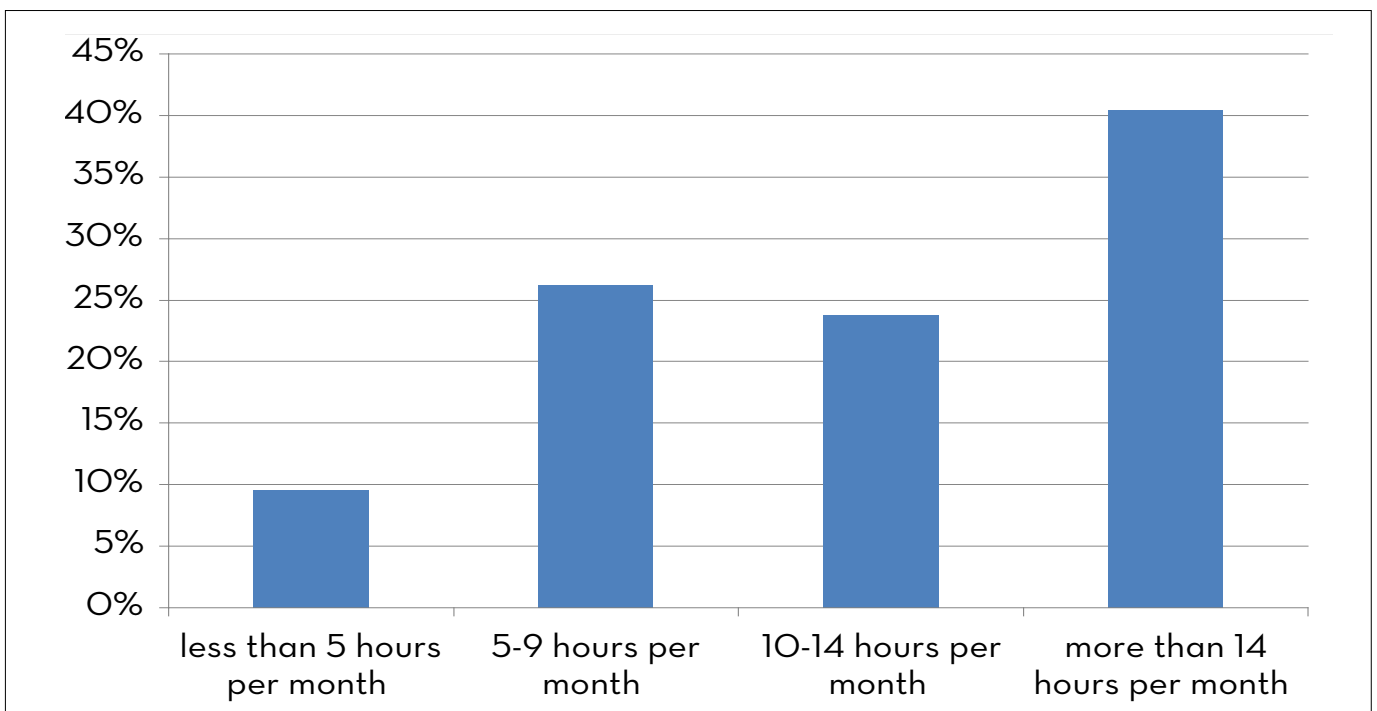


FIGURE 7 - SURVEY ONE

VOLUNTEER RETENTION

Volunteer retention is important to ACT, in part because volunteer turnover can lead to extensive recruitment and training costs. We have also seen that, over time, volunteers accumulate skills, dedication, and knowledge, and can become better able to carry out their volunteer tasks. Retention is viewed, within the volunteer program, as both a goal of the program and as an overall indicator of volunteer satisfaction.

Over half of the volunteers who responded to the survey have volunteered with ACT for more than three years, with 43% volunteer for more than 4 years. This was similar to the results of the volunteer satisfaction survey circulated in 2003ⁱⁱ, and shows that retention rates for volunteers have remained stable since that time

Why did you decide to volunteer with ACT?

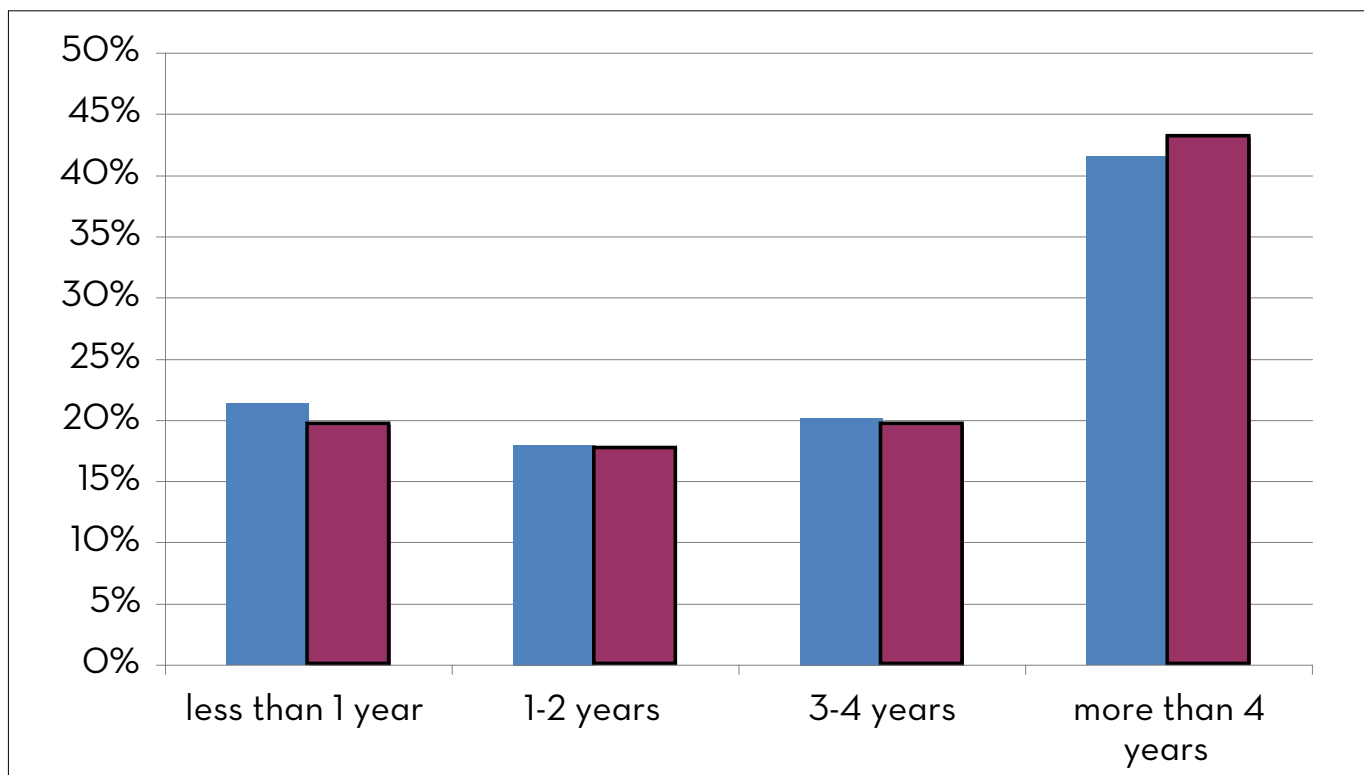


FIGURE 8 - SURVEY ONE

ⁱⁱ A Volunteer Satisfaction Survey was circulated in 2003 in paper form, within the ACT Access Centre. A total of 108 surveys were completed.

Volunteers were asked to respond to questions related to becoming aware of the ACT Programs and Services Volunteer Program, in order to understand which means of recruitment work best. While a diversity of media informed respondents of the volunteer opportunities at ACT, the most common mechanism for hearing about the program was through a friend (38%). As the survey did not prompt the respondent for clarification, it is unclear if the friend was an ACT volunteer, a service user, or connected to the agency in any way.

The second most common way that respondents heard about volunteering with ACT was by coming into the agency (29%). Again, we do not know why the respondent was coming into the agency (for instance, as a service user).

Interestingly, 20% of respondents heard about volunteering opportunities with ACT through mechanisms not identified in the survey question, including: learning about volunteering directly from Sergio Martinez, Program Volunteer Resource Manager, community-focused newspaper (e.g. Brasil News), other community groups (e.g. Bisexual Men of Toronto), and other ACT staff or volunteers.

How did you hear about volunteering with ACT?

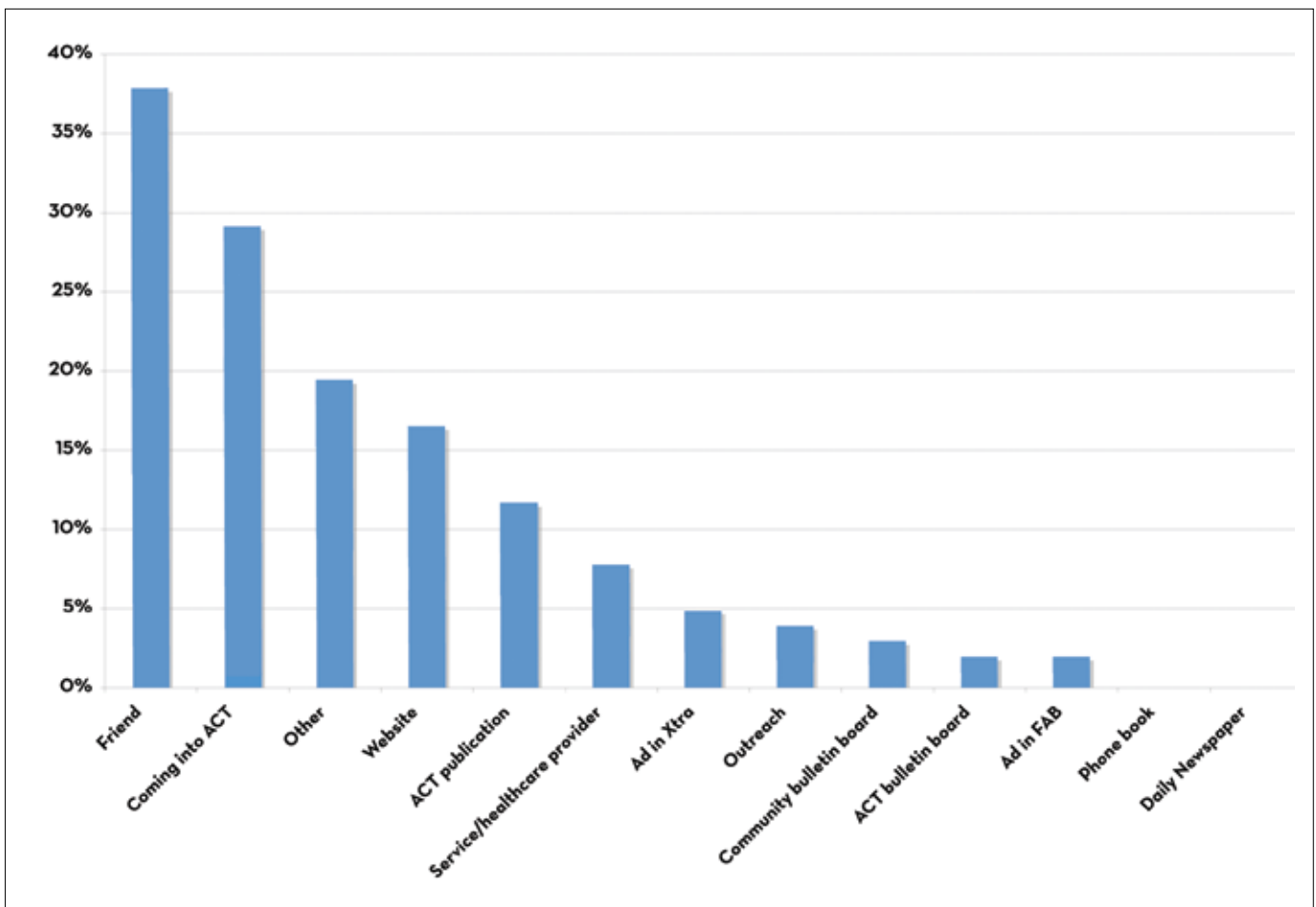


FIGURE 9 - SURVEY ONE

CHOOSING TO VOLUNTEER WITH ACT

The literature tells us that understanding and responding to people’s motivations for volunteering is critical to building an effective and dedicated volunteer base.

To better understand volunteers’ motivations for serving at ACT, in Survey One we listed the range of possible motivations that, anecdotally, we have seen in the volunteer pool. We wanted to assess if our assumptions were correct and if our volunteer program was structured to allow individuals’ motivations or goals for volunteering could be realized. To better develop our understanding of volunteers’ motivations for volunteering, we further explored this question in Survey Two.

Why did you decide to volunteer with ACT?

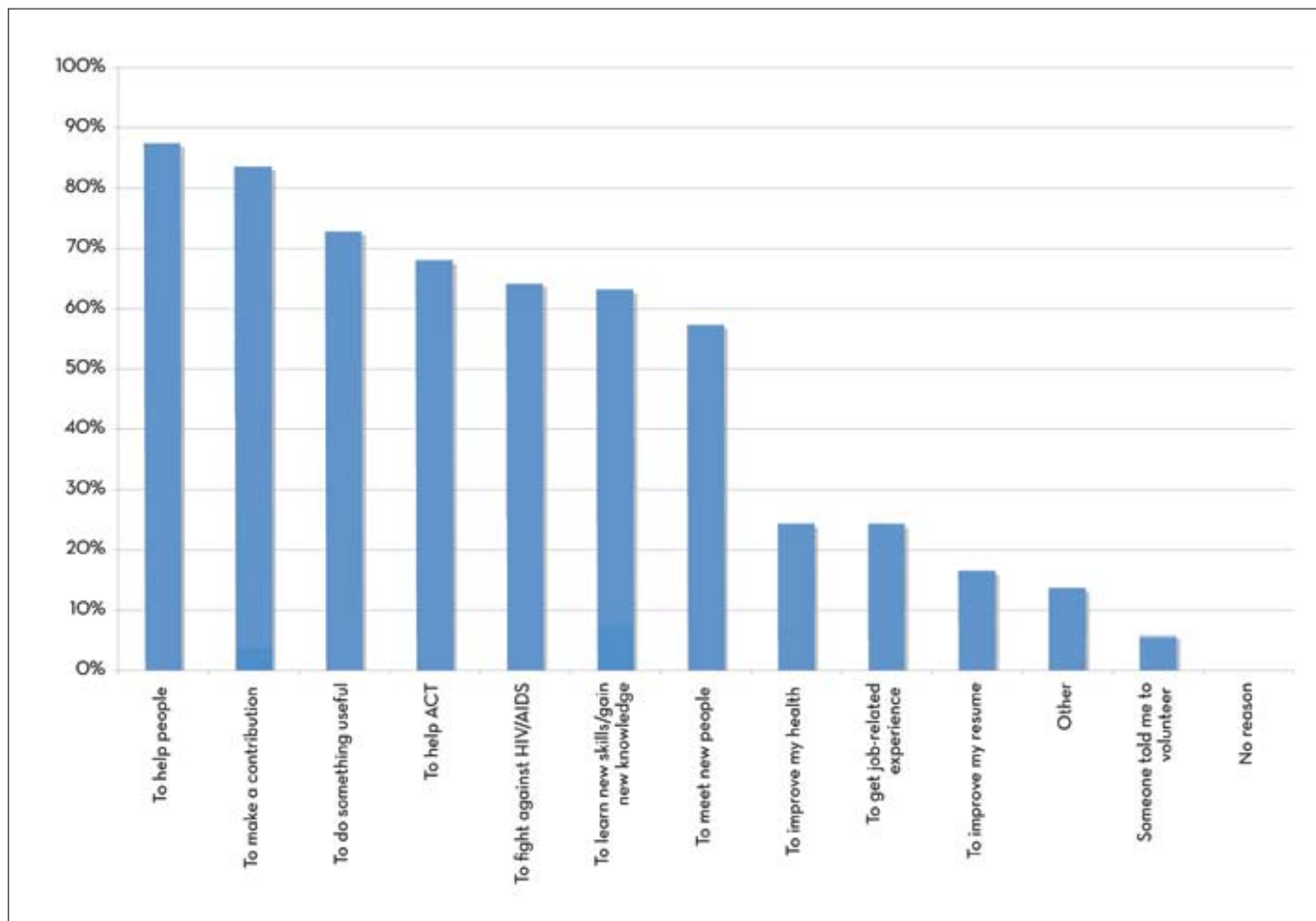


FIGURE 10 - SURVEY ONE

In Survey One, the vast majority of people who responded to the survey noted that they decided to volunteer with ACT to help people (87%) and to make a contribution (84%). Many volunteers also decided to volunteer at ACT to “do something useful” (73%).

In addition, respondents choose to volunteer at ACT to help ACT (68%) or to fight against HIV/AIDS (64%).

Importantly, many respondents also chose to volunteer at ACT for personal or professional development opportunities. Sixty-five respondents, or 63% of those who responded to the question noted that volunteering was an opportunity to learn new skills or gain new knowledge. 58% respondents decided to volunteer at ACT to meet new people while 24% noted that they decided to volunteer to improve their own health. 25 respondents (24%) decided to volunteer at ACT to get job-related experience and 17% did so to improve their resumes.

TRAINING

Training is an important component of the Volunteer Program at ACT. ACT strives to ensure that volunteers feel capable to fulfill their roles in the agency, and are given opportunities to learn and develop skills. Research has shown that dissatisfaction with training can lead to higher levels of volunteer burnout and dropout⁴.

Almost all respondents to Survey One received ACT Core Skills Training. Many other respondents noted participating in other training in addition to Core Skills. Volunteers who are unable to participate in Core Skills are still able to volunteer with ACT, but in a limited capacity (with our fundraising events, Pride Walk, or Condom Stuffing nights).

What training have you received from ACT to support your volunteer activities

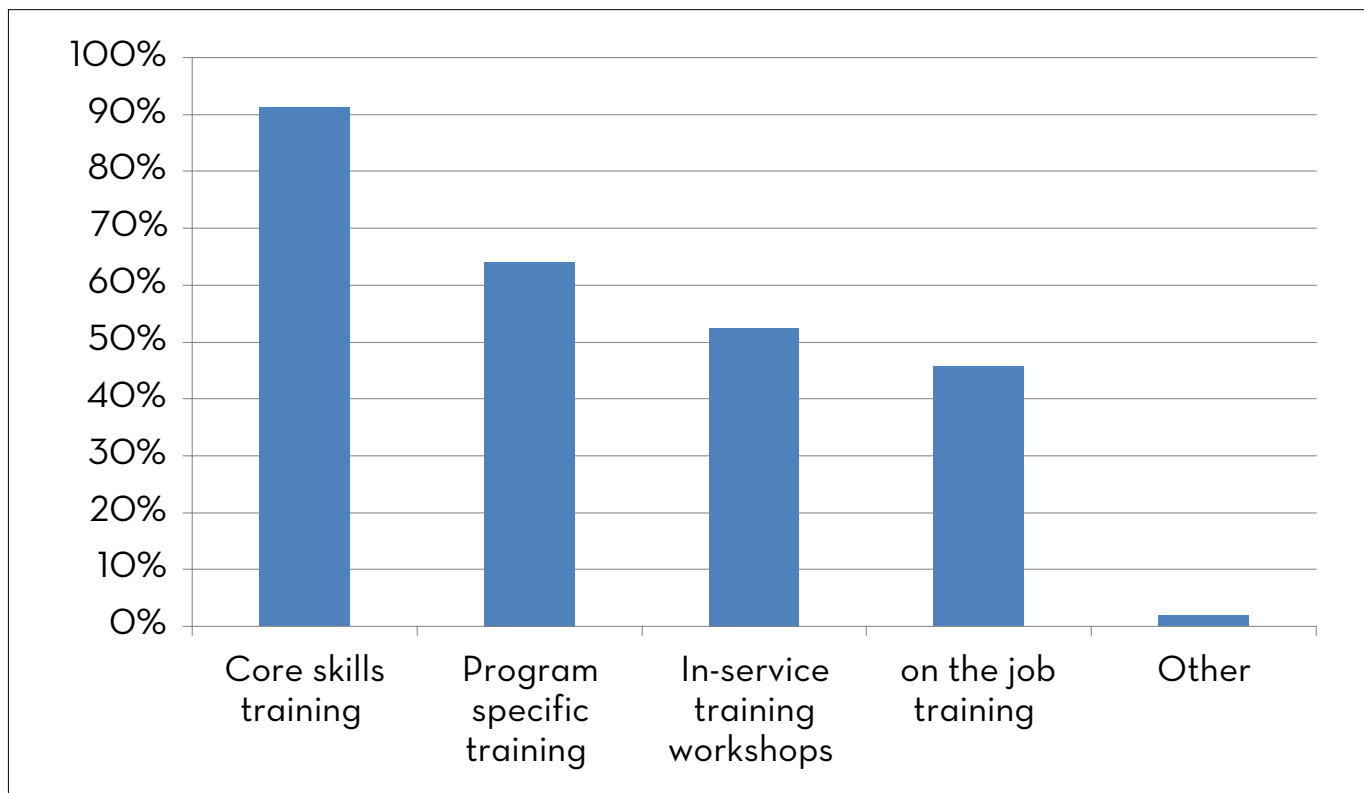


FIGURE 11 - SURVEY ONE

COMMUNICATION WITH VOLUNTEERS

Our literature review identified a volunteer’s “feeling of engagement” with the agency as important to their retention and dedication in volunteering. The volunteer program identifies regular communication with volunteers as an important component of engagement, making sure that volunteers feel connected to ACT and aware of agency activities.

Volunteers receive news about what is happening at ACT through a number of mechanisms. By far, the majority of respondents noted that they receive information about ACT via communications from the Program Volunteer Resources Manager and/or their program specific coordinator/supervisor. In addition to those response options listed in the survey, some volunteers receive news about what is happening at ACT through other organizations and through the Access Centre (reception) at ACT.

In response to our question “Do you feel informed about what’s happening at ACT?”, 39% of respondents stated that they always felt informed about what was happening at ACT, and 30% said they mostly felt informed. 15% stated that they sometimes felt informed, 10% said rarely, and 5% said never. Because this was not an open-ended question, we were not able to assess what barriers exist for these volunteers to obtain information about the agency.

How do you receive news or information about what's happening at ACT?

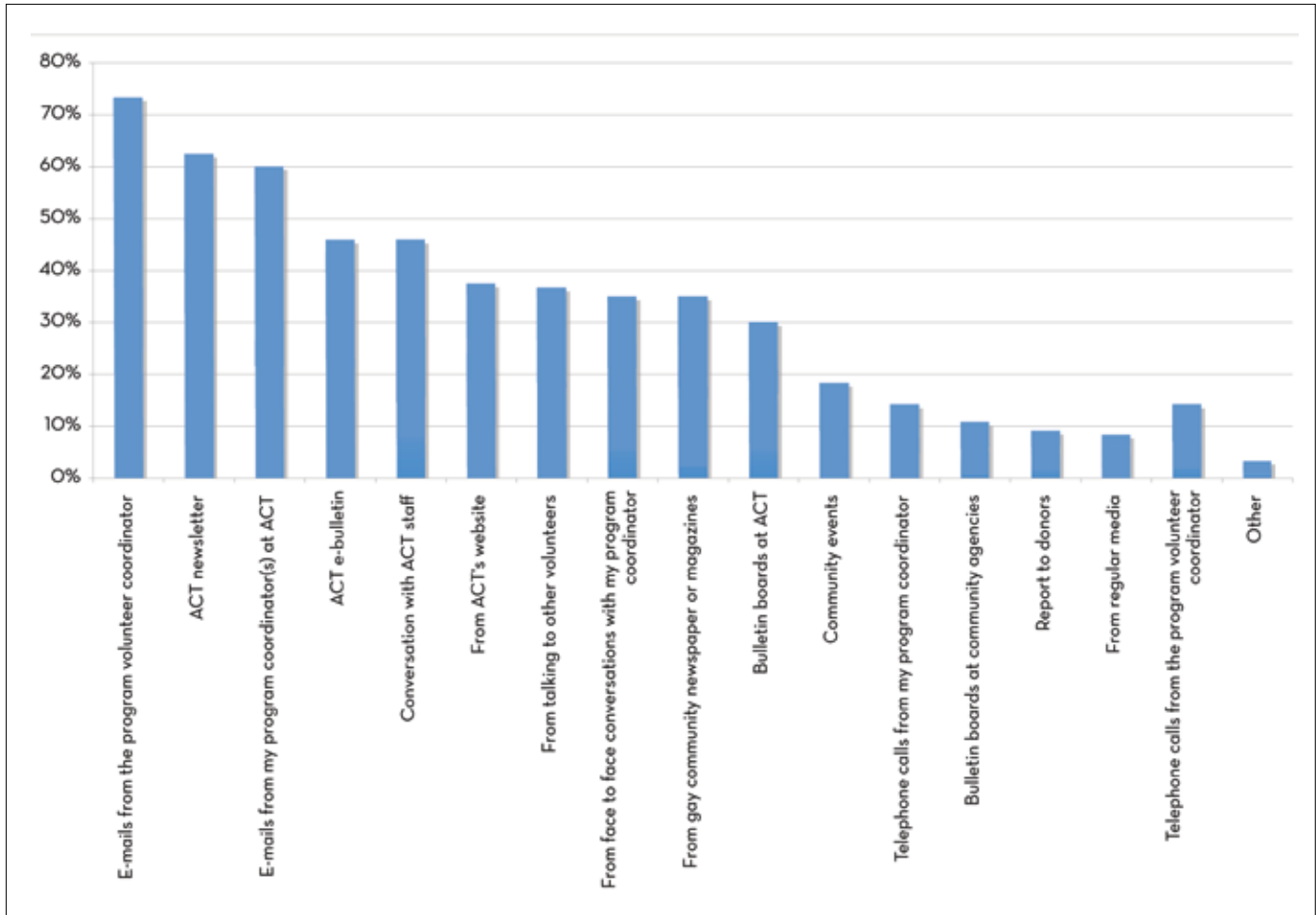


FIGURE 12 - SURVEY ONE

With so many ways of receiving information, it is important to ensure that volunteers do not feel overwhelmed by the amount of information that they receive from ACT, and that, when communication does happen, the media chosen are appropriate. We asked volunteers if they felt informed about things that are relevant to their volunteer duties at ACT. The majority of respondents said they always felt informed (54%) or mostly felt informed (23%). 13% said they sometimes felt informed about things that are relevant to their program, 3% said they rarely felt informed and 4% said they never felt informed. Again because this was not an open-ended question, we were not able to assess what barriers exist for these volunteers to obtain information about their program, nor how they assess what information is relevant to their volunteer duties.

In response to our question about their program coordinator(s) availability to see them when needed, the majority of respondents said that their program coordinator(s) is/are always available (64%) or mostly available (23%) to talk with them when needed. 7% of respondents stated that their program coordinator is only sometimes available to see them when needed, and only 3% said their program coordinator was rarely available. No respondents stated that their program coordinator was never available.

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

At the end of Survey One, we invited respondents to comment or make any suggestions to improve the volunteer program at ACT. 56 respondents (43%) completed this section and comments varied in tone and focus.

23 respondents (41%) offered praise and thanks to the volunteer program. Comments ranged in terms of length and detail, from statements like “Love it!” to more detailed statements like “great organization, a big part of the solution. I feel very supported and respected as a volunteer here. This has improved my mental health considerably.” Others offered praise to a specific staff member or the Program Volunteer Resources Manager.

10 respondents (18%) offered suggestions to improve their already positive experience at ACT. These suggestions focused on:

- Better and more frequent communication between volunteers and their coordinator and/or management. One respondent mentioned being dropped from an email list, and not knowing what opportunities there were for volunteering in his program.
- Opportunities to provide feedback on their experience volunteering (“This is the first follow-up or survey I have been given. There needs to be more follow-up with volunteers”)
- More training opportunities (e.g. First Aid course)
- One respondent suggested offering TTC tokens to volunteers who use transit to fulfill volunteer duties
- One respondent suggested increased supervision to provide volunteers with more direction

13 respondents (23%) identified a concern or complaint that had negatively impacted their experience of volunteering. These comments focused on four issues: not feeling appreciated, problems with their coordinator/supervisor, staff turnover, and not having a space to work when at ACT.

Five respondents stated that they did not feel that their volunteering was properly appreciated by the agency. Two provided some detail, explaining that while their experience with staff within the program they volunteered with was positive, they did not feel appreciated by the agency overall, for example that other staff members don't greet them or are generally unfriendly (“as long as I did not directly work for one particular ACT staff, I don't feel as being part of the ACT team at large, even after months of seeing that staff regularly”).

It is clear from the survey responses that a volunteer's relationship with their program coordinator/supervisor is important in shaping their experience volunteering at ACT. Four respondents identified problems with a coordinator/supervisor (poor communication, little direction) as negatively impacting their volunteer experience (“some of the coordinators are excellent while some are difficult to find, don't answer questions, do not listen, do not follow through, and are generally disorganized”). Three of these respondents explained that they have volunteered in more than one program, and make decisions about which program to volunteer in based on their treatment by coordinators/supervisors.

Three respondents identified staff turnover as negatively impacting their experience of volunteering (“There is a high turnover rate of staff in men's health outreach, which makes it difficult to establish rapport”). It is possible that staff turnover affects a volunteer's morale, engagement with ACT, and feeling of being connected or in the loop. It is important that mechanisms be in place that ease the change volunteers experience when new staff members are transitioned in as volunteer coordinators/supervisors, and that volunteers don't feel lost in the turnover.

Lastly, two respondents expressed a concern about having a space within ACT offices (“I often find it

frustrating that I have to search for an office or room to use EVERY time I volunteer”). Space is certainly a concern for all staff within the agency, but volunteers who may not know the history of this issue at ACT, and who may only understand it as an issue for volunteers, may experience the lack of a set space for them to work as a sign that they are not fully appreciated. This is an important flag for staff who supervise volunteers - when possible, ensuring for and preparing a space for volunteers to work before they begin their shift should be a routine part of volunteer supervision.

RESULTS: SURVEY TWO

The second survey was designed to better understand the motivations of ACT volunteers, and if the volunteer program is structured so that volunteers goals are met. Drawing from information that emerged from our literature review and Survey One, this survey sought to address volunteers experiences of training, motivation, feelings of effectiveness, and ACT’s ability to recognize and understand volunteer’s needs - all critical to improving volunteer satisfaction, motivation, and retention.

Sent out via email in August 2009, volunteers were given two weeks to submit their responses. Fifty-five volunteers responded.

The following is a summary of volunteer responses from Survey Two. Please note that the comments offered by survey respondents do not represent the thoughts and feelings of all ACT volunteers. Rather, the following summary will offer a snapshot of what some ACT volunteers are thinking and feeling.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY AND TENURE AS AN ACT VOLUNTEER

The majority of people who responded to Survey Two have been ACT Programs and Services volunteers for between one and three years (36%). 11% identified as having volunteered for less than a year, 30% identified as volunteering for 4-6 years, and 16% identified as having volunteer for 7 - 10 years. 7% of respondents have been Programs and Services volunteers for 11 years or more.

How long have you been a Program and Services Volunteer?

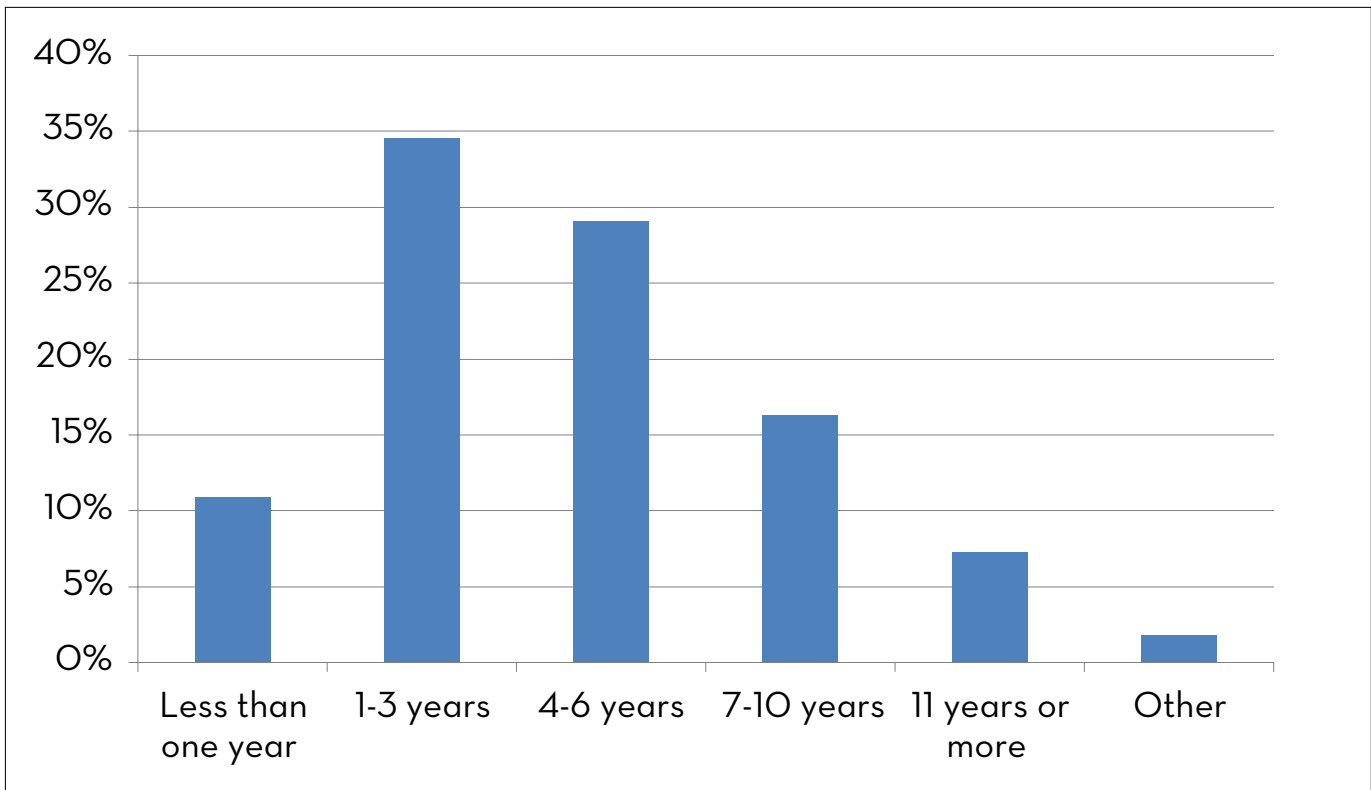


FIGURE 12 - SURVEY ONE

ACTIVE VS. NON-ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

The majority of survey respondents (83%) had volunteered within the past twelve months.

Those respondents who had not volunteered within the past twelve months (n=9) were asked to select and explain their reasons. Of those who responded:

- 5 respondents were “too busy to volunteer with ACT”
- 2 respondents left volunteering “for health or medical reasons”
- 1 respondent’s “position ended”
- 1 respondent “did not enjoy [his/her] role at ACT”
- 1 respondent “found that the work would trigger [him/her] emotionally or personally”
- 1 respondent “took a leave of absence and plans on returning to volunteer at ACT”
- 1 respondent became employed full time
- 1 respondent was not able to volunteer in the role/department that they wanted to work in

While the number of non-active volunteers is low, it is still important to examine their concerns and issues. The most common reason to stop volunteering is the commitment of time required. The volunteer program tries to accommodate people’s schedules with short-term volunteer opportunities (like condom stuffing), but many positions require a minimum commitment of 5 hours a month (plus training). Volunteers who are not happy in their role are encouraged to move to another program, but this is sometimes delayed by availability, training, or readiness on the part of the volunteer.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

ACT offers a diversity of volunteer opportunities in the Programs and Services Volunteer Program. By far, the majority of survey respondents volunteer in the Gay Men’s Outreach Program (36%) and with the front desk or Access Centre (31%). Other commonly cited volunteer programs include condom stuffing (29%) and Support Group Facilitation (27%). The majority of respondents (82%) indicated volunteering with 2 or more programs or services. It would be interesting to know how important a volunteer’s ability to change roles, or take on different volunteer positions within the agency is to their overall enjoyment or volunteering and engagement in agency. Future evaluations of the Programs and Services Volunteer Program will explore these questions.

How long have you been a Program and Services Volunteer?

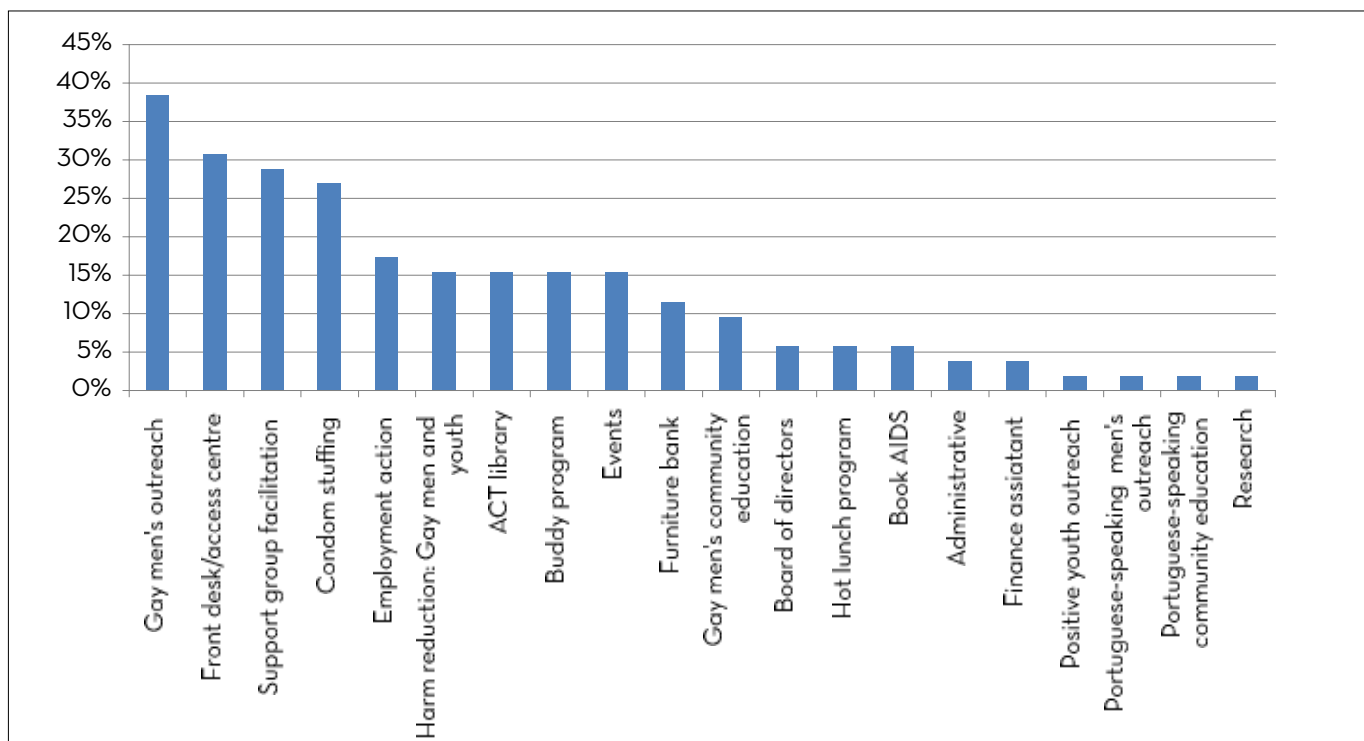


FIGURE 14 - SURVEY TWO

ENJOYMENT AND VOLUNTEERING AT ACT

93% of those who responded to our question about enjoyment and volunteering (n=41) noted that they enjoy volunteering at ACT. No respondent noted that they did not enjoy volunteering at ACT. Rather, 7% of those who responded to this question commented that they do not know if they enjoy volunteering at ACT. Respondents were offered an opportunity to elaborate on this.

Respondents noted that they enjoy volunteering at ACT because they:

- Feel appreciated (“It is such a friendly and appreciative organization. Any time spent volunteering is appreciated both verbally and through rewards such as recognition for long term service plus regular volunteer appreciation parties.”)
- Need or want the feelings of accomplishment and responsibility that volunteering at ACT offers them
- Agree with the philosophies behind ACT’s work (i.e. community-based, harm reduction and sex-positivity)
- Are proud of the work that ACT does
- Enjoy working with ACT staff, clients and other volunteers
- Feel like they are helping to address the causes and effects of HIV

Some respondents offered feedback related to lower levels of enjoyment with their experiences, including:

- The hours associated with certain volunteer positions (i.e. gay men’s bar outreach)
- Their own desire for more frequent volunteer opportunities
- One respondent described feeling that ACT was a male-dominated agency, and she found this challenging at times.
- One respondent described feeling as though ACT is losing contact with its founding mission and HIV positive clients (with ACT’s focus on prevention), which negatively impacts their enjoyment of volunteering.

ACT VOLUNTEER TRAINING

We asked volunteers if they felt they received adequate training from ACT to fulfill their volunteer position. 93% of those who responded to this question (N=41) noted that they think that they received adequate training from ACT to fulfill their volunteer position. Only one respondent noted that they do not think that they received adequate training (but did not elaborate on this). Respondents were offered an opportunity to comment on how ACT training helps them to fulfill their volunteer position. In general, volunteers enjoy ACT trainings. It is clear, however, that ACT volunteers vary considerably in their need for and desire to participate in training.

Training in general:

Many respondents commented that training at ACT is useful, is a great addition to their resumes, and (overwhelmingly) fun.

The in-service workshops and refresher courses were noted as being appreciated by and useful to volunteers. While some noted that continual learning is certainly necessary to fulfill their volunteer role to the best of their ability, the level of training offered by ACT is sufficient. Some respondents noted specific trainings that are offered by staff that are helpful. These include: The Facilitator Clinic, one-on-one support in the Access Centre and Joint Volunteer Outreach Training.

Core Skills Training:

Most respondents agreed that Core Skills is a useful training program and participating in it is a very positive experience (For example: “I love, love, love all the training!”). In particular, a few volunteers commented that participating in Core Skills was like taking part in “a journey of learning and self-discovery”. It was also noted that Core Skills is a positive vehicle for ensuring that all volunteers have a solid base of training. Some commented rightly that the generalized training may not prepare a volunteer to enter into specific programs and services. One respondent noted that the HIV 101ⁱⁱⁱ portion of Core Skills was a bit basic for them.

VOLUNTEERING AND THE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Recognizing that some individuals choose to volunteer to socialize and meet new people, ACT strives to support volunteers to develop and maintain social relationships through volunteerism. 75% of volunteers who responded to questions about social relationships noted that volunteering with ACT helps them to develop or maintain social relationships.

Of those who agreed that ACT succeeds in helping them to develop or maintain social relationships, some elaborated by noting that volunteering at ACT:

- Offers personal and professional networking opportunities
- Unites people with intersecting interests, values and vision. In particular, uniting people who care about HIV/AIDS was noted as a benefit of the volunteer program at ACT
- Helps to decrease social isolation associated with being a newcomer to Toronto or by helping to connect with others “in a similar situation”, such as being a gay man or HIV positive.
- Helps volunteers to meet new people from a diversity of communities and interact with people they might otherwise not have an opportunity to meet, such as people from different generations, communities or professional designations.
- Has professional and sensitive volunteer supervisors, which helps volunteers to feel supported and appreciated.

25% of respondents stated that volunteering does not help them to develop or maintain social relationships. Of those volunteers who responded that ACT did not help them to develop or maintain social relationships and who offered comments, most (6 of 7 respondents) noted that this was not their goal in volunteering: “my goal is not personal relationships.” One respondent suggested mixers for programs and services volunteers.

Some respondents made recommendations to ACT for ways to better support the development or maintenance of social relationships:

- Offer more events that allow programs and services volunteers specifically to interact (vs. all ACT volunteers).
- Offer opportunities to develop relationships with other volunteers in new ways, such as through a Facebook group
- Offer opportunities to meet volunteers in specific programs/departments. This is seen as important among some volunteers who volunteer in isolation, for example outreach volunteers doing a shift alone. Opportunities to meet other outreach volunteers are welcome.

ⁱⁱⁱ HIV 101 is the HIV/AIDS module of Core Skills Training and includes the basic information on: transmission, testing, treatment options, prevention, risk assessment, risk reduction and safer sex. It also explores how social, psychological, racial, economic, gender, and sexual orientation are connected to HIV/AIDS. The goal of this module is to provide volunteers with a basic overview and understanding of HIV/AIDS: those volunteers who will be taking on roles in Outreach and Prevention will cover these topics in more depth.

personal achievement is having an opportunity to challenge oneself and meet this challenge. Only three respondents indicated that no, volunteering with ACT does not offer opportunities for personal achievement.

Of those who agreed that ACT succeeds in offering volunteers the opportunity for personal achievement, some noted that:

- Volunteering helps them to move beyond their “comfort zone”, which can be associated with personal achievement. Examples of this include becoming more extroverted (For example: “I am more outgoing and able to talk to other gay men”) and learning how to interact well with people from different communities
- Volunteering offers opportunities to develop personal leadership qualities
- Volunteering offers opportunities to become educated in various ways, such as in learning computer skills or customer service skills, or in learning about other communities (For example: “understanding gay issues even though I am a straight/heterosexual male.”) or about HIV and the social determinants of health
- Volunteering can be very personally fulfilling, especially when volunteering in a role where interaction with clients is paramount (For example: “Seeing a Buddy grow and improve to a point where he could move on, on his own”, “Observing the growth of support group participants provides great personal satisfaction”)

Some respondents noted that having opportunities for personal achievement depends on the volunteer role. For example, some of the larger programs may be seen as having an “extensive structure, rules, procedures... and training”. This may manifest in a volunteer feeling restricted from conducting the work with one’s own style, and unable to develop and meet personal goals related to their volunteer position.

No respondents commented specifically about ways that volunteering at ACT does not offer opportunities for personal achievement. It should be kept in mind that opportunities for personal achievement is not necessarily a goal for all individuals volunteering with ACT.

VOLUNTEERING AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

68% of those who responded to the question about professional growth noted that volunteering with ACT offers them opportunities for professional growth. Examples of professional growth include building a resume or gaining experience to help find a job.

Of those who agreed that ACT succeeds in offering volunteers professional growth opportunities, some volunteers noted that:

- Their experience helped to build capacity to become a leader in the HIV/AIDS movement and/or find employment in an HIV-focused organization
- The skills gained through ACT training, workshops and conferences are seen as assets to employers
- The experience of volunteering itself is seen as an asset to employers
- Newcomers to Canada can benefit from volunteering at ACT professionally by gaining Canadian experience and improving language skills through their volunteer role
- Volunteering in certain positions helps individuals to perform their current employment position even better. For example, volunteer on the ACT Board of Directors can build management skills (planning, supervision, and financial and program monitoring skills, etc.)

33% of those who answered this question (n=14) noted that volunteering with ACT does not offer opportunities for professional growth. 8 of these respondents offered commentary on how ACT does not

offer volunteers professional growth opportunities and 6 of these respondents commented that they were not interested in professional growth. They identified as retired or not looking for employment, or do not volunteer for professional reasons. Two respondents spoke generally of the volunteer program and not their specific volunteer experience.

No respondents commented specifically that they wished to grow professionally and that ACT failed to support this. However, some volunteers commented that ACT can improve their ability to support professional growth by offering more training opportunities. Examples include conflict management, project and time management and human resources.

VOLUNTEERING AND “SERVING A COMMUNITY”

Although volunteers define “community” differently, responses reveal that many ACT volunteers are volunteering to support a community.

87% of those who responded to this question (n=38) noted that volunteering with ACT allows them to serve or support a community. Through open-ended responses, volunteers identified a diversity of communities as those that they volunteer “for”. Some respondents simply noted that they volunteer for their “own community”. The majority of respondents noted that they volunteer at ACT to serve or support the HIV movement in Toronto, ACT clients or the gay community. Other communities identified by ACT volunteers included clients, ACT staff, women living with or affected by HIV and community members who are unable to support themselves.

Of those respondents who included comments about their ability to serve a community, many included references specifically to Support Group Facilitation (“observing support group participants expand their life and provide more meaning is very satisfying”) and outreach (“many people approach with questions and I feel good having the answers”). Others identified that taking on administrative work allows them to feel that they serve the agency. Only one respondent described feeling unable to effectively serve people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS in terms of broader changes (“Yes and no! Yes, when I am helping to deliver tangible benefits [such as support, referrals, medical assistance, etc.] and No, when I am delivering intangible benefits [such as prevention, outreach, drug forums, etc.]”) This highlights the importance of grounding volunteer goals in tasks that can be completed effectively, and linking these everyday tasks to larger issues that shape HIV risk, and the experiences of people living with HIV.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Recognition of volunteers is a critical component to all volunteer programs. Of those who responded to the question “do you think that you are adequately recognized for your contribution to ACT?”, 84% said yes (n=37). Two respondents (5%) did not think that they are adequately recognized and 11% (N=5) did not know.

Respondents noted that one-on-one recognition and encouragement from ACT staff is important and often carried out (“for example: saying thank you!”). Regular supervision and feedback was also identified as important for volunteers to feel appreciated by their coordinator/supervisor. The ACT Volunteer Recognition party^{iv} was also mentioned as a wonderful event for volunteers and important to their recognition. Also mentioned by respondents: regular coverage of volunteer activities in ACT’s newsletter, holiday cards, and particular team activities (lunches with volunteers in the same program).

^{iv} ACT’s annual Volunteer Recognition Party celebrates the tremendous commitment and contributions made by the volunteers to the organization. The event is usually held in a venue that is located close to ACT and includes dinner, entertainment, door prizes and an excellent opportunity for volunteers to mingle with ACT staff and other volunteers in a social setting. ACT also acknowledges the contribution of volunteers to the organization with the Years of Service Awards that are presented every year at the AGM. Volunteers are recognized for their 5, 10, 15 and 20 Years of Service to ACT.

Of those respondents who suggested that ACT could do more to recognize the contribution to volunteers (2 respondents):

- One respondent suggested more coverage/promotion of volunteers on the ACT website
- One respondent suggested more opportunities to provide input on the development and implementation of ACT's programs and services stating that "after all, the volunteer bases is in large part coming from the very same representative group ACT calls clients. What better way to hear the voices of the clients than listening to the voices of the volunteers?"

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the two ACT volunteer satisfaction and experience surveys show that the majority of respondents are satisfied with their volunteering experience. The ACT volunteer program is successful in offering opportunities for developing and maintaining social relationships, personal and professional growth, and supporting a community. The results of ACT's two volunteer experience surveys offer a snapshot of a collection of ACT volunteers. If we agree that these survey responses are representative of the entire pool of volunteers currently active in the program, we can make some statements about the program in general.

The majority of volunteers enjoy volunteering, feel recognized and appreciated by ACT, feel that they receive adequate training, and feel that volunteering offers them opportunities for personal achievement. The three-stage selection and screening process allows the Program Volunteer Resources Manager to identify, with potential volunteers, their motivations and goals in volunteering, and ensure that a volunteer role can meet the candidate's needs. The training provided by ACT was reviewed positively by survey respondents and identified as sufficient for preparing volunteers for their roles and responsibilities. Both surveys show that the majority of volunteers remain active for several years (four+ years in Survey One and 1 to 3 years in Survey Two). The survey responses suggest that the structure of the volunteer program and the process for volunteers (from the initial engagement, training, placement and ongoing volunteering) are working well.

In examining the survey data and literature review, we found that satisfaction with volunteering at ACT was improved when the structure of the volunteer program took into account people's (changing) motivations for volunteering and when volunteer appreciation and recognition was embedded in the program's infrastructure and practice. Overall, we found that survey respondents were looking for a volunteer experience that felt "professional": a program structure that supports volunteers and the work they do, ensuring volunteer roles are clearly defined, provides sufficient training, consistent communication, and volunteers receive ongoing feedback and supervision from staff. The three-step intake process also ensures that motivations for volunteering are assessed by both the Manager of Program Volunteer Resources and the potential volunteer.

While none of the survey respondents (for either Survey One or Survey Two) identified the professional structure as a barrier, the volunteer management team is aware that the intensity of the intake process and training may pose challenges, especially for individuals from marginalized groups. Factors such as time, language skills, and socioeconomic status can impact on an individual's ability to participate in the current program. While there are some opportunities for these individuals to engage (events, condom stuffing), opportunities for a more flexible intake and training process are consistently reviewed and explored.

Drawing from the survey responses, volunteers identified a number of key issues that should be considered as part of ongoing program development. These recommendations include:

- The relationship between volunteers and their staff coordinators/supervisor has a profound impact on the volunteers overall experience with the agency. Making sure coordinators/supervisors have the necessary skills and resources to provide adequate supervision, provide clear direction, and are generally available to meet with volunteers should be a priority for the volunteer program. The current structure of the Volunteer Management Team is an important means to ensuring this end.
- Regular communication is important for volunteers to feel connected and engaged with the organization. Survey respondents commented on the value of direct communication with both the Program Volunteer Resources Manager and their program specific coordinator/supervisor.
- Staff turnover can negatively affect a volunteer's experience of volunteering. It is important that mechanisms be in place that ease the change volunteers experience when new staff members are transitioned in as their coordinators/supervisors, so volunteers don't feel lost in the turnover.
- Volunteers need to feel that a space has been made for them within the ACT office. When possible, ensuring for and preparing a space for volunteers to work before they begin their shift should be a routine part of volunteer supervision.
- Several respondents stated that they would like more opportunities to interact with other programs and services volunteers, particularly those volunteers whose volunteer role requires that they work alone. Offering more networking opportunities for volunteers is a recommendation.
- Some respondents identified that they would like more opportunities to provide feedback on their experience volunteering at ACT (beyond the evaluations that they may complete for the specific programs or services they volunteer with). One option could be to provide annual opportunity to for feedback, in the form of a survey or focus groups.
- Volunteers who do not volunteer for a specific program or service, identified feeling disconnected to the agency, and even unappreciated. One way to ensure they are not left feeling isolated within the agency is to ensure they have a designated staff coordinator/supervisor responsible for their supervision.

FURTHER QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

In general, ACT volunteers are satisfied with their experiences volunteering with the organization, including recruitment, training and recognition. However, through this process, a number of questions emerged. Should further opportunities for research on the volunteer program be undertaken, we recommend exploring the following issues:

1. Anecdotally, ACT volunteers display diversity in gender, sexuality and ethnocultural community of origin or identity. However, the majority of respondents identified as male (73%) gay or lesbian (65%) and Caucasian/White (74%). Given the nature of the survey and how it was distributed, these results may or may not reflect the demographics of the overall pool of ACT programs and services volunteers. In order to understand how representative the demographic profile produced by Survey One is, an analysis of the entire programs and service volunteer pool would have to be undertaken. We recommend a closer examination of this issue and of the experience of volunteers from racialized communities (do they feel supported and well trained, are they absent from the volunteer pool and why). We also recommend an analysis of what “diversity”, in the context of volunteering, means for ACT, and how it might be better achieved.
2. The Act Programs and Services Volunteer Program operates under the assumption that volunteer retention is an indicator of volunteer satisfaction. It would be useful to assess the validity of this assumption. We would like to know if volunteer satisfaction changes over time, and if so, how (are motivations, expectations, and needs different for volunteers who have been volunteering for 1 one year compared to volunteers who have been volunteering for 4 or more years?)
3. The ACT Programs and Services Volunteer Program operates under the assumption that many individuals volunteer in order to gain Canadian work experience and/or build their resume and skill set. Indeed 67% of Survey Two respondents agreed that volunteering with ACT offers them opportunities for professional growth. It would be interesting to explore the relationship between work and volunteering, specifically in terms of those individuals living with HIV and/or newcomers. If this is a goal for volunteers, does volunteering at ACT allow individuals to better engage in the paid workforce?
4. The issues and questions that emerged in this process have much in common with human resources concerns of most organizations. It would helpful to examine how volunteer work differs from remunerated work for ACT volunteers. A recent study looking at the experience of people living with HIV/AIDS volunteering with ASOs found that volunteer work provides PHAs with many of the advantages of remunerated work (higher quality of life), while at the same time avoiding some of the barriers or difficulties PHAs may experience if returning to the job market (loss of long-term disability, little flexibility, stigma)¹¹. It would be helpful to specifically examine the experience of volunteers who are HIV+ in order to better understand what their volunteer experience can tell us about obstacles or barriers to remunerate work, and how ACT can better advocate for work environments that meet the needs of people living with HIV.
5. One of goals of the volunteer program is to integrate individuals into the HIV movement and become agents for social change. We would like to examine the role that the ACT Programs and Services Volunteer Program plays in building engagement and leadership in a movement that includes ACT, and goes beyond this organization, as well as how this might be improved.

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APPENDIX 1: VOLUNTEER APPLICATION



act VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Join our Dynamic Team! ACT programs and services are generously supported by a fabulous team of 900+ volunteers who commit their time and energy to increase a higher quality of services to the community. Without the hard work of ACT's volunteers, we would not exist.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Please complete all parts of this form. Please print clearly. All volunteers information & files are kept strictly confidential, available only to ACT staff & volunteers. If you have any questions about this application, please contact the Program Volunteer Coordinator at (416) 340-8484 Ext: 224. Thank you for your interest in ACT.

Contact Information

Please only list addresses and/or phone number where it's OK us to send you mail or leave you messages.

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Middle Initial _____

Apt./Street _____ Mailing Address _____

City _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

Home# () _____ Business# () _____

Cel# () _____ Business# () _____

Primary Email _____ Alternative Email _____

How did you hear about volunteering with us? Select all that apply

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ACT Publication | <input type="checkbox"/> ACT Bulletin Board | <input type="checkbox"/> Coming into ACT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone Book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ad in Xtra! | <input type="checkbox"/> Ad in FAB | <input type="checkbox"/> Daily Newspaper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Service/Healthcare Provider | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Bulletin Board |

If you heard of volunteer opportunities from an ad featured in another publication, please specify which one:

APPENDIX 1: VOLUNTEER APPLICATION



act VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Skills Information: (Enclose a resume if available)

Volunteer History:

Agency	Position	Dates

Employment History:

Company	Position	Dates

Education History:

School	Program	Dates

APPENDIX 1: VOLUNTEER APPLICATION



act VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Skills I would like to Use at ACT:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting/Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> CPR/First Aid training | <input type="checkbox"/> Lotus B\Notes familiarity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult education training | <input type="checkbox"/> Dietician/Nutritionist | <input type="checkbox"/> Media relation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising/Marketing Experience | <input type="checkbox"/> Data entry | <input type="checkbox"/> Office administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal care/Veterinarian | <input type="checkbox"/> ESL tutoring/Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Performing arts training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural/Environment Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment management | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographer/Videographer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artist | <input type="checkbox"/> Even management | <input type="checkbox"/> Project Coordinator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audiovisual technician | <input type="checkbox"/> Event security | <input type="checkbox"/> Public relations/Communications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bartending/Waiting tables | <input type="checkbox"/> Government relations | <input type="checkbox"/> Publishing/Print production |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chef/Food preparation | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic design | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading/Writing Braille |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Group facilitation experience | <input type="checkbox"/> Research skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical/Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality training | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail/Merchandising experience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Literate | <input type="checkbox"/> Housekeeping training | <input type="checkbox"/> Shipping/Receiving experience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Income tax | <input type="checkbox"/> Stage Construction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MAC | <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Program _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> International Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Translation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy writing/Editing/Proof-reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Website Maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate sales | <input type="checkbox"/> Library skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Costume design | <input type="checkbox"/> License {car/general} | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counselling | <input type="checkbox"/> License {limosine/bus/truck} | _____ |

Equipment that I have access to that would assist me in my work at ACT:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Car | <input type="checkbox"/> Home Desktop Publishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Truck/Van |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HomeComputer | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography Equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Specify) |
- _____

Education History:

Written	Spoken/Signed	Read



act VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Volunteering with Us:

Please tell us about why you would like to volunteering with the AIDS Committee of Toronto:

Please describe your experiences(s) with and/or connections to HIV/AIDS (Personal or professional):

As a volunteer, what do you hope to gain?

APPENDIX I: VOLUNTEER APPLICATION



act VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Of the following Areas, Which would interest you?

Fundraising/Development Opportunities:

- Administrative Support/Office Support
- AIDS Walk
- Fashions Cares
- SNAP!
- Event Sub-committee
- Pre-event

Program Areas:

- Administrative Support
- Front Desk
- Portuguese Speaking Community Programs
- Employment Services
- Board of Directions
- Gay Men's Programs
- International Development
- Research & Evaluation
- Practical Assistance Programs
- Tax/Insurance Benefits Clinic Consultant
- Library & Information Service
- Group Facilitation
- Women's Program
- Youth Programs

General Availability:

Hours Per Week:

- Less than 3
 3-5
 6-10
 Over 10

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

For Program volunteer positions, are you prepared to make a commitment of at least one year to ACT?

- Yes
 No

Please provide the names and telephone numbers of two references, other than family members:

(1) Name _____ Telephone () _____

(2) Name _____ Telephone () _____



act VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Getting Back to Us:

Your Signature: _____

Date: _____

Send this signed and dated to:

OR

Fax to:

Volunteer Services

(416) 340-8224

AIDS Community of Toronto

399 Church Street

Toronto, Ontario

M5B 2J6

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX II: SURVEY ONE - VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2008

1. Have you volunteered for ACT in the last 6 months?

- Yes
- No

2. How long have you been a volunteer with ACT?

- less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- more than 4 years

3. How did you hear about volunteering with ACT?

- ACT publication
- ACT Bulletin Board
- Coming into ACT
- Friend
- Website
- Phone Book
- Ad in Xtra!
- Ad in FAB
- Daily Newspaper
- Outreach
- Service/Healthcare Provider
- Community Bulletin Board
- Other (please specify)

APPENDIX II: SURVEY ONE - VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2008

4. Why did you decide to volunteer with ACT? (Check all the reasons that apply to you from the list below)

- To help people
- To help ACT
- To learn new skills/gain new knowledge
- To improve my resume
- Someone told me to volunteer
- To improve my health
- To fight against HIV/AIDS
- To meet new people
- To get job-related experience
- To do something useful
- To make a contribution
- No reason
- Other (please specify)

5. Please check all the Programs in which you have volunteered in the past 12 months.

- Access Centre - Info Desk
- Board of Directors
- Communications
- Employment Action - Computer Training
- Employment Services
- Finance - Office Support
- Gay Men's Harm Reduction
- Gay Men's Outreach
- Gay Men's Community Education
- Youth Outreach
- Positive Youth Outreach
- HIV Health Promotion
- Library
- Portuguese-Speaking
- Community Education

APPENDIX II: SURVEY ONE - VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2008

- Portuguese-Speaking Men's Outreach
- Practical Assistance - Furniture Bank
- Practical Assistance - Book AIDS
- Practical Assistance - Medical Drives
- Hot Lunch Programs
- HIV and Dementia Program
- Support Groups
- Wellness Program - Women's Coffee Night
- Women's Community Education
- Research
- Other (please specify)

6. On average, how many hours per month do you volunteer at ACT?

- less than 5 hours per month
- 5-9 hours per month
- 10-14 hours per month
- more than 14 hours per month

7. What training have you received from ACT to support your volunteer activities? (Check all that apply)

- Core Skills Training
- Program specific training (e.g Gay Men's Outreach)
- In-Service Training workshops
- On the Job Training
- Not sure if I received any training
- Have not received any training

APPENDIX II: SURVEY ONE - VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2008

8. Answer the questions based on your overall experience of volunteering at ACT. Check the space that corresponds to your answer.

	No/Never	Little/Seldom	Average/Sometimes	Mostly	Totally/Always	Don't know
Does (Do) your program coordinator (s) provide clear instructions or direction about your work?						
Is (Are) your program coordinator(s) easy to get along with?						
Is (Are) your program coordinator(s) available when you need to talk with him/her (them)?						
Did the training you received from ACT help you to perform your volunteer duties?						
Does (Do) your program coordinator (s) provide the training that you need?						
Does ACT appreciate your contributions as a volunteer?						

APPENDIX II: SURVEY ONE - VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2008

	No/Never	Little/Seldom	Average/Sometimes	Mostly	Totally/Always	Don't know	
Does (Do) your program coordinator (s) appreciate your contributions as a volunteer?							
Do you feel welcome at ACT?							
Does (Do) your program coordinators make you feel like a part of the team?							
Do you feel informed about things that are relevant to your volunteer duties at ACT?							
Do you feel informed about what's happening at ACT?							
Does volunteering at ACT raise your awareness of HIV/AIDS?							
Do you enjoy volunteering at ACT?							

APPENDIX II: SURVEY ONE - VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2008

9. When was the last time that you volunteered?

- less than a year ago 1-2 years ago more than 2 years ago

10. What is the main reason you have not volunteered more recently or stopped volunteering? (List all that apply)

- I didn't have time to volunteer
 I wasn't enjoying it
 It wasn't interesting enough
 I wanted to do something different
 My health was not good
 I didn't get along with staff
 I didn't get along with other volunteers
 My contribution wasn't needed any longer
 I didn't feel appreciated
 It didn't fit my schedule
 I had difficulty getting to ACT
 It was time to move on
 Other (please specify)

11. Do you plan or intend to start volunteering at ACT again?

- Yes, within a year
 Yes, within 2 years
 Not sure
 No

12. How do you receive news or information about what's happening at ACT? (Check all that apply to you from the list below)

- ACT newsletter
 ACT e-Bulletin
 Report To Donors
 e-mails from the Program Volunteer Coordinator
 e-mails from my Program Coordinator(s) at ACT
 Telephone calls from the Program Volunteer Coordinator
 Telephone calls from my Program Coordinator(s) at ACT
 Bulletin boards at ACT
 Bulletin boards at community agencies

APPENDIX II: SURVEY ONE - VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2008

- Community events
- From talking to other volunteers
- From face-to-face conversations with my Program Coordinator(s)
- Conversations with ACT staff
- From ACT's website
- From gay community newspapers or magazines (e.g., Xtra! or FAB)
- From regular media (TV, newspaper, etc.)
- Other (please specify)

13. What is your age group?

- less than 20 years old
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70 years or older

14. What is your current employment status? (Check all that apply)

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Self employed
- Student
- Retired
- On disability support
- Unemployed

15. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Transman
- Transwoman
- Other (please specify)

APPENDIX II: SURVEY ONE - VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2008

16. What is your sexual orientation?

- Gay/Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Heterosexual (straight)
- Not sure/questioning
- Other (please specify)

17. What is your HIV status?

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know

18. What is your highest level of schooling?

- Elementary/grade school
- Some secondary/high school
- Completed secondary/high school
- Some university or college
- Completed university or college

19. Which ethnic/cultural group do you most identify with? (Check only one)

- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- East Asian
- South East Asian
- South Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Caucasian/White
- First Nations/Aboriginal
- Arabic
- Portuguese-Speaking
- Other (please specify)

APPENDIX II: SURVEY ONE - VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2008

20. What languages do you speak and understand well? (Check all that apply to you)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Urdu |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Hindi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Nations/Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mandarin | <input type="checkbox"/> Tamil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cantonese | <input type="checkbox"/> Polish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Korean | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukrainian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> Russian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese | <input type="checkbox"/> Arabic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian | <input type="checkbox"/> American Sign Language |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

21. How long have you lived in Canada?

22. Please rate the following question.

	Very much	Somewhat	Not much	Not at all	Don't know	
Does volunteering at ACT decrease your social isolation?						

23. Does volunteering at ACT increase your involvement in the community?

- Yes
 No

24. We welcome your comments or suggestions about volunteering at ACT or about ACT in general.

Comments:

25. If you are HIV Positive, please answer the following question. How long have you been living with HIV?

- Under 1 year
 2-5 years
 5-10 years
 10 or more years
 Not applicable

APPENDIX III: SURVEY TWO – VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2009

*1. How long have you been a Programs and Services Volunteer?

- Less than one year
- 1 - 3 years
- 4 - 6 years
- 7 - 10 years
- 11 years or more
- I have never been involved in the ACT Programs and Services Volunteer Program

Comments?

2. Please indicate in which programs you have volunteered:

- Front Desk/Access Centre
- Board of Directors
- Employment Action: Computer Class Trainer
- Employment Action: Computer Class Coordinator
- Employment Action: Resume Coach
- Employment Action: Interview Coach
- Employment Action: ESL Tutor
- Finance Assistant
- Harm Reduction: Gay Men and Youth
- Gay Men's Outreach
- Gay Men's Community Education
- Positive Youth Outreach (PYO)
- ACT Library
- Buddy Program
- Hot Lunch Program
- HIV and Dementia Program
- Support Group Facilitation
- Furniture Bank
- Medical Drives Program
- Book AIDS

APPENDIX III: SURVEY TWO – VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2009

- Income Tax Clinic
- Portuguese-Speaking Men's Outreach
- Portuguese-Speaking Community Education
- Condom Stuffing
- Women's Coffee Night
- Research
- Program Volunteer Resources
- Other (please specify)

*3. Have you volunteered with ACT in the past 12 months?

- Yes
- No

Comments?

4. If you have not volunteered in the past six months, why not? (Please select all that apply)

- My position ended (i.e. support group that finished its term, a project that was completed, etc.)
- I am/was too busy to volunteer with ACT
- I left volunteering for health or medical reasons
- I moved outside of Toronto
- I did not enjoy volunteering at ACT
- I did not enjoy my volunteer role at ACT
- I did not feel qualified to fulfill my role
- I did not know what other roles might suit me
- I did not know how to ask for or find training to help me feel qualified to fulfill my role
- I did not know who to ask for advice about other volunteer opportunities at ACT
- I found that the work would trigger me emotionally or personally.
- I took a leave of absence and plan on returning to volunteer at ACT
- Other (please specify)

APPENDIX III: SURVEY TWO – VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2009

To help us improve our Volunteer Program and to help serve the needs of our volunteers, please tell us more about your reason for not volunteering with ACT:

Comments:

5. As an ACT programs and services volunteer, does volunteering help you to develop or maintain social relationships?

Yes

No

We need to learn more! If volunteering with ACT helps you to maintain or develop social relationships, please describe how volunteering does this. If not, please let us know if you think that ACT can do a better job at this or if this is not your goal in volunteering. Comments:

6. As an ACT programs and services volunteer, do you think that you are offered opportunities for personal achievement? For example, does volunteering allow you to challenge yourself and meet that challenge? Did you feel like you accomplished something when you completed your training? Do you feel like you have achieved something personally after an outreach shift?

Yes

No

We need to learn more! If volunteering with ACT has offered you opportunities for personal achievement, please describe how volunteering does this. If not, please let us know if you think that ACT can do a better job at this or if this is not your goal in volunteering.

Comments:

7. As an ACT programs and services volunteer, do you think that you are offered opportunities for professional growth? For example, does volunteering help you to build your resume? Does it offer you experience that will help you find a job or perform your job better?

Yes

No

We need to learn more! Please explain how volunteering has offered you opportunities for professional achievement. Please let us know if we can do this better and how. Please also indicate if you do not volunteer for professional growth opportunities.

Comments:

APPENDIX III: SURVEY TWO – VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2009

8. Who, if anyone, do you feel you are serving or working to support when you volunteer with ACT?

Comments:

9. Are you able to serve them as an ACT volunteer?

- Yes
- No

10. Why or why not?

Comments:

11. Do you enjoy volunteering at ACT?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Comments (please tell us more!):

12. Do you think that you received adequate training from ACT to fulfill your volunteer position?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Comments (please tell us more!):

13. Do you think that you are adequately recognized for your contribution to ACT?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Comments (please tell us more!): _____
