




How ACH volunteers contribute

Volunteers are highly engaged cultural participants

They are far more likely to attend, create and produce ACH activities. These volunteers are not just helpers – they are core audience members and active contributors to cultural life.



Volunteering is widespread in the ACH sector, with 1 in 4 New Zealanders (24% of respondents) giving their time to ACH activities in the past year.



Arts, culture, or heritage events / activities attendance is higher among volunteers.

96%

of ACH volunteers attended ACH events or activities, compared with 85% of non-volunteers.



Creating and producing arts, culture, or heritage events / activities is strongly linked to volunteering.

69%

of those who volunteered for ACH also created or produced ACH activities, compared with 31% of non-volunteers.

On average, these volunteers give 1 hour of their time a week, aligning with the national trend towards shorter, more flexible volunteering (as found by Tūao Aotearoa Volunteering New Zealand, 2026).





Different ages, different ways to volunteer

35% Young adults (18–29yrs) volunteer in ACH

Top motivations for volunteering were:

- 56%** – Giving back to the community
- 48%** – To follow my interests
- 40%** – To gain work experience
- 32%** – To make friends

Younger adults were motivated to volunteer by a range of reasons, but more likely to volunteer for social and work experience reasons compared to other age groups.

Types of activities volunteered for:

Younger adults report volunteering across a wider range of ACH activities:

- 39%** – Cultural festival or event support
- 35%** – Museum / gallery / heritage place visitor host
- 31%** – Art and craft events
- 31%** – Theatre, dance, or music support

Estimated volunteering hours

Over typical 4-week period (median):

5 hours

With the majority going to ngā toi Māori (Māori arts e.g. carving, weaving, kapa haka, whaikorero) activities.

21% Middle-aged adults (30–59yrs) volunteer in ACH

Top motivations for volunteering were:

- 66%** – Giving back to the community
- 39%** – To follow my interests
- 30%** – To improve my wellbeing
- 28%** – To promote ACH activities

Like older adults, this age group are more motivated by supporting community. However, like younger adults, they are more likely to say work experience and socializing are important reasons.

Types of activities volunteered for:

Middle-aged adults report volunteering across fewer ACH activities compared to younger adults:

- 38%** – Cultural festival or event support
- 23%** – A workshop or class about a cultural or creative activity
- 23%** – Theatre, dance, or music support

Estimated volunteering hours

Over typical 4-week period (median):

4 hours

With equal spread across all volunteer activities.

22% Older adults (60+yrs) volunteer in ACH

Top motivations for volunteering were:

- 80%** – Giving back to the community
- 55%** – To follow my interests
- 39%** – To improve my wellbeing
- 29%** – To promote ACH activities

Giving back to community was a significant driver for volunteering in older adults, more so than any other reason.

Types of activities volunteered for:

Older adults report volunteering across a more focused range of ACH activities compared to other age groups:

- 33%** – Cultural festival or event support
- 23%** – A workshop or class about a cultural creative activity
- 15%** – Theatre, dance, or music support

Estimated volunteering hours

Over typical 4-week period (median):

5 hours

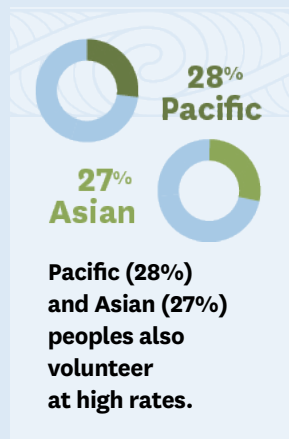
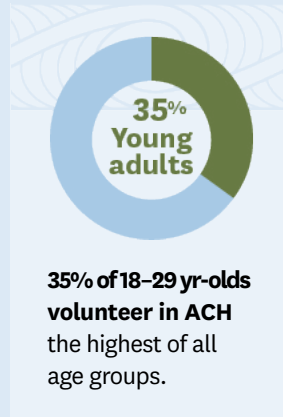
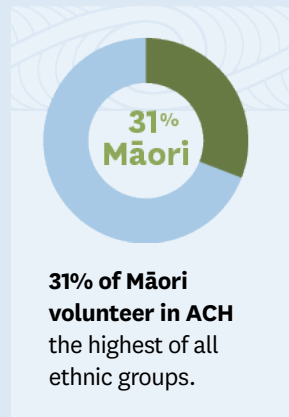
With majority going to museum / gallery / heritage place visitor host and heritage or tāonga preservation.



Key insights

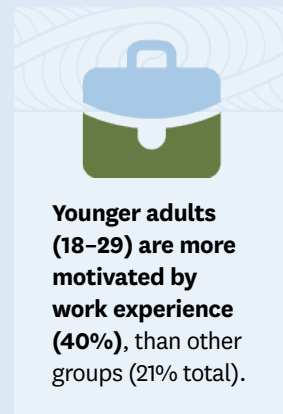
Younger adults and Māori stand out as the groups most likely to give their time to ACH activities

While 24% of New Zealanders overall volunteer, these groups participate in much higher rates, showing their strong connection to cultural activities and community life.



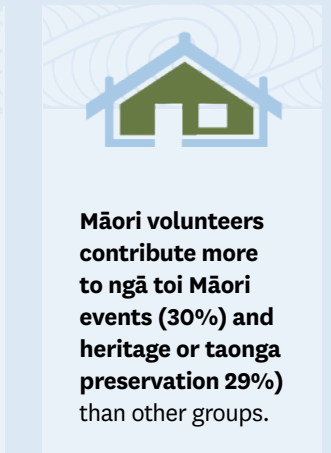
Giving back is the strongest reason for volunteering (67%)

But different groups emphasise other reasons for getting involved.



Cultural festivals or event support is the most common volunteer activity across all groups (37%)

But different communities contribute in different ways. Younger volunteers tend to spread their time across a wider range of ACH activities, while Māori volunteers show particularly strong involvement in cultural preservation and supporting ngā toi Māori.



*For more detailed data and breakdown please see page 5.



Data

| What are the reasons why you volunteered for an organisation, group or community for arts and cultural activities? | Total | 18–29 yrs | 30–59 yrs | 60+ yrs |
|---|--------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Number | 472 | 108 | 247 | 117 |
| To give back to the / my community | 67% | 56% | 66% | 80% |
| To follow my interests / passions | 46% | 48% | 39% | 55% |
| To improve my wellbeing / health | 33% | 32% | 30% | 39% |
| To help promote and preserve arts, cultural, heritage, creative activities or ngā toi Māori. | 28% | 29% | 28% | 29% |
| To make friends | 25% | 32% | 22% | 23% |
| Because a friend asked me to join | 23% | 30% | 22% | 16% |
| To gain work experience | 21% | 40% | 18% | 5% |

| What types of arts and cultural activities or events have you supported through time given or volunteering in the last 12 months? | Total | 18–29 yrs | 30–59 yrs | 60+ yrs |
|--|--------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Number | 472 | 108 | 247 | 117 |
| Cultural festival or event support | 37% | 39% | 38% | 33% |
| Theatre, dance or music performance support | 23% | 31% | 23% | 15% |
| A workshop or class to teach about a cultural or creative activity | 21% | 16% | 23% | 23% |
| Museum / gallery / heritage place visitor host | 20% | 35% | 16% | 10% |
| Art or craft shows or events | 19% | 31% | 14% | 14% |
| Heritage or tāonga preservation | 16% | 27% | 14% | 9% |
| Commemorations or national celebrations | 16% | 16% | 16% | 15% |
| Ngā Toi Māori (Māori arts) events | 14% | 23% | 11% | 9% |
| Film festivals or screenings | 9% | 14% | 8% | 6% |
| Literary or creative writing events | 8% | 14% | 8% | 2% |

References

[Creative New Zealand \(2025\). Audience Atlas Aotearoa New Zealand 2025.](#)

[Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage \(2026a\). Economy Te Ōhanga Evidence Brief.](#)

[Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage \(2026b\). New Zealanders Cultural Participation in 2025.](#)

[Statistics New Zealand \(2023\). General Social Survey Wellbeing Statistics 2025 \(update\).](#)

[Tūao Aotearoa Volunteering New Zealand \(2026\). State of the Decade of Volunteering.](#)