

# Talking Points: Census of choral activity in Canada



Choral Canada  
Association of Canadian  
Choral Communities

Canada Choral  
Association des communautés  
chorales canadiennes



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- The **goal of the choral census** was to **develop a detailed and accurate picture of the vast and diverse Canadian choral community**. A national choral census had never been done before in Canada!
- Choral Singing is a **part of our national identity like Maple Syrup, Poutine and Hockey!**
  - 3.5 million Canadians sing in choirs.
  - That's about 10% of the national population!
  - If "Choristers" was a city in Canada, the population would be 27% bigger than the population of Toronto—the biggest city in Canada!
- **There are about 28,000 choirs of all kinds in Canada**, from coast to coast to coast.
  - There is a report that details how this number of choirs was estimated. It's actually 27,700 but we rounded up.
  - 851 choral organizations representing 1,541 choirs and singing groups from all provinces and territories, completed a detailed online survey as part of the census project. These choirs are listed in the report, and demonstrate the diversity of choirs in this nation.
  - Choir singing opportunities in Canada are as diverse as we are as a country. There are choirs of all kinds for all ages. Professional choirs to professions (like nurses) that sing.
  - 9% of choirs are professional or community choirs; most choirs in Canada are church (63%) and school choirs (28%)
  - There are choirs in over 300 communities ALL over Canada
- **Music Education matters:** when people participate in music programs in school, they grow up 2.5 times more likely to have their own children in a choir. They are 7 times more likely to sing in a choir themselves, and twice as likely to attend choral performances!
- Data suggests **a decline in the participation in choral opportunities for younger Canadians** over the years. 41% of Canadians currently over the age of 65 sang in a choir when they were of school age. Only about 30% of Canadians between the ages of 18-24 sang in a choir when they were in school.
- Choral participation in schools is the highest in the lowest income range. All the more reason for choral programs in schools! **Choir may be the only music lessons available to lower income children!**
- **Research conducted by Kelly Hill, Hill Strategies Research** in 2017. He has much experience working in this field, and is a leading researcher in the Canadian arts sector. Kelly publishes his arts sector research on [www.hillstrategies.com](http://www.hillstrategies.com)
  - Our census was funded primarily by Choral Canada and Canada Council for the Arts, and a few private donors.
  - Choral Canada's Advocacy Committee worked on the project, advising and guiding Kelly's work.

### 3 different parts to the census:

- 1) Survey of 2,000 Canadians 18 or older (2017)
- 2) Random sample of 864 schools and 977 churches (2017)
- 3) Detailed survey of 861 Canadian choral organizations representing over 1500 choirs and 60,000 singers (2017)

- In Fall 2015 we surveyed 61 choral leaders in Canada, to find out what they most wanted to glean from a national choral survey. At Podium in Edmonton, 2016, we gathered input on census questions from more than 100 delegates at a sold-out “Census Power Hour” breakfast event. The data reflects what people told us they wanted to know.
- This census offers useful and valuable data that could raise the profile of choral singing in Canada.
  - The infographics and data can be used to represent to all levels of government, and internationally, the status of choral music in Canada at this time.
  - data benefits provinces, territories, individual organizations and institutions by demonstrating how vast the choral community is in Canada.
  - data inspires choirs to build connections, widen networks, build audiences, develop sponsors and funders
- We DID NOT seek to find the percentage of **economic impact in relation to GDP**, because even though this dollar amount would seem huge, as a percentage of GDP, it would only be a fraction of a percent. (this advice comes from Kelly Hill, our researcher)
  - Look: in Canada, ALL ARTS, including big media, contributed \$53.4 billion to GDP in 2010. This is *a mere 3.4% of total Canadian GDP*. Choirs would be a fraction of a percent of this. Same with percentages of total employment in choirs. In all of Canada, arts sector contributes about 707,000 jobs, or 4.1% of total employment in Canada. Choirs would be a small fraction of this 4.1%. (you can read more here [http://www.hillstrategies.com/sites/default/files/Alliance1\\_background.pdf](http://www.hillstrategies.com/sites/default/files/Alliance1_background.pdf))
- Data HAS been broken out **by province or region** where it was possible to do so. You can find these reports here: <https://goo.gl/pVQP3b>, or contact your Provincial Choral Organization for the report.
- Many stakeholders wanted to find out “the going rate” for **compensation of choral-related work**. This turned out to be a complex issue because of the different ways that choral positions are compensated- hourly versus monthly versus annual compensations. Data collected indicates that choir positions are undervalued and under compensated. **34% of choirs are totally volunteer run.**
- There are already many scientific studies about the health and social benefits of choral singing. We did not focus on this perspective in the census. Tell your OWN story about how choir singing has changed you or one of your singers’ lives!

Infographics that you can use in concert programs or presentations, and census summary reports that you quote, are available for download at [choralcanada.org](http://choralcanada.org) or <https://goo.gl/pVQP3b>