

# Civic Engagement

This section addresses the theme of civic engagement, the extent to which and how Millennials are involved in civic life and the communities in which they live. Specific topics include: volunteer activity, charitable giving, membership in organizations and clubs, and social trust.

## Volunteering

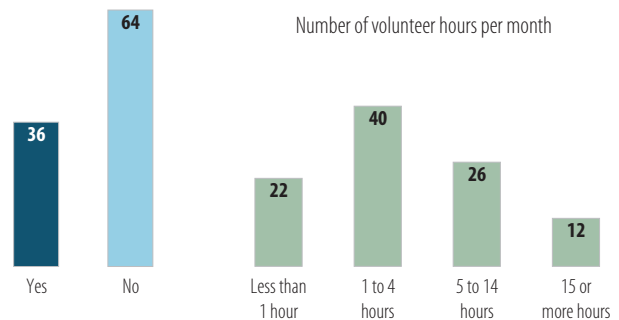
*Just over one-third of Millennials have volunteered in the past year, with most giving less than five hours of time per month. They are most likely motivated to give back to their community, but many also cite the value of personal or professional development. Many haven't volunteered because they lack the time, but some say no one has ever asked them or they don't know how to get involved.*

**Volunteering effort.** One important type of civic engagement is volunteering one's time for an organization, group or cause. Just over one-third (36%) of Millennials report having done unpaid volunteer work for an organization in the past 12 months. Of this group, the extent of involvement varies, based on the numbers of hours of volunteer work per month. Six in ten say they have given small amounts of their time – less than an hour per month (22%) or between 1 and 4 hours per month (40%). One in ten (12%) have made a more substantial commitment, giving 15 or more hours per month.

Across the generation, the likelihood of doing any volunteer work over the past year varies in some predictable ways. Most significantly it is linked to education: Millennials with a graduate degree (50%) are twice as likely as those without a high school diploma (25%) to report volunteer work. It is also more apt to be the case for younger Millennials, current post-secondary students, and those who are not yet parents, while least evident among Quebecers, and those who identify as white or Indigenous.

Social values also make a big difference: Volunteer activity is reported by half of Engaged Idealists (51%) and New Traditionalists (51%), followed closely by Diverse Strivers (47%); it is much less a common activity among Bros & Brittanys (22%) and Lone Wolves (21%).

## Volunteered your time in past 12 months?



Among Millennials who have done any volunteer work over the past year, the time commitment is more evenly distributed, but there are some notable exceptions to the general pattern of engagement. Some of the groups least apt to do any volunteer work are also the ones most likely to put in 15 plus volunteer hours per month, notably Quebecers, Millennials with less education and lower household incomes, and Lone Wolves. This also applies to those whose ethnic background is South Asian or “other,” and New Traditionalists. Millennial volunteers most apt to put in a token effort (less than 1 hour per month) include those employed full-time, ethnic Chinese and Bros & Brittanys.

**Type of volunteer activity.** Millennials who report volunteering their time in the past 12 months have done so in a variety of ways. The most common include organizing or supervising events and activities (37% of this group, or 13% of all Millennials); canvassing or fundraising (25%); and teaching, educating or mentoring (24%). Some other forms of volunteering encompass “white collar” activities such as serving on a committee or board, communications (research, writing) and office work, while others get involved in hands-on types of support such as delivering or serving food, maintenance and repair, coaching sports, and providing health care supports (e.g., elder or child care).

The type of volunteer activity varies somewhat across social values tribes. Engaged Idealists (the most active volunteers) are especially likely to report organizing events, teaching or mentoring (along with New Traditionalists), serving on a board or committee (along with Critical Counterculturists) and doing communications work. Critical Counterculturists are the tribe most apt to be helping with office work (bookkeeping, administrative), while Bros & Brittany are most prominent in coaching or refereeing sports and recreation activities.

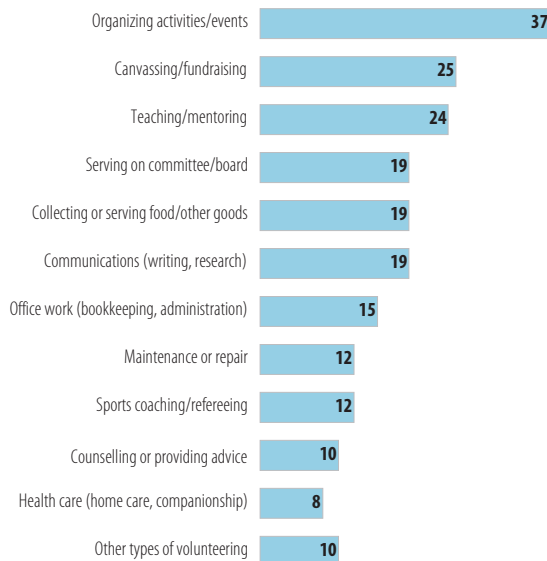
**Reasons for volunteering.** Millennials give a range of reasons for why they have volunteered over the past year, and they can be categorized into two broad types. Most common are reasons pertaining to making a contribution or because of an obligation. Included are the desire to give back, because they or someone else has been affected by the issue or cause (e.g., a disease like cancer), because they have been asked by a friend or someone else to help, because family or friends are also volunteering, and to fulfill a religious obligation.

The other category of reasons for volunteering pertains to furthering one’s own development and growth. This includes achieving a sense of accomplishment, using one’s skills and experiences, exploring one’s own strengths, networking and meeting people, and improving one’s health or well-being.

The range of reasons for volunteering is evident across all parts of this generation, with some variation. Making a contribution/giving back is most widely cited by older, more educated Millennials, and women, while networking benefits are more apt to be cited by younger individuals, current students and immigrants, and ethnic Chinese.

## Types of volunteer activity

Those volunteering in past 12 months



## Reasons for volunteering

Those volunteering in past 12 months

TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION/ SUPPORT A CAUSE	
Make a contribution/give back	55
You/someone has been affected by issue/cause (e.g., cancer)	32
Asked by friend to volunteer	26
Family/friends already volunteer	24
Support a particular cause	24
Fulfill religious obligation	11
FOR PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
Sense of accomplishment	47
Use experiences and skills	41
Explore personal strengths	25
Network/meet people	24
Improve job opportunities	24
Improve well-being or health	21

Across tribes, Critical Counterculturists are the most likely of all groups to emphasize making a contribution (77%) and supporting a particular cause (63%). Engaged Idealists are the most apt to mention making a contribution, gaining a sense of accomplishment, using their skills and experience, and networking, while it is mostly New Traditionalists who volunteer to fulfill religious obligations (38%).

**Reasons for not volunteering.** Those who have not volunteered in the past 12 months (64% of the Millennial generation) give a number of reasons for not doing so, which fall within a few broad themes:

- The most common response is a **lack of time or availability** (53% say they did not have time, and 22% mention they couldn't make a long-term commitment). These reasons are most commonly cited by more established individuals (employed, parents, more education and income), those with Chinese or "other" ethnic backgrounds, as well as Engaged Idealists and New Traditionalists.
- The second biggest type of reason is a perceived **lack of opportunity**: 35 percent say they haven't volunteered because no one asked them, and another 23 percent say they didn't know how to get involved. Not knowing how to get involved is emphasized by younger Millennials and students, as well as South Asians and Critical Counterculturists. Men and self-employed Millennials are among those most likely to say they were never asked to volunteer.
- One-quarter (24%) indicate a **lack of interest** in volunteering. This group is most apt to include men, residents of Atlantic Canada and Quebec, ethnic Chinese, Lone Wolves and Bros & Brittany.
- A similar proportion mentions **external barriers** in the form of financial costs/affordability (11%), health limitations (11%) and lack of available child care (1%). Health barriers are most common among women, those with the least education and income, and Indigenous individuals.
- One in six (14%) say they would **prefer to give money** instead of time. Predictably, this reason is most apt to come from Millennials who are employed full-time and in the top income bracket.

### *What do you get personally out of the volunteer work that you do?*

For me, what I get out of volunteering is a satisfaction that I'm doing something that I know I love and that I'm passionate about, so for example, when I tutor I know that education and promoting higher learning and reaching someone's full potential has been something that's made a difference in my life. – Diverse Striver (female, 24, Ontario)

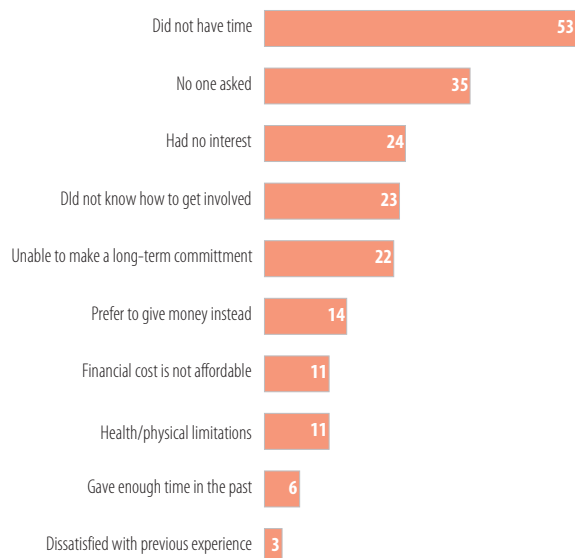
I don't have that much volunteer experience, but I have done some volunteering through my university to participate in orientation week and the planning of that, which is very enjoyable for me. – Bro & Brittany (female, 22, Nova Scotia)

I get a great satisfaction for helping and giving back to the world. – Diverse Striver (female, 22, Ontario)

With the economic situation the way it is, some of us in my generation are having to volunteer to get the kind of experience we need to get into the careers that we're in school for. – Engaged Idealist (female, 31, Ontario)

### Reasons for not volunteering

Those not volunteering in past 12 months



- One in ten (9%) cite **previous experience with volunteering** as the reason for not doing so this past year (gave enough time in the past, dissatisfaction with previous experience). This type of reason is most apt to be given by Millennials of Chinese and South Asian backgrounds, and Diverse Strivers.

## Benchmark Comparisons

How does volunteer activity among Millennials compare with that for older generations in Canada, based on results to the same questions on the 2013 General Social Survey?

**Volunteer activity in the previous 12 months.** The incidence of volunteering in the past 12 months is notably stable across generations (37% for Millennials aged 15 to 34, 37% for Gen-Xers, 35% among Boomers). Millennial volunteers are somewhat more likely than Gen-Xers to put in at least 5 hours per month (57% versus 54%), but trail behind Boomers (62%).

**Reasons for volunteering.** Millennials are more likely than their older counterparts to volunteer because their friends are doing it, to network, for job opportunities and to explore their strengths. They are less apt to do so because someone they know has been personally affected (e.g., by a disease), and to improve their health and well-being. These differences are modest, with the exception of seeking job opportunities.

**Reasons for not volunteering.** Millennials who have not volunteered in the previous 12 months are more likely than older generations to say this is because no one asked them, because they did not know how to do so, and because they have no time for it. They are less apt to give as reasons health limitations, inability to make a long-term commitment to volunteering, and a preference to give money instead of time.

## Charitable giving

*Two-thirds of Millennials have made donated money or goods in the past year, although relatively few have given more than \$300. Charitable giving is tied to household income, but also social values, with New Traditionalists among the most generous. Online contributions are the most common, but many have also given through workplace and charity events, and in response to in-person appeals.*

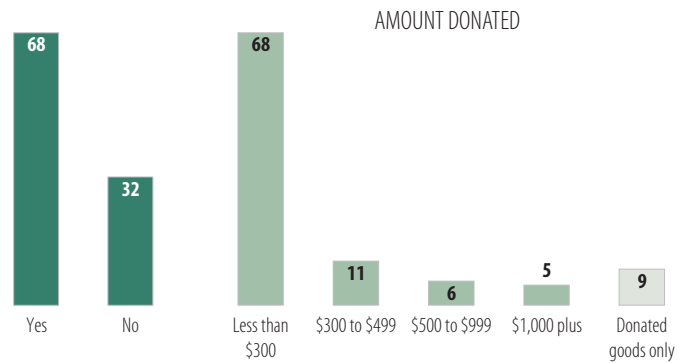
**Charitable donations in past 12 months.** Two in three (68%) Millennials across Canada say they have donated money or goods to an organization or charity in the past 12 months. Of this group, most (68%) have given less than \$300, with only one in ten (11%) reporting contributions of \$500 or more. A comparable proportion (9%) say they have donated only goods over the past year.

As would be expected, charitable giving is partly a function of household income, as well as education (the two being closely linked). Incidence of donations are reported by almost eight in ten (78%) Millennials earning \$100K or more, but also by a majority (57%) of those earning less than \$30K. Individuals without a high school diploma (26%) are the ones most apt to say they have donated only goods in the past year.

Across the country, giving is more widespread among women (72% versus 63% of men) and residents of Alberta (75%), while lowest in Quebec (62%). In no identifiable group, however, do fewer than half of Millennials report donating money or goods in the past year. Donating money or goods is only modestly related to giving of one's time as a volunteer (it is reported by 74% of those who have volunteered over the past year, compared with 66% of those who have not done so).

Across social values tribes, New Traditionalists are the most generous, with 80 percent having donated something, and 20 percent of this group giving \$1,000 or more (much of which may have been directed to their religious denomination). Engaged Idealists and Critical Counterculturists are close behind (77% and 75%, respectively, have donated something), but few in these tribes have donated more than \$500 in the past year. Just over half of Bros & Brittanys (64%) and Lone Wolves (57%) have made contributions, and only three percent of these groups have given amounts of \$1,000 or more (in comparison to one in ten who say they have donated goods only).

### Charitable donations in past 12 months?



**Method of giving.** Those who have made contributions over the past year were asked about the methods by which they did so (from a list provided, along with space to add other options). Given the digital life of Millennials, it is no surprise that a majority (54%) have made contributions via online channels (including crowdfunding websites, by text and email). At the same time, just as large a proportion have made donations offline in various venues, including workplace events (26%), on the street or the doorstep (22%), while attending charity events (22%) and elsewhere (9%).

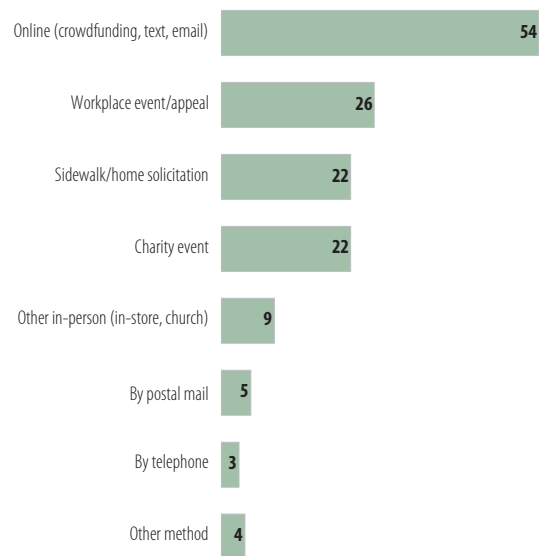
By comparison, very few report making charitable contributions by postal mail (5%) or in response to a telephone solicitation (3%).

Online donations are common across the generation, but most widespread among Millennials with higher levels of education and income, and ethnic Chinese (61%), as well as among Engaged Idealists (56%) and Critical Counterculturists (59%).

Engaged Idealists and Diverse Strivers are the tribes most apt to give at charity events, while New Traditionalists are overrepresented among those who give in-person (e.g., at their place of worship).

## Method of making donation

Those donating money/goods in past 12 months



## Benchmark Comparisons

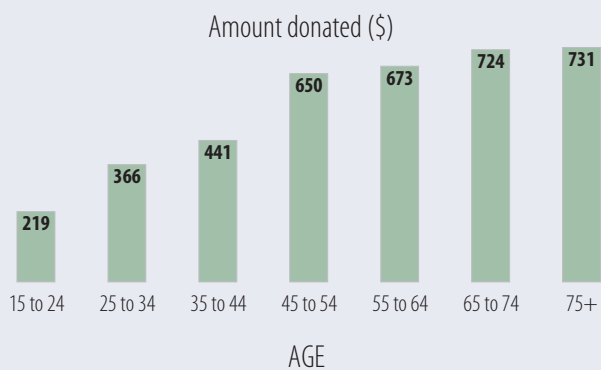
How does volunteer activity among Millennials compare with that for older generations in Canada, based on results to the same questions on the 2013 General Social Survey?

**Charitable giving.** The incidence of charitable giving in the past 12 months is somewhat lower among Millennials (aged 21 to 34) (72%) in comparison with Gen-Xers (79%), Boomers (81%) and Elders (82%).

The average annual amount donated increases steadily along with age. In 2012, Canadian Millennials 25 to 34 gave on average \$366 to charitable organizations and causes, which is about half the amount given by those aged 65 and over.

## Average amount donated to charitable causes

Those donating in past 12 months, by age cohort\*



\* 2013 General Social Survey (Statistics Canada)

## Group membership

*Fewer than half have participated in local community organizations or informal groups in the past year, most commonly unions/professional associations and sports/recreation clubs. Group membership rises along with educational attainment and employment, and is most evident among ethnic Asians and those social values tribes most actively involved in other forms of civic engagement.*

Another form of civic engagement entails membership or participation in groups and organizations, which may be formally constituted, or simply groups of individuals who get together regularly for activities or discussion. Among Canadian Millennials, such activity is common but by no means the norm. Fewer than half (46%) report to have participated in any of nine broad types of organizations/groups in the past 12 months (participants were also given the chance to identify other types of groups not specified in the survey). Among those with such involvement, 30 percent indicate involvement in only one type of group, with the remainder (16%) mentioning two or more (the average number of groups is 1.5).

Across the nine types of groups, Millennials are most likely to belong/participate in unions or professional associations (18%), and sports or recreational leagues/clubs (14%). Smaller proportions are involved with religious groups, local community associations (including school and neighbourhood groups), arts and culture organizations, political parties or groups around political causes, and youth-focused organizations (e.g., Big Brothers/Big Sisters, YMCA).

Overall group participation or membership varies across the generation, most notably by educational attainment: Participation in at least one group is reported by fewer than three in ten (28%) without a high school diploma, rising to 65 percent among those with a graduate degree (half of whom belong to more than one group). Participation is also more widespread among those employed (versus looking or not looking for work), as well as among residents in Western Canada (51%, mostly with with religious and sports organizations), with membership lowest in Quebec (40%).

Country of birth and ethnicity also make a difference. Immigrants (51%) are somewhat more likely than native-born (46%) Millennials to belong to at least one group. And such activity is most evident among those ethnically Chinese

## Group member or participant in past 12 months

ORGANIZATION/GROUP TYPE	%
Union or political association	18
Sports or recreational club/league	14
Religious group	9
School group/neighbourhood/civic/community association	8
Cultural/educational or hobby organization	7
Arts organization or collective	4
Political party or group	4
Youth organization (Big Brothers, YMCA)	4
Other type	3
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More than one group	16
One group	30
No group	54

(notably unions or professional associations) and South Asian (religious, arts, political and youth-oriented groups). South Asians are also the most likely to have participated in more than one group (26%).

Social values are also a significant factor in understanding Millennials participation in groups and organizations, consistent with other forms of political and civic engagement. In this case, it is New Traditionalists who are the most active (68% belong to at least one group), largely because of their involvement with religious communities (38%) but not exclusively (24% of this tribe belong to more than one group).

Majorities of Engaged Idealists (56%), Diverse Strivers (54%) and Critical Counterculturists (52%) belong to at least one group, with the group profiles generally similar (although it is Critical Counterculturists who are most apt to be involved with politics). In contrast, comparatively few Bros & Brittanys (38%) and Lone Wolves (30%) report having participated in any group or organization in the past 12 months, and no more than one in ten from either tribe mentions more than one category.

## Benchmark Comparisons

The survey question about group membership was based closely on the 2013 General Social Survey, providing the basis for comparing Millennials' participation with that of older generations in Canada. Overall participation levels are notably similar across generations, in terms of the likelihood of reporting membership in one or more groups.

In terms of the group type, there is variation in a predictable pattern: Millennials are more likely than Gen-Xers or Boomers to report involvement in sports and recreation, schools and community groups, and youth-oriented organizations, and somewhat less apt to belong to unions or professional associations, and cultural or educational groups.

## Social trust

*One-third of Millennials believe most people can be trusted, a smaller proportion than older generations. Trust in others is most closely linked to higher levels of education and with related social values tribes. Immigrants and South Asians in particular are among the most optimistic about recovering a lost wallet or purse, with this view least apt to be shared by Quebecers.*

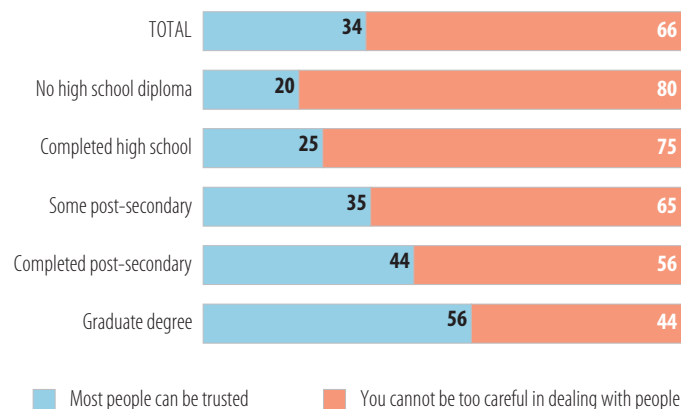
Beyond involvement in specific activities and organizations, civic engagement also encompasses a broader sense of belonging to one’s community and acceptance by others. This is often what is described as “social capital,” which refers to the vibrancy of social networks, and the extent to which there is trust and reciprocity within a community and among individuals. There is ample evidence that high levels of such reciprocity, trust and connection are not simply ‘feel good’ notions, but key ingredients to making communities productive, healthy and safe. This study included two well-established measures of social trust in other people.

**General trust in other people.** One in three (34%) Millennials ascribes to the view that “most people can be trusted,” with two-thirds (64%) saying instead “you cannot be too careful in dealing with people.”

As with other results presented in this study, perspectives on this question are closely related to educational attainment in a linear fashion: trust in others is the view of only 20 percent who do not have a high school diploma, more than doubling to 56 percent among those with a graduate degree.

Along with education, a similar pattern can be observed with the related factors of household income, income adequacy and employment status. As well, general trust is more evident among men (38% versus 30% among women), Millennials without children (38%), ethnic Chinese (44%), B.C. residents (42%, compared with 25% in Quebec), and those who belong to one (39%) or more than one (47%) group/organization. There are no differences across age sub-cohorts, or between native-born and immigrants to Canada. Across social values tribes, general trust in others is most widespread among the two most educated groups: Critical Counterculturists (53%) and Engaged Idealists (47%), while least evident among Bros & Brittanys (28%) and Lone Wolves (29%).

General trust in other people  
By educational attainment



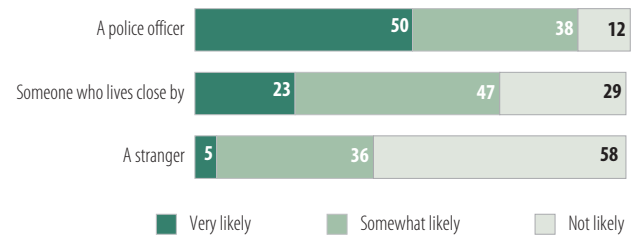
**Recovering a lost wallet or purse.** One of the most well-known indicators of social capital measures people's confidence in having a lost wallet or purse containing \$200 returned by each of several types of individuals (someone who lives close by, a police officer, and a stranger).

Predictably, Millennials' confidence in recovering a lost wallet with money inside varies significantly depending on who might find it. They are most likely to say it is very likely that their lost wallet/purse would be returned by a police officer (50%), with about half as many anticipating this outcome if it was found by someone living close by (23%). Very few (5%) expect they would ever see it if recovered by a stranger.

Trust in recovery from a **police officer** is comparatively strong across the generation, but rises modestly with educational attainment and household income. It is also stronger among immigrants (55% versus 49% among native-born), and residents in western Canada (58%, compared with 50% in Ontario and only 38% in Quebec). New Traditionalists (58%) are the most trusting in police, with Lone Wolves (44%) least apt to share this view.

Confidence in recovering a lost wallet or purse from **someone living close by** follows a similar pattern. A very likely return is most apt to be expected by Millennials with more education and income, as well as by immigrants (27%) and South Asians (29%), and residents of Manitoba and Saskatchewan (32% versus only 16% in Quebec).

## How likely are you to recover a lost wallet/purse from ... ?



Among social values tribes, it is Diverse Strivers (30%), Engaged Idealists (28%) and New Traditionalists (27%) who express the most confidence in recovering a lost wallet or purse from a neighbour, compared with Critical Counterculturists (18%) and Lone Wolves (14% versus 38% in this group who believe this is not at all likely).

Finally, trust in a **stranger's** good deeds is low across all Millennials. In this case, education and income do not make much of a difference in saying a recovery is very likely, but those with higher levels are less apt to conclude it is not at all likely. South Asians (14%) and Diverse Strivers (10%) are the groups most apt to believe it is very likely that a stranger would return their lost wallet or purse, with Quebecers (72%), Bros & Brittanys (65%) and Lone Wolves (68%) among those most likely to believe this is not a likely outcome.

### Benchmark Comparisons

The same measures of social trust have been asked on other surveys in recent years, providing the basis for comparison across generations (although direct comparison with the current survey is not possible because of differences in survey mode).

**General Social Survey 2013.** Results from this national survey show that Millennials are less trusting than Gen-Xers or Boomers, both on general trust and expectation of recovering a lost wallet or purse, most notably in the case of someone living close by (with Boomers the most confident in all cases).

**Focus Canada 2012.** The results from this Environics Institute national survey also shows lower levels of trust among Millennials with respect to recovering a lost wallet or purse, but only a small difference in terms of general trust in others. This survey also found notable differences in social trust by education level and by region, with the lowest trust levels in Quebec.