

2024 CANADIAN REPORT GIFTS IN WILLS

An analysis of 8,172 Wills revealed the most frequently bequeathed items among Canadians.

GIFTS IN WILLS

Gifts in Wills, or bequests, are asset transfers individuals specify in their Last Will and Testament, taking effect after their death.

To understand Canadians' gifting preferences, we generated data based reports from 8,172 Wills in our database, with no personally identifiable information.

This study reveals the most common bequests among Canadian testators, offering insights into their priorities and values regarding their legacies.





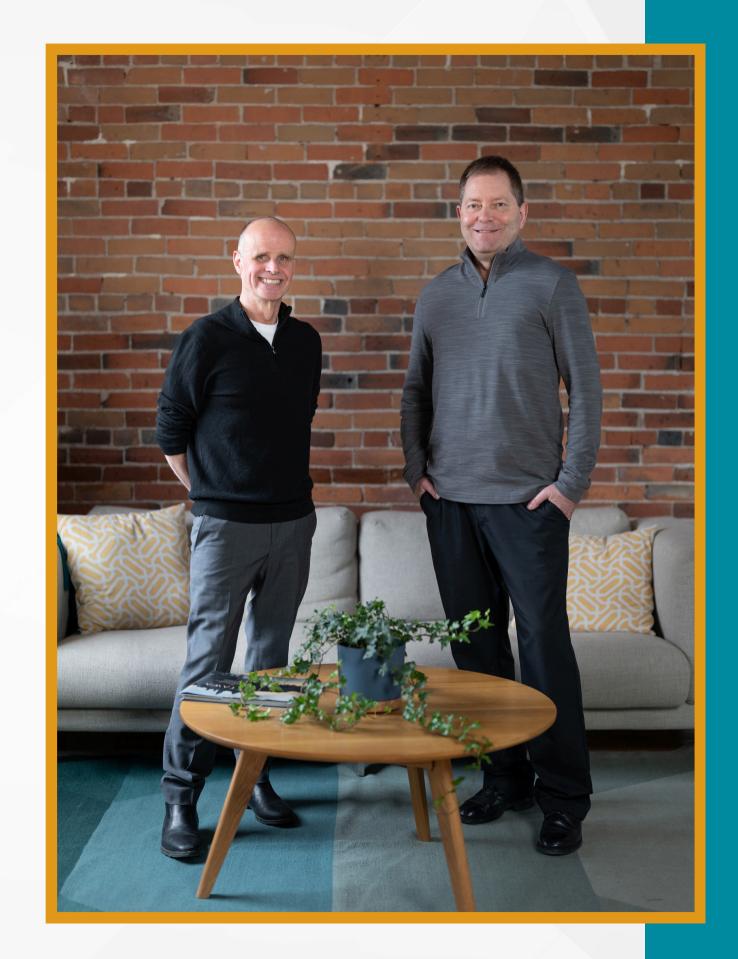
OUR HISTORY OF GIFT GIVING

In 2014, LegalWills became the **first company** to offer **charity donations** directly through our online Will service.

Since then, Canadians have donated millions of dollars to charities through LegalWills' platform.

By including charitable bequests in their Wills, our users have helped fund essential programs, advance medical research, support environmental initiatives, and contribute to countless other causes.

LegalWills is proud to have facilitated this remarkable legacy of giving, helping Canadians make a meaningful difference for future generations.





THE IMPORTANCE OF LEAVING A GIFT

Leaving a gift in your Will is a powerful way to create a lasting legacy.

Many individuals choose to leave a bequest as a meaningful expression of their values, ensuring that the causes closest to their hearts continue to benefit from their generosity long after they are gone.

Whether it's supporting animal welfare, medical research, or community organizations, these gifts allow people to make a significant impact that endures for future generations.









WHY PEOPLE LEAVE BEQUESTS

People choose to leave gifts in their Wills for many reasons. For some, it's about giving back to the organizations that have supported them or their loved ones throughout their lives.

For others, it's a way to ensure that the causes they are passionate about continue to thrive.

Bequests provide an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution that may not have been possible during their lifetime, allowing individuals to make a lasting mark on the world.











THE IMPACT ON CHARITIES

For charities, bequests are a crucial source of funding. These gifts often account for a significant portion of their revenue, enabling them to continue operations, launch new programs, and achieve longterm goals.

From funding medical breakthroughs to supporting vulnerable communities, bequests help organizations fulfill their missions and expand their reach. Without these gifts, many charities would struggle to maintain the same level of service and impact.

By leaving a bequest, individuals can ensure that their support will live on, making a difference for years to come.







Bequests often come without strict conditions, allowing charities the flexibility to allocate funds where they are most needed, whether for urgent projects or long-term initiatives.



Large bequests can help charities build financial reserves, providing a safety net during times of economic uncertainty or fluctuations in regular donations.



Bequests allow charities to enhance existing programs by improving resources, increasing outreach, and supporting better outcomes for the communities they serve.



THE METHOD

The provided dataset contained 15,124 rows. Data was cleaned to extract the monetary value from bequest types.

Duplicate cases, and cases where either charities were not listed or could not be identified were removed. Further filtering was performed to provide a working dataset of 13,338 rows from Wills across all provinces and territories in Canada.

Charities were allocated via automation and manual curation to the following categories:



Animal



Health



Arts



Hospital Foundations



Community



International Aid



Education



Political organizations



Environment



Religious

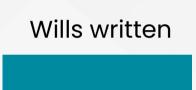


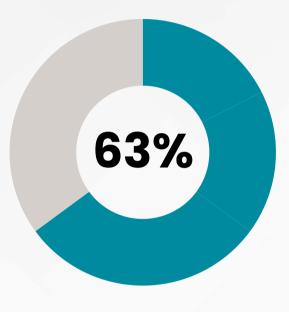
Special Interest

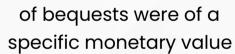


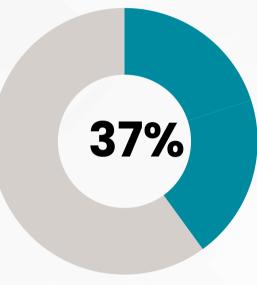
DATA **OVERVIEW**

8,172

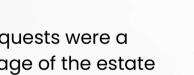








of bequests were a percentage of the estate



of bequests detailed a specific asset

<1%



mean residual gift value

\$44,982



million CAD bequested

2,588

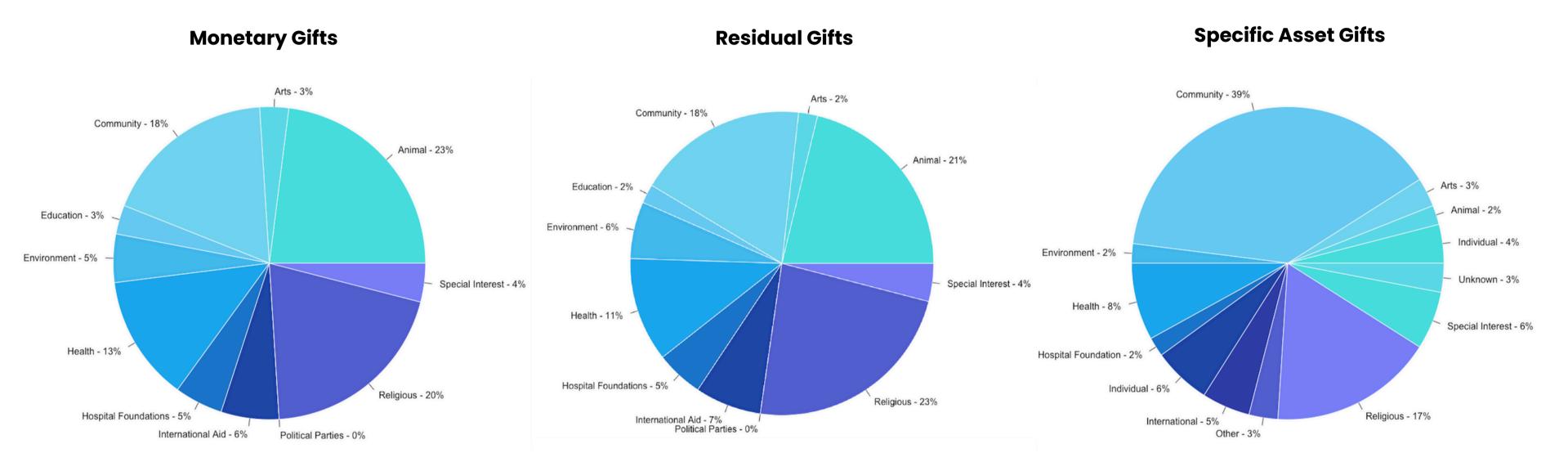
Wills feature more than one bequest

44

Wills feature more than ten bequests



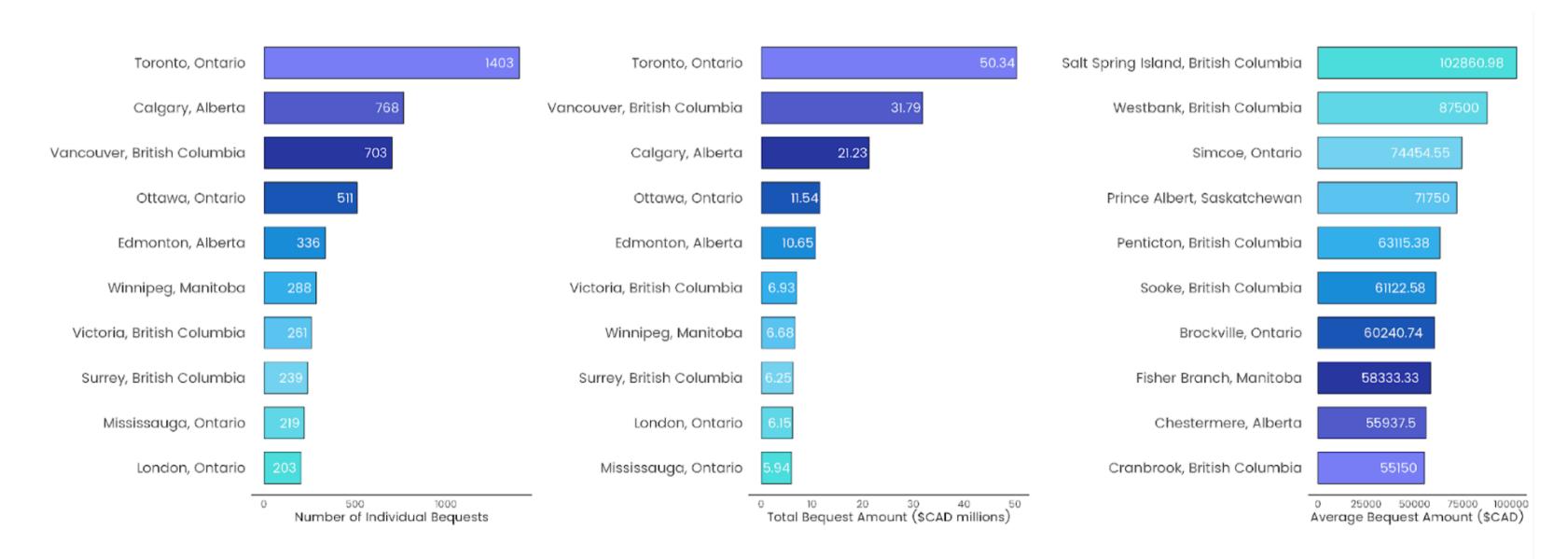
SECTOR BREAKDOWN



- •Sector breakdown across monetary and residual gifts are almost identical. Bequests of specific assets are skewed towards community charities
- •Some assets are bequeathed to individuals or organizations that could not be identified.

LOCATION BREAKDOWN

Toronto leads in philanthropic giving by total volume and number of charitable donations*. However, its ranking drops when considering the average donation size, suggesting the city's charitable impact stems from numerous smaller contributions. Salt Spring Island stands out differently, with an impressive average donation of \$102,860 derived from 41 individual gifts.



^{*} of locations with over 10 bequests



LOCATION STATISTICS

2x Toronto, Ontario has at least twice as many bequests as any other city

500+ Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, and Ottawa are the only cities to feature more than 500 bequests

Fort Langley, British Columbia has the largest single bequest amount

409 Cities have only a singluar bequest

Cities have more than 50 unique bequests



STAND OUT CANADIAN CITIES

CITY**	MOST POPULAR CHARITY	TOTAL CHARITIES	SMALLEST BEQUEST	LARGEST BEQUEST	NUMBER OF MONETARY BEQUESTS	NUMBER OF RESIDUAL BEQUESTS	NUMBER OF ASSET BEQUESTS*
TORONTO	Toronto Humane Society	1196	\$1	\$1,000,000	836	557	10
OTTAWA	Ottawa Humane Society	413	\$1	\$350,000	316	192	3
VANCOUVER	BCSPA	588	\$20	\$2,000,000	425	275	4
EDMONTON	Edmonton Humane Society	276	\$5	\$1,000,000	214	118	4
HALIFAX	SPA	124	\$3	\$750,000	93	36	3

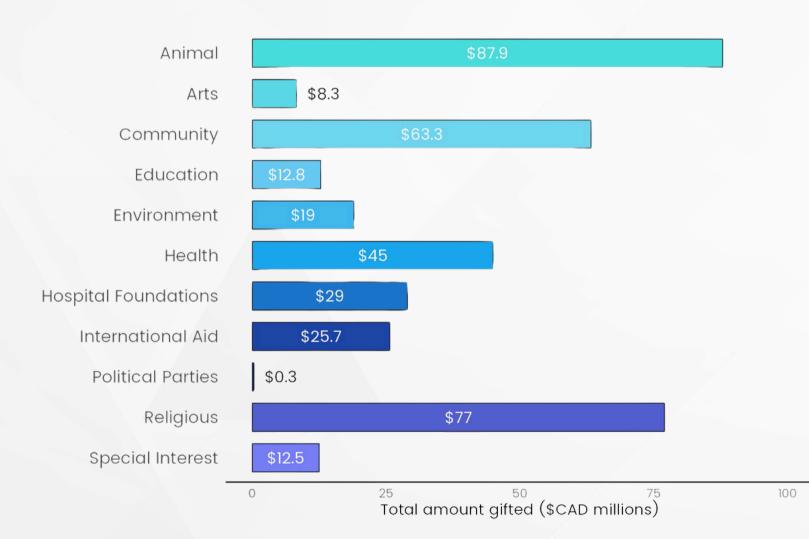
^{*} specific assets with direct monetary value

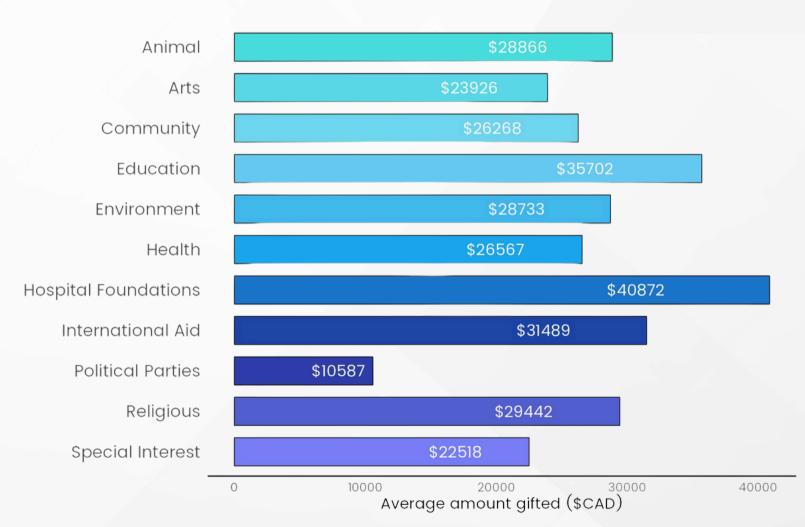


^{**} Includes the Metropolitan area of each city

COMBINED GIFTS*

- Animal charities received the largest amount of monetary bequests, totalling almost \$88 million, followed by religious and community organizations at \$77 and \$63.3 million, respectively.
- Political parties and organizations received the least monetary bequests at \$300,000.
- When considering gifts within each charity, the average monetary gift was greatest for Hospital Foundations followed by Education and International Aid.
- Combined with total amount gifted figures, this suggests that Animal, Community and Religious charities benefit from a larger number of smaller donations.



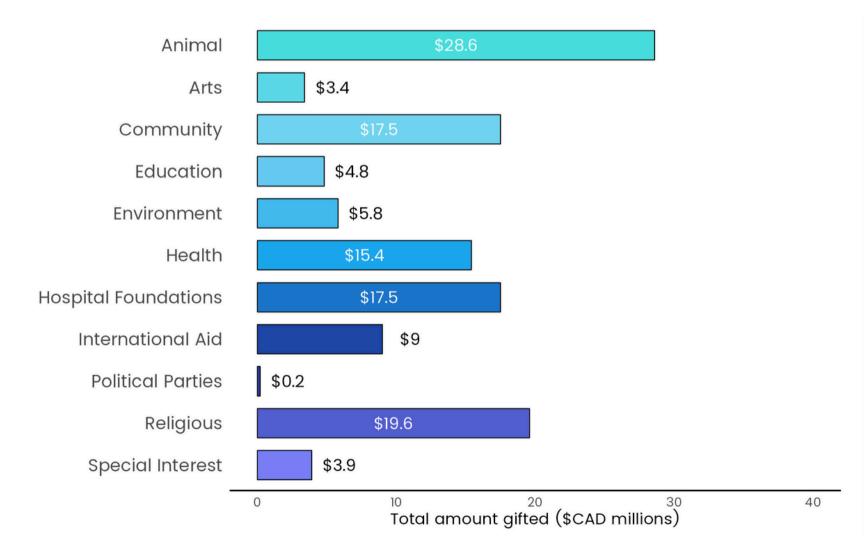




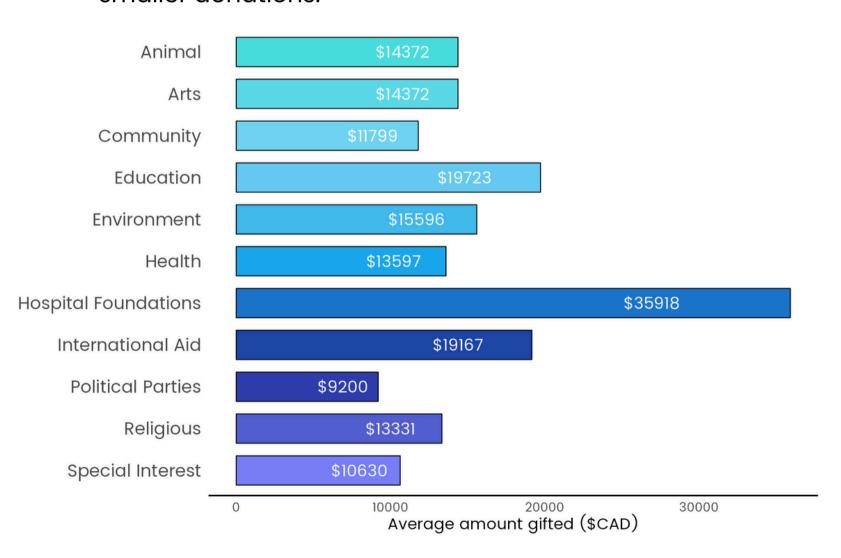
^{*} only includes gifts of specific financial value - excludes residual gifts and specific assets (e.g. cars)

MONETARY GIFTS*

- Animal charities received the largest amount of monetary bequests, totalling almost \$29 million, followed by religious and community organizations at \$19.6 and \$17.5 million, respectively.
- > Political parties and organizations received the least monetary bequests at \$200,000.



- When considering gifts within each charity, the average monetary gift was greatest for Hospital Foundations and Community, followed by Education and International Aid.
- Combined with total amount gifted figures, this suggests that Animal, Community and Religious charities benefit from a larger number of smaller donations.





^{*} only includes gifts of specific financial value - excludes residual gifts and specific assets (e.g. cars)

RANGE OF MONETARY BEQUESTS

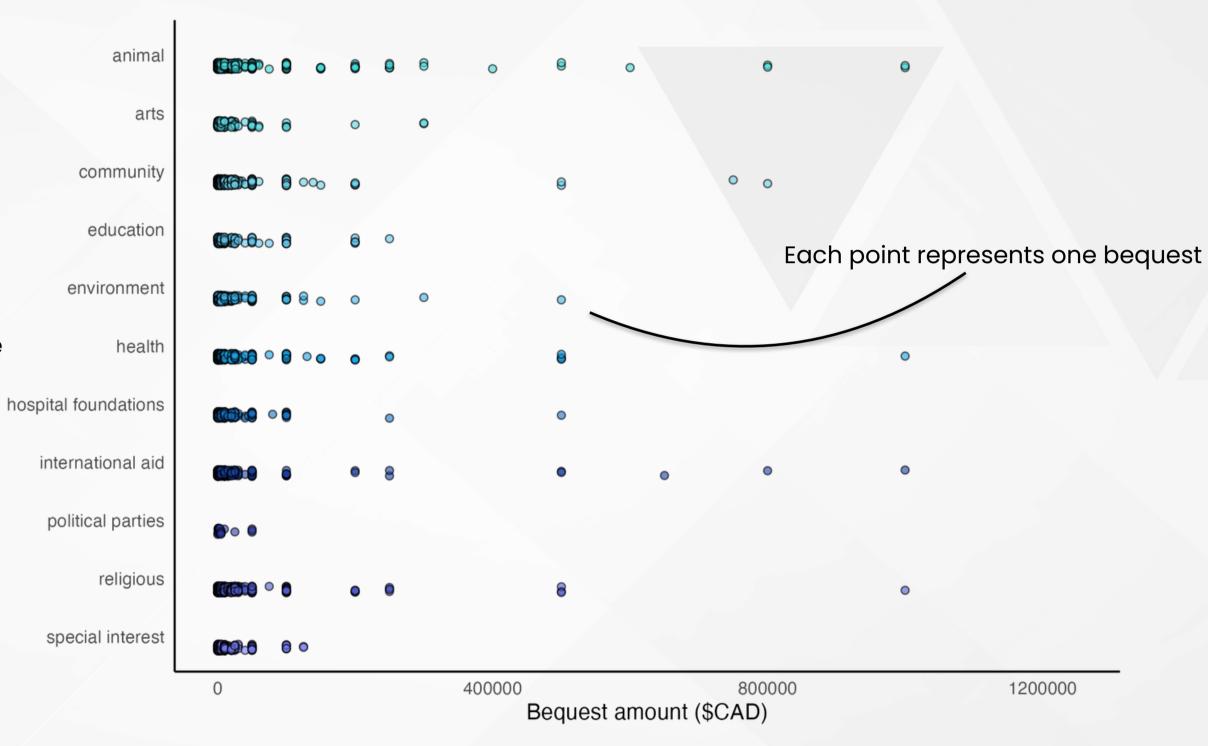
This figures shows how monetary bequests are distributed.

Animal, health, international aid and religious bodies all have bequests of very large singular amounts.

Generally speaking, each sector is comprised of a large number of smaller requests, around the range of \$10,000 CAD.

Arts, environment, political parties and special interest groups have no specific monetary requests bigger than \$350,000.

Animal, health, international aid and religious bodies have singular bequests of \$1,000,000 CAD.

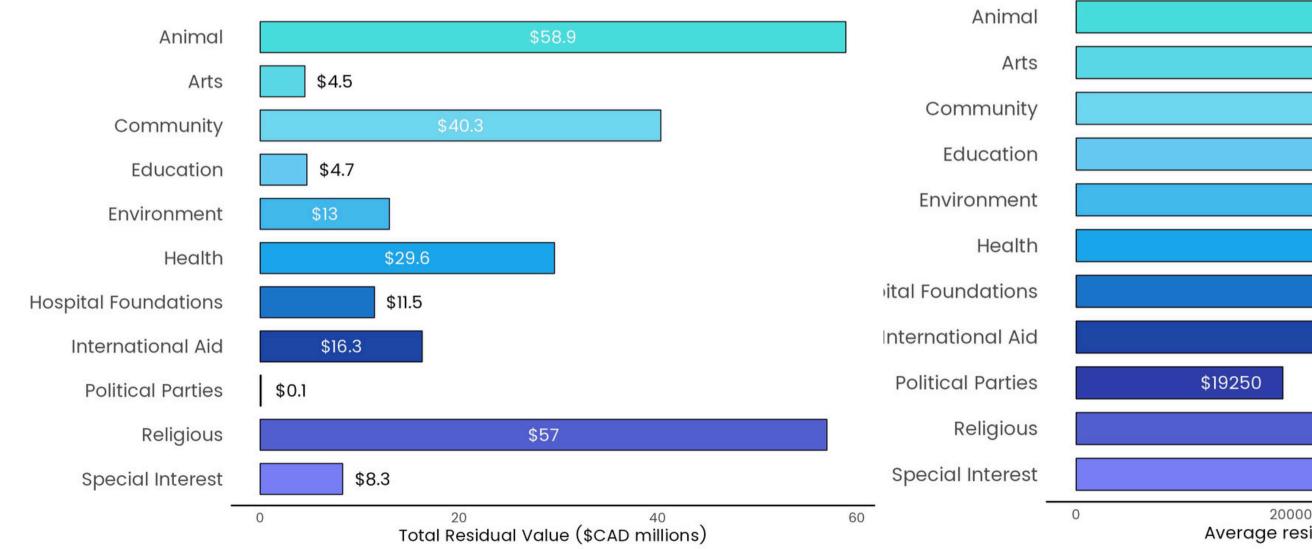


^{*} only includes gifts of specific financial value - excludes residual gifts and specific assets (e.g. cars)



RESIDUAL **GIFTS**

- Animal charities received the largest amount of residual bequests, totalling almost \$59 million, followed by religious and community organizations at \$57 and \$40 million, respectively.
- Political parties and organizations received the least monetary bequests at \$100,000.
- When considering gifts within each charity, the average monetary gift was greatest for Animal organizations followed by Health and Hospital Foundations.
- The average size of residual estate gifted across all charity sectors is 15%.



^{\$56332} \$42631 \$46575 \$52788 \$51901 \$48286 \$50212 \$46478 20000 Average residual amount gifted (\$CAD)

^{*} only includes residual gifts - excludes monetary gifts and specific assets (e.g. cars)



2,367 featured Wills

Animal charities were featured in 2,367 unique Wills and accounted for 23% of all monetary gifts and 21% of all residual gifts.

When looking only at bequests to animal charities, 34% of these were gifts of a percentage of the estate and comprised from 1% to 100% of the Will writer's residual estates - averaging 16%.

2,183 different charities were listed within the Wills database, and the Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was the most popular beneficiary with 62 bequests.



Smallest Gift	\$1
Largest Gift	\$2,000,000
Average Gift*	\$28,866
Percentage of Residual Gifts	34%
Smallest Residual Gift	\$3,500 (1%)
Largest Residual Gift	\$350,000 (100%)
Average Residual Gift	\$56,331 (16%)
Number of Unique Charities	2,183
Most Popular Charities (Bequests)	SPCA - 169 Ottawa Humane Society - 44 Toronto Humane Society - 38
Most Popular Charities (\$)	SPCA - \$4,117,250 Grey Haven Exotic Bird Sanctuary - \$2,035,000 World Wildlife Fund - \$1,769,400



312 featured Wills

Arts charities featured in 312 unique Wills and accounted for 3% of all monetary gifts and 2% of all residual gifts.

When looking **only** at bequests to arts charities, 31% of these were gifts of a percentage of the estate and comprised from 1% to 100% of Will writer's residual estates – averaging 12%.

300 different charities were listed within the Wills database, and the Operation Smile was the most popular beneficiary with 9 bequests.

Specific assets left to arts charities comprised artwork, cars and costumes

Assets Gifted: Art, Cars, Costumes



Smallest Gift	\$3
Largest Gift	\$350,000
Average Gift*	\$23,926
Percentage of Residual Gifts	31%
Smallest Residual Gift	\$3,500 (1%)
Largest Residual Gift	\$350,000 (100%)
Average Residual Gift	\$40,854 (12%)
Number of Unique Charities	300
Most Popular Charities (Bequests)	Operation Smile - 13 Mahone Bay Setllers Museum - 2 Ottawa Little Theatre - 2
Most Popular Charities (\$)	Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario - \$600,00 Operation Smile - \$180,500 Reed Deer Symphony Orchestra - \$175,000

COMMUNITY



1,958 featured Wills

Community charities featured in 1,958 unique Wills and accounted for 18% of all monetary gifts and residual gifts.

When looking **only** at bequests to community charities, 37% of these were gifts of a percentage of the estate and comprised from 1% to 100% of Will writer's residual estates – averaging 13%.

1,883 different charities were listed within the Wills database, and the Salvation Army was the most popular beneficiary with 39 bequests.

Specific assets left to community charities comprised artworks, clothing, furniture, stuffed animals, jewellery, an entire working farm and sculptures.

Assets Gifted: Art, Clothing, Furniture, Stuffed Animals, Jewellery, a Farm, Sculptures



Smallest Gift	\$1
Largest Gift	\$3,500,000
Average Gift*	\$26,267
Percentage of Residual Gifts	37%
Smallest Residual Gift	\$3,500 (1%)
Largest Residual Gift	\$350,000 (100%)
Average Residual Gift	\$44,670 (13%)
Number of Unique Charities	1,883
Most Popular Charities (Bequests)	Salvation Army - 51 Covenant House - 25 Compassion Canada - 24
Most Popular Charities (\$)	John A McLennon Family Foundation - \$3,500,000 Salvation Army - \$1,548,011 Vancouver Foundation - \$1,000,000

EDUCATION



331 featured Wills

Education institutions featured in 331 unique Wills and accounted for 3% of all monetary gifts and 2% of all residual gifts.

When looking **only** at bequests to education charities, 31% of these were gifts of a percentage of the estate and comprised from 1% to 100% of Will writer's residual estates – averaging 12%.

315 different institutions were listed within the Wills database, and Queen's University was the most popular beneficiary with 5 bequests.

Specific assets left to educational institutions comprised of books.

Assets Gifted: Books



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Smallest Gift	\$5
Largest Gift	\$3,000,000
Average Gift*	\$35,701
Percentage of Residual Gifts	31%
Smallest Residual Gift	\$3,500 (1%)
Largest Residual Gift	\$350,000 (100%)
Average Residual Gift	\$42,630 (12%)
Number of Unique Charities	315
Most Popular Charities (Bequests)	Queen's University - 5 Indspire - 4 Trinity Western University - 4
Most Popular Charities (\$)	Michael's College - \$3,000,000 Queen's University - \$380,500 George Brown College - \$350,000



551 featured Wills

Environmental charities featured in 551 unique Wills and accounted for 5% of all monetary gifts and 6% of all residual gifts.

When looking **only** at bequests to environment charities, 42% of these were gifts of a percentage of the estate and comprised from 1% to 100% of Will writer's residual estates - averaging 13%.

490 different charities were listed within the Wills database, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada was the most popular beneficiary with 45 bequests.

A log cabin was left to an environmental charity.

Assets Gifted: Cabin.



Smallest Gift	\$15
Largest Gift	\$500,000
Average Gift*	\$28,733
Percentage of Residual Gifts	42%
Smallest Residual Gift	\$3,500 (1%)
Largest Residual Gift	\$350,000 (100%)
Average Residual Gift	\$46,575 (13%)
Number of Unique Charities	490
Most Popular Charities (Bequests)	Nature Conservancy of Canada - 45 Greenpeace Canada - 14 Bruce Trail Conservancy - 11
Most Popular Charities (\$)	Nature Conservancy of Canada - \$2,039,95 Greenpeace Canada - \$837,500 Bruce Trail Conservancy - \$431,000



1,392 featured Wills

Health charities featured in 1,392 unique Wills and accounted for 13% of all monetary gifts and 11% of all residual gifts.

When looking **only** at bequests to health charities, 33% of these were gifts of a percentage of the estate and comprised from 1% to 200% of Will writer's residual estates – averaging 15%.

1,126 different charities were listed within the Wills database, and the Canadian Cancer Society was the most popular beneficiary with 133 bequests.

Specific assets left to health charities comprised stocks and shares, cars, clothing, an air mattress and books.

Assets Gifted: Shares, Cars, Clothing, Air Mattress, Books



Smallest Gift	\$2
Largest Gift	\$1,000,000
Average Gift*	\$26,567
Percentage of Residual Gifts	33%
Smallest Residual Gift	\$3,500 (1%)
Largest Residual Gift	\$700,000 (200%)
Average Residual Gift	\$52,788 (15%)
Number of Unique Charities	1,126
Most Popular Charities (Bequests)	Canadian Cancer Society - 133 Doctors Without Borders - 47 BC Cancer Foundation - 24
Most Popular Charities (\$)	Canadian Cancer Society - \$3,992,250 Doctors Without Borders - \$1,552,400 Seva Canada - \$1,435,000

HOSPITAL FOUNDATIONS



625 featured Wills

Hospital foundations featured in 625 unique Wills and accounted for 5% of all monetary gifts and residual gifts.

When looking **only** at bequests to hospital foundations 31% of these were gifts of a percentage of the estate and comprised from 1% to 100% of Will writer's residual estates - averaging 16%.

539 different charities were listed within the Wills database, and the British Columbia Children's Hospital was the most popular beneficiary with 20 bequests.

Specific assets left to hospital foundations comprised art and antiques.

Assets Gifted: Art, Antiques.



Smallest Gift	\$3
Largest Gift	\$12,000,000
Average Gift*	\$40,871
Percentage of Residual Gifts	31%
Smallest Residual Gift	\$3,500 (1%)
Largest Residual Gift	\$350,000 (100%)
Average Residual Gift	\$51,901 (15%)
Number of Unique Charities	539
Most Popular Charities (Bequests)	BC Children's Hospital - 39 Sick Kids Hospital - 20 Canuck Place Children's Hospice - 7
Most Popular Charities (\$)	BC Children's Hospital - \$13,255,100 Sick Kids Hospital - \$223,500 Canuck Place Children's Hospital - \$531,500

INTERNATIONAL AID



729 featured Wills

International Aid featured in 729 unique Wills and accounted for 6% of all monetary gifts and 7% of all residual gifts.

When looking **only** at bequests to international aid charities, 41% of these were gifts of a percentage of the estate and comprised from 1% to 100% of Will writer's residual estates - averaging 14%.

554 different charities were listed within the Wills database, and the Canadian Red Cross was the most popular beneficiary with 37 bequests.

Specific assets left to animal charities comprised bikes.

Assets Gifted: Bikes.



Smallest Gift	\$2
Largest Gift	\$1,000,000
Average Gift*	\$31,489
Percentage of Residual Gifts	41%
Smallest Residual Gift	\$3,500 (1%)
Largest Residual Gift	\$350,000 (100%)
Average Residual Gift	\$48,286 (14%)
Number of Unique Charities	554
Most Popular Charities (Bequests)	Canadian Red Cross - 37 World Vision Canada - 27 World Vision - 25
Most Popular Charities (\$)	Canadian Red Cross - \$1,447,100 Unang Hakbang Foundation - \$1,000,000 World Literacy Canada - \$1,000,000

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS



26 featured Wills

Political organizations featured in 26 unique Wills and accounted for less than 1% of all monetary gifts and residual gifts.

When looking **only** at bequests to political organizations, 14% of these were gifts of a percentage of the estate and comprised from 1% to 15% of Will writer's residual estates – averaging 6%.

24 different charities were listed within the Wills database, and he Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives was the most popular beneficiary with 62 bequests.

No specific assets were gifted to political organizations.

No Assets Gifted.



\$10
\$52,500
\$10,587
14%
\$3,500 (1%)
\$52,500 (15%)
\$19,250 (6%)
24
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - 9 Broadbent Institute - 3 Fair Vote Canada - 3
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - \$110,510 Broadbent Institute - \$105,000 Fair Vote Canada - \$61,000



2,204 featured Wills

Religious bodies featured in 2,204 unique Wills and accounted for 20% of all monetary gifts and 23% of all residual gifts.

When looking **only** at bequests to religious organizations, 43% of these were gifts of a percentage of the estate and comprised from 1% to 100% of Will writer's residual estates - averaging 14%.

2,060 different charities were listed within the Wills database, and the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society was the most popular beneficiary with 85 bequests.

Specific assets left to religious bodies comprised cars, furniture, household goods, houses, books and a nativity set.

Assets Gifted: Cars, Furniture, Household Goods, Houses, Books, Nativity Set



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Smallest Gift	\$5
Largest Gift	\$1,000,000
Average Gift*	\$29,442
Percentage of Residual Gifts	43%
Smallest Residual Gift	\$3,500 (1%)
Largest Residual Gift	\$350,000 (15%)
Average Residual Gift	\$50,212 (14%)
Number of Unique Charities	2,060
	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
Most Popular Charities (Bequests)	- 85
	Union Global Mission - 12 Islamic Relief Canada - 11
	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
	- \$6,932,025
Most Popular Charities (\$)	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter
	Day Saints - \$1,000,000 Parish of St. Aidan - \$700,000
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SPECIAL INTEREST



526 featured Wills

Special interest groups featured in 526 unique Wills and accounted for 4% of all monetary and residual gifts.

When looking **only** at bequests to special interest groups, 32% of these were gifts of a percentage of the estate and comprised from 1% to 100% of Will writer's residual estates - averaging 13%.

477 different charities were listed within the Wills database, and the Scouts Canada was the most popular beneficiary with 3 bequests.

Specific assets left to special interest groups comprised roller skates, bikes, sewing machines and house sale proceeds.

Assets Gifted: Roller Skates, Bikes, Sewing Machine, Sale Proceeds



Smallest Gift	\$20
Largest Gift	\$350,000
Average Gift*	\$22,518
Percentage of Residual Gifts	32%
Smallest Residual Gift	\$3,500 (1%)
Largest Residual Gift	\$350,000 (15%)
Average Residual Gift	\$46,478 (13%)
Number of Unique Charities	477
Most Popular Charities (Bequests)	Scouts Canada - 3 Special Olympics Ontario - 3 Aunt Leah's Independent Lifeskills - 2
Most Popular Charities (\$)	Royal Canadian Geographical Society - \$700,000 Abundance Canada - \$665,000 Give Clear - \$350,000

ALL CHARITIES



Top 10 (Bequests)	Top 10 (\$)
SPCA - 169	BC Children's Hospital - \$13,255,100
Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society - 85	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society - \$6,932,025
Canadian Cancer Society - 133	SPCA - \$4,117,250
Salvation Army - 51	Canadian Cancer Society - \$3,992,250
Doctors Without Borders - 47	John A McLennan Family Foundation - \$3,500,000
Nature Conservancy of Canada - 45	St Michael's College Bursary Fund - \$3,000,000
Ottawa Human Society - 44	Nature conservancy of Canada - \$2,039,950
Toronto Humane Society - 38	Grey Haven Exotic Bird Sanctuary - \$2,035,000
Canadian Red Cross - 37	World Wildlife Fund - \$1,769400
World Vision Canada - 27	Doctors without Borders - \$1,552400



MAKING YOUR LEGACY LAST HOW LEGALWILLS CAN HELP YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

At LegalWills, we make it easy for you to include bequests in your Will. By partnering with LegalWills, you can ensure your wishes are clearly outlined and legally protected, while also helping to support the causes you care about most.

Additionally, LegalWills offers specialized advice on making charitable bequests, ensuring that your gift is maximized for both the charity and your beneficiaries. Whether you are leaving a residual gift, specific asset, or a monetary donation, our platform guides you through the process seamlessly.

Consider including a charity in your Will today, and make a difference for future generations.

You can even explore creative options like bequeathing family heirlooms, stocks, or property, ensuring that every part of your estate reflects your values and priorities.

Start planning with LegalWills today to turn your legacy into a powerful force for good.