

2019 Federal Policy Agenda



CCVO (Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations) is an advocate and champion of the nonprofit sector in Alberta, providing leadership on cross-cutting policy issues, convening leaders, and giving voice to critical issues affecting the sector.

We believe that a more purposeful relationship between the federal government and the nonprofit sector would ultimately benefit the communities the sector works to serve. The federal government plays an important role in recognizing not only the unique role we play and the contributions we make, but also the distinct challenges we face as we work to increase our impact across Canada.

Based on recent feedback from nonprofits in Alberta through CCVO's annual Alberta Nonprofit Survey, on our partnerships with organizations across the country, and on our own research, CCVO is looking for federal parties to address key issues facing the sector in the upcoming federal election, taking place on October 21, 2019. We have identified the following themes that CCVO would like to see in election platforms:

A FORMALIZED "HOME" IN GOVERNMENT

The sector would benefit greatly from a federal department, minister, agency, or secretariat charged with promoting the sector as a whole, and where the unique impacts of federal policies on charities and nonprofits are considered before decisions are finalized. An example from another jurisdiction is the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, for which oversight has recently been given to a newly appointed Charities Minister.

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DATA ABOUT NONPROFITS

Having access to accurate sector data would lead to more informed decision-making, engagement in effective strategic planning, and reliability of sector programs and services. Collecting data at a federal level could provide a national basis for comparability and consistency and potentially provide a standard taxonomy for dialogue in cross-organizational work. Examples of measures include:

- Providing updates on an ongoing basis to the Statistics Canada Satellite Account for Nonprofit Institutions and Volunteering.
- Recognizing nonprofit status in the National Occupational Classification (NOC) and/or Industry Classification System to improve labour market information on the sector.

SOCIAL PROCUREMENT AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT AGREEMENT POLICIES

Supportive policies in these areas would make it possible to leverage existing government spending to meet the unique needs of communities and their defined goals and outcomes. Examples could include requiring bidders and developers to provide information and assessments on the community benefits of projects along with opportunities to report back regarding the impact on communities.

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SUPPORT FOR THE ADOPTION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL LITERACY

Increasing nonprofit opportunities to incorporate new technology has the potential to help organizations serve more people, evaluate and communicate their impact, and potentially secure more funding – especially from diverse sources (i.e. community foundations, corporate partners etc.). There are several existing or past government initiatives that could help alleviate some of the technological burdens that nonprofits face. Examples could include:

- Extending the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's Broadband Fund to incorporate nonprofit organizations.
- Reimagining the now-concluded Digital Technology Adoption Pilot Program (DTAPP) for nonprofit organizations.
- Increasing the federal budget towards the Digital Literacy Exchange Program, offering more advanced digital training initiatives for nonprofits.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR CHARITIES AND NONPROFITS

This includes working with the sector to find ways to revitalize philanthropy, ensure that organizations can engage in social finance, and improve the way grants and contributions are administered.

The nonprofit sector in Canada is vibrant and diverse. Nonprofits accounted for 8.5% of Canada's GDP in 2017 and employed approximately 2.4 million people. These organizations play a vital role in each and every community in Canada, operating in areas as diverse as seniors support, social services, amateur sports, environmental conservation, health care provision and research, education, literacy, immigrant settlement, youth services, arts and culture, and religious observance, all of which provide much-needed services and contribute enormously to community health, cohesion and overall quality of life.

Party platform commitments in support of the nonprofit sector are a meaningful way to recognize the value and contributions that nonprofits make in our communities every day.