

# Our vision for a Home in Government for Nonprofits

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By Imagine Canada

What could the sector and our society look like after fifteen years with a federal home in government for nonprofits?

- Canadian communities have better access to high quality nonprofit programs and services
- The nonprofit sector is better respected and valued for its economic and social contributions
- More workers in the nonprofit sector have decent wages, stable work and benefits
- The nonprofit sector and the federal government have a stronger relationship and are working together effectively to tackle shared priorities like poverty reduction, the climate crisis and welcoming newcomers to Canada

Why do we believe the nonprofit sector needs a federal home in government?

- The nonprofit sector is often treated as an afterthought by the federal government and isn't supported by intentional policymaking the way so many other sectors are
- The government's current approach to the nonprofit sector is piecemeal and siloed, leading to inefficiencies, issues and miscommunication
- The government doesn't have a good understanding of the sector's economic value, social impact, expertise, or its operating and financial models
- A better relationship between the federal government and the nonprofit sector could help unleash the sector's full economic and social potential

Why does a strong nonprofit sector matter to society?

- Virtually everyone in Canada is touched by or served by the nonprofit sector, whether they know it or not
- The nonprofit sector is an important component of civil society, which is crucial to our economic, democratic and social structures
- The nonprofit sector has a unique role: like the public sector, it focuses on social and environmental good, but like the private sector, it has more freedom to be nimble, and innovative
- The nonprofit sector provides basic and emergency services, cultural and educational programs, and works with the private and public sectors to address the root causes of complex societal problems

- The nonprofit sector brings expertise and insight from community relationships which can be used to create better public policy

## What should a home in government for nonprofits do?

- Ensure public policy fosters a strong, accountable, diverse and innovative nonprofit and charitable sector
  - Potential areas for public policy development:
    - Nonprofit sector labour force strategy
    - Creation of equitable and effective federal funding practices
    - Regulation of the disbursement quota
    - Creation of policies that introduce anti-racism/anti-oppression training for funding officers
    - Red tape reduction
    - Supporting digital transformation within the nonprofit sector
- In partnership with Statistics Canada, collect and share data about the nonprofit sector to support evidence-informed policy making
- Promote understanding of the nonprofit sector within the federal government and collaboration across government on issues affecting nonprofits and charities
- Be an internal advocate for the nonprofit sector in general public policy decisions that may impact charities and nonprofits
- Address broad inequities within the nonprofit sector that fall within federal jurisdiction

## What should a Home in Government for the nonprofit sector not do?

- Replace or interrupt relationships that the nonprofit sector has with other departments agencies, or ministries
- Be responsible for all funding of the sector; the home in government may develop public policy to improve federal funding practices, but departments and ministries should still operate their respective grant and contribution programs
- Only serve the largest, national, most well-connected and well-funded charities and nonprofits

## What should a Home in Government for the nonprofit sector look like?

- It must be a structure that has staying power and won't disappear after a change in government or after a few years
- It must have appropriate, ongoing resourcing (budget and staffing) to allow it to carry out its mandate effectively
- It must have the power and authority to advance its mandate and make a meaningful difference for the nonprofit sector and the communities we serve
- It must have regular, meaningful, equitable and accessible mechanisms for consulting and engaging the diversity and breadth of the nonprofit sector
- Its staffing should include officials with an adequate level of authority to fulfill its mission on the political and bureaucratic side

- Its staff should include individuals with experience working in the nonprofit sector
- Its work should be informed by a diverse nonprofit sector advisory committee, whose members are compensated for their contributions

### How can we ensure a Home in Government serves the sector equitably?

- It must serve all public-benefit, social impact community organizations, regardless of legal status (i.e. including unincorporated grassroots organizations)
- It should make federal programs and services that serve the nonprofit sector more accessible
- It must have open, equitable and accessible channels of communication and consultation
- One of its public policy priorities should be to address inequities within the nonprofit sector (e.g. instituting anti-racism/anti-oppression training to funding officers or ensuring that legislation governing the disbursement quota is equitable)

### What's your vision?

We want to hear from the sector to shape future detailed proposals on this issue. Reach out to [publicpolicy@imaginecanada.ca](mailto:publicpolicy@imaginecanada.ca) to have your say!