

# **Submission to 2026 Federal Pre-Budget Consultations**

*By the Federal Nonprofit Data Coalition*

*As organizations:*

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada
- BridgePoint Center for Eating Disorder Recovery
- Circle on Philanthropy
- Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador
- EMBRACEHEALTHFOUNDATION
- Imagine Canada
- National Alliance for Children and Youth
- OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
- Philanthropic Foundations Canada
- Pillar Nonprofit Network
- Resilient Kids Canada
- Vantage Point
- Skills for Change
- SETSI
- Terrace Women's Resource Centre Society
- The Nonprofit Chamber
- Volunteer Canada

*As individuals:*

- Bruce Martin, Professor, Thompson Rivers University
- Cathy Barr, Adjunct Research Professor, Carleton University
- François Brouard, Full Professor, Sprott School of Business, Carleton University
- Nathan Grasse, Associate Professor, Carleton University
- Ushnish Sengupta, Assistant Professor, Algoma University

## Summary of recommendations

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- Recommendation 1: Maintain funding for existing key nonprofit data products
- Recommendation 2: Ensure enhanced federal nonprofit reporting results in high quality, accessible data without creating excessive administrative burden

## Context

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*Canadian nonprofits employ more people than any other industry.<sup>1</sup> Despite our economic contribution, a lack of data on our sector hinders our ability to provide quality services for communities and creates inefficiencies for government and nonprofits. Our submission outlines the importance of maintaining key nonprofit data products to enable effective, efficient decision-making in support of community outcomes. We also call on the government to ensure that expanded nonprofit reporting requirements result in high quality, accessible data without creating excessive administrative burden.*

The government has ambitious goals, from attracting global talent to making life more affordable. Nonprofits are crucial partners in affordable housing, poverty reduction, settlement, and more. Data will be essential to shaping smart policy, efficient resource allocation, and productive partnerships that lead to measurable results in priority areas.

However, the government has also pledged to cut costs, including at Statistics Canada. While we're supportive of Statistics Canada modernizing and becoming more efficient, it's crucial that budget cuts don't lead to a reduction of the very data that will be essential to meeting the big challenges facing our country today.

Canada's nonprofit sector is a critical pillar of our economy, contributing 8.4% to the country's GDP<sup>2</sup> and employing 2.9 million people.<sup>3</sup> As of 2023, volunteerism had an economic value of \$31.7 billion.<sup>4</sup> Nonprofit-public partnership is a cornerstone of a strong economy and strong communities. In today's complex world, the federal government relies on nonprofits to deliver many vital services that it would otherwise need to deliver itself. As partners, we bring expertise, deep connections to community, and nimble approaches to the table.

Our sector faces a data deficit. For decades, the federal government did not regularly collect comprehensive nonprofit sector data. Over the past several years, we've seen some progress as the government has begun to carry out more frequent updates to the Satellite Account of

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<sup>1</sup> [Imagine Canada. People First: A Portrait of Canada's Nonprofit Workforce \(2025\).](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0616-01: Gross domestic product \(GDP\) of non-profit institutions by sub-sector](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0617-01: Employment in non-profit institutions by sub-sector](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0618-01: Economic value of volunteering activity.](#)

Non-profit Institutions and Volunteering and included a nonprofit sample in the Canadian Survey of Business Conditions. However, we still lack basic information on many aspects of the sector and regularly rely on data that is decades old. Where data on the nonprofit sector exists, it is often not available in easily accessible, usable, or disaggregated forms. With budget cuts coming to Statistics Canada, we fear that we'll lose the hard-won progress of the past few years.

While nonprofits receive government funding, we also leverage private funding and earn our own income. Like business, we need comprehensive, up-to-date information to inform financial, human resources, service delivery and business decisions.

As we face multiple intersecting crises, communities cannot afford to have resources used ineffectively or inefficiently. Donations and volunteerism are declining while operating costs and demand for many services are rising. Last year, Food Banks Canada reported a 99% increase in total visits from 2019 to 2025.<sup>5</sup> Data can help identify and scale high impact nonprofit services, address service gaps and inequities, reduce duplication, and foster collaboration.

The bottom line is that timely, high quality data drives better results for communities, government and nonprofits.

## **Recommendation 1: Maintain funding for existing key nonprofit data products**

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Budget 2025 included a commitment to cut costs at Statistics Canada by up to 15% over three years.

We are supportive of the agency adopting modern statistical methods that will allow it to produce high quality data at a lower cost. However, we urge Statistics Canada to inform and consult with the sector on major changes to any of the nonprofit datasets that provide key information about our sector to ensure that the data products continue to meet needs.

We are also concerned about the agency reducing frequency and level of detail in data collection on data sets that are judged to be of 'less relevance for Canadians.' Despite our economic contributions and delivery of services that millions of Canadians rely on daily, the nonprofit sector is rarely centred in public conversations about the economy. For example, the 1.2 billion hours of formal volunteer labour contributed to charities and nonprofits in 2023 represent a structural pillar of our communities, one that the government would need to replace at enormous cost if it were to disappear. The data products this coalition is asking the government to maintain are the primary tools tracking whether that pillar is holding. The results of the most recent General Social Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating shows that

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<sup>5</sup> [Food Banks Canada. "Hunger Count 2025".](#)

formal volunteering and donation rates both declined between 2018 and 2023, even as demand for many nonprofit services increased. Without this survey, that divergence would be invisible to policymakers, and decisions would continue to be made as though the sector's capacity were stable. Maintaining these data products is not an abstract pledge to measurement, it is a commitment to ensuring a sector that has often been overlooked shows up in the country's data.

There are many examples of concrete, impactful use-cases for nonprofit data. In Alberta, through a cross-ministry partnership using annual filing data, the provincial government created a [Non-profit Listing Dashboard](#) that has been used extensively by the sector and government alike. When devastating wildfires struck Jasper in 2024, the Alberta government was able to use this data to quickly identify all nonprofits in the area and contact them in record time to create a rapid community response.

Over the past several years, the nonprofit sector has worked with Statistics Canada to begin to address our data deficit. Chief among these advancements are:

- More regular releases of the Satellite Account of Nonprofit Institutions and Volunteering (SANIV), which provide us with data on the sector's GDP and employment contributions;
- Two updates to the SANIV Human Resources Module, which provides some basic labour force information; and
- The inclusion of a nonprofit sample in the Canadian Survey of Business Conditions, which provides us with crucial, timely information about our operating environment.

Additionally, the following two data products have been consistently valuable to us over the decades:

- The tax-filer donation dataset provides key insights into a major revenue source for our sector; and
- The General Social Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating provides us with rich data on volunteerism and donation trends over time.

These data products are insufficient to address the nonprofit sector's data deficit on their own, but they are absolutely foundational to our basic understanding of the sector.

In March 2026, we learned with great concern that the government intends to cancel the Canadian Survey of Business Conditions (CSBC). This survey was introduced during the pandemic during a time of great economic uncertainty. It has become a crucial source of timely, trusted information for businesses and nonprofits about their rapidly transforming operating environment.

The quarterly CSBC data is used by the nonprofit sector for human resources planning, fund development, advocacy, service planning, and more. Additionally, in early 2024, Statistics Canada released [data on the nonprofit sector](#) collected through a special module of the CSBC. The survey gave us crucial insights that we hadn't had in decades into the size and scope of the sector, its finances, its leadership, and who it serves.

The cancellation of the CSBC stems from the Comprehensive Expenditure Review. However, the elimination of data products that enable solid, data-driven decision making across the economy is counterproductive to the government's stated focus on economic growth, efficiency, and results.

Virtually everyone in our communities is connected to nonprofits, whether through employment, volunteerism, participation in programs and services, or donating. Canadians need federal leadership on collection of nonprofit data to ensure that the social infrastructure they rely on and support remains sustainable and resilient.

Now, as Canada continues to face significant uncertainty, is not the time to cancel the nonprofit sector's most reliable sources of data to inform decision-making.

**Recommendation 1: We call on the federal government to maintain funding for existing nonprofit data products including:**

- The Satellite Account for Nonprofit Institutions and Volunteering and its associated Human Resources module
- The General Social Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating
- The Canadian Survey of Business Conditions (on a reduced, biannual data collection schedule)
- The tax-filer donation dataset

## **Recommendation 2: Ensure enhanced federal nonprofit data collection results in high quality, accessible data without creating excessive administrative burden**

We welcome the government's intent to expand nonprofit reporting, which could increase transparency and accountability while filling one of the most significant data gaps about our sector.

We urge the government to continue to work closely with the sector to implement these new data collection measures in a thoughtful way to ensure that the benefits are not outweighed by administrative burden and that data collected is publicly available, complete and of high quality.

**Recommendation 2: As it moves forward with the expanded nonprofit data collection measures outlined in draft legislation, we call on the government to:**

- Amend the *Income Tax Act* to create a new section modelled on subsection 149.1(15) of the Act, which provides for the publication of charitable T3010 data notwithstanding

section 241, to similarly provide for the publication of nonprofit data collected through the T1044 and short-form information returns at the record level. The data must be available at no charge in accessible formats, and be released on a monthly or quarterly basis.

- Ensure a smooth implementation process by taking simple steps to limit administrative burden, support education and awareness initiatives and promote online filing.

## About the Federal Nonprofit Data Coalition

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The Federal Nonprofit Data Coalition has a national membership of 60+ nonprofits. We advocate for more and better federal data collection on the nonprofit sector. Our ultimate goal is increasing the sector's impact and enabling it to better serve communities through improved decision-making, planning, advocacy and storytelling.

### Contact

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