

Summary of Mission Areas

A POLICY PLATFORM
FOR CANADA'S
NONPROFITS

IMAGINE
CANADA

APRIL 2025

Economy and Affordability

Problem:

Demand for food banks, shelters, child care centres and nonprofit services that provide essential support for Canadians struggling financially has increased. For example, food bank usage has surged by 90% since 2019. Even as inflation trends downwards, affordability remains a challenge for many Canadians.

Impact:

As the cost of living continues to rise, it will increase demand for nonprofit services, causing substantial strain on our infrastructure.

Recommendations for the first 100 days:

- **Improve the Canada Disability Benefit** by raising the benefit amount, simplifying access, and expanding eligibility.
- **Increase the Guaranteed Income Supplement** by \$500 for single individuals and \$750 for couples starting at age 60 to ensure seniors who are most in need receive financial support.

- **Maintain investment in the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) and CVITP Grant program** to support free tax-filing assistance for Canadians with low incomes delivered by community organizations.
- **Amend the Income Tax Act to implement automatic tax filing** for low-income Canadians to ensure greater access to benefits and financial support.



Housing and Homelessness

Problem:

Access to affordable housing is about more than just shelter. It has cascading effects on health, well-being and community satisfaction. The nonprofit sector plays a critical role in meeting Canada’s housing needs through the development and management of affordable housing, providing supportive housing and wraparound services to bolster individual and community wellbeing.



Impact:

Investments in housing improve social and educational outcomes for individuals and communities.

Recommendations for the first 100 days:

- Strengthen and improve the **National Housing Strategy**
- **Provide stable long-term funding** for current housing programs such as the Affordable Housing Fund and Rapid Housing Initiative
- Tackle the national housing and homelessness crisis by **scaling funding for non-profit housing providers** in accordance with inflation and population growth.
- Reduce chronic homelessness by working with the non-profit sector to invest in the **creation of transitional and supportive housing supply**
- **Remove barriers that make it difficult for non-profit and private developer partnership projects.**
- Adequately fund and implement the [Canada Rental Protection Fund](#)
- **Reduce the administrative burden** associated with non-profit organizations attaining long-term funding.

Environment

Problem:

Nonprofit organizations drive change through forest and land conservation efforts, ocean and water protection and sustainability initiatives. Heatwaves, droughts, and hurricanes are becoming more frequent. These extreme weather events damage our natural landscapes and create severe challenges for the Canadian economy.

Impact:

According to the Red Cross, 90% of their assistance goes to Canadians at home. As extreme weather and patterns become more frequent, they will begin to undermine Canada's economic growth, placing additional strain on government budgets.

Recommendations for the first 100 days:

- Commit to **protecting 30% of Canada's land and ocean by 2030**, and allocate sufficient funding to provinces, territories, Indigenous Nations and civil society, through the Enhanced Nature Legacy Fund and other mechanisms to fulfill this commitment and protect the cultural and ecological value of communities.
- **Strengthen the integration of Nature-Based Solutions into federal climate policy** instruments including the National Biodiversity Strategy, National Adaptation Strategy, Green Municipal Fund, and Environmental Assessment processes.
- **Expand partnerships with municipalities and Indigenous communities** to lead on climate action and biodiversity conservation.

Mental Health

Problem:

Each year, mental health costs Canada an estimated \$51 billion in terms of health care costs, lost productivity and decreases in quality of life. Nonprofits play a vital role in delivering comprehensive mental health, addiction, and substance use health services across communities. Despite the high prevalence and cost to the economy, only 7.2% of Canada's health budget is dedicated to mental health care.

Impact:

Continued underfunding of mental health has been most pronounced in community-based mental health services.

Recommendations for the first 100 days:

- **Create a Canada Universal Mental Health and Substance Use Health Act** to accompany the Canada Mental Health and Substance Use Health Transfer.
- **Create a permanent Canada Mental Health and Substance Use Health Transfer** equivalent to 12% of provincial/territorial health care spending (\$6.25B) ramped up over 5 years, with 50% earmarked for community services.
- Continue to **expand access to mental health and addictions services**

Labour

Problem:

Collectively nonprofits employ 2.5 million people, which accounts for 12% of the total workforce. In addition, 13 million volunteers dedicate nearly 2 billion hours annually to building stronger communities. Demand for services has grown dramatically due to the affordability crisis and inflation, while donations have declined. The nonprofit sector also has low wages; the average nonprofit worker makes 13% less annually than the average for all jobs economy-wide.

Impact:

Reliance on short-term, project-based funding has led to precarious working conditions, such as low wages, reduced benefits, and limited job security. These systemic issues threaten the sector's ability to meet rising demand.

Recommendations for the first 100 days:

- **Develop a nonprofit labour force strategy** to strengthen recruitment and retention, ensuring the sector's stability and economic resilience.
- Develop and **implement a National Volunteer Action Strategy**
- **Maintain funding to core employment programs that generate employment opportunities** in the sector such as the [Canada Summer Jobs wage subsidy](#), the Canadian National Institute for the Blind's [Come to Work program](#), and Innovative Work-Integrated Learning Initiatives.
- **Drive job creation and promote business growth by introducing supports for key sectors** facing labour force challenges such as a [Tax Credit for Live Performing Arts](#).

