House of Commons
Chambre des communes
Canada

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance – Pre-budget Consultations 2013

This brief is submitted by:

(•) **an organization** **Organization name:** Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO)

or

( ) **an individual** **Name:** _____

Topic: Charities, charitable giving and volunteerism

*Recommendation 1: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Extending services available to small business to charities and nonprofits.

A variety of government expertise is available to small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in areas such as the identification of potential finances, technology and labour supports, etc. Charities often have need of the same types of assistance as SMEs.

We also support Imagine Canada's recommendation that the eligibility of the Mitacs Accelerate internship program should be extended to allow nonprofits and charities to enjoy the same benefits that the private sector receives from the program.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

≤$499,999

Immediately

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

There may be some administrative costs associated with expanding and promoting existing services for small- and medium-sized enterprises to nonprofits and charities, but we anticipate that they would be relatively minor costs.

In some cases, as would be the case with Mitacs, changing eligibility requirements would merely allow nonprofits to compete for existing dollars.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Canada's nonprofits and charities would benefit from additional expertise in areas such as finance, technology, and human resources. This would allow them to realize greater efficiencies in the programs and services they offer to their key constituencies and move toward maximizing the productivity of the voluntary sector's two million employees and 13.3 million volunteers.

With respect to Mitacs, university graduates would benefit from exposure to the nonprofit sector and organizations would benefit from the expertise of a highly educated workforce.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Any benefits regarding increased capacity or better utilization of limited resources realized by nonprofit organizations that provide services would be passed onto the communities they serve.

Topic: Charities, charitable giving and volunteerism

Recommendation 2: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Streamline processes to improve efficiency and reduce transaction and administrative costs borne by nonprofits and charities.

We urge that the recommendations made by the Independent Blue Ribbon Panel on Grant and Contribution Programs (2006) be implemented to reduce the administrative burden on organizations. In 2007, the CRA Action Task Force on Small Business Issues identified 61 “concrete” actions that would reduce the reporting burden. We believe that similar action is required to reduce the burden of unnecessary administrative and regulatory requirements for the nonprofit sector.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

unknown

Immediately

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Implementing the recommendations of the Independent Blue Ribbon Panel may require internal reassignment of priorities by government and administrative costs, but we expect these costs would be offset by subsequent administrative savings.

The government's Budget 2007 commitment to reduce the administrative (paperwork) burden on Canadian businesses eliminated nearly 80,000 regulatory requirements and information obligations under the Paperwork Burden Reduction Initiative. This may provide an indication of the scope of savings that could be realized by government and nonprofits.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

The federal government, funders and donors, and nonprofits and charities would all benefit by the reduction of red tape. Charities are constantly scrutinized and expected to limit their administrative costs. However, many of these costs incurred are the result of complying with government regulatory and oversight processes and reporting requirements. Removing unnecessary layers of bureaucracy would reduce or eliminate much of the administrative overhead borne by organizations.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Streamlining the regulatory and reporting requirements for nonprofit and charitable organizations would allow them to operate more efficiently and direct more of their resources to meeting the needs of their communities.

In addition to saving time, effort and money, a less burdensome administrative environment makes it easier for organizations to interact with the federal government.

Topic: Charities, charitable giving and volunteerism

Recommendation 3: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Restore the research capacity of Statistics Canada and resume the collection of Satellite Account of Nonprofit Institutions and Volunteering data.

A number of vital sources of information on the nonprofit and voluntary sector have been lost recently, including the mandatory long-form census and Canadian Social Trends reports. Data collected needs to be complemented by ongoing and expanded government support to illuminate other key areas of the nonprofit sector, including labour force issues, revenues, and expenditures; and to bring this information on par with that available on other sectors.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

unknown

1 year

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

While there would be costs associated with reinstating Statistics Canada's data collection on communities and reintroducing the Satellite Account, the enhanced decision making that would be a direct result of working with current data would result in savings across the entire breadth of the charitable and philanthropic sectors. Collecting the data at a national level would be the most efficient and reliable use of tax dollars.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Current knowledge is essential in good decision making. Nonprofits and the communities they serve, government and corporate funders, foundations, and individual donors and volunteers would all benefit from current and reliable data on the nonprofit sector.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

It is hard to put a dollar value on good information. Better decision making by funders and governments would result in better utilization and less waste of taxpayer dollars and a more efficient use of the limited resources most nonprofits operate under. Good and current information would also help nonprofits make greater progress toward fulfilling their missions.

Please use this page if you wish to provide more explanation about your recommendation(s).

The Satellite Account of Nonprofit Institutions and Volunteering was Statistics Canada's annual look at the nonprofit and voluntary sector from a System of National Accounts perspective, and released figures each year from 2004 to 2009. Among other things, it measured the contribution of the nonprofit and charitable sector to Canada's economy, providing estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), income, and expenditures for the sector. It also produced valuable information about variations and change within the sector.

Given the important role the nonprofit and charitable sector plays in supporting a healthy and resilient economy, we would like to also take this opportunity to stress the importance of considering and engaging the sector as you establish and implement your priorities for Budget 2014. In the absence of a robust consultative process, policy makers are understandably challenged to fully anticipate the consequences of policy decisions on organizations and the people who work or volunteer for them. CCVO urges the federal government to fully consider all possible consequences when introducing new legislation, regulation, and policy that relates to nonprofit sector governance and compliance.

The Government of Canada has made a number policy changes in recent years with the aim of assisting the charitable sector. The elimination of the Disbursement Quota in 2010 allowed charities greater flexibility around planning for the future. The introduction of the First-Time Donor's Super Credit in 2013 was aimed at increasing the donor base. However, the collection and release of comprehensive information (beyond raw data) about the nonprofit sector is one area where we appear to be regressing. We would like to reinforce that data collection of this nature is more efficient and useful when gathered at a national level. We hope that your government realizes that this information is essential to the work and wellbeing of Canada's nonprofit sector and all the communities it serves.

*Please note that at least one recommendation must be provided