



June 18, 2020

Rt. Hon Justin Trudeau, PC, MP
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the more than 3,000 members of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) Canada, I am urging the federal government to propose policies or assistance aimed at helping charities and nonprofits during this crisis, and to do so as soon as possible.

While AFP is grateful for the support announced to date, more funding is desperately needed. Our sector builds strong, resilient communities, but without immediate government support during COVID-19, **organizations will be forced to close or reduce services—with devastating consequences for Canadians.**

Imagine Canada's recent survey demonstrates the overwhelming impact of the crisis on the charitable sector. The survey found that 80% of charities were operating with decreased capacity and nearly one in five had suspended or ceased their operations. The estimated projected financial loss for registered charities is between \$9.5 and \$15.7 billion. These statistics translate to diminished access to vital services for communities throughout our country.

Among the services that are in jeopardy:

- Services to seniors. Services provided by these organizations help seniors deal with isolation imposed by the pandemic and the resultant deleterious mental and physical health consequences.
- Services to racialized populations and social justice support. Urban, Indigenous, black and immigrant communities have been particularly affected by the pandemic. Our sector is the primary provider of skills, language and literacy training, justice and social equity support, and anti-racism resources and programs, as well as advocacy for these communities.
- Health services and support. These organizations play an important role in preventative care, matching individuals to the right services and providing support that enables individuals experiencing health problems to enjoy a higher quality of life.
- Support for women. Charities report that domestic violence is intensifying under lockdown, with extra assistance needed to engage children who are experiencing violence at home. Women and their families will need additional support to find safety and the help they need.

- Childcare services, after school programs and day camps. These are vital to ensure parents can return to work. Charities and nonprofits need to be able to offer these services, the absence of which will disproportionately affect women and single-parent families.
- Mental health services. Whether by directly providing mental health services or providing Canadians with a semblance of normalcy (e.g., through amateur sports or arts), our sector will be at the forefront of helping Canadians cope with the experience we have all shared.
- Services to people with disabilities. Charities and nonprofits ensure people with disabilities have a voice through advocacy efforts and a valuable place within society through career support, social activities, training, accessibility workshops and more.
- Environmental sustainability. From the preservation of ecosystems to the protection of threatened species and the development of sustainable solutions for communities, the work of these organizations needs to continue, pandemic or not.

Entire populations will suffer from decreased sector capacity. Adults and children experiencing poverty or food insecurity, veterans, vulnerable or marginalized youth, seniors, the unemployed and unskilled, women facing domestic violence, people with disabilities, and individuals with mental health challenges, among others, will feel the effects of reduced services from our sector.

Support for community gardens, parks and conservation, sports and recreation, performance art, festivals, educational programs, community museums and art galleries are investments in much needed community and individual rehabilitation and reconnection. When these programs expire, individuals become vulnerable and communities are weakened.

The charitable and nonprofit sector can contribute so much to the recovery and beyond—if we have the means to survive, adapt to changed circumstances, and position themselves to actively contribute to the recovery. The financial measures announced so far have met a portion of what is required, but more funding is needed.

We urge you to finalize and implement a grant program that recognizes the unique situation facing charities and nonprofits, the efforts they have made to serve their communities in unprecedented circumstances, and the role they must play in Canada's recovery from COVID-19.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Paula Attfield
Chair
AFP Canada

cc: Hon. Bill Morneau, PC, MP
Minister of Finance

Hon. Ahmed Hussen, PC, MP
Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development