Volunteer
Bénévoles
Canada



Impact Report 2026

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

Thank you for your investment in the National Volunteer Infrastructure Fund.

Your contributions have helped to strengthen Volunteer Canada's core programs and services to our members and to our network.

Your contribution has been instrumental and supported Volunteer Canada to act on three national priorities:

01

Policy and Strategy

02

Nonprofit Capacity

03

Corporate Volunteering Innovation



From the Desk of the CEO

Volunteering in Canada is at an important turning point. Across the country, communities are relying on volunteers in new and urgent ways, and Canadians continue to show a deep desire to contribute when the conditions are right.

The opportunity before us is not only to respond to pressure in the system, but to build a stronger, more modern volunteer infrastructure that makes participation easier, more inclusive, and more impactful for everyone.

This is the opportunity your investment and partnership are helping to unlock.

The **National Volunteer Infrastructure Fund** exists because of a commitment by corporate leaders who understand that volunteering is more than goodwill; it is a vital part of how communities connect, respond, and thrive. By investing in this work, you're helping to move volunteering from the margins of community investment into a shared national priority. This report is an account of what that leadership made possible over the past year, and why corporate partners have such an important role to play in what comes next.

Your contribution helped Volunteer Canada carry three priorities forward at once. We advanced the case for volunteer infrastructure with the federal government, proposing concrete funding pathways and building relationships with ministers, parliamentarians, and senior officials. We strengthened the capacity of a network of approximately 1,000 organizations through national tools, research, and shared learning. And we accelerated new models for corporate volunteering, including a partnership to explore a national corporate readiness program for charities and nonprofits. Each of these gains reflects the unique value corporate partners bring: resources, reach, operational expertise, trusted community relationships, and the ability to demonstrate that volunteering matters across sectors.

There is still important work ahead, but the momentum is real. The case for national volunteer infrastructure is stronger, more visible, and better understood than it was a year ago. The relationships are in place. The evidence is growing. The field is organizing around shared priorities. With corporate partners alongside us, we can move from

making the case to building the systems, tools, and partnerships that communities need.

That is why this report looks forward with confidence. The pages that follow show what we have built and where we are going next, priority by priority. The foundation is in place, and corporate leadership can help turn it into lasting national capacity.

When companies invest, advocate, engage employees, and use their influence in service of community priorities, they help create the conditions for volunteering to flourish.

You are part of how that happens, and your continued partnership can help carry this work further than any one organization could alone. Thank you for investing in this work, together we've created a strong foundation upon which we continue to build. We invite you to continue your investment and help create a Canada where everyone participates.

Megan Conway
President and CEO,
Volunteer Canada

With gratitude to our founding investors:





Advancing Policy and Strategy to Strengthen Volunteering

Policy Advancement

Volunteers deliver services Canadians rely on every day, and the infrastructure that supports them has been chronically underfunded. In 2026, Volunteer Canada made the case to the federal government to change that.

We made a formal submission to the federal budget process proposing three funding pathways for volunteer infrastructure in Canada: $10 million, $25 million, and $50 million, each tied to a different scale of national impact.

We then took that submission into the rooms where funding decisions are shaped, meeting with Members of Parliament, Parliamentary Secretaries, and Ministers, including Parliamentary Secretary Lesley Church, Minister Gainey, Minister Hajdu, Minister Zerucelli, and Senator Mohamed. We held working discussions with Employment and Social Development Canada, Finance, Heritage, Public Safety, the Canadian Armed Forces, and the Prime Minister's Office. In each, we pressed the same point: volunteering is national infrastructure, and it needs to be funded like one.

While the budget does not yet reflect our submission, the case is made, the relationships are built, and the ask is on the public record. What we need now are more voices carrying it as these efforts continue.

This is where our corporate partners matter beyond their investment. Government moves when it hears from many directions at once, and the business community carries weight in those conversations that a national charity cannot carry alone. If you are engaging government on community investment, civic resilience, or the social sector, this is an opportunity to push together. Our budget submission is public, and we would welcome the chance to align our advocacy with yours.



National Volunteer Action Strategy (NVAS) Strategy Advancement

Throughout 2025, Volunteer Canada actively advanced the National Volunteer Action Strategy (NVAS) by building, connecting, and deepening the evidence and relationships needed to guide a national strategy.

Activities included national surveys, sector-wide convening, landscape reviews, storytelling projects, and extensive synthesis of what Volunteer Canada heard from volunteers, volunteer engagers, community organizations, and sector partners across Canada. Across this engagement, participants consistently reinforced the need to strengthen volunteer infrastructure, foster cross-sector collaboration, and create more equitable, accessible, and people-centred pathways to participation. These efforts culminated in the development of a preliminary set of Strategic Priorities, Recommendations, and a comprehensive Theory of Change to guide the NVAS moving forward.

As part of these efforts, Volunteer Canada launched a targeted digital advocacy campaign that generated strong engagement among federal political audiences, including substantial click-through by federal officials and staff. In addition, Volunteer Canada commissioned opinion research to strengthen and further strengthening Volunteer Canada's efforts to support data engagement across the sector and upholding our position as a credible source of insights on volunteering trends.

Together, these efforts strengthened the evidence, partnerships, and policy momentum needed to advance the National Volunteer Action Strategy.

To learn more about the key themes and insights that informed the NVAS, see the latest What We're Hearing report.

> "Volunteering isn't in crisis, rather, our engagement needs to shift from a demographic-based understanding toward models that respond to people's shared values and motivations.
>
> –(Re)Engaged research initiative, Volunteer Alberta and InWithForward

WHAT'S NEXT FOR: Advancing Policy and Strategy to Strengthen Volunteering

Looking ahead, Volunteer Canada will be working with provincial and local partners to build implementation action plans for the **National Volunteer Action Strategy** to turn the tide on declining volunteerism. We will continue to advocate for engagement from the federal government and seed leadership and collaboration across geographies and from key sectors like sports and recreation and arts and culture. Paying specific attention to younger and older adults, we are also developing a stronger policy and advocacy agenda, calling for investments and programmatic initiatives to shore up civic participation by these key demographics. This work is not ours alone; shared leadership is key to creating a robust and inclusive ecosystem for volunteering from coast to coast to coast.

Nonprofit Capacity

This past year Volunteer Canada supported a network of approximately 1,000 members through national tools, research, awareness campaigns, and shared resources that improve volunteering

Volunteer Canada is committed to helping make it easier for every Canadian to participate and volunteer. We do this by conducting research, providing tools and resources, convening our network, providing small funding to grassroots organizations, and brokering relationships and understanding between government, volunteers, volunteer-led organizations, and corporate partners.

The focus of this work included supporting data literacy, renewing our models of member engagement, expanding research to better support Older Adult, Youth, and Newcomer volunteering, and updating the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement (CCVI).



Data-Driven Engagement (DDE) and Learning

A key initiative supporting this work is Data-Driven Engagement (DDE) focused on making national data more accessible and usable for nonprofit practitioners, planners, and leaders.

As the lead partner on this initiative, Volunteer Canada works with Imagine Canada, the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy Canada, the Volunteer Management Professionals of Canada (VMPC), and DARO Dataworks, to strengthen the sector's ability to access, understand, and apply national data in everyday practice. In collaboration with Statistics Canada, the program delivered national learning opportunities that helped nonprofit and voluntary sector professionals build their confidence in accessing, interpreting, and applying national data to inform organizational planning and decision-making. In January 2026, Volunteer Canada launched the **Certificate of Completion in Data-Driven Engagement**, a structured ten-webinar learning pathway designed to build sector-wide data confidence through national data and practical case studies.

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Registration insights from the Certificate of Completion in Data-Driven Engagement highlighted limited familiarity with the General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (GSS-GVP), underscoring the need for structured learning pathways and stronger data confidence across the sector.



of participants were unfamiliar with the GSS-GVP or had only heard of it.



of participants were committed to completing the full ten-webinar program.

> I am eager to strengthen my confidence using Canadian data in ways that are practical, ethical, and human-centred. I look forward to learning alongside others in the sector and applying these insights in real volunteer and nonprofit contexts.
>
> –Program participant

Intergenerational Engagement

Through our integrational project, GenerationsCo, Volunteer Canada is generating data and insights about volunteering across the life cycle and exploring models for building stronger connections between generations.

One of the key activities of this project is to provide small grants to community organizations that are looking to build and scale intergenerational volunteering programs. Using a shared monitoring and evaluation framework, these partners will allow us to generate insight and metrics that contribute to field building in Canada.

Relatedly, we are collaborating with partners like the International Longevity Centre for Canada to build an online knowledge hub to support intergenerational volunteering and developing a coaching and mentoring service.

"When people develop intergenerational friendships with people they didn't previously know, they quickly realize they have many things in common, and that's a bonding, community-building experience."

–Betty Good,
Founder, GoodLinks
Intergenerational Practice



Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement (CCVI)

The volunteer landscape is undergoing a seismic shift. Nonprofit organizations of all sizes are navigating constrained resources, declining volunteer base, and increasing demand for services.

At the same time, our sector is responding to growing social isolation and polarization. These realities underscore why the need for updated guidance and principles related to best practices in volunteer engagement.

Volunteer Canada worked closely with our partners at Volunteer Management Professionals of Canada (VMPC) to renew and update the CCVI to ensure it reflects the current context of volunteerism in Canada.

This included extensive consultation with Leaders of Volunteers, Volunteer Centres, and a cross-section of sector partners, to ensure that these principles for volunteer involvement support the shifting needs of both individuals and organizations. The updated resource will be released later this year.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR: Non-Profit Capacity

As we look to the year ahead, Volunteer Canada will continue to strengthen Non-Profit Capacity through the development of additional tools, resources, and training materials related to data trends and insights; modules to support self-assessment and implementation of the **Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement**; a mentoring and coaching program to support intergenerational engagement; and campaigns to support, celebrate, and grow participation in communities across the country.

Corporate Volunteering Innovation

Volunteer Canada believes strongly that employers have a critical role to play in enabling impactful relationships and engagement through their employees and their corporate community investments.

In 2025, Volunteer Canada continued to innovate in our approach to strengthening corporate citizenship. Some highlights from the past year including working alongside our corporate and community partners to deliver a national model for **Employer-Supported Volunteering (ESV)** that made it easier for employees to learn about social issues, take meaningful action, and reflect on their participation within the communities where they live and work.

The impact extended well beyond the activities themselves. By designing volunteer experiences around community priorities and incorporating opportunities for learning and reflection, employees developed a deeper understanding of local issues and their role in creating positive change. Community organizations gained meaningful capacity, and corporate partners strengthened employee engagement through purpose-driven experiences that reflected their values and social impact commitments.

This work reflects Volunteer Canada's commitment to reimagining ESV as a catalyst for stronger communities and lifelong civic participation. By bringing together employers, nonprofits, and volunteers around shared community priorities, Volunteer Canada is helping build a more connected, resilient, and inclusive volunteer ecosystem.

For additional stories and impact highlights, see the 2025 ESV Year in Review report.



I want to take a moment to express our sincere appreciation for the incredible work completed during our recent volunteer day at Camp Otonabee. The Synopsys volunteer group, organized through Volunteer Canada, made a tremendous impact on the upkeep, safety, and long-term sustainability of our site. Thanks to the dedication and teamwork of everyone involved, we were able to complete an extraordinary amount of work — the impact on the camp will be felt for years to come.

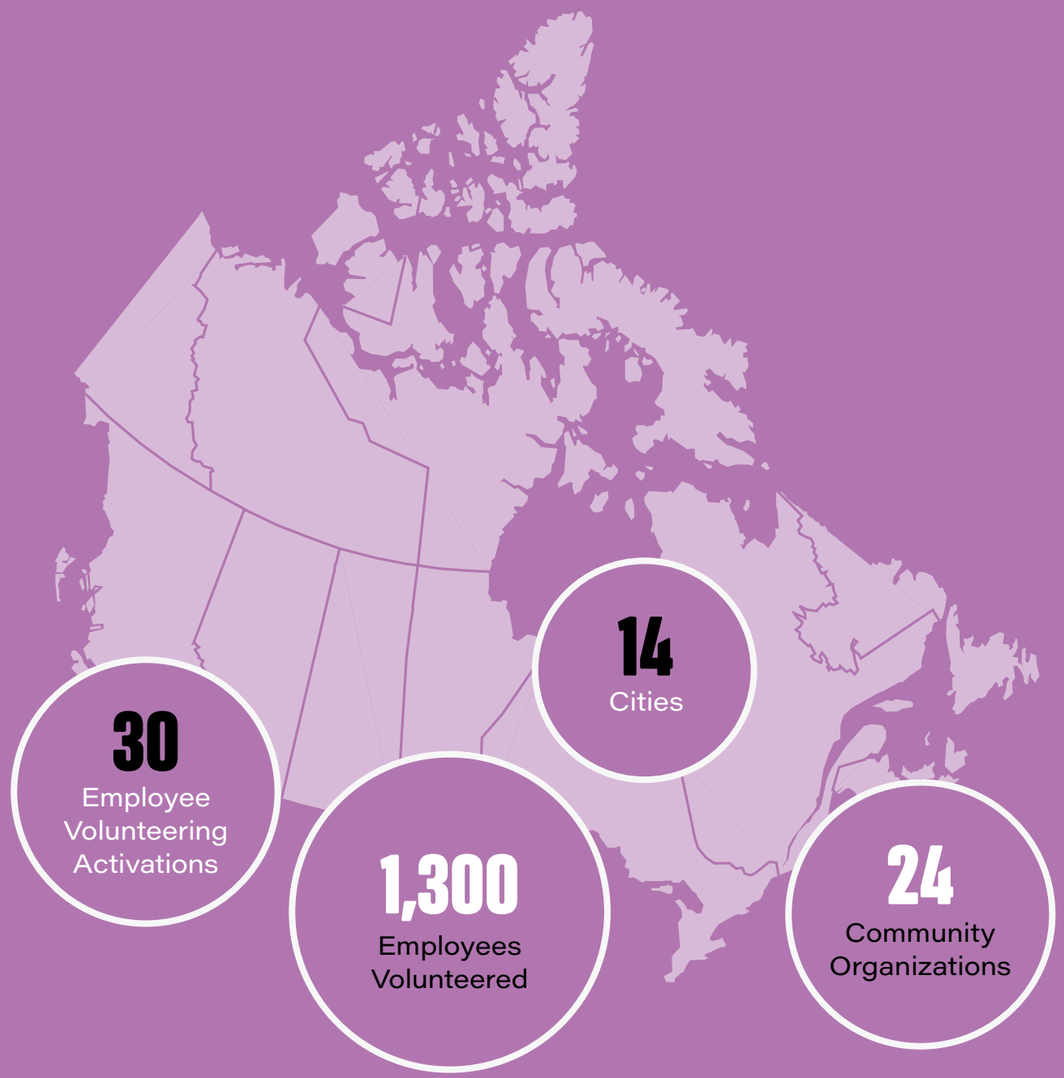
Shay Ackerman,
YMCA of the National Capital Region

At Synopsys, our global commitment to generate positive community impact drives us to invest in meaningful partnerships like the one we've built with Volunteer Canada. Their expertise and trusted leadership have helped us grow our employee-supported volunteering programs in Canada, creating impactful opportunities that align with our values and global initiatives. It has been exciting to see how this collaboration has evolved as we deepen our investment in communities where our teams live and work.

Nancy Wall,
Synopsys Social Impact team

2025 ESV AT A GLANCE

Across Canada, employee volunteers supported initiatives that strengthened food security, environmental stewardship, newcomer inclusion, youth development, and community well-being. Together, these efforts helped nonprofit organizations advance meaningful work that might otherwise have gone unrealized.



29,000+

Youth, women, newcomers, seniors, families, and community members

Vertex Global Day of Service | Toronto:

Vertex employees in Toronto spent their Global Day of Service volunteering at PACT's Grow-to-Learn Garden, working together on hands-on gardening activities that helped maintain this community garden for seasons to come.





Motive Gives Back | Montreal:

As part of Motive Gives Back, employees volunteered at Marché Bon Accueil, sorting and packing food to help prepare essential resources for community members experiencing food insecurity.

Synopsys Season of Service | Ottawa:

During their annual Season of Service, Synopsys employees volunteered at the YMCA Outdoor Centre, contributing to hands-on projects that supported the camp's upkeep, enhanced safety, and promoted its long-term sustainability.



Corporate Volunteering Readiness Program

Demand for corporate volunteering is rising at the same time as the volunteer base that charities rely on is shrinking.

Employer-supported volunteering (ESV) is one of the few channels positioned to grow while individual volunteering declines. Charities need practical ways to receive it well.

Over fourteen years of national corporate volunteering delivery, we have seen where the sector is under-equipped. Building and sustaining a strong corporate partnership takes scoping, costing, risk management, and stewardship that most organizations have never been resourced to develop. When those foundations are in place, a corporate relationship advances the mission and sustains itself. When they are not, the same relationship can draw more staff time and resources than it returns. As the national organization leading best practices on corporate volunteering, Volunteer Canada is positioned to close that gap: to help charities in every community build corporate partnerships on their own terms, so that more of them can take part, and companies find more organizations equipped to host their teams in meaningful, well-designed experiences.

The UPS Foundation committed $24,500 this year to test this approach. Through focus groups with charities and corporate leaders, we are examining whether charities would use this kind of program and how it could strengthen and expand employee volunteering opportunities. If the demand is there, this becomes the case for a build.

This work reflects Volunteer Canada's ongoing commitment to strengthening volunteer infrastructure and creating more inclusive and equitable opportunities for civic participation across Canada.

73%
of Canadians volunteered in 2023, down from 79% in 2018.

18%
decrease in the total number of hours volunteered between 2018 and 2023.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR: Corporate Volunteering Innovation

The year ahead turns momentum into infrastructure. We are launching the **Good Company Leadership Labs**, working sessions that bring senior leaders in corporate volunteering, community investment, and social impact together to build the practices the field will run on. We are advancing the **Corporate Volunteering Readiness Program** from validation toward build, equipping charities across the country to host corporate groups well and, over time, helping companies find the organizations ready to receive them. And we are deepening partnerships, including our work with Points of Light, so that what we build in Canada connects to what is working globally. The foundation is in place. What comes next is scale.

ABOUT VOLUNTEER CANADA

Volunteer Canada's Mission is to advance volunteerism to grow connection, community and belonging.

Since 1977, Volunteer Canada has acted as the national voice and leadership body for volunteerism. A registered charity with approximately 1,000 organizational members, Volunteer Canada works with a diversity of corporate, charity, nonprofit, and education partners nationwide to strengthen the quality, quantity, and accessibility of volunteering. We are the sector's backbone organization providing leadership, expertise, standards of practice and resources for the public, private, and charitable sectors.

"Your investment has been a critical lever

in our ability to strengthen the infrastructure and ecosystem that supports volunteering and community participation across the country.

Behind this work are people who want to contribute, connect, and make a difference. Volunteering and service are essential to building strong communities and a stronger Canada.

Together, we are strengthening the systems, partnerships, and opportunities that make meaningful participation possible and help volunteering thrive. The opportunity ahead is to build on what we have achieved and carry this work forward. We invite you to continue your investment and join us on the journey ahead.



Megan Conway
President and CEO, Volunteer Canada

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