

2023-2024 Annual Report

MEETING THE MOMENT

Building a movement to
strengthen volunteerism
in Canada



Volunteer
Bénévoles
Canada



“

With declines in group participation and a rise in loneliness, the need for a national strategy is acute. Volunteer Canada is the ideal organization to bring the sector together in a shared effort.

Julia Howell
Chief Program Officer, Toronto Foundation

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Territory Acknowledgement

At Volunteer Canada, we recognize and acknowledge the Indigenous Peoples as the original stewards of the lands on which we live, work and volunteer. We humbly express our gratitude for their longstanding presence and enduring connections to this land.

We understand that our physical head office is located on the unceded and unsundered Anishianbewaki and Algonquin territory, along the banks of the Ottawa River, and we recognize the role the Algonquin Peoples play as traditional waterkeepers and defenders of the river and the land.

Volunteer Canada recognizes this as part of reaffirming our commitment and responsibility to improving relationships between nations, as well as our own understanding of local Indigenous Peoples and their cultures.

From coast to coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of all the Inuit, Métis and First Nations Peoples.

As we move forward, we recognize the collective responsibility we hold in promoting truth, understanding and positive change. We encourage all people of Canada to join us in this journey of reconciliation as we work toward building a more just, equitable and inclusive society for all.



JAIDE Commitment

At Volunteer Canada, we are committed to upholding the principles of Justice, Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (JAIDE) in all aspects of our work.

We recognize the colonial constructs present in narratives around volunteerism and are working to shift these narratives to reflect diverse models of community participation in an effort to actively move toward reconciliation.

We envision a society where every unique background and perspective is acknowledged and celebrated, fostering a vibrant future of volunteerism. We know that volunteering serves as a catalyst for social justice, and we acknowledge systemic inequalities and advocate for change, envisioning a Canada with equal opportunities for all. Volunteerism should be universally accessible, and we are dedicated to ensuring that everyone, regardless of differences, can participate as both contributors and beneficiaries of community engagement.

Volunteer Canada is committed to nurturing inclusive spaces, valuing differences in race, gender, age and ability, and enhancing our impact on positive change.

We strive to address imbalances in our programs, policies and practices. Understanding the distinction between equality and equity, we believe everyone should have the tools and resources needed to thrive in volunteering.

As we champion, support and celebrate volunteerism, these JAIDE principles remain at our core. Our commitment to continuous growth drives us to create a volunteer landscape mirroring the diversity of our country. **Together, we contribute to a Canada where everyone is valued, respected and empowered.**



Volunteering serves as a catalyst for social justice, and we acknowledge systemic inequalities and advocate for change, envisioning a Canada with equal opportunities for all.

ABOUT VOLUNTEER CANADA

Since 1977, Volunteer Canada has acted as the national voice and leadership body for volunteerism.

A registered charity with close to 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 backbone organization for volunteerism, providing leadership, expertise, standards of practice and resources for the public, private and charitable sectors. Our mission is to advance volunteerism to grow connection, community and belonging.



Vision

The value of one,
the power of many.

Mission

We advance
volunteerism to
grow connection,
community and
belonging.

Values

Volunteer Canada
acts with integrity
and is socially
just, collaborative,
courageous and
results-focused.

Core Functions

Volunteer Canada’s leadership and expertise on volunteer engagement has focused on the following core functions, which are continuously adapted to meet the evolving context and emerging trends and issues in volunteerism.

01

Capacity Building

Volunteer Infrastructure (tools,
knowledge and resources)

Coaching and Consulting

Knowledge Mobilization

02

Advocacy and Education

Public Education and Engagement

Convening and Consultation

Narrative Building

Government Relations

03

Facilitating Pathways to
Volunteerism

Building Pathways to Support
Diverse Participation

Movement Building

Corporate Citizenship

Message from Board Chair

This past year has been one of reflection and renewal at Volunteer Canada. For almost 50 years, we have been the national voice of volunteerism in Canada, and as the sector has changed, we have had to evolve to keep pace.

Our Strategic Plan 2023-2026 lays the foundation that will guide our work. Along with revitalized vision, mission and values statements, the plan defines our strategic priorities and provides milestones against which we can measure our progress.

With the Strategic Plan as our guide, the Board's Governance Committee has been busy reviewing and updating the materials that underpin the work of the Board, including a new recruitment strategy and orientation manual, as well as the ongoing work to review the Board's governance policies. With this, the Board is in a better position to support the organization today and going forward.



Lisa Mort-Putland
Chair

We know how important volunteering is in communities from coast to coast to coast. And the past few years have highlighted the fragility of the sector in the face of economic and social pressures. **I can confidently say that we have the pieces in place to help us meet this current moment and move into the future with confidence.** Let's work together to revitalize and strengthen volunteering in Canada. We have the tools, and we have the commitment, to shape the future together.

Message from President & CEO

There have been so many *moments that matter* this year. Far too many to list here, but you'll see references to many of them throughout this annual report. Collectively, these moments have created what feels like unstoppable momentum toward positive change and ongoing impact.

This year we took a hard, uncompromising look at our organization and, with the help of experts, crafted a JAIDE statement that will guide our work with our partners to create a volunteer and participation space in Canada that is welcoming and accessible to everyone. This is foundational in our work to create pathways to participation for every individual who wants to contribute in meaningful ways to advancing change.

It is also incumbent on us, as the national voice for volunteering in Canada, to never miss an opportunity to speak to the contributions that volunteers, and the volunteer sector, make to communities across the country. Whether that's through another successful National Volunteer Week or in conversations with government officials, our corporate partners or other non-profit groups, we are always there to raise the profile of volunteers and the impact they have from coast to coast to coast.

The federal government's support for, and financial contribution to, the development of a National Volunteer Action Strategy is a tangible result of our ongoing efforts. This coming year is going to be a busy one as we continue to work with our partners to develop the strategy that will guide volunteerism for years to come.

The future is feeling very bright! Together, we must keep the momentum going, and we must continue to create moments that matter at every opportunity. Because volunteering matters—to our neighbours; to our communities; to our country.



Dr. Megan Conway
President & CEO

Gratitude and Acknowledgement

Many people have contributed to enriching the organization over the last year.

A sincere thank you to the Board of Directors, especially outgoing Board members, **Michel Alexandre Cauchon, Lawrie Portigal** and **Penny Rowe**.

Thank you to all of the volunteers on the various Board committees and those who have acted as advisors and contributors to strengthening our work.

Thank you to those who have participated as partners, those who have participated in consultations, and those who have offered practical advice and feedback over the course of the year.

Lastly, a sincere thank you to the staff for their contributions, insights and creativity over the past year.



“Let’s work together to revitalize and strengthen volunteering in Canada. We have the tools, and we have the commitment, to shape the future together.”

Lisa Mort-Putland
Chair

STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2023, we launched Volunteer Canada’s Strategic Plan, 2023-2026, which outlines a bold vision for the future. With this foundation in place, Volunteer Canada is poised to play a critical role in shaping volunteerism and participation in Canada.

Together with our partners, we will work to create bold, far-reaching movements of participation and volunteerism, build a National Volunteer Action Strategy, and champion the building of comprehensive, accessible pathways for everyone to volunteer, participate and contribute to individual and community well-being.

Strategic Priorities

The impact we want to deliver for our stakeholders	
We will advance diverse movements of volunteerism and participation, where everyone belongs...	So that growing and diverse movements of volunteerism and participation are anchored in every province and territory.
The work we most need to do to create the impact we seek	
We will steward a national action strategy on volunteerism...	So that Canada invests at a scale that meets its volunteerism and participation needs.
We will continue our journey to make JAIDE foundational in all that we do...	So that equity is centred in all of our work, and there are inclusive pathways to participation.
We will curate and amplify narratives on volunteerism and participation...	So that the value of volunteering is understood and seen.
We will strengthen infrastructure for volunteerism and participation...	So that individuals, organizations, grassroots groups and networks have greater access to what they need to enable volunteerism and participation.
The human resources and culture that underpin it all	
We will invest in the culture, team and capacity to drive our mission...	So that we increase our impact with a team reflective of the communities we serve, and modernized processes, systems and capacities.

Emerging Theory of Change



Advocacy & Education (the narrative)	Advocacy Public education & engagement	The value of volunteering is understood and seen	Greater volunteerism and participation	Belonging
Facilitating Pathways to Volunteerism	Building pathways to participation Volunteerism Movement building	Canada invests at a scale that meets its volunteerism and participation needs		
Capacity Building	Knowledge creation, curation and mobilization Volunteer infrastructure (tools & resources) Coaching and consulting	Greater access to what is needed to enable volunteerism and participation		
Values	Volunteer Canada acts with integrity and is socially just, collaborative, courageous and results-focused	Common Approaches	▪ collaborative ▪ convening ▪ informing	▪ bridge-building ▪ influencing ▪ engaging

Funder profile: The Counselling Foundation of Canada

Riz Ibrahim, President and CEO of The Counselling Foundation of Canada, said he views volunteering “within the context of an individual’s career development, helping that person build skills and networks that will be valuable as they progress through their career journey.” Having acted as a funder for Volunteer Canada’s Strategic Plan, Ibrahim said the Plan will anchor the organization as it moves through a pivotal time for volunteering in Canada. He noted that the Plan’s focus on JAIDE is very important.

“This represents an evolution in the volunteer space, making it more current, accessible and open to everyone.”

IMPACT STORIES: FACILITATING PATHWAYS TO PARTICIPATION

As the volunteer landscape in Canada continues to evolve, we are working with our partners to find new ways to reinvigorate volunteering in communities across the country and to remove barriers to participation. Empowering every Canadian to find their place in the volunteer space—regardless of age, ethnicity, income or ability—will help to build more empowered citizens, more connected and resilient communities, and a stronger, more unified and more prosperous Canada.

Pathways to Participation

Empathy Engaged amplified the voices of young Canadians. We worked with them to better understand how they perceived formal volunteering in a post-pandemic world. They identified why some youth might be hesitant to volunteer, how organizations can best engage youth, and what they saw as the essential ingredients to a meaningful volunteer experience. Along with a landscape and gap analysis that formed the foundation for these conversations, what we heard from these young volunteers will help lay the foundation for a national youth volunteer action plan and commitment challenge.

There is tremendous potential to be harnessed when you bring older adults and youth together to volunteer in intentional, mutually beneficial ways. **Intergenerational volunteering** helps to build connections, foster trust and combat loneliness, and reinforces the value of lifelong volunteering.

Dr. Megan Conway appeared before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities in December 2023 to reinforce the role that intergenerational volunteering can play in solving the current participation crisis. Dr. Conway put forward three recommendations, which were all included in the Committee's final report.

- 01** Develop a national volunteer action strategy
- 02** Strengthen the evidence base on intergenerational volunteering
- 03** Increase the availability of federal funding for intergenerational volunteering initiatives

Empathy Engaged Roundtables

87 youth participated in five roundtables, led by a Youth Advisory Council, to gain a deeper understanding of the ways that youth perceive and participate in formal volunteering.

In 2023, we received generous commitments of funding from a variety of partners, including Canada Life, Lawson Foundation, Rideau Hall Foundation, Counselling Foundation, Suncor Energy Foundation, Toronto Foundation and a generous anonymous donor. We are grateful to our partners who make our work possible.



October 2023: Launch of Empathy Engaged Roundtables

Empathy Engaged was a collaborative project between Volunteer Canada and the Rideau Hall Foundation and with support from Ilona Dougherty from the Youth & Innovation Project at the University of Waterloo. The project aimed to explore ways to create meaningful opportunities for formal youth volunteering, promote a sense of belonging, and build a national strategy for youth volunteerism that is inclusive, equitable and impactful. In the fall of 2023, we launched the first of five Youth Engagement Roundtables to gather insights on youth volunteerism, barriers and creative solutions.

December 2023: Expert Witness at HUMA Committee meeting

Volunteer Canada's President & CEO, Dr. Megan Conway, was invited to serve as an expert witness for the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA). After informing Committee Members of the linked nature of Canada's current loneliness epidemic and crisis in volunteering and participation, Dr. Conway urged the Committee to investigate the dual issues and invest in the infrastructure necessary to effectively promote and support intergenerational volunteerism. These recommendations were included in HUMA's June 2024 report on promoting and encouraging international volunteerism.



Partner Profile: Rideau Hall Foundation

Empathy Engaged gave young people a forum to speak about how they envision volunteering, how they want to participate and how they want to work to build better communities. Involving youth is a critical step toward inspiring volunteerism, something that is particularly important now given the declining number of formal volunteers in communities all across the country. The Rideau Hall Foundation is excited to continue to work with Volunteer Canada to create more opportunities for people of all ages and stages to better engage with their communities and the world around them.

**Teresa Marques, President and CEO,
Rideau Hall Foundation**

IMPACT STORIES: ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION

As the national voice for volunteering in Canada, we will continue to work to create a bold and far-reaching movement of volunteerism and participation to help meet the challenges and opportunities that Canada is facing.

Movement Building

National Volunteer Week is an opportunity for us to bring Canadians together to celebrate the vital role that volunteers play in their communities. Last year's theme, Volunteering Weaves Us Together, put the spotlight on how volunteers help to strengthen Canada's social fabric and how they work together to create vibrant communities from coast to coast to coast.

We met some major milestones in our journey toward a **National Volunteer Action Strategy** that will help to protect, support and facilitate volunteering today and far into the future.

The Case for Support outlined the post-pandemic pressures and challenges facing the sector. It was a call to action to get people involved and motivated to add their voices and support to the creation of the Strategy.

A Roadmap to Meet the Moment: Co-Creating a National Volunteer Action Strategy was the next major step in our journey. This document was the culmination of a research and consultation process to develop key themes and recommendations that would guide the way forward.

With these pieces in place, we continued to lobby key decision makers. We were thrilled that the spring 2024 Federal Budget included a commitment of \$400,000 to support the Strategy's development.



40+

NVAS Consultations

Over the course of 2023, we facilitated a series of consultations to lay the groundwork for establishing a robust partnership framework for the development of the NVAS. In addition to hosting seven roundtables on the need for a strategy with stakeholders from Victoria to St. John's, we met with over 30 leaders, representing a wide variety of civil society subsectors to gather insights related to the NVAS and met with several Members of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA).

International Day of the Volunteer and Launch of the NVAS Development Process

We officially launched the process to develop a National Volunteer Action Strategy (NVAS). During an hour-long webinar, attendees heard about the need for a NVAS and were invited to engage in its development and implementation. They also heard from Nina Arwitz, CEO of Volunteer Ireland, about lessons learned from Ireland's experience in developing and implementing a successful strategy.



Campaign Profile : National Volunteer Week

We need to ask ourselves, what is the country we wish to create together? And how might we each contribute to strengthening our communities in ways that move beyond our needs as individuals to the needs of the broader collective?

Volunteer Canada and partners across the country are working to broaden perspectives on ways of engaging in volunteerism and civic engagement, building our capabilities to work collectively, and contribute to a vibrant, diverse and inclusive society.

National Volunteer Week, is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate all the diverse ways in which people from coast to coast to coast are engaging in their communities.

All these forms of community engagement continue to be vital as we reimagine how we contribute to the revitalization of our social fabric.

National Volunteer Week 2023

67k total impressions

131 media hits

541 engaged users

1.5k reactions

13,000 impressions for launch of NVW on April 16th

social media followers grew to **53,000**

4.08 / 5 average satisfaction rating in participant survey

IMPACT STORIES: CAPACITY BUILDING

We are committed to working with our partners to ensure greater access to the tools, resources and data needed to facilitate volunteerism and participation.

We are working with our corporate partners to help them build and grow their unique cultures of giving.

We identify, generate and mobilize knowledge about volunteer engagement through research and learning opportunities such as webinars and workshops.

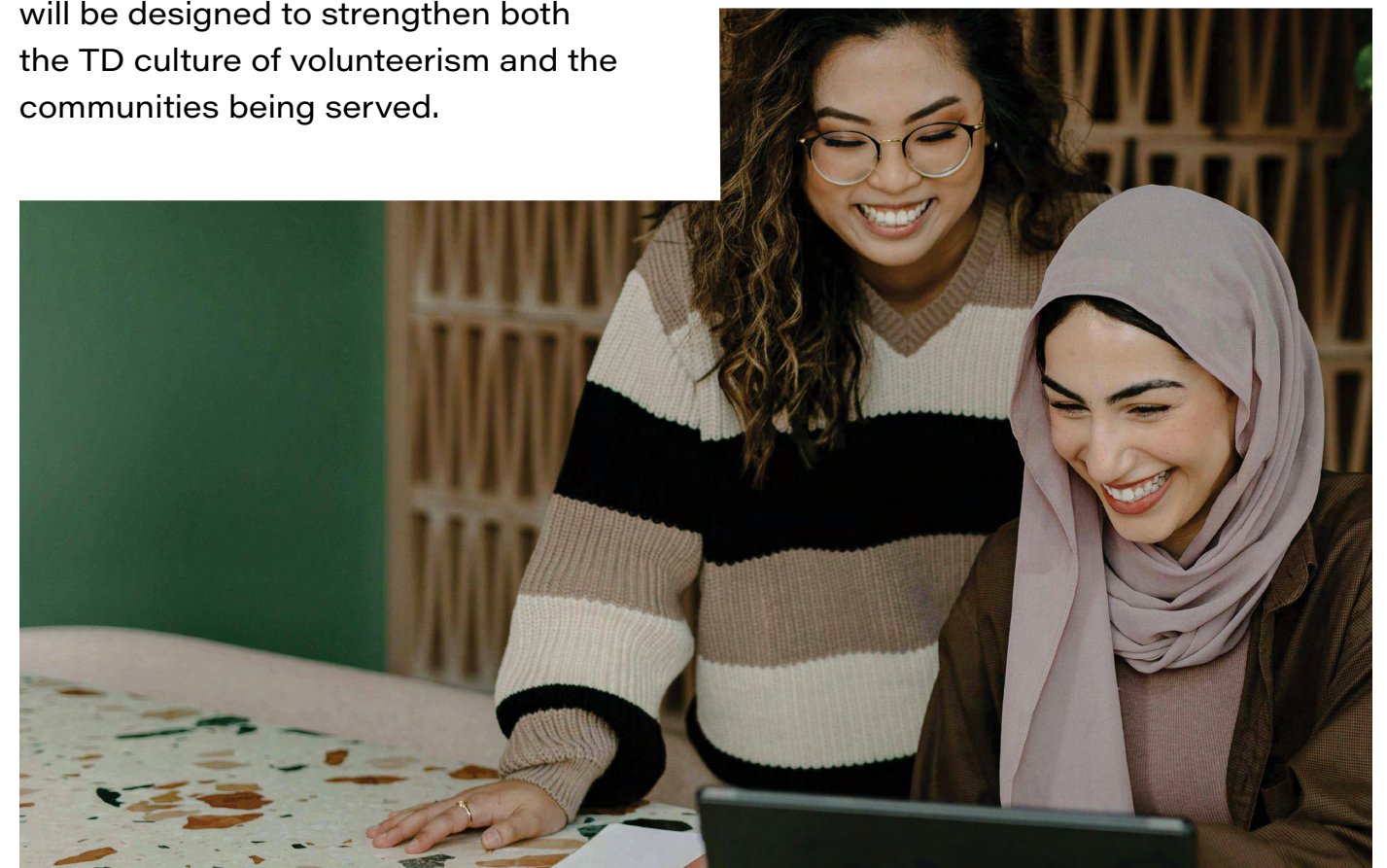
Enabling Volunteerism

Corporate membership with Volunteer Canada offers opportunities for networking, exchanging ideas and working together within a community of members who share a commitment to engaging their employees as volunteers in their communities. Our current cohort of corporate members represents over 300,000 employees.

Through 2025, we will work in partnership with **TD Bank Group** to further enhance its culture of corporate community engagement and amplify the impact staff are having in communities across the country. Each of the 16 planned curated group community engagement activities will be designed to strengthen both the TD culture of volunteerism and the communities being served.

In addition, webinars will inspire continued employee commitment to volunteerism by focusing on issues like fostering inclusion and co-designing an ethical volunteer experience.

With the launch of the **Canadian Knowledge Hub for Giving and Volunteering**, together with our partners, we have created a one-stop resource for data about giving and volunteering in Canada. With the data, which continues to grow as more becomes available, users can make evidence-based decisions to help inform program planning, optimize operations and achieve greater community impact.



Funder profile: TD Bank Group

At TD, we know that we can only thrive when the communities around us thrive. Through the TD Ready Commitment, we recognize the power of volunteering in a rapidly changing world to help create more inclusive spaces, increase community resiliency and forge connections. TD colleagues are passionate and committed to helping improve outcomes for their communities and we're proud to work with Volunteer Canada to help create more opportunities and ways to get involved with local initiatives.

Alicia Rose, Associate Vice President,
Social Impact, Sustainability & Corporate
Citizenship, TD Bank Group

350

people gathered online to learn
"How to Harness the Power of
Data: Data as a Catalyst for
Community Change"

32

workshops and
speaking
engagements

20

group
volunteering
activities

539

volunteers
engaged

1,489

volunteer
hours

14

charities
supported

Group Volunteering Holiday Helpers:

At the first Holiday
Helpers Event, TD
employees came
together, leading
the charge to
spread the holiday
spirit to families
in need.

440

gifts wrapped

21

families
supported

108

volunteer hours

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Volunteer Canada is committed to being transparent and accountable with regards to our financial practices.

Volunteer Canada’s work is supported by the generous contributions of organizations, government, sector funders and individuals from across the country.

Thank you for sharing our vision and supporting our mission.

Summarized Statement of Financial Position as at March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
Assets		
Total current assets	\$1,293,849	\$1,037,865
Tangible capital assets	\$21,570	\$953
Intangible assets	\$28,915	-
Total assets	\$1,344,334	\$1,038,818

Current Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$116,937	\$73,909
Deferred revenue and contributions	\$968,750	\$717,074
Net Assets	\$258,647	\$247,835
Total Assets	\$1,344,334	\$1,038,818

Summarized Statement of Operations Year Ended March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
Revenue		
Corporate funding	\$476,856	\$305,522
Government funding	\$459,794	\$404,321
Memberships	\$365,578	\$382,979
Sector partners	\$275,437	\$97,334
Other	\$132,853	\$63,829
Total revenue	\$1,710,518	\$1,253,985

Expenses		
Salaries and benefits	\$880,915	\$654,529
Consulting and contracts	\$519,532	\$385,520
Other	\$299,259	\$213,470
Total Assets	\$1,699,706	\$1,253,519

Excess of revenue over expenses	\$10,812	\$466
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GET INVOLVED

We are committed to creating multiple pathways for our members to engage in the work of Volunteer Canada. Currently, we have several opportunities for members to get involved, including:

- Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement Advisory Council
- Centreville Calls for Volunteer Centres
- The National Volunteer Action Strategy
- Corporate Community Engagement Council

We encourage you to reach out for more information if you are interested in participating in these initiatives or would like information about future opportunities. Please subscribe to our newsletter to receive regular updates about Volunteer Canada initiatives and opportunities.

Member Spotlight: Atwater Library and Computer Centre

Volunteer Canada has welcomed multiple new members to the organization from across the country. One of our newest members is Atwater Library and Computer Centre in Westmount, Quebec.

The library is a volunteer-led not-for-profit organization with registered charitable status and a mission to foster learning and community development. The Atwater Library specializes in English-language educational programs and services contributing to the vitality of the official language minority population of Greater Montreal, and Quebec more widely. The organization manages well with a modest budget, a small number of paid staff, many talented and committed volunteers, and generous donors.



Become a Member

Volunteer Canada members are part of a community of organizations that recognize the power of giving. Membership provides exclusive access to the latest research, resources and support, ensuring you don't have to manage your volunteering program alone. Together, we foster connection, community and a sense of belonging.

Become a member today!

Consulting Services

Volunteer Canada's team of consultants are available to help you create, strengthen and enhance your volunteer involvement strategy. Whether you are a not-for-profit organization, a corporation or a community group, our services can be tailored to meet your needs.

Connect with Us

New Brand Launch

Volunteer Canada is excited to announce a new brand and visual identity.

Our new identity reflects the ripples of action that every volunteer creates. Each spark of giving ignites broader change, and together, we're building stronger, more united communities across the country.

Every ripple of impact strengthens the diverse fabric of our communities. Together, we are a movement. Together, we are Volunteer Canada.





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Canada

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