

Sharing Your Views on Proposals for the National Volunteerism Initiative



An initiative between the Voluntary Sector
and the Government of Canada

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An Invitation from the NVI Joint Table Co-Chairs

For the purposes of consultation, this document outlines proposals for the National Volunteerism Initiative (NVI).

Building on the creativity and momentum of the International Year of Volunteers, the NVI is being designed as a lasting legacy for the voluntary sector to strengthen its engagement and support of volunteers.

These proposals for the NVI were developed through an initial round of discussions with interested parties by the NVI Joint Table, one of several collaborative forums established in 2000 by the Voluntary Sector and the Government of Canada as part of the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI).

We need your input to develop the NVI in a way that will reflect your views and priorities. This fall, through a series of roundtable discussions across Canada, we are seeking feedback from representatives of voluntary organizations, including individuals from sector-specific groups representing Aboriginals, youth, seniors, immigrants and refugees, faith communities, the environment, sport and recreation, arts and culture and international volunteers.

If you are not attending a roundtable discussion, you may complete this document and mail your copy to:

***NVI Secretariat
c/o Community Partnerships Program
Department of Canadian Heritage
12 York Street, 2nd Floor
Ottawa, ON K1N 5S6***

You may also submit your comments by fax to (613) 238-9300 or online by visiting www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/joint_tables/nvi/consultations.cfm. The deadline for comments to be received is October 16, 2001.

Thank you for helping us develop a shared vision for the NVI — we look forward to receiving your input!

Sincerely,

Colleen Kelly, NVI Joint Table Co-Chair

Tom Ring, NVI Joint Table Co-Chair

Notes/Suggestions

What is Canada's National Volunteerism Initiative (NVI)?

- ∅ The NVI is being designed as a lasting legacy of the *International Year of Volunteers (IYV)*.

The aim of the NVI is to provide ongoing mechanisms and resources to lead, promote and support efforts to strengthen the engagement and support of volunteers, so as to:

- ∅ encourage Canadians to participate in voluntary organizations; and
- ∅ improve the capacity of organizations to benefit from the contribution of volunteers and to enhance the experience of volunteering.

What are the anticipated results and benefits of the NVI?

For Voluntary Organizations:

- ✓ Greater capacity to engage and support volunteers
- ✓ More reliable, sustainable supply of volunteers
- ✓ Better ability to fulfill their missions

For Volunteers:

- ✓ New opportunities for volunteering
- ✓ Better matching of interests, talents and time with meaningful, rewarding volunteer opportunities
- ✓ Greater recognition and support

For Communities and All Canadians:

- ✓ Broader and more accessible range of services
- ✓ Better understanding and appreciation of volunteerism
- ✓ Strengthened civic awareness, participation and service

How has the NVI been developed to date?

- ∅ Current proposals for the NVI are the result of an initial round of discussions with selected organizations and experts, as well as working sessions of the NVI Joint Table and discussions with other VSI Joint Tables.
- ∅ These ideas take into account results of the *2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP)*.

What are the next steps in developing an NVI?

- ∅ Next steps are to review, challenge, validate and refine proposals for the NVI through broader consultations and invited input from voluntary organizations, volunteer-involving organizations and other interested parties, via:
 - 20 roundtable discussions in centres across Canada
 - invited input via the VSI website and voluntary sector communication networks; and
 - presentations and discussions with other VSI Joint Tables.
- ∅ All of these comments will help validate, challenge and refine ideas developed so far on the NVI.
- ∅ Results will shape final proposals for the NVI for consideration this fall by Federal Ministers and the Voluntary Sector.

Notes/Suggestions

Notes/Suggestions

What would we like your comments and suggestions on?

We need your input on the following 5 topics:

1. Key challenges and issues in engaging and supporting volunteers
2. Solutions identified to address the challenges
3. Possible types of implementation mechanisms
4. Principles that might govern the detailed design and implementation of the NVI
5. Other ideas, questions or issues of concern to you

National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP)

The NSGVP is a national study conducted in 1997 and again in 2000. Its purpose is to determine Canadian patterns and behaviours with respect to giving, volunteering and participating.

The NSGVP provides basis for concerns about the increased load borne by volunteers and the capacity of voluntary organizations to fulfill their missions. From 1997 to 2000:

- ∅ While the Canadian population grew by 2.5%, the number of volunteers declined by 13% (from 7.5 M to 6.5 M)
- ∅ The proportion of Canadians volunteering dropped from 31% to 27%
- ∅ The total number of volunteer hours declined by 5%, to 1.05 billion hours
- ∅ The average number of hours per year contributed by individual volunteers increased from 149 to 162
- ∅ About ¼ of volunteers continue to carry ¾ of the load, but their annual average hours are up 10% from 431 to 471

Notes/Suggestions

Notes/Suggestions

TOPIC #1

Key Challenges

Key challenges identified to date for the voluntary sector include:

- ∅ Dealing with the serious time crunch for volunteering
- ∅ Designing programs and positions for volunteers that are appropriate for both the organization and the volunteers, while considering trends in volunteering
- ∅ Recruiting and retaining volunteers with awareness, motivation and time
- ∅ Training, managing, and developing volunteers on an ongoing basis
- ∅ Recognizing the contribution of volunteers in a meaningful way, including compensation for out-of-pocket expenses
- ∅ Finding financial and other resources to handle peak workloads from emergencies, unforeseeable events, and special opportunities
- ∅ Pooling, sharing, and coordinating volunteer resources, particularly at the local level
- ∅ Having ready access to practical information, expertise, advice and mutual support needed to involve volunteers effectively
- ∅ Developing and sustaining public understanding and appreciation of the nature, opportunities and benefits of volunteerism
- ∅ Building sustainable, effective relationships to support volunteerism among voluntary, private and government sectors
- ∅ Developing a strong local, regional, national knowledge base about volunteerism

*Do you see these challenges
in your own experience?*

Are there others we may not have included?

*Which are the most important
challenges to address in the NVI?*

TOPIC #2

Solutions

Three complementary strategies, each supported by a series of specific measures, have been identified:

1. **Strengthen capacity** of voluntary organizations to engage and support volunteers
2. **Promote a favourable climate** for volunteerism and the effective involvement of volunteers
3. **Sustain effective relationships** between voluntary organizations, governments and the private sector for ongoing collaboration and dialogue on volunteerism

Notes/Suggestions

Notes/Suggestions

Strengthening capacity

We could strengthen *capacity* through:

- ∅ Supporting the efforts of organizations to improve how they engage and support volunteers. For example:
 - **Program Design:** *Ensure that an organization’s programs are designed to maximize the potential contribution of volunteers to support its mission*
 - **Job Design:** *Design volunteer positions to match the contributions/needs of volunteers with the organization’s mission*
 - **Management:** *Ensure that basic management functions (e.g., screening, recruitment/selection, orientation, training/development, supervision, appraisal, recognition/reward) take account of volunteers’ contributions/needs and the organization’s mission*
 - **Collaboration:** *Strengthen organizations’ capacities to collaborate in promoting public awareness/understanding of the roles of volunteers in the community, and their contribution to the missions of the organizations/causes in which they are involved*

- ∅ Leading and supporting the promotion, development and sharing of information, sensitivities, skills and ideas on effective approaches to volunteer engagement and support. For example:
 - Compile information about volunteers, volunteerism and volunteering opportunities
 - Provide tools, guides, and best practices for effective management of volunteers and collaboration with other organizations
 - Develop networking opportunities and face-to-face meetings on management of volunteers
 - Create and support locally accessible advisory and support services on volunteer engagement and support
 - Ensure ongoing research on volunteer trends and practices

In terms of these measures that focus on capacity, what would you add, remove or like to comment on?

Promoting a favourable climate

We could promote a favourable *climate* by:

- ∅ Supporting national information, awareness and promotion efforts to:
 - Improve understanding of the nature of, and opportunities for, volunteering at all levels
 - Encourage active participation in voluntary activities
 - Recognize the personal, organizational and community values and benefits of volunteerism

- ∅ Developing and implementing consistent standards as well as new model policies and practices related to volunteerism and management of volunteers

- ∅ Developing better ways of sustaining dialogue and action on policy issues at national, regional and community levels concerning volunteerism

In terms of these measures that focus on climate, what would you add, remove or like to comment on?

Notes/Suggestions

Notes/Suggestions

Sustaining effective relationships

We could build on the cooperative and collaborative *relationships* forged and renewed through IYV by:

- ∅ Continued support for national surveys, conferences and other mechanisms for dialogue and understanding
- ∅ Ongoing support for government/voluntary sector dialogue on volunteerism issues
- ∅ Enhanced support for volunteer-serving organizations

In terms of these measures that focus on relationships, what would you add, remove or like to comment on?

TOPIC #3

Implementation Mechanisms

Possible ways to implement the proposed NVI approaches include the following mechanisms:

- ∅ New/enhanced government, voluntary sector and/or joint programs to provide voluntary organizations with resources, support and new tools or better access to existing ones.

- ∅ New mechanisms or institutions, for example:
 - leadership centre(s)
 - consortiums of voluntary organizations
 - advisory and networking services and/or support bodies
 - government secretariat

- ∅ Research programs

- ∅ Clearinghouses

- ∅ Some combination of the above

In terms of these measures that focus on ways to implement the NVI, what would you add, remove or like to comment on?

Notes/Suggestions

Notes/Suggestions

TOPIC #4

Principles

Ideas to date for principles that could guide the design and implementation of the NVI include:

- ∅ Ensures a rewarding experience for volunteers
- ∅ Promotes diversity management
- ∅ Promotes volunteerism as an agent of change in the community
- ∅ Promotes openness and accountability
- ∅ Stays relevant to changing community needs
- ∅ Is readily accessible by volunteer-involving organizations and volunteers at all levels across Canada, including urban, rural and remote communities
- ∅ Enables face-to-face, local interaction and support
- ∅ Builds on existing organizations, programs and processes, making effective use of community assets, and promoting collaboration
- ∅ Encourages, directs and acts on research, to support innovation
- ∅ Promotes innovation and supports risk-taking in the interests of improvement, and does not simply replicate the status quo
- ∅ Sustains effective relationships between voluntary organizations and all levels of government, as well as the private sector
- ∅ Accommodates both top-down and bottom-up flow of ideas, innovations and initiatives

In terms of these measures that focus on principles, what would you add, remove or like to comment on?

TOPIC #5**Other Ideas, Questions or Concerns**

- ∅ **Are there any other ideas, questions or concerns you would you like to add or comment on?**

- ∅ **Overall, do the ideas developed to date for the NVI make sense to you?**
 - *Do they address the most important needs and opportunities of voluntary organizations?*
 - *Have any needs or opportunities been overlooked?*
 - *What other initiatives might improve how we engage and support volunteers?*

- ∅ **What challenges can we expect in designing and implementing an effective NVI?**
 - *What factors should guide the design or selection of mechanisms to lead, coordinate and deliver NVI initiatives?*
 - *How can we best ensure the NVI remains responsive and accountable to voluntary organizations?*

Notes/Suggestions

Other information about the VSI & the NVI Joint Table

- ∅ Background on the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI), including the various Joint Tables composed of voluntary sector and government representatives, can be found on the VSI website at <www.vsi-isbc.ca>
- ∅ Information about the National Volunteerism Initiative (NVI) Joint Table, including records of meetings, can also found on the VSI website, under the link to Joint Tables.

NVI Joint Table Members

Colleen Kelly (Co-Chair)
Executive Director
Volunteer Vancouver

Mary Anne Chambers
Chair
United Way Canada - Centraide Canada

Anthony Knight
Executive Director
Youth Council of New Brunswick

Cynthia Lam
Former Chief Executive Officer (Retired)
Chinese Family Services of Greater Montreal

Gabrielle Moule
National Director, Volunteer Resources
Canadian Red Cross

Tom Myers
Vice President
Telephone Pioneers

Pierre Riley
Directeur Général
Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du
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Tom Ring (Co-Chair)
Director General
Citizens' Participation & Promotion Branch
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Jim Dooley
Executive Advisor
Oceans Sector, Office of the Ass't. Deputy
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David Fransen
Director General
Information Highway Application Branch
Industry Canada

Geoff Gruson
Director General
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Marilyn Hay
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