

## Community Services Council Newfoundland and Labrador

### **Context**

The Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador (CSC) is a charitable organization dedicated to social and economic well-being. At any given time, CSC is working on dozens of projects that help to advance the voluntary, community-based sector (VCBS). There are over 4,000 voluntary, community-based organizations (VCBOs) throughout the province and operating in such a large geographic area is often associated with high costs. As a way of coping, CSC has turned to the Internet in an effort to assist VCBOs in the use of technology to increase their capacity. CSC, along with champions from a number of government agencies, saw the value in using the Internet to strengthen the sector in order to increase the social and economic development within communities.

### **Project Description**

In 2002, CSC launched the first ever Internet vortal for the VCBS in Newfoundland and Labrador – [www.enVision.ca](http://www.enVision.ca). enVision.ca is a virtual resource centre based on recommendations by organizations who wanted a new communications mechanism that would better link the sector and encourage information-sharing and skills enhancement. Today, the enVision.ca vortal contains almost 4,000 pages of information, and it is constantly growing. A combination of static information pieces and interactive tools make enVision.ca a unique resource. At enVision.ca, groups can learn about organization management, board development and volunteer coordination as well as keep up with current news about legislation, research and policy affecting the VCBS. There is also an interactive calendar of events, a listing of organizations throughout the province and a volunteer opportunities board.

In addition, the CSC created sophisticated databases available online covering topics from possible funding sources to sample volunteer job descriptions. enVision.ca also offers website creation and hosting as well as toll-free support for organizations who need technical assistance. With the recent development of online interactive training in such areas as Public Relations for the Non-profit, Volunteer Management and Risk Management, enVision.ca has hit its stride.

### **Successes/Challenges**

The enVision.ca project required the recruitment of human resources specialists with a solid understanding of the VCBS as the third sector of the economy, combined with both research and technical skills. As information technology skills become increasingly valuable to organizations in all sectors, CSC recognized this challenge upfront and ensured the recruitment and orientation of staff with the necessary combination of skills. CSC staff travel across the province to train VCBOs and provide one-on-one orientation sessions. Individuals are also contracted throughout the province to ensure that enVision.ca is a valuable resource for rural and remote organizations.

A successful initiative, the vortal currently receives about 33,000 visits per month!

<http://www.enVision.ca>

*These best practices are an excellent way of sharing your experiences with other organizations in the voluntary sector. If you also have positive experiences on the use of technology in the voluntary sector, the IM-IT Secretariat will be pleased to post your stories. Please contact the IM/IT Secretariat by e-mail at [imit@ic.gc.ca](mailto:imit@ic.gc.ca).*