



Cape Breton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

THE CHARTER OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

This Charter reflects the principles of the voluntary sector as determined by the membership of the Cape Breton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations. It serves as a reference point, a statement of shared understanding among boards of directors, volunteers and staff. The Charter will be used to guide future relationships both within the sector and between the sector and others. The Charter will be reviewed annually by the membership of the Cape Breton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations.

WHEREAS active, stable voluntary organizations are essential to a functioning society and to healthy communities.

AND WHEREAS the decisions and activities of all sectors of society must support and complement the efforts of caring citizens who organize to help one another and who wish to advance the common good.

PART I: THE SECTOR

1. The voluntary sector has the right to stable, long-term funding that respects its core operating needs.
2. To support participation in the voluntary sector, public policies must address social, economic, cultural, and regional inequalities, nurture stable communities and families, promote community service through our schools and workplaces, and not penalize citizens for carrying out their responsibilities to one another.
3. Government support is most effective when it is responsive to the needs of voluntary organizations and is allocated by transparent and fair methods with the active involvement of the voluntary sector.
4. The staff of voluntary sector organizations should be compensated in manners equivalent to that of other sectors (e.g. rates of remuneration, access to benefit and pension plans and professional development, and compensation for overtime worked).
5. The local wisdom and experience of voluntary sector organizations give these organizations the right to be actively consulted about the future of their communities and to be recognized for their consulting assistance.
6. All voluntary organizations should have the right to advocate without apprehension and to propose and comment on policy changes.
7. Voluntary sector organizations should receive first consideration and favourable terms when government property and assets are relinquished or sold.
8. Voluntary sector organizations should have access to up-to-date research about the socio-economic needs of their communities, regions, or sectors of activity.



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PART II: VOLUNTEERS

9. All volunteers should have safe, comfortable working conditions and should not be expected, without suitable training, to perform any tasks that lie outside their areas of competency, or to perform any tasks for which they have not given their full and informed consent.
10. No volunteer should be expected to perform or support any tasks that compromise common ethical standards or the volunteer's own principles and beliefs.
11. No volunteer should be expected to fill, on a long-term and unpaid basis, a position or part of a position that has been recently vacated by a paid staff person.
12. No volunteer should incur financial risk or penalty for serving in good faith.
13. Volunteers should be recognized and acknowledged for their service and should receive information on how their service is contributing to the common good. This recognition and this contribution must be complemented and supported by adequate, stable funding for the project and organization.
14. All volunteers should have access, upon request, to advice, assistance, and relief. Professional employees should be available within the public service and, where possible, within the organization to counsel and support volunteers.
15. All volunteers should have access to descriptive information on their organizations, including policies, annual reports, an outline of the organizational structure, and clarity on their role in the organization.
16. Volunteers should be consulted about the future of their organizations and about public policies affecting volunteers. Volunteers should have access to formal networks and forums to collaborate, share ideas, and improve their skills.
17. All volunteers have the right to serve in organizations and communities that are welcoming of differences and diversity, of new ideas, of generational renewal, and that are open to change.