



Volunteer
Bénévoles
Canada

**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER
ACTION STRATEGY**

WHAT WE'RE HEARING

Summer 2025 Report

VOLUNTEER

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NVAS ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

Throughout Summer 2025, Volunteer Canada has continued to engage individuals and organizations across the country to inform, deepen, and test what we know about the volunteer ecosystem. The preceding year of research and consultation helped us create an outline of the ecosystem (readers can find more background in the **Spring 2025 What We're Hearing report**). Over the summer, we've been able to colour in that outline thanks to a series of roundtables and workshops, storytelling initiatives, and early analysis of NVAS survey data. This report shares more of what we've heard to date and will be followed by a Fall 2025 capturing insights we hear later this year.

1,461

We have engaged 1,461 individuals through the NVAS Survey

321

We have engaged 321 organizations through the NVAS Survey

The emerging picture is complex, yet hopeful. Across Canada, communities are grappling with rising costs of living, uneven access to supports, and increasing social isolation. These pressures weaken civic trust and strain the networks people rely on in difficult times. In this context, volunteering and community participation are not only admirable, but are essential to community resilience, belonging, and well-being. In the face of these challenges, volunteering and community participation have been, and will remain, a critical part of the solution.

At the same time, the structures meant to support participation have not kept pace. Rising costs push many prospective volunteers out. The level of accessibility supports vary widely.

Screening and data systems often feel like barriers instead of tools. People have always sustained communities through mutual aid, grassroots organizing, chosen families, and civic action. Today, these contributions are increasingly visible, and their value is undeniable.

Volunteering in all its forms and manifestations continues to strengthen civic life. The task ahead is to ensure these contributions are recognized, supported, and sustained.

Between June and August 2025

667

We have directly engaged over 667 people through Round Tables, in person sessions and NVAS strategic meetings

45

Volunteer Canada has hosted and facilitated 45 virtual and in person sessions, talks, consultations and community activations



City of Burnaby Volunteering Presentation

Key Insights

Non-profits, charities and community organizations are doing a lot with very little.

Across the non-profit sector, we are seeing an increase in demand for the services the sector provides, and a decrease in capacity and sustained funding. It cannot be on the staff within the sector to rise to our socio-economic challenges alone – sustaining Canada’s social safety net must be a national priority. Investing in volunteering is a necessary component of that work.

Emergencies reveal the power of community mobilization but also highlight weaknesses in coordination and infrastructure.

During crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and climate emergencies like wildfires and floods, volunteers often take on essential support roles to help meet surging demand. Harnessing the adaptability and resilience of community networks in more

intentional ways will be key in preparing for future health and climate emergencies.

There can be very real and exclusionary costs to volunteering. Many are priced out of participation, signaling the need for a common approach to things like stipends and subsidies and other shared infrastructure to break down barriers to engagement.

Accessibility and screening practices remain uneven and often prohibitive. While these safeguards are critical, risk management is often disproportionate to the role, and duplication increases costs and delays. As opposed to rigid standardization, what’s needed is greater integration, shared values, and consistent and proportional approaches that make participation more accessible without compromising safety.

I believe the National Volunteer Action Strategy should prioritize accessibility, especially for youth, newcomers, and marginalized communities.

–NVAS Survey Open Text Response

Volunteering should not involve a large amount of costs to the volunteer. For example, uniforms or costumes, courses, parking costs, record checks etc.

–NVAS Survey Open Text Response

Fragmented data practices and reporting obligations often prevent valuable stories and data from being mobilized.

There is an appetite for shared, streamlined indicators that balance quantitative and qualitative data, respect data equity principles, and embed collection into everyday service delivery. When paired with feedback loops that show volunteers how their contributions shape outcomes, data shifts from a reporting obligation to a tool for collective learning, adaptation, and sector resilience.

Grassroots organizing, activism, and political engagement play a major role in strengthening civic identity and building community resilience. Yet, these contributions are rarely supported in funding frameworks or institutional understandings of volunteering. We have much to learn from these models, particularly their emphasis on reciprocity, equity, and belonging. How might we amplify grassroots practices without coopting them, ensuring advocacy and rights-based engagement are resourced as vital forms of volunteering?

What's Next

- Youth Round Tables in Partnership with Youth Innovation Project
- Alberta Engagements
- Newfoundland and Labrador Engagements
- Research and Data Month
- Sub-Sector Round Tables

WHAT WE'RE HEARING

Our consultations and conversations over the summer have made it clear that communities and organizations across Canada are navigating multiple crises at once: **rising costs of living, stretched community services, and shrinking funds for the sector.** These pressures are shaping when and how people can volunteer, and in turn placing new pressures on the organizations that engage volunteers.

But this is not the only story we heard. **Energy and innovation are abundant;** in sector efforts to change the way we think about data, in neighborhood led initiatives, in advocacy, in training and emergency preparedness, and in adaptive models that respond to people's changing life stages and circumstances.

While volunteers and organizations continue to emphasize the need to address the costs of participation, the unevenness of accessibility and screening practices, the fragility of our systems in the face of health and climate emergencies,

there's a palpable appetite to **design and test solutions.** We heard about promising data practices that spark learning, shifts toward recognizing and resourcing grassroots organizing, and exploring investment and philanthropic models built on trust and reciprocity.

One thing remains constant in the midst of change and crisis: **people want to contribute in ways that are meaningful, accessible, and supported.** The next step is to build the infrastructure that allows this energy to thrive.

Toward a Reimagined Narrative of Volunteering

From the outset, developing the NVAS has challenged us to deepen and expand our operating definition of “volunteering.” It has forced us to reflect on all the ways that volunteering has changed in this country since Volunteer Canada’s inception. The ever-shifting landscapes of technology, access to opportunities, financial stability, eco-consciousness, national identity, social and historical consciousness and reconciliation have impacted the way we see ourselves. These shifts have also impacted the way we see civic engagement and volunteer motivation. And they impact the singularity of the story we tell about volunteering in this country. **There is no one story of volunteering in Canada.** Through our engagements and research, we have been fortunate to be shown many stories that add richness and complexity to our understandings of motivation and participation.

How We’ve Been Expanding

Strict understandings of the term often capture only a narrow slice of community participation, overlooking the many ways people contribute such as mutual aid, grassroots initiatives, sustaining networks of care and kinship, supporting their communities and leading neighborhood projects.

Through the expansion of the Statistics Canada’s General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (GSS-GVP) to include measures of informal volunteering, our sector was able to gather data on the contributions that often go unnoticed and unmeasured. Many practitioners and sector leaders hypothesized that the decline in formal volunteer rates would correlate to a sharp increase in informal volunteering. However, the most recent comparative GSS-GVP data shows a decline in informal volunteering between 2018 and 2023.

All forms of volunteering and participation are on the decline. And many of the reasons that impact the formal volunteer rate - tradeoffs between paid and unpaid labor, burnout, lack of sustainability for the work - also impact informal volunteering.

Expanding our understanding is not about replacing the language of volunteering as a simple re-branding exercise. Rather it ensures that how we talk about volunteering resonates with all people across communities, life stages, and circumstances. We need to expand our language accordingly in order to attract and retain volunteers more effectively.

Moving forward, the sector must be supported to better align its infrastructure with the realities of how people contribute. That means resourcing and

supporting the people that engage volunteers and Volunteer Centres, investing in and learning from grassroots models without diluting their autonomy, and building measurement practices that emphasize learning over compliance. At the same time, there is a need to address concerns about duplication within grassroots organizing and nonprofits, ensuring that energy and resources are used effectively. This calls for a reciprocal approach: **learning from grassroots models while also creating stronger pathways to share information, resources, and expertise back to grassroots networks.**



Behind the scenes of “Building the Path: Queer and Trans Stories of Mutual Aid In Montreal”

Speaking About Motivation

We've used many words to broaden our understanding. Civic engagement, community care, political participation, kinship, reciprocity are all ideas and concepts that speak to the activities that Volunteer Canada and the NVAS strive to promote and support. This shift has allowed us to engage people who might not see themselves reflected in traditional volunteer roles but who are deeply active in their communities. **People want reciprocity, purposeful opportunities, and volunteer roles that fit with their lives and motivations.**

Our infrastructure must catch up to these evolving motivations. Reimagining the narrative isn't just about language; it's about evolving our practices too. This means designing roles that reflect peoples' life stages and circumstances. Resourcing grassroots groups without coopting them. Creating tools that embed learning into everyday practice rather than adding

duplicative reporting burdens. As we heard over the summer, this is how we create a volunteer ecosystem where all forms of participation are recognized, supported, and sustained.

We know from our research that motivations vary across the country and are often determined by factors such as age, cultural background, newcomer status, community affiliations and individual interests. **Even at an individual level, most people possess multiple motivations for volunteering.**

97%

(778 out of 804) of participants that responded to the Volunteer Alberta and Volunteer Canada's Volunteer Participation Survey selected multiple motivations when asked why they volunteer.

Canada is a large and diverse country. If only one aspect gets integrated into the national strategy, I would hope it is the streamlining of the volunteering process. Many people have limited time to give to volunteering, especially with rising costs of living and the need to work multiple jobs. **If someone is looking to get involved, a short and direct line to go from interest to volunteering needs to be established, and backed by a national strategy that helps reduce the liability for organizations and volunteers alike.**

–NVAS Survey Open Text Response

However, the sector has limited ways of engaging willing volunteers. We want to create easy to use tools that translate the varied motivations of prospective volunteers from across different life stages and demographics and lived experiences to volunteer engagers struggling to meet volunteer capacity needs. **Our NVAS individual survey shows us that most people hear about volunteer opportunities through word of mouth.** Often, the missing link between someone who volunteers and who doesn't is whether someone has been asked. Forthcoming analysis from Common Good Strategies reveals that this is especially prevalent among older adults, the group most likely to say yes to requests. In the past year, only 32% of older adults reported being asked to volunteer, the lowest of any age group. **We're hearing that asks have been traded for ads** – and very few within the sector have the organizational capacity to adapt to ever shifting algorithms. We want to give organizations the ability to create asks that are

grounded in the lived experiences and motivations of all the volunteers across our country.

65%

of NVAS Individual Survey respondents learn about volunteer opportunities through word of mouth. That's higher than social media (**55%**) and volunteer boards or websites (**45%**).

We have repeatedly heard that we need to raise the profile of volunteering. Not just by telling people to volunteer more, but by highlighting the various pathways to volunteering and the positive benefits that come from volunteering. In workshops and round tables staff and leaders in the sector have expressed how lucky they feel; through their

work they are often faced with the direct and collective impact of volunteering.

They know that volunteering, civic engagement and community participation are critical in bringing different people together – because they see it every day.

Volunteering reduces feelings of isolation, helplessness, stagnancy and overwhelm. These are individual benefits that we need to emphasize more.

92%

of NVAS Survey Respondents said that volunteering helps them feel more connected to others.

73%

of NVAS Survey Respondents said that they build lasting relationships through their volunteer experiences.

Build awareness of organizations and their processes that facilitate access to volunteer opportunities. I'm not convinced that the average person knows how to avail themselves of volunteer opportunities.

–NVAS Survey Open Text Response

The First Steps

We recognize that 2026: **the International Year of the Volunteer** will be a pivotal moment in advancing this renewed narrative. However, this is about more than public campaigns. To effectively illustrate the importance of volunteering and civic engagement to Canada's wellbeing and resilience, we must re-imagine the ways we enable community participation in all facets of daily life. Our research and engagements have encouraged rethinking the way community participation is taught in schools, supported in the workforce, and encouraged through policy.

"I've learned over many years that volunteering is enriching and essential in creating healthy, livable communities."

– NVAS Survey Open Text Response



Harnessing volunteerism for Canada's socio-economic resilience

Volunteering has always been a force for connection, belonging, and care. It strengthens health outcomes, builds civic participation, and supports organizations in delivering vital services. At a time of overlapping crises, harnessing this force will help build resilient communities. To do this, we must shift how we engage with and resource both volunteers and the infrastructure surrounding them.

As we heard in our **Decent Work and Decent Volunteering** workshop, we cannot treat volunteers as a stopgap for underfunded services or employment precarity. Volunteers are not simply a “labour pool,” their contributions are tied to culture, identity, purpose, and lived experience. Supporting resilience means embedding decent volunteerism principles into practice: ensuring flexible

pathways so people can step in and out of service as circumstances change; building mentorship into volunteer journeys; treating translation, accessibility, and trauma-informed training as core infrastructure rather than optional extras; and recognizing volunteer managers and Volunteer Centres as indispensable to sustaining relationships and designing meaningful roles. These investments are what allow volunteering to flourish as a source of health and wellbeing for individuals and communities alike.

The economic benefits are an important part of this story too. **Canadians contributed 4.1 billion volunteer hours in 2024, the equivalent of 2.4 million full-time jobs (Statistics Canada, 2025).** Yet formal volunteer participation has declined from 41% in 2018 to 32% in 2023. Representing a loss of 1.2 billion hours of

community support, this drop has heavily impacted sectors such as healthcare, seniors’ services, and community care, the very areas where Canada’s resilience is most at stake.

“Canada’s charitable sector is at a tipping point. Rising service demand, shrinking financial resources, and an overburdened workforce are placing unprecedented strain on the sector.”

–Charity Insights Canada Project (CICP) At a Tipping Point: The Trilemma Facing Canada’s Charitable Sector April 2025

This trend has been further validated by the NVAS Survey and various sector datasets. We have heard that community service providers struggle to retain and recruit volunteers while seeing an increased demand for their

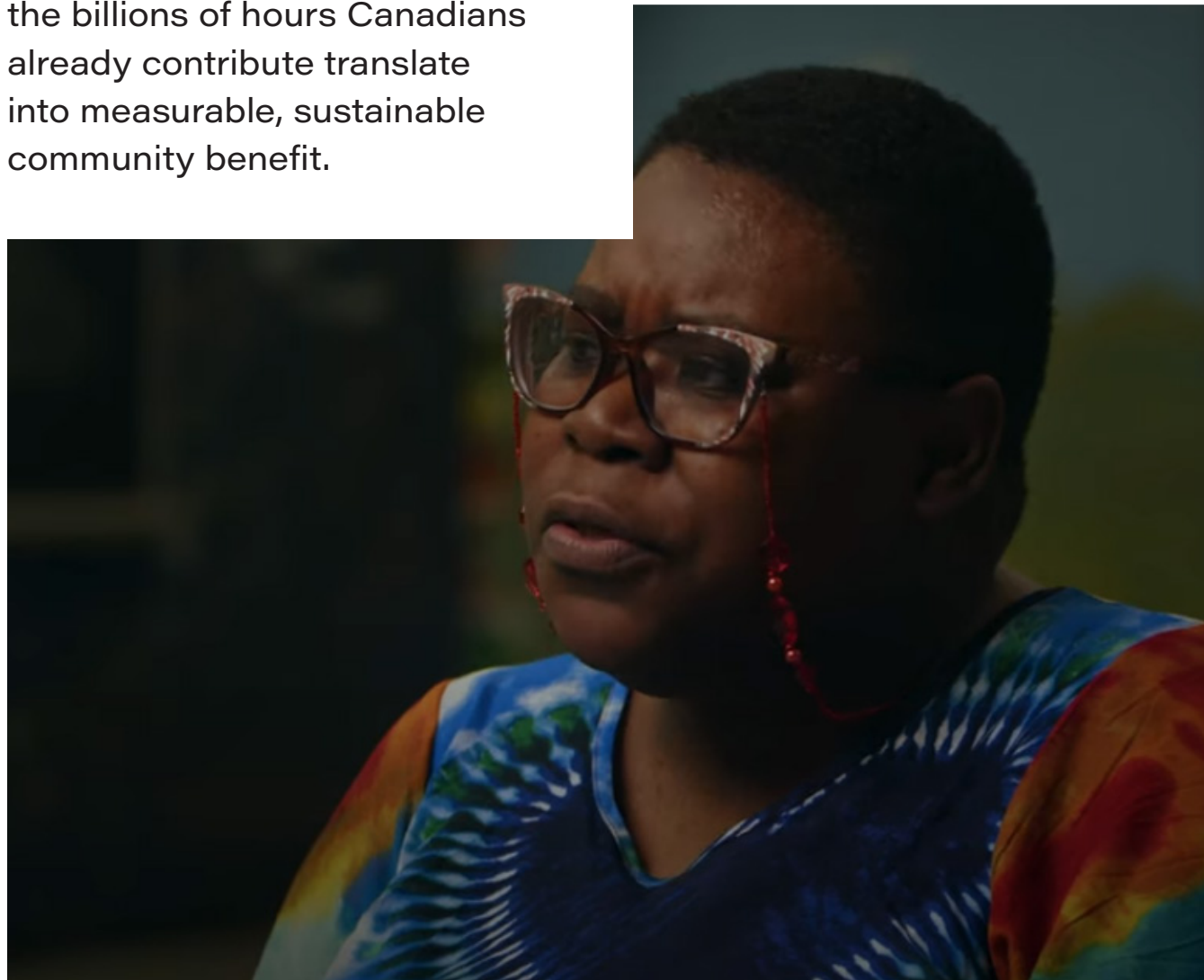
services. Canadian Food Banks and other key organizations that serve low-income communities are also at the forefront of this issue. The trilemma (CICP) of increased demand, decreased capacity and financial instability is not new to the sector. But the renewed urgency to think critically about the long-term sustainability of Canada’s social safety net in the face of increased socio-economic crisis cannot be understated.

83%

of respondents to the NVAS Organisation, Non-Profit, Charity and Collective Survey saw an increase in demand for services and programs in the last 12 months.

Policy shifts can also help mitigate these pressures. For example, modernizing Employment Insurance (EI) to recognize volunteering as a complementary activity would allow people to contribute without risking income security. Greater federal investment in volunteer infrastructure, like Volunteer Centres, Volunteer Managers, and data systems, would ensure that the billions of hours Canadians already contribute translate into measurable, sustainable community benefit.

Anchoring volunteerism as a pillar of socio-economic resilience means recognizing its dual impact: sustaining services and economies, while also building community identity, solidarity, and wellbeing.



Still of Lydia from the *Wisdom Across Generations* storytelling project in collaboration with Volunteer Toronto

Centering community impact in volunteer engagement

In practice, reimagining the narrative of volunteering means engaging people in ways that reflect their realities and motivations. As we're hearing, volunteers continue to show up for their communities, but life stage and circumstance shape how they participate. Volunteer Toronto's **Continuum of Civic Engagement** reinforces this, showing how people can move fluidly through different roles. A high school student may prefer group-based opportunities, a parent may seek a short-term, ad-hoc role that fits into a busy schedule, and an older adult may seek an opportunity to mentor a younger community member. Volunteering is rarely linear or static; people may step in and out of volunteering due to job transitions, health issues, caregiving responsibilities, or burnout. In some communities, participation cycles are driven by seasonal or cultural factors, like farming schedules in rural areas,

or religious observances that emphasize giving back.

Systemic barriers also shape how people engage, and for equity-deserving groups, barriers like cost, time poverty, and discrimination can be particularly pronounced. As Volunteer Alberta's **Reengagement Reimagined** study confirms, broader trends like rising costs of living, demographic shifts, work precarity, and digitization are further reshaping how and when people can contribute. We heard that organizations need to interrogate their assumptions: Do prospective volunteers face food security? Do they have access to transportation? Funds for screening checks? Are they part of any networks? Closing these gaps is a necessary step toward equitable participation.

These shifts are also notable in corporate and employer supported volunteering spaces. We heard that quick, one-day events can download hidden labour costs onto nonprofits. While helpful for team building, this approach doesn't always meet community needs. When co-created from the outset, resourced to cover the labour of planning, and grounded in community priorities, however, employer supported volunteering can be transformational. **It can spark awareness of systemic issues, deepen understanding of the nonprofit sector, and provide a meaningful entry point into civic life.**

Models that center community impact and human connectivity hold the key: they ensure that volunteering strengthens local networks and addresses priorities defined by communities themselves. This might look like creating re-entry pathways that welcome people back to volunteering or designing seasonal or project-based roles

adapted to the rhythms of life and community needs. At the organizational level, it might look like bridging nonprofit and grassroots or neighbourhood-led initiatives – enabling collaboration and resource sharing without diminishing community autonomy. **Volunteer managers were repeatedly identified as essential to making these models work,** yet their roles are often undervalued and underfunded. Funders, too, were called to embrace more flexibility and trust to enable these approaches.

We've begun to put this vision into practice. **The Community-Based Volunteering Model,** co-created by Volunteer Canada and Sydney Beales of Family Dynamics' Community Hubs within the Family Resource Centres in Winnipeg, integrates service delivery, volunteer engagement, and skill development. It treats volunteers as individuals with aspirations and needs, positions volunteering as a "third space" for connection and belonging

and provides organizations with tools to triage motivations and link them to meaningful opportunities. By embedding reciprocity and recognizing volunteering as both a contribution and a source of benefit, this model points to what community-impact-centered volunteering can look like in action.

Early feedback on the model revealed that many communities are already practicing certain aspects of this approach. For example, in the settlement sector, volunteer engagement is often tied to supports such as language training, access to networks, and skill development. We also heard that the model will be most effective when organizations have dedicated staff to triage volunteer motivations, sustain relationships, and build leadership pathways. Food banks across the country noted that shifting the traditional volunteer model on its head requires resources on change-management, adaptation and confidentiality. Importantly, we noted the challenge of balancing

local responsiveness with the compliance demands of larger organizations and the need for funders to embrace flexibility and trust to make adoption of such a model possible.



Volunteer Canada and Volunteer BC at Vantage Point's BC Non-Profit Leadership Conference

Prioritizing sustainable investment in volunteering

The need for sustained and flexible investment echoed throughout our conversations this summer. This means resourcing the people and the infrastructure that make participation possible, while reducing the administrative load that often draws time and energy away from creating spaces for meaningful volunteer engagement.

Volunteer Centres are uniquely positioned to act as local data hubs, convenors, and program incubators. When resourced adequately, they can track community-level trends, take a more personalized approach to connecting volunteers with meaningful opportunities, be a key asset in mobilizing volunteers in times of crisis and provide training and tools that strengthen organizations' capacity. Yet underfunding limits the ability of many Volunteer Centres to explore and step into these

more expansive roles in the volunteering ecosystem.

Similarly, Volunteer Managers, coordinators, and facilitators are at the heart of the ecosystem. Often expected to do everything from recruitment to conflict resolution to impact reporting, many don't have stable salaries, professional development opportunities, or recognition as an essential role. Sustainable investment in these roles looks like supporting capacity building, fair pay, and dedicated time to engage volunteers in meaningful conversations about goals and motivations. At the same time, volunteer engagement cannot be the responsibility of these professionals alone. Boards, executive leaders, funders, and program staff all have a role to play in creating the conditions for meaningful volunteer engagement.

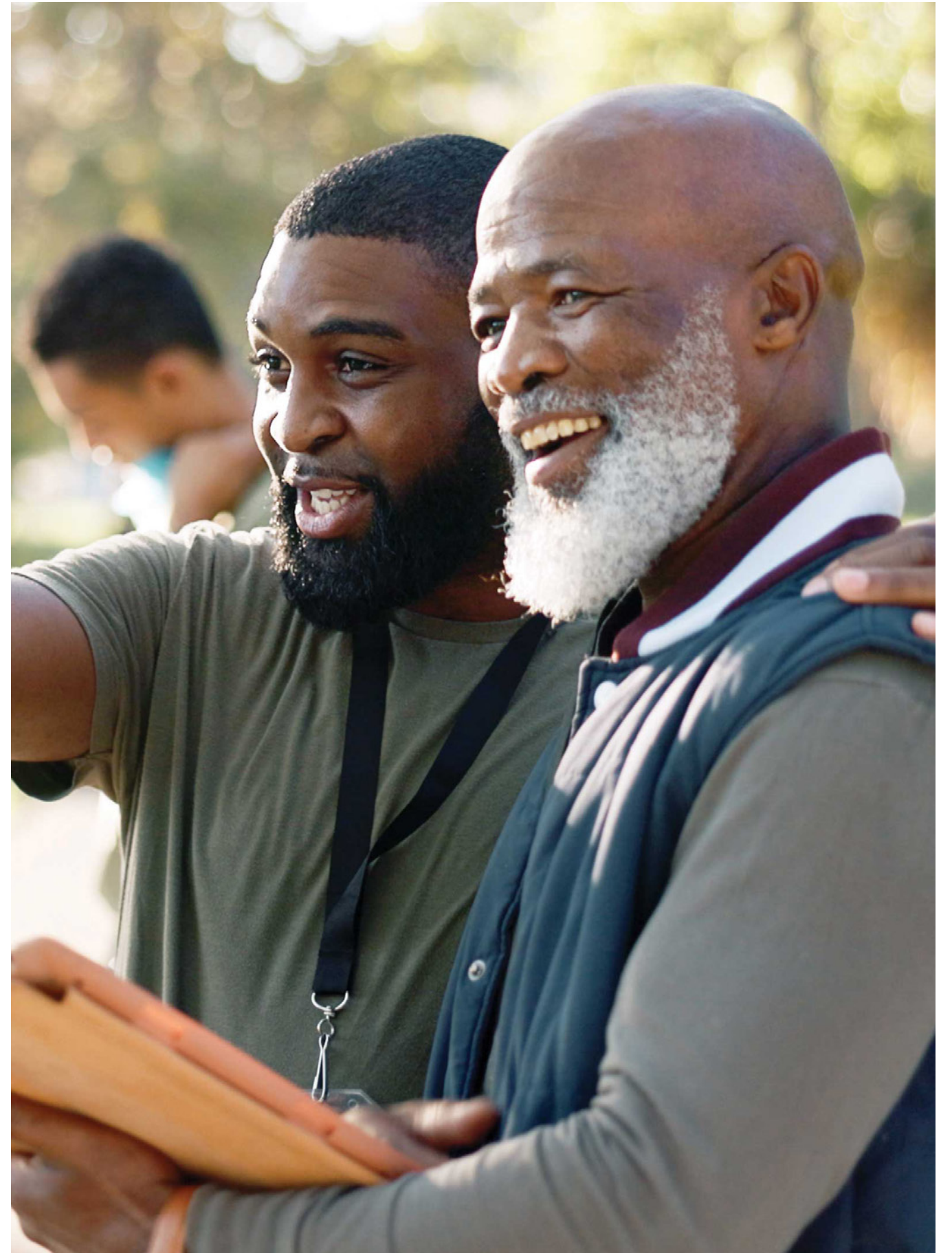
Participants also raised questions about who receives government and philanthropic support and who remains left out. Many grassroots and informal groups that mobilize volunteers highly effectively still operate on shoestring budgets or volunteer contributions alone. Sustainable investment looks like expanding funding lenses to ensure these groups aren't perpetually overlooked in formal support streams and providing non-financial resources such as space, mentorship and skill-sharing.

We heard that **trust-based philanthropy** is part of the path forward. Flexible, multi-year grants reduce the administrative burden of constant reporting and allow organizations to design engagement models that reflect what their communities need. Shifting the emphasis from compliance to trust not only sustains organizations but also opens space to honour the knowledge and leadership of volunteers themselves.

Ultimately, sustainable investment goes beyond dollars. It's about intentional support of the long-term infrastructure that will bolster a stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient volunteer ecosystem.

**Governments
should be more
resilient as
community
needs change.**

–NVAS Survey Open Text Response



Volunteering for the future

Conversations this summer reinforced that beyond meeting immediate needs, volunteering is an essential part of building the resilience required to face future crises. Emergencies, from the COVID-19 pandemic to climate-related disasters like wildfires and floods, have shown that while our communities are adaptive, there is room to strengthen our response systems. Communities often mobilize quickly, but at the same time, uneven screening and training practices and coordination gaps can leave willing people sidelined at the moments they're most needed.

As we saw throughout the pandemic, organizations relied on informal networks, episodic and digital engagement, and rapid mobilization, but many struggled to strike a balance between meeting urgent needs and ensuring safety. Many volunteers reported feeling disconnected from

decision-making or undervalued despite their essential contributions. Volunteer Centres expressed being overwhelmed with requests from community members to help COVID-19 efforts – while having no information about where to direct them. Trauma-informed engagement models, proportionate risk management, and intentional feedback loops can help avoid these pitfalls in future times of crisis.

Strengthening Canada's volunteer emergency preparedness systems is now an urgent priority.

There are many ways to do this:

01

Integrating volunteers into municipal, provincial, and territorial crisis planning so that volunteers are not an afterthought but a recognized component of emergency preparedness and response frameworks

03

Expanding organizational and civilian volunteer training to include emergency preparedness, or offering region-wide training (which could be incentivized through micro-credentials or certifications)

02

Co-designing shared emergency preparedness strategies and tools that can be scaled and customized across regions

04

Establishing and maintaining emergency volunteer corps and registries with clear roles and skill indexes accompanied by readiness measures like drills to ensure volunteers can be mobilized rapidly and safely.

Volunteering for the future means embedding preparedness into the fabric of Canada's volunteer ecosystem so that we can move from ad hoc mobilization to a sustained model where volunteers are recognized as key partners in building community resilience.

The power of good data

Good data has the power to transform how we understand and support volunteering.

Yet across the sector, data practices remain fragmented, often shaped by compliance and reporting requirements, and overly focused on headcounts and hours. Many organizations lack the time and resources to collect information consistently. This means that valuable signals and stories stay buried, preventing data from being mobilized for learning and adaptation.

There's a strong appetite for shared, streamlined indicators (both qualitative and quantitative) that respect data collection principles and that can be embedded easily alongside service delivery. Shared tools like dashboards, infographics, and data frameworks could help reduce duplication, make reporting easier, and better tell the story of the sector's collective impact.

Part of the task ahead is to build data literacy across the sector and support staff and volunteer managers in collecting data, but also in interpreting it, identifying what matters, and using it to improve practice. **Equity should be central to this work so that data collection isn't extractive and responds to community priorities.**

We also heard about research gaps. For example, we lack robust evidence on the long-term impacts of mandatory volunteering programs across provinces and territories. With renewed interest in programs like the mandatory year of service from governments and the public – these gaps are becoming more pronounced. Relatedly, we heard calls for long-term impact studies of youth engagement beyond their immediate mandatory volunteering experience. Other

insights that would be helpful include national data related to the average number of volunteers per Volunteer Manager to provide organizations with realistic benchmarks for research and staffing, and volunteer conversion benchmarks to support organizations in determining the relative success of their recruitment and retention efforts.

We also need data to deepen our understanding of how structural barriers, from cost of

living to systemic discrimination, shape participation. Filling these research gaps will support the design of policies and programs that have the most potential for positive impact.

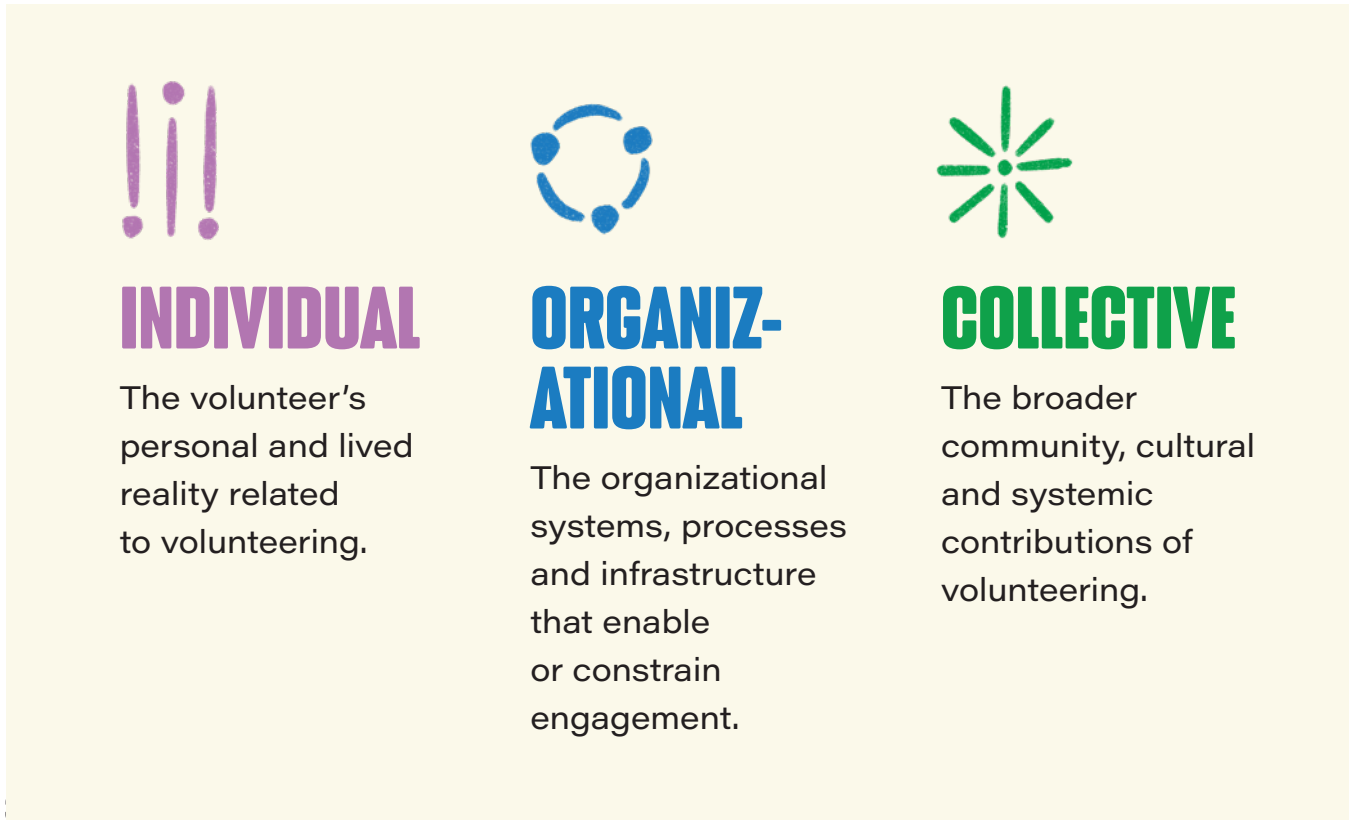
When we pair data with feedback loops and shared practices, it shifts from a compliance exercise to a tool for learning and adaptation.

By strengthening data literacy, investing in infrastructure, and advancing equity-based practices, we can build the evidence base needed to drive change and secure sustainable investment in Canada's volunteer ecosystem.

A note on our research and consultation approach

We’ve grounded our research and consultations in a framework that organizes the volunteer ecosystem into three spheres.

Previously described as the Experiential, the Infrastructural, and the Societal dimensions, we’ve simplified the terminology. Now, we describe the framework in terms of levels: **Individual**, **Organizational**, and **Collective**. Our hope is that this language is easier to understand and visualize yet still captures the interconnections between personal lived experiences of volunteering, the organizational practices that sustain and constrain volunteering, and the broader systemic dynamics that shape civic life.



We continue to combine **quantitative data** (as the NVAS Individual and Organizational surveys and other sector data sets) and **qualitative insights** from workshops, roundtables, and **storytelling initiatives** through an iterative sensemaking process. This has helped uncover both patterns and nuance and begin shaping strategic priorities that reflect the complexity and richness of what we’re hearing.

For example, when gathering perspectives on screening, we often heard how prohibitive and inequitable these practices can be, particularly for newcomers and equity-deserving communities. At the same time, many organizations reminded us of the legacy of a time before screening protocols, when the absence of these safeguards resulted in real harm in volunteer roles involving vulnerable populations.

Weaving these perspectives together brings us to a more balanced perspective: screening is necessary for safety, but it must be proportionate to the role, reduce duplication, and be designed with equity in mind.

By drawing insights from both numbers and stories, then validating them through collaborative interpretation, our research process is dedicated to describing the current state of volunteering in the while pointing to concrete, actionable priorities for the sector.

EMERGING RECOMMEND- ATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The insights gathered over the summer have moved us from identifying challenges to crafting promising strategic priorities and recommendations for the NVAS. Strategic priorities, our “North Stars,” are the broad, high-level focus areas that capture what we want to achieve collectively through the NVAS. Recommendations accompany each strategic priority statement, mapping out concrete, actionable proposals to bring priorities to life in communities, organizations, and policy.

We now have a set of emerging recommendations. They’re not the final blueprint, but rather a starting point for testing and tweaking through upcoming conversations, including a series of youth roundtables, regional engagements in Newfoundland and Labrador and Alberta, and subsector and thematic dialogues.

volunteering peak bodies and member associations with cross-jurisdictional representation, the committee serves as a national forum for expanding and deepening our collective understanding of volunteering and participation in Canada.

In October 2025, **Volunteering Matters**, our Technical Working Committee, will convene in St. John’s Newfoundland to continue the work of building the NVAS and its recommendations. Comprised of representatives from

We also look forward to convening **The National Volunteering Strategy Advisory Council (NVSAC)** this fall. The NVSAC is a pan-Canadian council of leaders from business, government, philanthropy, and civil society. Convened by Volunteer Canada, the Council will serve as a strategic sounding board and public champion for the National Volunteering Action Strategy (NVAS).

As we move into the next stage of NVAS development, we'll build on our strategic priorities while continuing to deepen, sharpen, and validate the recommendations to ensure the Strategy reflects the realities and wisdom of the communities it's designed to serve.



New Minas Round Table in collaboration with Volunteer Nova Scotia

Volunteerism, both locally and internationally, has afforded me the greatest, most mind-expanding experiences of my life and has shaped and strengthened my character more than any other experience.

–NVAS Survey Open Text Response

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