CHARITY INSIGHTS CANADA PROJECT (CICP)

Policy in Canada's Charitable Sector

Collective CICP Survey Results (2023-2025)

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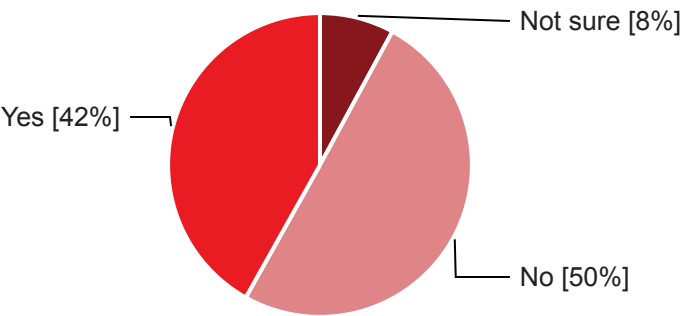vancouver foundation

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Charity Insights Canada Project [CICP]
Policy: 2023-2025

Carleton University

Advocacy Work *(February 2023 - 1.02.09)*

Does your organization engage in advocacy to change laws, rules or programs?

695 Responses

Not sure [8%]
Yes [42%]
No [50%]

If no, why does your organization not engage in this type of advocacy?

340 Responses

Reason	Percentage
Not relevant to our mission	45%
Other organizations advocate on our behalf	36%
Time constraints	29%
Not skilled in advocacy	26%
Funding constraints	23%
Risk of losing government support	13%
Concerned about violating the rules	10%
Risk of losing funders or sponsors	10%
Other	9%
Risk of losing public support	8%
Won't make a difference	3%
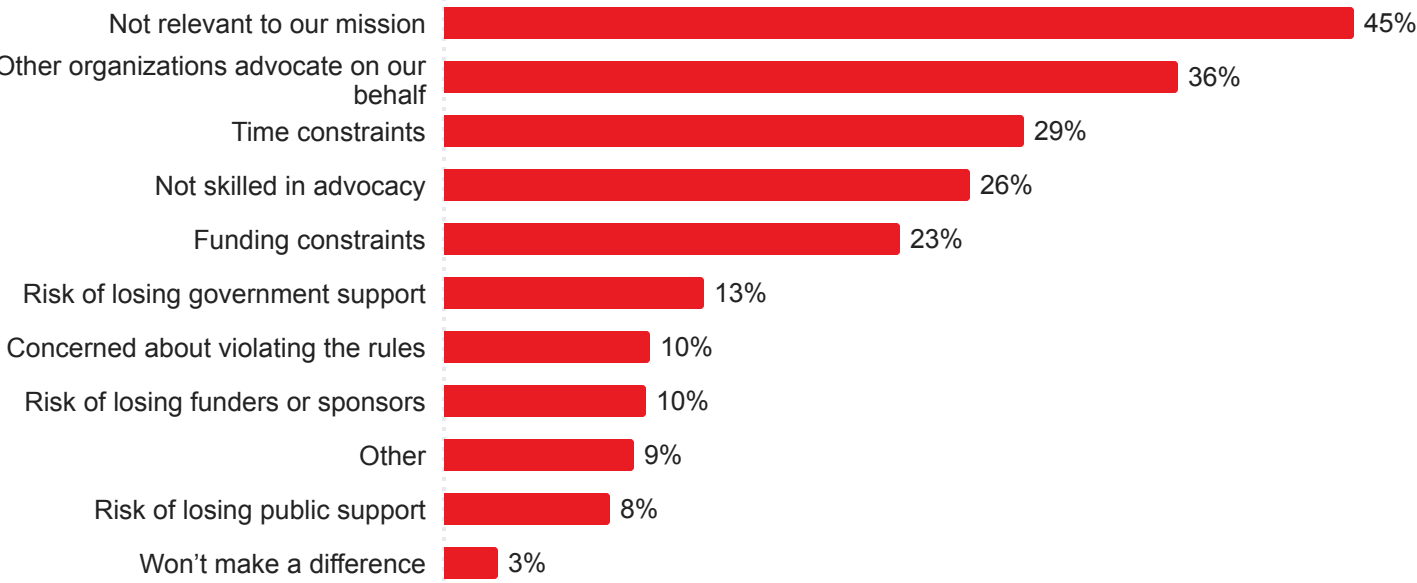
A few years ago, the CRA relaxed the rules on 'political activities', has this changed your advocacy work?

340 Responses

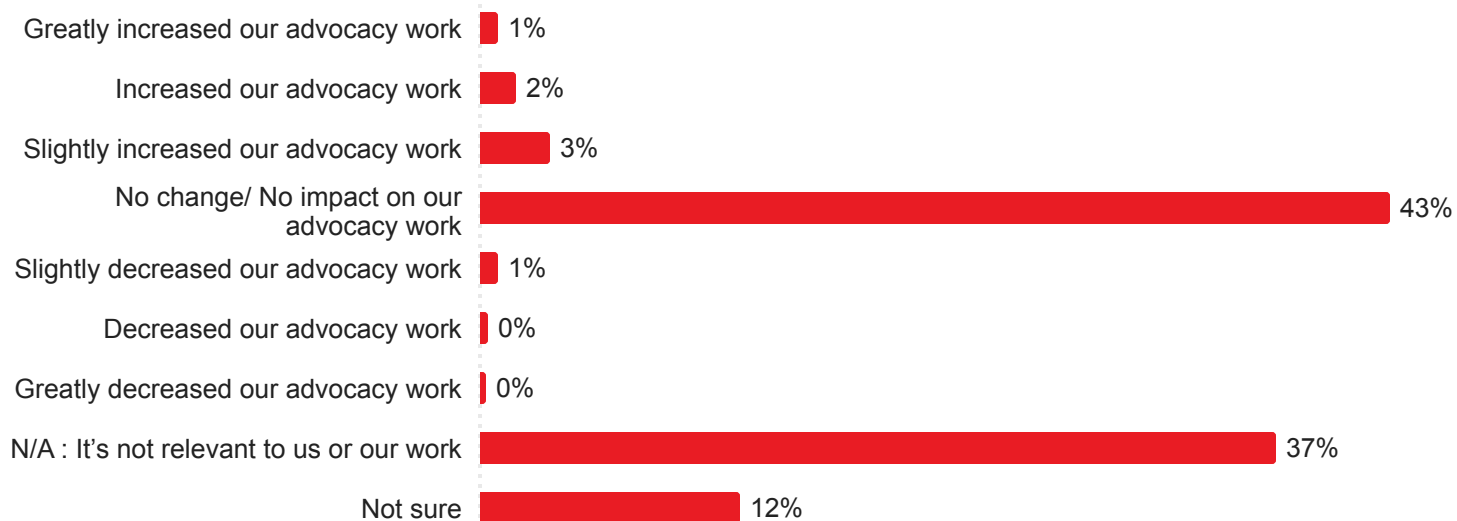| Category	Percent
Not relevant to our mission	45%
Other organizations advocate on our behalf	36%
Time constraints	29%
Not skilled in advocacy	26%
Funding constraints	23%
Risk of losing government support	13%
Concerned about violating the rules	10%
Risk of losing funders or sponsors	10%
Other	9%
Risk of losing public support	8%
Won't make a difference	3%
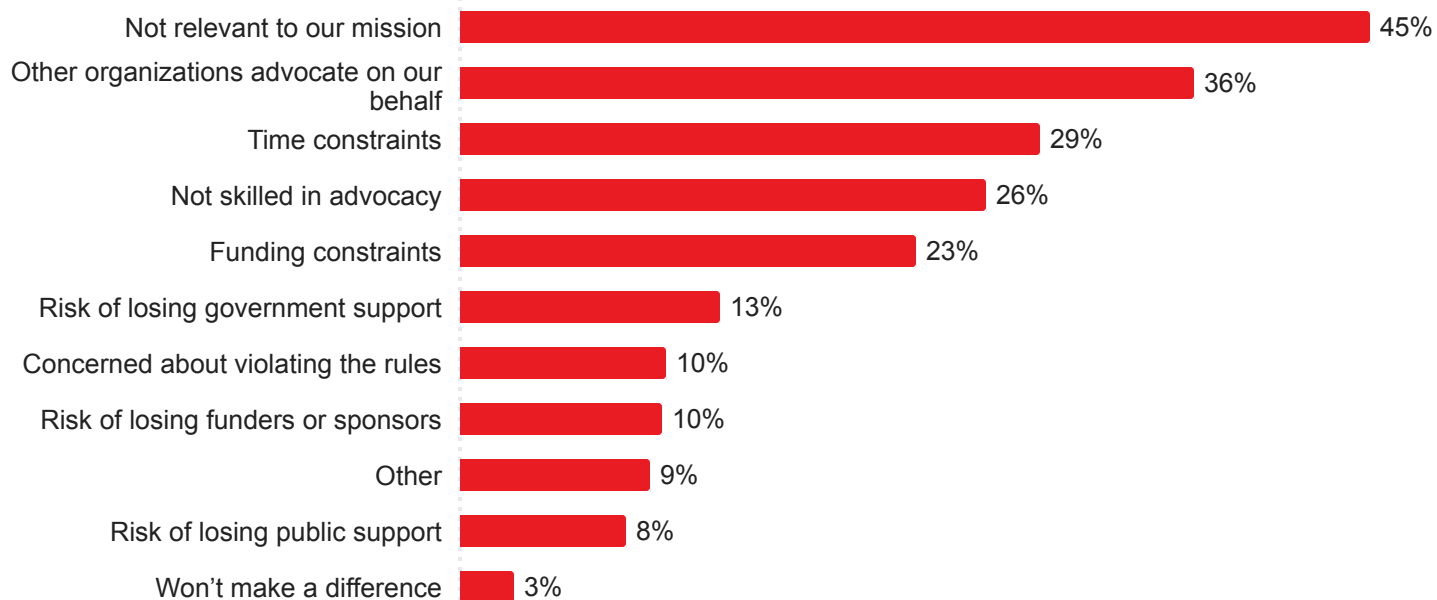
<u>Policy Concerns</u> *(April 2023 - 1.04.19)*

Confidence level: 95%, Margin of error: 4%

In your opinion, what changes can government implement to better support the growth and sustainability of the charitable sector in Canada? (Please select your top 3 choices)

718 Responses

Category	Percent
Greatly increased our advocacy work	1%
Increased our advocacy work	2%
Slightly increased our advocacy work	3%
No change/ No impact on our advocacy work	43%
Slightly decreased our advocacy work	1%
Decreased our advocacy work	0%
Greatly decreased our advocacy work	0%
N/A : It's not relevant to us or our work	37%
Not sure	12%

How can organizations like yours advocate for these and other policy changes at the government level?

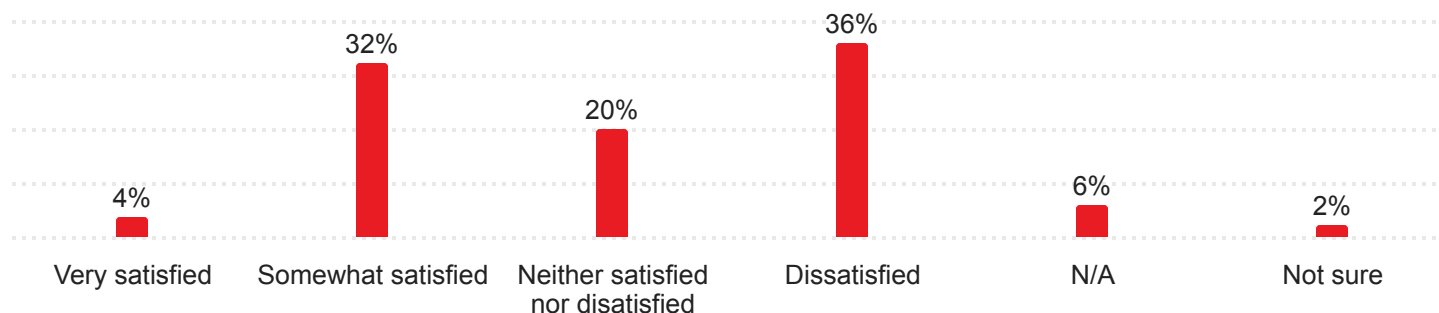623 Responses

Build relationships with government officials and policymakers.	69%
Participate in advocacy coalitions and networks.	57%
Collaborate with stakeholders to present a unified agenda.	50%
Share data and evidence to support policy proposals.	48%
Educate policymakers and the public through events.	41%
Lobby policymakers directly for support.	39%
Seek media coverage of the issue.	32%
Mobilize local support through grassroots organizing.	30%
Use social media to mobilize supporters.	30%
Conduct research to demonstrate benefits and costs.	25%
N/A	5%
Other (please specify)	5%

Impact of Government Funding *(June 2023 - 1.06.28)*

Confidence level: 95%, Margin of error: 4-5%

How satisfied is your organization with regards to the accessibility of government funding programs and grants?

572 Responses

Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor disatisfied	Dissatisfied	N/A	Not sure
4%	32%	20%	36%	6%	2%

What are common concerns within your organization regarding government funding programs and grants?
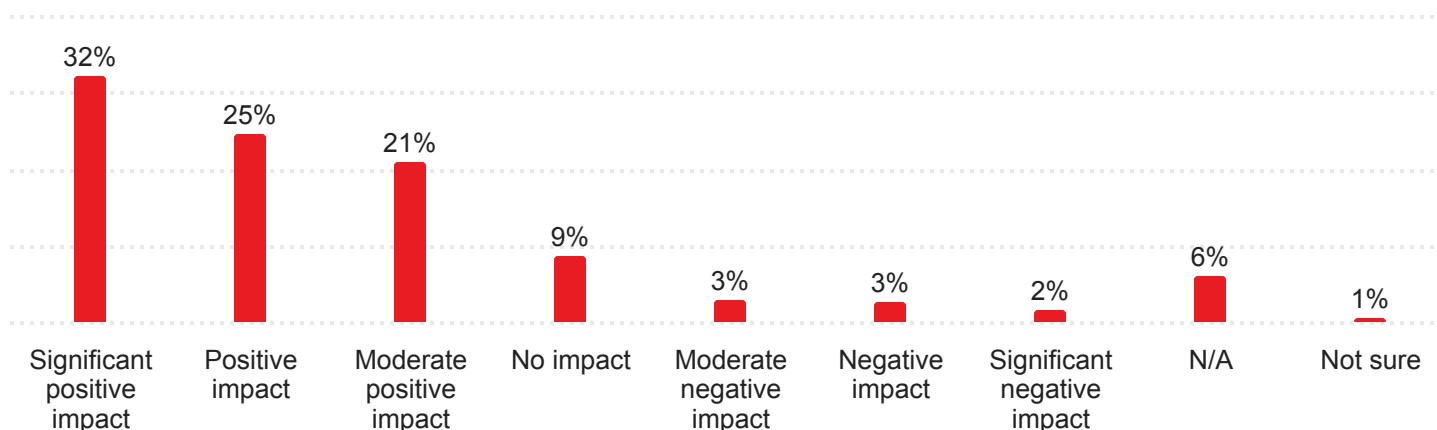
573 Responses

Lengthy approval timelines	51%
Insufficient funding amounts	48%
Excessive reporting requirements	44%
Limited eligibility criteria	39%
Complex and confusing application forms	38%
Lack of awareness for what programs or grants are available to us	36%
Lacking relevant funding programs and grants	34%
Inequitable distribution of funds across sectors	26%
Unpredictable changes in funding guidelines	18%

Lack of transparency in application processes	17%
Inconsistent communication from funding agencies	16%
Difficulty in accessing information and resources for applications	15%
Other (please specify)	14%
N/A	5%
No concerns	2%
Not sure	2%

In your organization's experience, what kind of impact have government funding programs and grants had on your organizations overall financial sustainability and ability to achieve your mission?
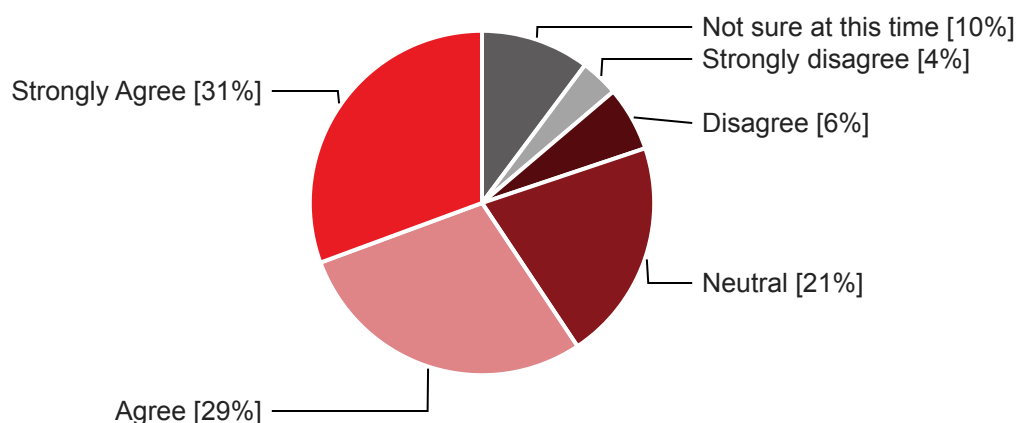
572 Responses

Bar chart showing:
- Significant positive impact: 32%
- Positive impact: 25%
- Moderate positive impact: 21%
- No impact: 9%
- Moderate negative impact: 3%
- Negative impact: 3%
- Significant negative impact: 2%
- N/A: 6%
- Not sure: 1%

Regulation & Management of the Sector *(August 2023 - 1.08.33)*

Confidence level: 95%, Margin of error: 4%

As an organization, do you think that establishing a dedicated ministry or department for the charitable and non-profit sector within the Canadian government would be beneficial?

529 Responses

Pie chart showing:
- Strongly Agree [31%]
- Agree [29%]
- Neutral [21%]
- Disagree [6%]
- Strongly disagree [4%]
- Not sure at this time [10%]

If a dedicated ministry or department for the charitable and non-profit sector was established within the Canadian government, what potential benefits do you think might arise for the sector?

	530 Responses
Enhanced Sector Representation: A dedicated entity could amplify the sector's voice and advocate for its needs effectively.	64%
Streamlined Support: Such a ministry could provide targeted support and resources tailored to the sector's unique challenges.	60%
Resource Allocation: A dedicated entity might secure more resources and funding for sector-related initiatives.	58%
Increased Visibility: The establishment of a dedicated body could increase public awareness about the sector's importance.	54%
Coordinated Policy Advocacy: A specialized department could coordinate policy efforts, leading to more impactful advocacy.	50%
Expertise and Insight: A specialized ministry could bring in-depth sector knowledge to governmental decision-making.	49%
Simplified Communication: Having a single point of contact within the government could streamline communication and collaboration.	47%
Long-term Sustainability: A dedicated ministry could work on policies and programs for the sector's sustainable growth.	47%
Elevated Credibility: Having a government department could enhance the sector's credibility and legitimacy.	38%
Efficient Regulation: Specialized oversight could lead to well-informed and balanced sector regulations.	37%
I'm unsure.	11%
Other (please specify)	5%
No potential benefits	5%

If a dedicated ministry or department for the charitable and non-profit sector was established within the Canadian government, what potential concerns do you think might arise for the sector?

	529 Responses
Bureaucratic Inefficiencies: Risk of increased red tape and slowed decision-making.	73%
Uneven Resource Distribution: Possibility of resources favoring certain organizations over others.	55%
Compromised Independence: Concerns that government influence might compromise the sector's independence.	51%
Restricted Flexibility: Reduced ability for charities to engage with various government officials and departments.	46%
Resource Competition: Competition for resources with other government bodies or agencies.	43%
Limited Diversity of Ideas: Potential negative impact on the diversity of approaches and ideas within the sector.	36%
Resource Allocation: Possible diversion of resources from other sector priorities.	35%
Operational Mismanagement: Risk of mismanagement within the dedicated ministry or department.	34%
Other (please specify)	8%
I'm unsure.	6%
No potential concerns	3%

Policy Concerns *(February 2024 - 2.02.04)*

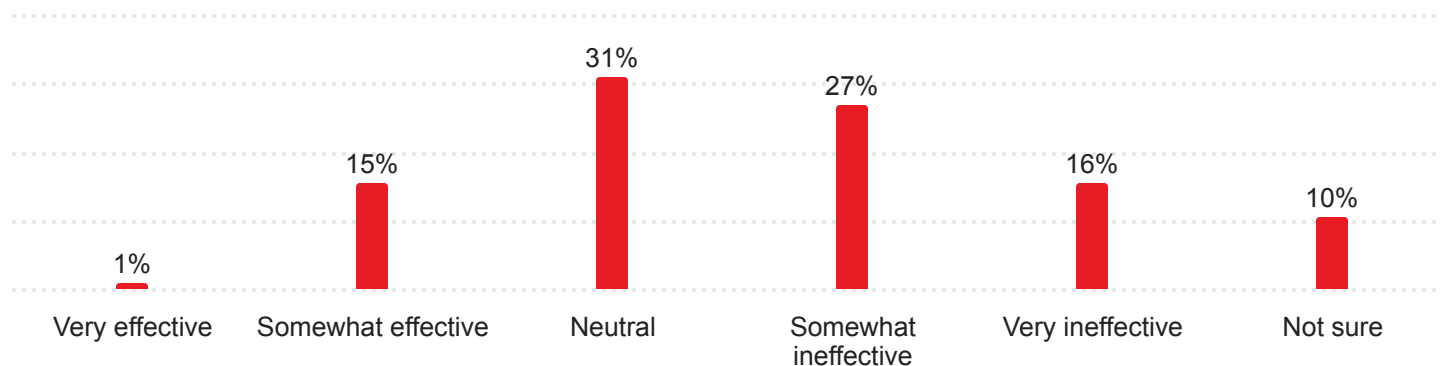Confidence level: 95%, Margin of error: 4%

What specific policy priorities do you believe the government should focus on to better support the operations and sustainability of charitable organizations? (Please select your top 3).

682 Responses

Increased funding and grants	75%
Fewer restrictions on funding and grants	49%
Simplified reporting and compliance procedures	33%
Tax incentives for donors and organizations	26%
Creation of a 'home' for the sector in government	16%
Collaboration and partnership incentives	13%
Dedicated support for technology and digitalization	13%
Creation of provincial or federal action plans for volunteering	12%
Enhanced support for diversity and inclusion initiatives	12%
Improved access to professional development training and resources	11%
Other (please specify)	8%
Dedicated support for climate action	7%
Streamlined regulatory processes	6%
Dedicated support for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	3%
Unsure	2%

How would you rate the effectiveness of government engagement with charities in addressing their policy concerns and needs?

681 Responses

Very effective	Somewhat effective	Neutral	Somewhat ineffective	Very ineffective	Not sure
1%	15%	31%	27%	16%	10%

What are the main challenges your organization faces in advocating for favourable policies that support its operations and sustainability? (Please select up to 3 of your top choices)

678 Responses

Limited resources for advocacy efforts	51%
Difficulty in engaging with policymakers and government officials	33%
N/A- We don't engage in advocacy	23%

Lack of up-to-date information on the needs of the sector	20%
Lack of awareness about policy issues within the organization	14%
Regulatory barriers hindering advocacy initiatives	12%
Difficulty accessing larger advocacy networks	12%
Other (please specify)	8%
Problems identifying other organizations concerned about these issues	8%
Our organization does not face any major challenges in our advocacy	6%

CRA Form T3010A *(March 2024 - 2.03.10)*

Confidence level: 95%, Margin of error: 3%

What are the primary challenges your organization faces when implementing requirements related to the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) Form T3010A (Registered Charity Information Return)?

	854 Responses
No challenges with CRA Form T3010A	28%
Understanding and interpreting CRA guidelines	25%
Gathering and organizing required data	24%
Insufficient resources (time, manpower, budget)	23%
Dealing with discrepancies between organizational and CRA definitions	16%
Lack of awareness of CRA updates regarding changes in reporting requirements	14%
Getting in contact with the CRA for support or guidance	13%
Managing complexity of reporting for multi-program organizations	12%
Insufficient staff training	12%
I'm not sure	12%
Staff turnover affecting filing consistency	9%
Technical issues with online submission platforms	9%
Other (please specify)	8%
Demonstrating impact effectively within the form's framework	7%
Privacy and data security concerns when submitting sensitive information	2%
Internal communication and coordination between departments	2%

How does your organization address the challenge of maintaining compliance with CRA T3010A requirements throughout the year?

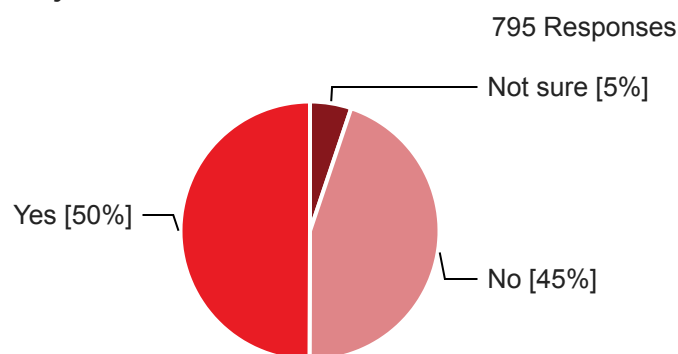|	846 Responses
Gather and organize required data regularly	43%
Seek external assistance for guidance on compliance	36%
Allocate adequate resources (time, manpower, budget)	24%
I'm not sure	18%
Ensure organizational and CRA definitions are aligned	17%
Review and update compliance documentation and procedures	16%

|	
Train staff responsible for compliance	15%
Establish systems to stay informed about CRA updates and changes in reporting requirements	10%
Other (please specify)	10%
Maintain effective communication channels with the CRA	7%
Use specialized software or tools for streamlined reporting	7%
Maintain strong internal channels for coordination between departments	7%
Mitigate impacts of staff turnover on filing consistency	7%
Conduct periodic risk assessments to identify and address compliance gaps	6%
Foster collaboration with other organizations or groups to share knowledge	5%
N/A (please specify)	5%
Enhance data security protocols to address privacy concerns	4%
Develop strategies to effectively demonstrate impact within the form's framework	3%
Implemented measures to address technical issues with online submission platforms	2%

Policy Participation *(July 2024 - 2.07.27)*

Confidence level: 95%, Margin of error: 4%

Does your organization engage in advocacy and/or lobbying activities? *(Can compare to results on page 16)*

Advocacy
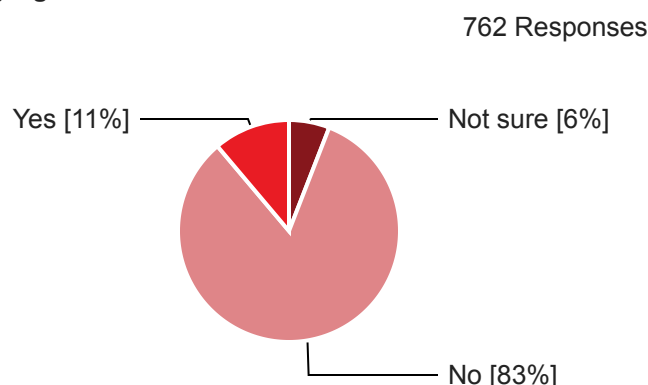
795 Responses

Not sure [5%]
Yes [50%]
No [45%]

*Lobbying*

762 Responses

Yes [11%]
Not sure [6%]
No [83%]

Please rate your organizations' engagement in each of the below categories of policy participation *(Can compare to results on page 17-18)*

798 Responses

Field	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Not Sure	N/A
Releasing research reports to the media, public, or policymakers	53%	19%	17%	4%	1%	1%	5%
Discussing obtaining grants or contracts with government officials	21%	21%	31%	19%	5%	1%	2%
Making representations in writing or verbally to a parliamentary committee	62%	18%	12%	2%	1%	2%	3%

Advocating on behalf of or against a proposed bill or other policy pronouncement/proposal	51%	24%	18%	3%	1%	2% 2%
Encouraging members to write, call, fax, or email policymakers	43%	27%	20%	4%	2%	1% 2%
Interacting socially with government officials	25%	28%	32%	11%	2%	1% 2%
Working in a planning or advisory group that includes government officials	38%	22%	23%	11%	2%	2% 2%
Formally meeting with government officials about the work we are doing	24%	25%	33%	13%	2%	2% 1%
Responding to requests for information from those in government	19%	26%	30%	13%	8%	2% 2%
Other (please specify)	24%	6%	7%	3%	7%	1% 52%

How important is it for your organization to increase its level of participation in public policy dialogue and development activities?

798 Responses
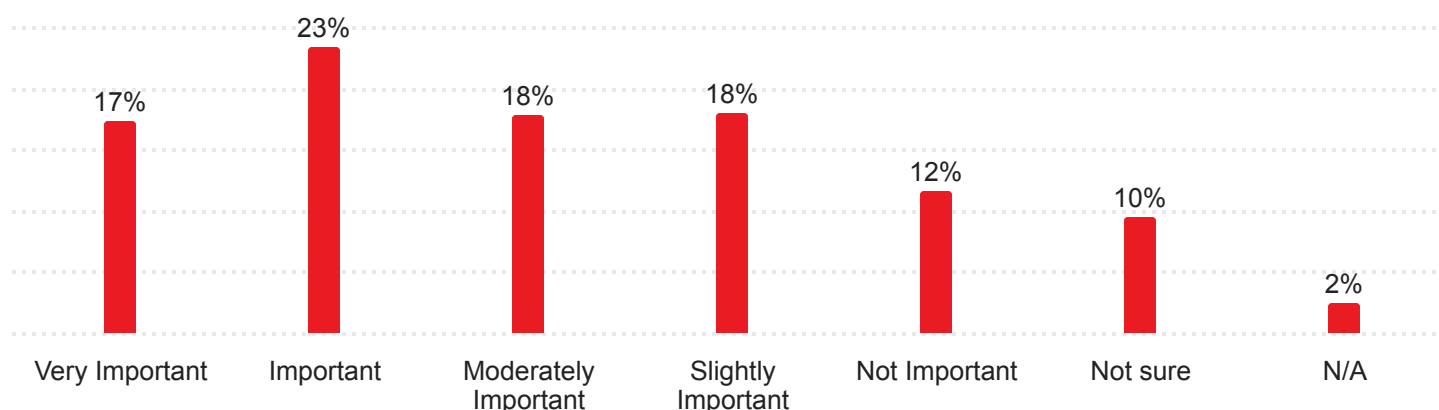
Regulations *(March 2025 - 3.03.05)*

Confidence level: 95%, Margin of error: 4%

To what extent do you feel that current regulations governing Canadian charities (e.g., CRA compliance, reporting requirements) support your organization's ability to achieve its mission?

833 Responses

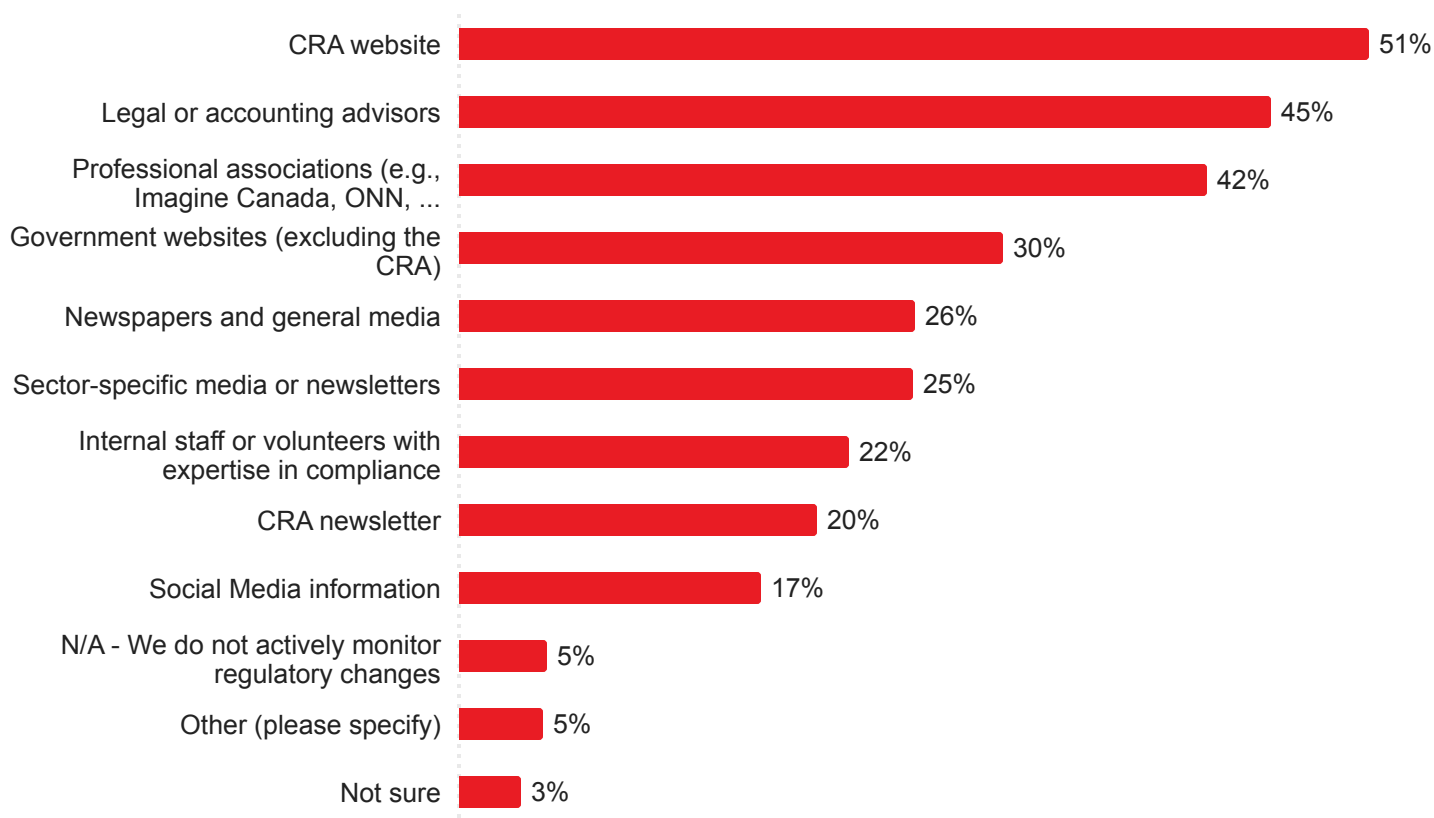|	
Strongly supportive – Regulations help facilitate our work and mission.	12%
Somewhat supportive – Regulations provide structure but also present some challenges.	36%
Neutral – Regulations neither significantly help nor hinder our work.	33%
Somewhat hindering – Regulations create barriers that make our work more difficult.	12%
Strongly hindering – Regulations significantly restrict our ability to achieve our mission.	1%
Not sure	7%

Which specific regulations or compliance requirements do you find most challenging for your organization?

829 Responses

None – We do not find current regulations particularly challenging.	30%
Annual reporting to the CRA (e.g., T3010 filing)	19%
Tax benefits and receipting compliance	16%
Restrictions on political activities and advocacy	14%
Not sure	11%
Employment standards (e.g., for nonprofit staff)	10%
Provincial/territorial regulatory differences	10%
Privacy and data protection requirements	10%
Other (please specify)	10%
Granting to non-qualified donees	10%
Employment and labor regulations	8%
Financial transparency and accountability standards	5%
Rules on receiving foreign funding	3%

How does your organization stay informed about regulatory changes affecting the charitable sector?

833 Responses

|	
CRA website	51%
Legal or accounting advisors	45%
Professional associations (e.g., Imagine Canada, ONN, ...	42%
Government websites (excluding the CRA)	30%
Newspapers and general media	26%
Sector-specific media or newsletters	25%
Internal staff or volunteers with expertise in compliance	22%
CRA newsletter	20%
Social Media information	17%
N/A - We do not actively monitor regulatory changes	5%
Other (please specify)	5%
Not sure	3%

Political Landscape(s) *(March 2025 - 3.03.06)*

Confidence level: 95%, Margin of error: 3%

Do you think that the current U.S. political landscape impacts your organization's work?

810 Responses

Yes, significantly [22%]

Not sure [13%]

No, not at all [13%]

Yes, somewhat [52%]
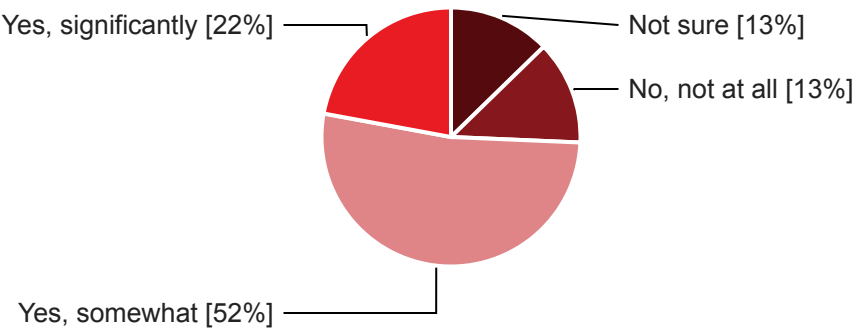
What is your outlook on the upcoming Canadian federal election in terms of its impact on your organization?

809 Responses

We anticipate a primarily positive impact	We anticipate a somewhat positive impact	We do not anticipate any or much impact	We anticipate a somewhat negative impact	We anticipate a primarily negative impact	Not sure
5%	16%	20%	15%	9%	36%
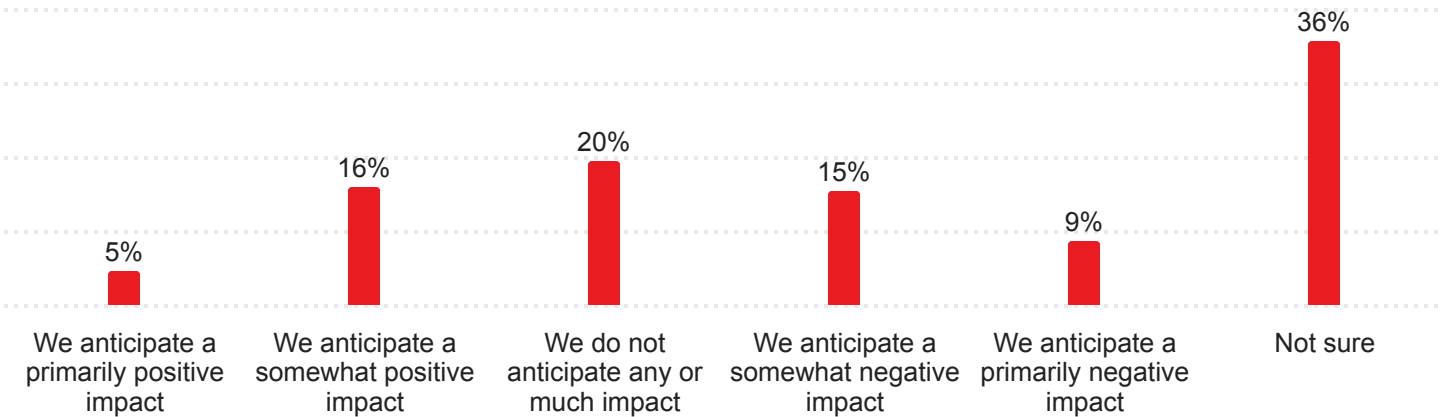
To what extent do you believe the following areas will be impacted by the upcoming Canadian federal election?

804 Responses

Field	Very negative	Somewhat negative	No impact	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not sure	N/A
Government funding or grant availability	13%	32%	12%	9%	1%	30%	3%
Policies and regulations affecting charities	3%	18%	31%	10%	1%	34%	2%
Demand for our services/programs	5%	13%	30%	16%	7%	24%	5%
Advocacy and government relations work	5%	22%	21%	13%	2%	30%	7%
Recruitment and retention of staff/volunteers	2%	11%	49%	8%	1%	23%	6%
Public perception of our work	3%	10%	37%	14%	6%	25%	5%

Other (please specify)	4%	2%	8%	4%	1%	37%	43%

Given the potential impacts of the upcoming Canadian federal election and the current U.S. political landscape, what actions is your organization planning to take?

	809 Responses
Strengthening relationships with funders to ensure financial stability	54%
Preparing contingency plans for potential funding shifts	45%
Increasing public engagement and awareness efforts	44%
Adjusting fundraising strategies in response to anticipated changes	44%
Monitoring policy developments closely to adapt operations accordingly	35%
Increasing advocacy efforts to engage policymakers	28%
Expanding or adjusting services in response to anticipated demand	24%
Work with a coalition to advocate the federal/provincial/municipal government	20%
No planned actions at this time	18%
Not sure	3%
Other (please specify):	3%

Policy Priorities for Canada's Charitable Sector *(May 2025 - 3.05.15)*

Confidence level: 95%, Margin of error: 4%

How prepared is your organization to adapt to potential policy or funding changes following the recent federal election?

	754 Responses
Very prepared – We have a plan in place and are actively monitoring developments	4%
Somewhat prepared – We're discussing scenarios but need more information	20%
Neutral – We're aware but haven't taken any steps yet	30%
Not very prepared – We're unsure how changes might affect us	25%
Not at all prepared – We haven't considered this yet	10%
Not sure	4%
N/A	7%

What specific policy priorities do you believe the new federal government should focus on to better support charitable organizations? (Select up to three)
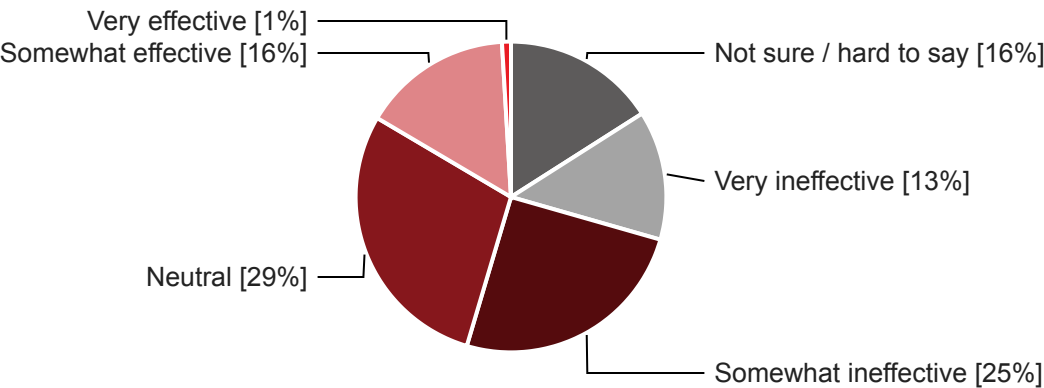
	754 Responses
Increase access to funding and grants	69%
Reduce restrictions on how funding and grants can be used	51%
Simplify reporting and compliance requirements	47%
Modernize charitable tax incentives for donors	32%
Establish a dedicated 'home' or ministry for the sector in government	21%
Improve access to professional development and training	18%
Incentivize collaboration and partnerships	16%

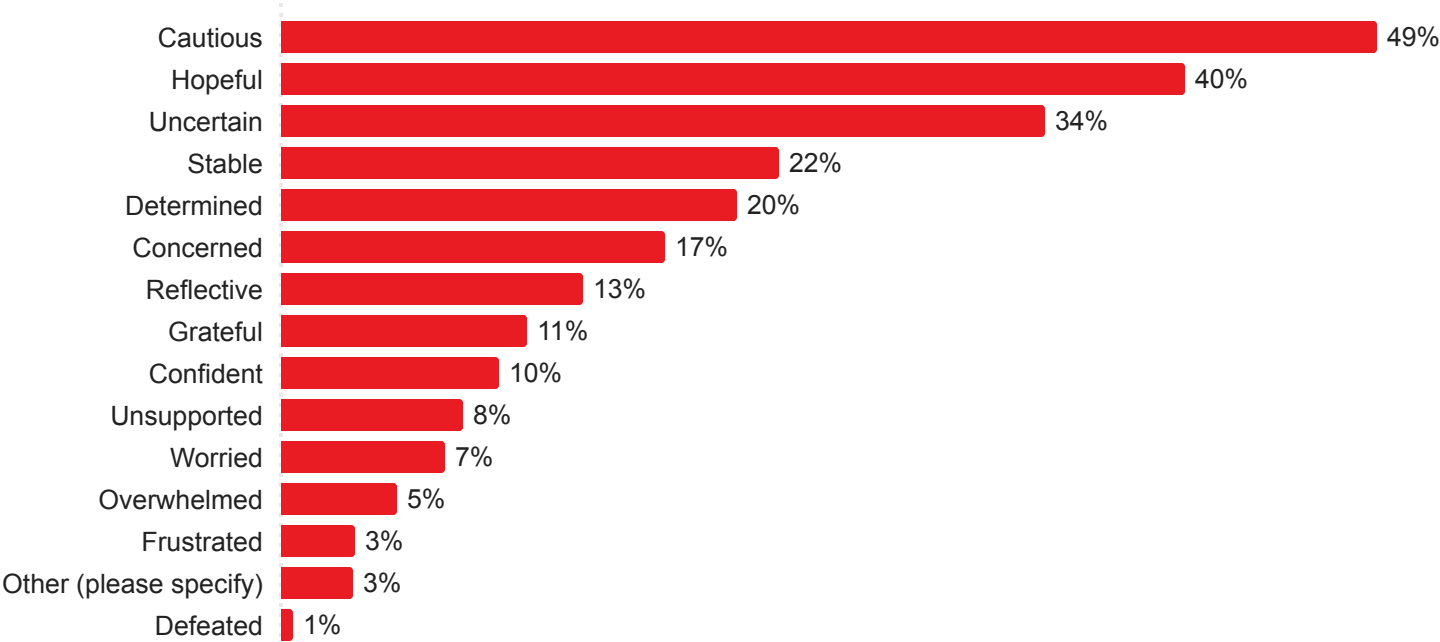|	
Provide dedicated support for technology and digital infrastructure	16%
Develop national or provincial action plans for volunteering	14%
Expand support for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives	12%
Streamline regulatory and registration processes	12%
Support better impact measurement and evaluation	10%
Offer targeted support for climate action initiatives	7%
Other (please specify):	7%
Not sure	4%

Historically, how effective do you feel the federal government have been in engaging with charities on policy issues and sector needs?

751 Responses

Very effective [1%]
Somewhat effective [16%]
Not sure / hard to say [16%]
Very ineffective [13%]
Somewhat ineffective [25%]
Neutral [29%]

Choose up to three words that best describe how your organization is feeling about the future of the sector following the election.

749 Responses

Cautious	49%
Hopeful	40%
Uncertain	34%
Stable	22%
Determined	20%
Concerned	17%
Reflective	13%
Grateful	11%
Confident	10%
Unsupported	8%
Worried	7%
Overwhelmed	5%
Frustrated	3%
Other (please specify)	3%
Defeated	1%

What are the biggest challenges your organization faces when trying to advocate for policies that support your mission and long-term sustainability? (Select your top 3)
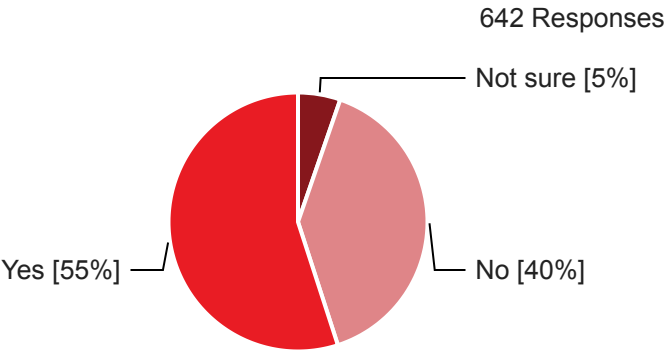
	753 Responses
Limited time or staff capacity	64%
Limited access to decision-makers or consultation opportunities	29%
Lack of expertise or confidence in advocacy/lobbying	26%
Difficulty building relationships with government officials	21%
Low public or media visibility for our cause	21%
Fragmentation or lack of coordination across the sector	14%
Fear of political repercussions or reputational risk	12%
N/A- We don't engage in advocacy	11%
Competing priorities within the organization	10%
Uncertainty about rules governing charitable advocacy or lobbying	9%
Difficulty translating our work into policy language or priorities	8%
Board or leadership reluctance to engage in advocacy	6%
Other (please specify):	4%
Our organization doesn't face any major challenges in our advocacy	3%

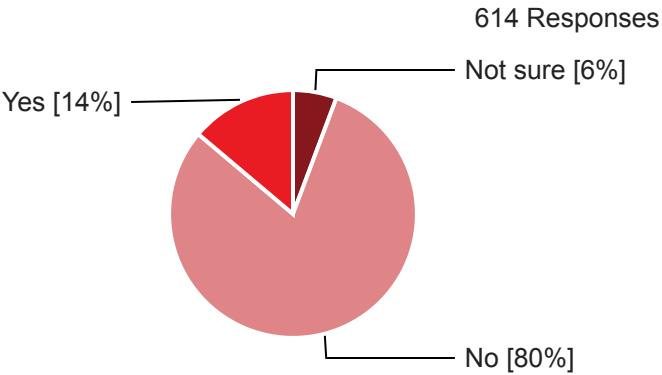## Policy Engagement *(October 2025 - 3.10.37)*

Confidence level: 95%, Margin of error: 4-6%

Does your organization engage in advocacy and/or lobbying activities? *(Can compare to results on page 10)*

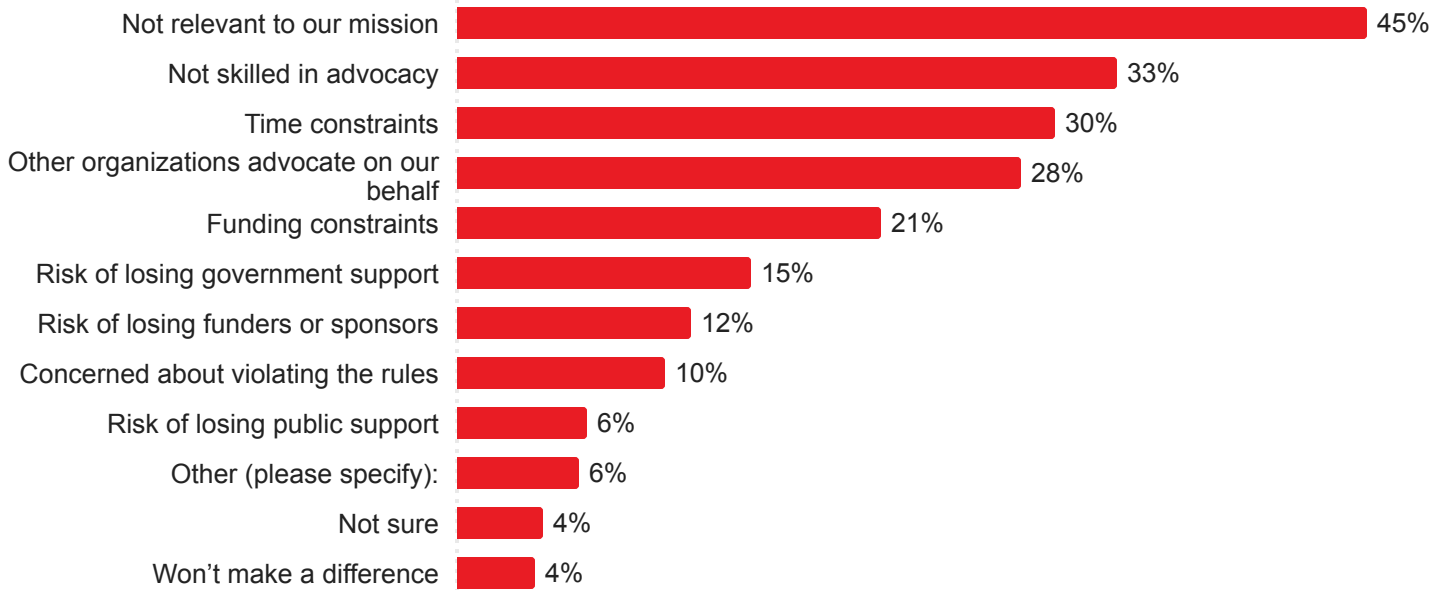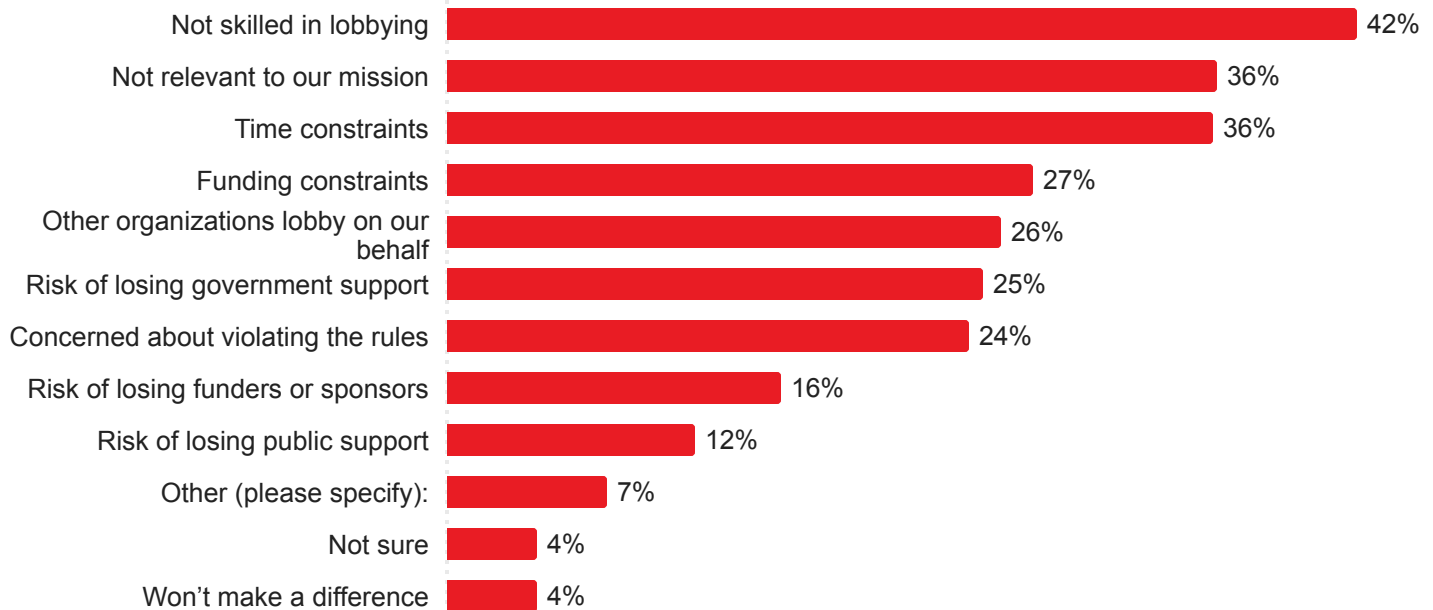**Advocacy**

642 Responses

Not sure [5%]
Yes [55%]
No [40%]

Lobbying

614 Responses

Not sure [6%]
Yes [14%]
No [80%]

What are the main reasons why your organization does not engage in advocacy?

233 Responses

Reason	Percentage
Not relevant to our mission	45%
Not skilled in advocacy	33%
Time constraints	30%
Other organizations advocate on our behalf	28%
Funding constraints	21%
Risk of losing government support	15%
Risk of losing funders or sponsors	12%
Concerned about violating the rules	10%
Risk of losing public support	6%
Other (please specify):	6%
Not sure	4%
Won't make a difference	4%

What are the main reasons why your organization does not engage in lobbying?

458 Responses

Reason	Percentage
Not skilled in lobbying	42%
Not relevant to our mission	36%
Time constraints	36%
Funding constraints	27%
Other organizations lobby on our behalf	26%
Risk of losing government support	25%
Concerned about violating the rules	24%
Risk of losing funders or sponsors	16%
Risk of losing public support	12%
Other (please specify):	7%
Not sure	4%
Won't make a difference	4%

Please rate your organizations' engagement in each of the below categories of policy participation *(Can compare to results on page 10-11)*

597 Responses

Field	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Not Sure	N/A
Releasing research reports to the media, public, or policymakers	50%	19%	16%	5%	3%	2%	5%

Discussing obtaining grants or contracts with government officials	19%	19%	33%	20%	5%	1%	2%
Making representations in writing or verbally to a parliamentary committee	57%	21%	12%	4%	0%	3%	3%
Advocating on behalf of or against a proposed bill or other policy pronouncement/proposal	48%	24%	17%	5%	1%	2%	3%
Encouraging members to write, call, fax, or email policymakers	35%	29%	23%	7%	2%	2%	3%
Interacting socially with government officials	21%	26%	31%	15%	3%	1%	2%
Working in a planning or advisory group that includes government officials	33%	22%	23%	15%	3%	2%	3%
Formally meeting with government officials about the work we are doing	24%	23%	34%	14%	3%	1%	1%
Responding to requests for information from those in government	22%	23%	28%	15%	8%	2%	3%
Other (please specify)	25%	6%	4%	6%	8%	4%	47%

Compared to 2024, has your organization increased the resources (time, money, or staff) it dedicates to advocacy and/or lobbying in 2025?

596 Responses
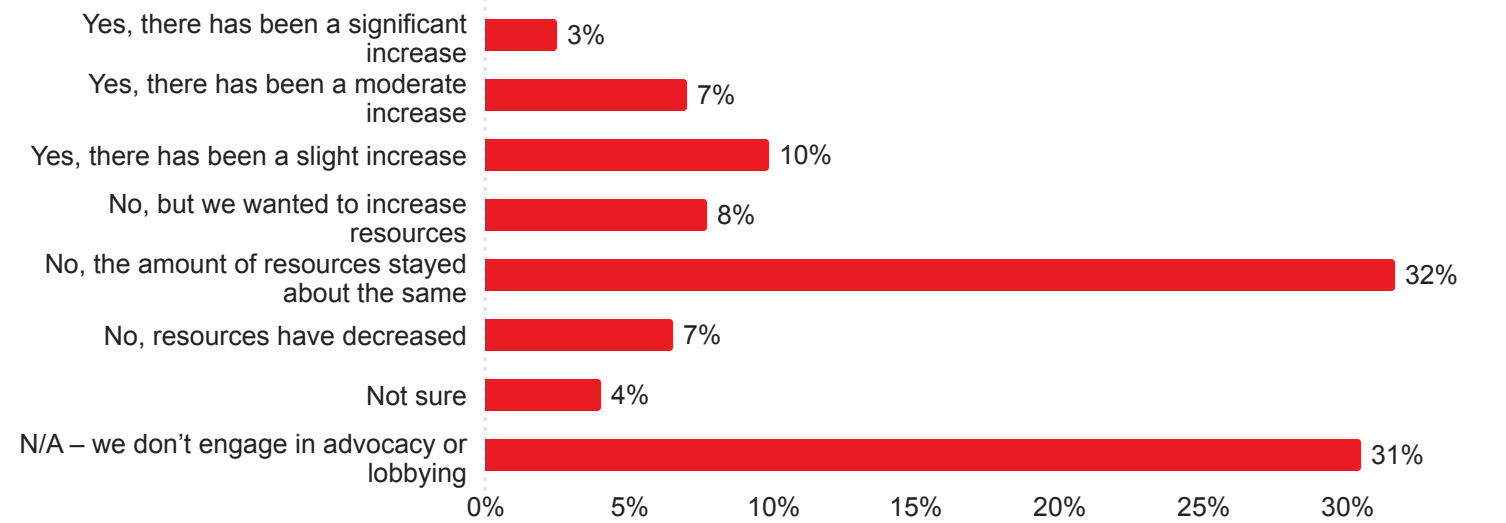
Survey Methdology

Data Source
The Charity Insights Canada Project (CICP) panel is derived from publicly available T3010 Registered Charity Information Returns administered by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). This dataset is publicly accessible and unaltered. Our lists are copies of an official work published by the Government of Canada and are not endorsed by, or affiliated with, the Government of Canada.

Sample Development
Randomized samples were generated from a population of approximately 84,000 registered charities in Canada. After initial exclusions, the sampling frame included approximately 33,000 organizations.

Excluded from the study were:

- Religious organizations tied to specific places of worship (with limited exceptions)
- Hospitals and schools

Charities were included if they:

- Were designated as Type C (charities)
- Reported at least one full-time employee (FTE)
- Reported annual expenditures greater than $1
- Targeted sub-samples were also created for:
- Public and private foundations (Types A & B)
- Volunteer-run charities (FTE = 0)

Panel Composition
From this refined frame, a primary random sample was drawn and supplemented by seven sub-samples (SS1–SS7) to ensure inclusion of hard-to-reach and diverse groups such as:

- Foundations and volunteer-run organizations
- Charities across different regions (e.g., British Columbia, Québec)
- Organizations engaged in international or religion-focused activities

This approach results in a panel of approximately 1,100 charities annually, representing a broad cross-section of the sector. As of September 2025, about 950 participants remain active.

Recruitment & Participation
Recruitment was conducted via email and phone outreach. All participants completed an information form to verify organizational details and provide additional HR data.

Survey Process
The CICP distributes short surveys every Wednesday at 6:00 a.m. ET, with a 24-hour initial response window and a reminder the following morning. Weekly reports are released each Friday to provide timely insights.

Oversight
Survey topics are developed by the CICP core research team, with guidance from an Advisory Board of sector leaders and practitioners. The Board ensures that the study remains responsive to emerging issues and reflective of the sector's evolving realities.