



## Charity Checklist

### A Guide to Evaluating Canadian Charities

With demand for charities at an all-time high and so many worthy causes to choose from, it's important to make an informed decision to help your donations have the greatest social impact. This checklist is a guide to help you evaluate a charity on key aspects of its organization to ensure your generosity is directly wisely.

Charity Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Evaluated: \_\_\_\_\_

### Who is behind the charity?

#### Is the organization registered as a charity?



Confirm that the charity is registered with the CRA.<sup>1</sup> This provides assurance that it meets regulatory standards and can issue official donation receipts.

Yes / No

#### Are the leaders of the charity free from all conflicts of interest?



Review the leadership team to understand who oversees its operations. Check for any potential conflicts of that might hinder the charity's ability to serve its intended purpose impartially.<sup>1,2</sup>

Yes / No

#### Does the charity have an independent board?



An independent board helps ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of the charity's mission. Check that a majority of the board members have no financial interest in the charity's operations and are not related by blood or marriage.<sup>2</sup>

Yes / No

#### Has the board maintained consistent leadership without unexpected departures?



A sudden resignation or a series of resignations from a charity's board could indicate internal issues. Investigate the reasons behind any recent board changes to ensure the organization's stability and integrity.

Yes / No

### What do independent experts have to say?

#### How are they rated on Charity Intelligence Canada?

Charity Intelligence Canada provides ratings and reports on Canadian charities based on factors like financial transparency, governance, and social impact. This can give you insights into its impact and financial efficiency.<sup>2</sup>



#### Are they certified by Imagine Canada?

Imagine Canada certification means the charity meets specific standards in governance, accountability, and transparency.<sup>3</sup>

Yes / No



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## How does the charity use the money it receives?

### For each dollar received, how much is directed towards the cause?



A higher percentage of funds going directly to the cause, as opposed to salaries or administrative costs, generally indicates a more effective use of donations. Consult Charity Intelligence Canada<sup>2</sup> or calculate it from the charity's financial statements.

\_\_\_\_\_ %

### Does management receive larger salaries than warranted?



Examine the compensation of the charity's top executives to ensure that it is in line with similar roles in the sector. Excessive salaries could indicate misallocation of funds.

Yes / No

### Does the charity have reputable supporters?



Identify major donors to the charity, especially institutions and well-known individuals. Are you comfortable investing in the same cause as they are?

Yes / No

### Are the charity's cash reserves managed responsibly by qualified individuals?



Charities with significant reserves should employ sound investment strategies managed by competent professionals. Investigate the charity's investment strategy and the qualifications of those overseeing it.

Yes / No

If you need help completing the assessment or want a second opinion, reach out to the team at Christianson Wealth Advisors. Our goal is to help you make wiser decisions with your money.

### Notes:

1. You can use the search feature on the CRA website to look up registered charities. There, you can also see their financial statements and a list of their directors.  
**Web Link:** <https://apps.cra-arc.gc.ca/ebci/hacc/srch/pub/dsplyBscSrch>
2. Charity Intelligence Canada is an independent organization which assesses over 800 Canadian charities and assigns them a rating out of five stars. To understand their method or to look up a charity, see here:  
**Web Link:** <https://www.charityintelligence.ca/giving-with-impact/understanding-our-ratings>
3. Imagine Canada provides resources, research, and advocacy support to charities in Canada, helping them operate effectively and transparently. They also offer a paid accreditation program which certifies charities who demonstrate excellence in key areas of operation.  
**Web Link:** <https://www.imaginecanada.ca/en>



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