

July 7th 2009



Dear Colleague:

“State of health of the non-profit/voluntary sector in Nova Scotia”:
A New Research Study for our Sector

On behalf of the Advisory Group for the above project, I am delighted to invite you, your staff and board representative(s) to participate in this very important research study, which is in the preparatory stages and begins in September.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) awarded The Federation of Community Organizations and Phoenix Youth Programs more than \$200,000 to undertake this research project on the labour pressures facing Nova Scotia's non-profit/voluntary sector. It is the first time that a province-wide study of this nature will be conducted in Nova Scotia.

An Advisory Group has been working together since March on the early development stages on the project – members are listed at the end of this letter. Following a call for proposals process, the Advisory Group has awarded the research contract to Gardner Pinfold Consulting.

The non-profit sector in Nova Scotia, with almost 24,500 employees, is approximately the same size as the province's Federal public service and is comparable in size to the entire construction industry. Yet the labour needs of our sector remain largely unknown, while the sector is so vital to the health and well-being of our province.

The **key parameters** for inclusion in this study are that you are an incorporated, non-profit agency with paid staff, probably providing front-line programs and services. Over the next 12–18 months, this study will provide an opportunity for ***you*** to contribute to a better understanding of the economic value of our sector to the province, and to develop a current snapshot of Nova Scotia-specific research data. Information will be gathered on a range of topics from salary ranges of various positions to anecdotal reporting on the issues in the form of scenarios or your own narrative. Available to all, and taken in complete confidence by the research consultants, this study will create real data to inform decision-making within agencies as well as government. Interviews will be approximately 10 – 15 minutes by phone or on-line, and in-person or focus groups will be one to two hours.

We are aiming for a high number of participants and we invite Executive Directors, Board members and all paid staff to be interviewed either in person or on-line or by phone. Please feel free to share this invitation with your network(s) and staff. E-mail the project as soon as possible at: nfpresearch@gmail.com with your name, job title and organization, e-mail and phone number so that you can be contacted by the consultants.

While we are sending out 500 invitations, we know there will be agencies that we have not been able to contact. The study will not include large institutions (e.g. hospitals or universities), or traditionally volunteer-only run groups such as legions, churches or sport groups etc.

One goal of the research is to better understand how to develop and retain the talent needed to fulfill the important role non-profits play throughout the province. Given the uncertainty of the labour market and the importance of non-profits, this research will be of value to all Nova Scotians. A thriving non-profit sector means a stronger Nova Scotia.

“People – particularly within government organizations and the business community – have long overlooked the massive economic impact of the not-for-profit/voluntary sector. We believe this project will really open some eyes, and identify major opportunities for economic growth.” says Joel Stoddart of the Acadia Centre for Social and Business Entrepreneurship (ACSBEA), a member of the project Advisory Group.

A provincial conference will be held in late 2010 where the results and outcomes will be presented. From there, you will have input into future policy recommendations.

A website has been developed for the project – www.NFPresearch.ns.ca and will be added to as the work progresses. Please check it out now!

The Federation of Community Organizations, a coalition of over seventy members, and Phoenix Youth Programs, a Halifax non-profit with more than 20 years of experience working with homeless and marginalized youth, will act as co-chairs of the project.

Best regards, and thank you in anticipation for your participation.

Margaret

Margaret Fraser - co-chair/project manager
For more immediate information please contact Margaret at:
Federation of Community Organizations –
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Advisory Group:

Bonnie Shiell, HR Council for the Voluntary/non-profit Sector
David Muise, Family Service Association of Eastern Nova Scotia (retired)
Hilary Amit, Highland Community Residential Services
Joel Stoddart, Acadia Centre for Social and Business Entrepreneurship
Leslie Brown, Mount Saint Vincent University
Peter Mortimer, United Way of Halifax Region
Margaret Fraser, Federation of Community Organizations – co-chair/project manager
Miia Suokonautio – Phoenix Youth Programs – co-chair