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# Policy Matters: Martha Powell

By Martha Powell

*Later this year, Canadians will vote in the 43rd federal election. Many non-profit organizations, networks, and coalitions see elections as a critical opportunity to raise relevant public policy issues. Recently, the rules for charities engaging in public policy have become a prominent source of debate and discussion in government and the sector. As we countdown to the next election, The Philanthropist is asking non-profit leaders what public policy issues are top of mind for them.*

**Name and organization:** Martha Powell, London Community Foundation

## **What current election issues might impact your work?**

Affordable housing in Canada is a huge issue, and so is appropriate housing. Mental health and addictions, homelessness, and poverty all contribute to this need. When I say appropriate, I mean not just a roof over someone's head, but the right roof that provides the supports to ensure people and families are housed in sustainable homes that meet their individual needs. Wrap around supports are paramount. Governments must work collectively with organizations such as community foundations to change the game through innovative investment, not just throwing dollars at these issues.

## **What issues would you like to bring more attention to in the election?**

A provincial- and indeed country-wide coordination of mental health and addictions funding strategy is needed. This will ensure a thorough mapping of the landscape and service delivery so that no one falls through the cracks. Less bureaucracy and funding envelopes (right now there is so much overlap) to a streamlined solution. You can't streamline when you have so many different funding bodies and regulators.

## **Where can we learn more about these issues?**

Niagara Mental Health and Addictions Charter

