
Sector News Digest - April 20, 2021

Title: Sector News Digest – April 20, 2021

Author: Angela Long

Published in: *The Philanthropist* , News Digest

ISSN: 2562-1491

Date: April 20, 2021

Original Link: <https://thephilanthropist.ca/2021/04/sector-news-digest-april-20-2021/>

Date of PDF Download: May 12, 2021

This week: budget 2021, the feds respond to the Senate’s sector report; Volunteer Week; gender policy and the recovery; and hunting for vaccines online.

Budget 2021: new funding for daycare, charities, and Black-led community organizations

The federal budget released yesterday afternoon by Liberal Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland included \$400 million to establish a “Community Services Recovery Fund,” to be administered by Employment and Social Development Canada, to help charities and non-profits “adapt and modernize so they can better support the economic recovery in our communities.” The massive spending plan also includes a provision to launch \$755 million in planned disbursements from a previously announced Social Finance Fund, as well as allocate \$50 million for capacity-building in the sector. These moves respond to sustained lobbying by Imagine Canada – although fall well short of proposals for a [stabilization fund](#) made earlier in the pandemic. (Last spring, Ottawa earmarked \$350 million for an emergency community support fund.) Elsewhere in the budget, the government commits \$200 million to support Canada’s first Black-led philanthropic endowment fund and a new \$100 million investment in the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative. The Liberals also said they’ll convene consultations to look at increasing foundation disbursement levels and establishing a new Canadian Social Bond for socially conscious investors. Check back later this week for full coverage and analysis by Fatima Syed.

A long-awaited reply to the Senate report

Minister for National Revenue Diane LeBouthillier earlier this month [issued the federal government's long-awaited response](#) to [Catalyst for Change: A Roadmap to a Stronger Charitable Sector](#), the Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector's 2019 report on how the charitable and non-profit sector can continue to make its "essential contribution to building a stronger, more inclusive and more resilient nation."

The 21-page document agreed with 12 of the committee's 42 recommendations, recommended further review for another 14, and rejected six outright. Notably, LeBouthillier's report endorses calls for a "single window" point of contact for the sector, proposing Employment and Social Development Canada. It turned out long-standing calls for an expanded legal definition for what constitutes charitable activity.

Senator Ratna Omidvar, co-author of *Catalyst for Change*, [took to Twitter](#) to thank LeBouthillier for "a thorough and open response," adding that she plans to digest the document's contents before commenting. Imagine Canada also [tweeted to say](#) its policy experts will be doing some digesting in the upcoming days. Let's hope no one suffers from indigestion.

Long live Volunteer Week

In a country where, [according to Statistics Canada](#), 41% of Canadians 15 and older devoted about 1.7 billion hours to volunteer work in 2018, the equivalent to more than 863,000 full-time jobs, National Volunteer Week is a big deal.

The 2021 theme – The Value of One, The Power of Many – reflects a year that has shown us just how much we need each other. From [food banks in Manitoba](#) to [homeless shelters in Nova Scotia](#), volunteers have often found themselves at the front lines of the pandemic. In Dawson City, Yukon, 60 volunteers came forward within 24 hours to assist residents in 14-day self-isolation periods, [CBC News](#) reported.

But in light of Imagine Canada's latest report, [Sector Monitor: Ongoing Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), which found that 60% of charities are reporting a decline in volunteers and 58% a reduction in volunteer hours, the need to celebrate grows by the minute.

Volunteer Canada can help with a [list of 20 suggestions](#) about how to celebrate safely, including house-party movie nights, scavenger hunts, and well-being webinars. The group also provides a handy [campaign kit](#) packed with downloadable assets, such as volunteer certificates and places to share inspiring stories and photos.

Software engineer by day, vaccine hunter by night

In light of widespread confusion about the COVID-19 vaccination rollout, one group of volunteers is well on their way to superhero status: the [Vaccine Hunters](#).

"During the day Joshua Kalpin works as a software engineer, but by night he is hunting online – hunting for COVID-19 vaccine appointments on behalf of Vaccine Hunters Canada," [Global News](#) reports.

[Vice](#) dubbed the group “Canada’s most helpful vaccine resource,” noting that government ineptitude has driven more than 58,000 people (at last count) to social media for real-time information about pop-up vaccination sites or appointment slots that need filling. Vaccine Hunters’ Twitter feed has generated hundreds of retweets and likes.

“We need to help each other get through all this,” Kalpin [told *The Globe and Mail*](#).

Some followers are turning to humour to get through Ontario’s vaccine rollout, with a [Twitter thread](#) about “things ... that are easier to access than Ontario’s vaccine process.” A few (slightly Toronto-centric) answers: navigating [the PATH](#), attending the [Yayoi Kusama exhibit](#), scoring an Ontario Parks campsite, and eating cheesecake on [opening day at Uncle Tetsu’s](#).

Canada’s not-so-golden years

The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) is tracking how Canada’s older populations have fared during the pandemic and in the current vaccination blitz.

About 95% of Canada’s 23,000 COVID-related deaths have occurred among those over 60, according to [If Older Canadians Want a COVID-19 Vaccine, Why Is Canada Struggling to Get Them Vaccinated?](#) Recent evidence from around the world has shown that vaccines are saving lives. Another NIA report, [COVID-19 Vaccines – What Older Canadians Need to Know](#), provides “evidence-informed answers” to “many legitimate questions and misconceptions” about the four available COVID-19 vaccines.

High-quality non-profit care isn’t just for dreamers

“Does profit have a place in the care of our most vulnerable citizens?” ask André Beaudry, executive director of Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada, and Cathy Taylor, executive director of the Ontario Nonprofit Network.

In a new *iPolitics* op-ed, Taylor and Beaudry argue it’s time to examine alternative models “that put people, not profit, at the heart of community care.” Some of the groundwork has already been done, they note, citing [a Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy Co-Creation Steering Group report](#) with 12 recommendations. Examples of social-economy models, such as the “thriving” [Victoria Health Co-operative](#), show that non-profit high-quality care isn’t just for dreamers.

The *Ottawa Citizen* also noted in [a recent article](#) successful models from around the world, including an eldercare community in Denmark called Lillevang. (Watch an Atlantic Seniors Housing Research Alliance [video about Lillevang here](#).)

In [Assessing Cash-for-Care Benefits to Support Aging at Home in Canada](#), the Institute for Research on Public Policy also looked abroad for inspiration about how to repair our “broken system.” The authors suggested that by increasing funding for formal home care and supports for informal caregivers, we can “avoid unnecessary or unwanted admissions” to long-term-care homes and also ease the burdens of thousands of unpaid caregivers, mostly women, who suffer daily in a system with “long-standing flaws.”

The gender agenda and the she-covery

In [a pre-budget letter to finance minister Chrystia Freeland](#), BC charities lawyer Margaret Mason, Imagine Canada's board chair, points out that 80% of the sector's workforce identifies as female, and suffers for its gender skew.

Mason notes a [2018 Ontario Nonprofit Network report](#) that found the sector is viewed "in stereotypically feminine ways," such as "dependent, nurturing, caring, emotional, inferior to masculinity, unintelligent, unskilled, and requiring guidance and monitoring."

Despite the clout of the sector, which employs 2.4 million and contributes 8.5% to Canada's GDP, it's "largely invisible" to the government, Mason says. It's been more than 18 years since Statistics Canada conducted a sector-wide survey, for example, unlike male-dominated sectors with fewer employees and less economic impact whose data is collected annually. Mason makes three recommendations for government to "address gender equality and unleash the potential of the sector": examine funding practices that lead to precarious employment and low wages, collect employment and economic data on an ongoing basis, and create a "home in government" to facilitate policy coordination and ensure characteristics unique to the sector are considered.

A recent House of Commons report, [Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women](#), included the non-profit sector in its 21 recommendations, noting a need "to evaluate how to support employees in industries where women work."

An [ONN blog post](#) suggests a parental-leave top-up fund could be one way to address low wages and lack of benefits in the sector. Such a fund would also help advance gender equity principles by providing "income security during a major life event" and lead to "better recruitment and retention of employees while also lowering turnover costs," the ONN notes.

The young and hopefully not-so restless

First Policy Response and the Ryerson Leadership Lab are challenging the sector to create more opportunities for young people "to be included in their important policy and advocacy work" through a program called [Fast Start](#).

Matthew Mendelsohn, co-creator of First Policy Response, talks about why it's important to get on board [in a personal essay](#), noting that employers "have a role to play in how we recover and what kind of country emerges on the other side," not only by helping out youth who've endured a "devastating" year, but to "do what we can to address the impacts of the pandemic, which have been so gendered and racialized."

Another entry in the non-profit journalism space

A second media outlet has joined La Presse Inc. on the Government of Canada's [list of registered journalism organizations](#). Since declaring its status in early April, *The Narwhal* has [attracted an additional 300 subscribers](#), and 230 existing readers have increased donations. As one new reader wrote, "Dropping *The New York Times* for you. Love your stories :)"

Unfortunately, the road to charitable status for Canada's media outlets might be a little too long and winding to save the industry from the fallout of loss of advertising revenue to social media giants like Facebook. Chris Waddell, professor in the School of Journalism and Communication

at Carleton University, explained why in “[From Media House to Charity Case](#),” published last year in *The Philanthropist Journal*.

Home sweet home in government

Newfoundland and Labrador have laid out a welcome mat for the sector with the appointment of John Abbott as Minister Responsible for the Community Sector. The province joins British Columbia, which appointed Niki Sharma as the Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits last year, in making a home for the sector in government.

In [a press release](#), Newfoundland and Labrador’s Community Sector Council applauded the appointment, saying, “This is a big step forward and recognizes the fundamental role of the community sector.”

Events and activities

- [Join YMCA Canada and YWCA Canada for a #Budget2021 event](#) on April 22 to “crunch the numbers and unpack what this Federal Budget means for our communities and sector.”
- In the mood to “gather with similarly pissed-off folks” and “be optimistic about the world again”? Click [here](#) for tickets to the Canadian premiere of *BROKE: The Business of System Change* on April 21.
- Mystified by our digital world? You’re not alone. Join Marina Glogovac, president & CEO of CanadaHelps, on April 22 for [Five Good Ideas for demystifying digital transformation](#).
- Don’t forget about Earth Day (April 22)! Here’s [a video from Earth Day Canada](#) to get you in the mood to celebrate [this year’s theme, #TakeCareofThePlanet](#).
- Learn about how newcomers in Canada are leading the way in philanthropy at [Generous Futures: Newcomers Redefining](#) on April 28.
- The Mississauga Food Bank has launched its [Give 30 Ramadan fundraiser](#), which runs until May 13.
- For those looking to the North, the [Arctic Inspiration Prize call for nominations](#) is now open.
- Finally, check out these hot-off-the-press publications: [Swimming with the Sharks: Poverty, Pandemics and Payday Lenders](#), a report about a little-discussed topic that affects an estimated 520,000 Canadian households; and [this guide](#) about “using digital tools for constructive two-way conversations” with elected officials.