



CanadaHelps' Digital Skills Survey Reveals Huge Deficit in Charities' Access to Digital Technology and Skills

Report calls for urgent government action and funding for capacity-building

TORONTO – MAY 19, 2021 – [CanadaHelps](https://canadahelps.org), the country's largest platform for donating and fundraising online, has published the results from the first-ever Digital Skills Survey on Canada's charitable sector. The survey, which provides critical baseline data on the digital health of Canada's charitable sector, was designed to understand the current use of technology, as well as assess potential barriers to the adoption of digital technology and advancement of digital skills. More than 1,400 Canadian charities responded to the survey between February 2 to 14, 2021. Key findings from the survey reveal that charities are lagging in digital adoption and investing in digital technology, with small charities falling the furthest behind. The report calls for governments and funders to better understand the operational needs of charities as a fundamental step to ensure the sector's survival. The Digital Skills Survey is available for download [here](#).

Key Findings:

- One in three charities believe that they'll soon find it harder to continue their work if they don't improve their digital capabilities.
- There is a major skill gap, with the majority of charities rating their digital skill level as "fair" or "poor."
- Small charities are most vulnerable to the digital skills gap: 58% of charities with less than \$100,000 in annual revenue (50% of all charities) have no plans to integrate digital into everyday activities; this percentage is more than double that of larger charities.
- The majority of charities believe digital adoption is important, yet more than two thirds of charities indicate that adopting digital technology is a lower priority.

"This report reveals the daily tug-of-war that most charities in Canada face in terms of the ability to prioritize digital skills adoption," says Marina Glogovac, President and CEO of CanadaHelps. "There is a willingness to expand the adoption of digital technologies, especially among the smallest of organizations. However, without material support from the government and funders for charities to invest in developing a strategic digital plan and acquire essential skills and technology, the survival of many charities is at risk."

Charities Are Facing a Digital Skills Gap

The report reveals that the barriers to digital adoption in Canada's charitable sector are significant. More than 55% of respondents say they either don't have enough funding or the skills, expertise, and knowledge for greater use of digital tools. In response to questions pertaining to experience using software and digital tools, the majority of charities revealed that they only use software for general office operations and financial reporting. Fewer charities use software and digital tools for applications such as websites, email marketing, digital accessibility, and project management tools – applications that are more likely to support fundraising and capacity building. Most charities rated their digital skill level as fair or poor, highlighting a significant skills gap. More than 40% of respondents acknowledged they require help to understand the benefits of software and digital tools.

"Given the demands of their day-to-day operations, digital adoption is repeatedly put on hold by charities. Although these same charities understand the important role of digital tools in attracting supporters and engaging donors, for many, the barriers to adopting digital transformation seem insurmountable," says Glogovac. "We believe that for charities to stay relevant and to achieve the benefits that digital transformation can deliver, they need to see a clear path forward through greater investment from government and funders."

Urgent Government Action is Required



The report calls on government action to advocate and strengthen the charitable sector. It notes that there is currently no home in government to advocate for, strengthen, and grow the impact of charities. In contrast, the federal government has a minister responsible for small business, and the Business Development Bank of Canada, a crown corporation, supports Canadian businesses through financing, advisory services, and capital.

“Charities desperately need the same support provided to Canadian businesses,” says Glogovac. “Without concerted and immediate government action, many charities will not bridge the skill, funding, and staffing gaps to keep pace in today’s digital world.”

About CanadaHelps

CanadaHelps is a charitable foundation working to increase giving in Canada through technology. CanadaHelps.org, provides a safe and trusted one stop destination for making donations, fundraising, or learning about any charity in Canada. The organization also develops affordable fundraising technology and provides free training and education for charities so that, regardless of size, all charities have the capacity to increase their impact and succeed in the digital age. More than 3 million Canadians have donated over \$1.9 billion to charities using CanadaHelps since its founding in 2000. For additional information, visit CanadaHelps.org or connect with CanadaHelps on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

###