

Municipal Administrator's Cheat Sheet

Building Resilient Communities Through Stronger Local Organizations

Local non-profits provide essential community services such as recreation, cultural events, seniors' programs, environmental action, and poverty reduction, among others. Many are led entirely by volunteers and operate with limited time, funding, and expertise. While some receive municipal or provincial funding, most are independent and vary widely in size and structure.

Common Challenges Non-Profits Face:

- Weak governance structures and unclear leadership roles
- Burnout among volunteers and staff
- Financial instability and lack of oversight or controls
- No formal policies or risk management practices
- Limited experience in fundraising, reporting, or compliance

The Municipality's Role in Supporting Non-Profits

Supporter:

- Provide grants or in-kind supports such as facility access
- Offer or fund training on board roles, financial oversight, or legal compliance
- Assist with troubleshooting governance or operational problems
- Encourage succession planning and mentorship for staff and board members

Connector:

- Connect organizations to other levels of government or funding programs
- Promote resource sharing, collaborative projects, or shared templates
- Maintain or support a local directory of nonprofits and community resources
- Facilitate networking between organizations facing similar challenges

Expectation Setter:

- Set governance and accountability requirements for groups receiving funding or facility access
- Require key policies: conflict of interest, financial controls, board responsibilities
- Use clear funding agreements with deliverables and reporting timelines
- Encourage transparency and regular board review of their role and effectiveness

Steps to Build Stronger Local Organizations:

- Require and support the development of basic governance documents
- Offer access to training or refer organizations to local capacity builders
- Encourage peer learning and collaboration
- Tie funding or access to expectations for accountability and board function
- Respond to crises with support, but pair help with governance improvement

Reflection Questions for Municipal Administrators

- What expectations do we set for groups using public facilities or funds?
- Are we equipping organizations to succeed, or just reacting when they fail?
- How do we manage risk when a funded group is facing collapse or conflict?
- Are we using our role to build capacity, not just provide funding?

Suggested resources:

- [Governance Guru](#) – Source of tools, templates, a blog, and a wide array of services for non-profit leaders



- [CharityVillage](#) – Tools and templates for nonprofit operations



- [Volunteer Manitoba](#) – Training and other supports for non-profit organizations



- [Imagine Canada's Standards Program](#) – an accreditation for non-profits

