



News Release

Study on Canadian Charitable Fundraisers – A First

March 24, 2003 – Toronto, ON – Professional fundraisers are key to the future success of Canada’s non-profit sector.

Canadians have come to rely on non-profit organizations to deliver an increasing range of essential goods and services. At the same time, public sector cutbacks have left the non-profit sector facing increasing demand with diminished resources. This leaves non-profit organizations more dependent on fundraising than ever before.

Despite this, we know very little about the professionals charged with generating non-profit resources. A new study by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) and the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) addresses that knowledge gap.

AFP hopes to use the data collected in the study to promote the critical importance of the non-profit sector in Canada. The study adds to the growing body of research by CPRN on the non-profit sector. The sector’s key role in the Canadian economy and social fabric makes it critical that policy leaders and the public generally have a better understanding of the part played by fundraisers in sustaining it.

The AFP/CPRN Study is the first comprehensive look at the fundraising profession in Canada. It also suggests directions for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of charitable fundraising. An analytical report on the survey by CPRN researchers, Grant Schellenberg, Kathryn McMullen, Richard Brisbois and Ron Saunders will be released later this Spring.

“This landmark survey establishes the first complete picture of Canada’s fundraising landscape, and provides some invaluable data about the state of the profession,” says Paulette V. Maehara, CFRE, CAE, AFP president and CEO. “We will be using the results of the survey to target educational programs and services that will allow fundraising professionals to better serve their organizations and their communities. It will also provide a valuable benchmark for future studies.”

The fundraising executives surveyed feel that integrating fundraising activities within an organization and having a board of directors with realistic expectations will dramatically improve the effectiveness of fundraising. Preliminary results from the survey released today show that only about half of fundraisers believe their boards of directors have realistic expectations about fundraising.

“The opportunities and challenges that this survey identifies give both the profession and the charitable sector plenty of food for thought,” says Dianne Lister, LL.B., CFRE, president and CEO of The Hospital for Sick Children Foundation, Toronto, and one of the primary originators of the study.

“Fundraising and private philanthropy are increasingly important to charities as governments at all levels cut back on programs. However, it’s clear that some charities may not be prepared or have the infrastructure in place to make fundraising a priority or understand how to integrate it properly and ethically within their existing operational structure.”

The survey also presents a clear demographic picture of the Canadian fundraising profession. Seventy percent of fundraisers are women, compared to 46% in the labour force as a whole. Seventy percent have a university degree, and nearly two-thirds are 40 years old or older.

The authors surveyed members of 10 professional associations representing fundraisers across Canada in the Fall of 2002. More than 1,300 fundraisers responded.

“The results present a rich body of data on the working conditions of professional fundraisers,” says Ron Saunders, director of CPRN’s Work Network. “They indicate a number of areas that need attention from a human resources standpoint if the sector is to continue to attract and retain the professionals it needs.”

The final report of the survey findings, to be published in May 2003, will elaborate on those themes.

A PowerPoint presentation of some of the survey highlights is available on the CPRN Web site at www.cprn.org and the AFP Web site at www.afpnet.org

The survey was conducted through the support of the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada, AFP International Headquarters, AFP Greater Toronto Chapter, AFP Calgary Chapter, The Hospital for Sick Children Foundation, DVA Navion, Ketchum Canada Inc., Anne Moore & Associates and an anonymous donor.

The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) represents more than 26,000 members in 170 chapters throughout Canada, the United States and Mexico, working to advance philanthropy through advocacy, research, education, and certification programs. The Association fosters development and growth of fundraising professionals and promotes high ethical standards in the fundraising profession. For more information visit www.afpnet.org

CPRN is a national not-for-profit research institute whose mission is to create knowledge and lead public debate on social and economic issues, important to the well-being of Canadians, in order to help build a more just, prosperous and caring society. For more information visit www.cprn.org

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