A Viable Non-profit Sector – Professional Fundraisers the Key

Friday, July 11, 2003 – A ground-breaking survey of Canadian professional charitable fundraisers expands knowledge regarding the profession and reveals ways to strengthen the fundraising capacity of the crucial non-profit sector.

A Portrait of Canadian Fundraising Professionals, undertaken by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) and the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN), with the support of other major Canadian fundraising associations, is the first comprehensive look at the fundraising profession in Canada.

With federal and provincial government funding decreasing and the demand for services increasing, Canadian charities are focusing on generating private support from individuals, corporations and foundations. However, little was known about the individuals charged with the task of raising those funds, and the challenges they face, until the release of this report.

The survey reveals a gap between older, more mature organizations – frequently foundations and focused in the health or education fields – and smaller charities new to fundraising – especially those with less than $250,000 in funds raised annually. "We found that many small organizations new to the field, especially in the social services and arts, culture and humanities subsectors, face tougher challenges than larger, well-established institutions," says **Kathryn McMullen**, CPRN researcher and author of the report. "The rapid growth in non-profit organizations has created a 'segmented labour market' that can affect the effectiveness and efficiency of charities based on size and maturity."

While a majority of survey respondents were satisfied with their jobs, satisfaction with pay, workload, training and career opportunities were all ranked higher by those respondents working for larger organizations than those fundraisers employed by smaller charities.

"There is a real need and opportunity for AFP and other professional associations in Canada to reach out to the smaller organizations with less resources," says **Dianne Lister**, Immediate Past President of The Hospital for Sick Children Foundation and Immediate Past Chair, AFP Canada Council. "The survey findings provide a basis for developing policies and strategies to better serve these smaller organizations, as well as to address professional and workplace issues and to strengthen the sector's capacity to attract and retain the professional fundraisers on whom it depends."

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The survey also questioned fundraisers about the challenges they face in the current environment. Nearly two-thirds of respondents stated that their organization had begun new fundraising practices or campaigns within the last two years. Yet, only half indicated that their charity's board of directors had realistic expectations about fundraising, and slightly less than half felt they had the necessary resources to perform the job successfully. Another quarter indicated that a lack of integration of fundraising activities into the rest of the organization made it difficult for them to do their job well.

"These challenges point to the importance of educating charities, and in particular their boards of directors, about the role of professional fundraising in the overall charitable sector," said **Paulette V. Maehara**, CFRE, CAE, President & CEO, of AFP. "Charities are more dependent on fundraising than ever before, but not enough to understand what fundraising is and how to perform it effectively and ethically."

Among the report's recommendations:

- Professional organizations, like the AFP, should further expand their outreach and education programs to reach paid fundraisers in small organizations.
- Professional organizations should develop training packages especially for the needs of new entrants to the field at a reasonable cost.
- Special outreach and education programs should be developed for boards of directors to allow them to more effectively support the fundraising process.
- Employers should undertake reviews to ensure competitive pay and benefits.
- Employers should address intrinsic job conditions like flexible working conditions, communications, good working relationships, fairness and respect and opportunities for professional training.
- A human resources sector council should be created for the non-profit sector to address collective challenges.

"The public interest in a financially viable non-profit sector coincides with the professional interest of fundraisers in creating better opportunities for training and career advancement and a satisfying work experience," Lister says. "We look forward to building the kind of professional environment that will attract and keep the best talent available to this crucial field."

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.

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