



Post-Election Wake-Up Call: What Canada's New Federal Government Means for Nonprofits

SFX: Sound of typing and office ambiance

Mary Barroll: Welcome to CharityVillage Connects. I'm your host, Mary Barroll.

SFX: Hummingbird flying and tone

That's the sound of a Hummingbird pollinating our world and making it a better place.

Music

The Hummingbird is CharityVillage's logo because we strive – like the industrious Hummingbird – to make connections across the nonprofit sector and help make positive change.

We'll offer insight that will help you make sense of your life as a nonprofit professional, make connections to help navigate challenges, and support your organization to deliver on its mission.

In this episode of CharityVillage Connects ...

SFX Buzz

News clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXRFB6t5xJQ>

Reporter: "Are you also considering military force to annex and acquire Canada?"
Trump: "No. Economic force. Because Canada and the United States, that would really be something. You get rid of that artificially drawn line and you take a look at what that looks like and it would also be much better for national security."

News clip

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jX7v_dr-g04

"Donald Trump is selling it as a way to boost American manufacturing jobs. Tariffs on steel and aluminum are doubling from 25% to 50% as of 12:01 Eastern Wednesday."

News clip

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/trump-canada-steel-tariffs-1.7548855>

"We've had months and months of disarray and uncertainty. So, this is yet another, punch in the gut, if you will, from the President, on the domestic steel industry, here in

Canada. Simply put, we do not understand at all why this is happening.”

News clip

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/carney-wins-canada-election-vows-not-to-yield-to-trump/vi-AA1DOTAY>

“Who’s ready to stand up for Canada with me? (Cheers) As I’ve been warning for months, America wants our land, our resources, our water, our country! (Boos) Never. But these are not idle threats. President Trump is trying to break us. So that America can own us. That will never, ever happen.”

Music

Mary Barroll: It’s been about three months now, since Canada elected its new government. With another minority Liberal government, under Prime Minister Mark Carney, one might say the Canadian electorate met in the centre. Despite its highest popular vote in decades, the Conservative Party lost. Its own leader, Pierre Poilievre, lost his seat. New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh also lost his seat.

All of this, in the shadow of U.S. President Donald Trump, the existential threat of his tariffs on the Canadian economy, and the continuing threat of annexing Canada as a 51st state. So, what now? What will this new federal government mean for Canada's nonprofit sector? What policy shifts can we anticipate? How will funding be affected? And what should nonprofit leaders be watching for, in the months ahead? To help us navigate these issues in these unnerving times, to help us unpack what we might expect from our newly elected government, and to better understand what the nonprofit sector can do to work with this government to serve the needs of Canadians, we speak to several leaders in the field.

Chris Holz: So, the U.S. Trump tariff situation is the number one issue for the national government, all the provincial premiers, for the Canadian economy, for all of us as a population. It’s the number one issue, it’s the number two issue, it’s the number five issue. And we all agree on that. So, if that’s number one, what are some of the other things that are on the agenda? And then we can answer, well, what does that mean for the charitable nonprofit sector?

Mitzie Hunter: I believe that nonprofits should be right at the table when it comes to policy development, as we move forward. And we, at the Canadian Women's Foundation, recognize that 80% of the nonprofit sector workers are women. Women are part of the economy, a vital part of the economy and no conversation should be happening about the economy without them at the table.

Jean-Marc Mangin: It’s very clear that the intent of this government is to lead the greatest transformation of our economy since World War II. So, the impact on the social safety net, that effort will be great. And the demand, both on the granting side, but also on the investment side, on foundations, will also be significant.

Andrew Chunilall: The federal government is very Ottawa centric, but it's also riding centric. It's not necessarily community centric. And so, there is an opportunity for government to partner with civil society, organizations like community foundations or otherwise. We have that reach. We're in community. We have the relationships. We have the knowledge and the data to inform good decision-making, at a very local level.

SFX: Buzz

News clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30btXYITjrl>

“Define a new economic and security relationship with the United States. And build the strongest economy that works for everyone. Canadians also want their life to become more affordable; they want their communities safer. We will deliver these mandates with urgency and determination. We are going to get going for ... (applause). We are starting, as we aim to go on.”

Mary Barroll: That's newly elected Prime Minister Mark Carney addressing caucus when it met for the first time, at the end of May. And it wasn't just symbolism that brought King Charles III to our shores to open Parliament with a new vision for Canada, a few days later. In the face of continuing threats of annexation of Canada as the 51st state by the Trump Administration, what better way to express the sovereignty of Canada than with a speech from the throne, by the actual Sovereign.

SFX: Buzz

News clip

<https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/campaigns/speech-throne/2025/speech-from-the-throne.html>

“Many Canadians are feeling anxious and worried about the drastically changing world around them. Fundamental change is always unsettling. Yet this moment is also an incredible opportunity. An opportunity for renewal. An opportunity to think big and to act bigger. An opportunity for Canada to embark on the largest transformation of its economy since the Second World War. A confident Canada, which has welcomed new Canadians, including from some of the most tragic, global conflict zones, can seize this opportunity by recognizing that all Canadians can give themselves far more than any foreign power, on any continent, can ever take away. And that by staying true to Canadian values, Canada can build new alliances and a new economy that serves all Canadians.”

Mary Barroll: Staying true to Canadian values is fundamental to the nonprofit sector. For many, our social safety net and charitable organizations are the manifestation of Canadian values put into action with their purpose driven work. But with so many challenges and so many priorities, just where does the nonprofit sector stand in the

quickly evolving economic and political landscape? According to our guests for this episode, it's time for the nonprofit sector to pay close attention to the contents of the Throne Speech, the government's Mandate Letter, and Carney's messaging, in order to glean an understanding of this new government's priorities. As a principal of Campbell Strategies and government relations advisor for Capital W, Chris Holz is a seasoned public affairs executive with over 20 years of experience providing counsel at all three levels of government. He's also served private sector clients, citizen groups and charities, after serving as a senior advisor to several Ontario cabinet ministers, providing his perspective on both sides of government relations. Here's his take on the results of Canada's federal election:

Chris Holz: It is an absolutely remarkable transformational outcome. It is incredible. In politics, something like this, this dramatic doesn't really happen that often. It is a remarkable achievement in the case of Mr. Carney. And while the Conservatives, it's true, were not successful, and yes, Pierre Poilievre lost his seat, the fact that the Conservatives did as well as they did, is also a pretty impressive achievement. That's not a political statement. That is a reality. Over 40%, which normally would be super majority territory for any party. The fact that two of them got over 40 percent is remarkable. We've moved, at least for now, into a two-party type system with the destruction, candidly, of the NDP vote and certainly the Bloc vote, as well.

I think Canadians were seized with what is an existential crisis. It just so happens that the antidote to that anxiety for a lot of Canadians was Mark Carney versus Pierre Poilievre.

SFX: Buzz

News clip

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/carney-wins-canada-election-vows-not-to-yield-to-trump/vi-AA1DOTAY>

“Our old relationship with the United States, a relationship based on steadily increasing integration is over. The system of open global trade, anchored by the United States. A system that Canada has relied on, since the Second World War, a system that, well not perfect, has helped deliver prosperity to our country, is over. These are tragedies, but it's also our new reality. We are over the shock of American betrayal, but we should never forget the lessons. We have to look out for ourselves. And above all, we have to take care of each other.”

Mary Barroll: Indeed, we *do* need to take care of each other. No one knows this better than the nonprofit and charitable sector. But how exactly will the new federal government help these organizations take care of Canadians who rely on their services? Chris Holz shares his thoughts on what this federal Liberal win signals for Canadian nonprofits, during this time of very difficult economic circumstances caused by Trump's tariffs.

Chris Holz: So, the US Trump tariff situation is the number one issue for national government, all the provincial premiers, for the Canadian economy, for all of us as a population. It's the number one issue, it's the number two issue, it's the number five issue. We all agree on that. If that's number one, what are some of the other things that are on the agenda? What does that mean for the charitable nonprofit sector? So, Trump and the Canadian economy and the response to the situation is absolutely number one. Some of that is around the notion of building significant infrastructure in Canada. It's not just rhetoric. There is a lot of very, very serious interest in doing things, but also a national unity need to do things.

So, I think the biggest thing is, look at the platform. Look to the Liberal platform. Look to the speech from the throne, the mandate letters, who the cabinet ministers are, and their political staff. And I say all that because whatever we are and what we want, it's always about figuring how we fit within the frame of decision makers. But let's also look at the bigger picture, some of the bigger issues that are consuming any government.

SFX: Buzz

News clip

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jT3WnQgiul

“As the anthem reminds us: The true North is indeed strong and free.” (applause)
Reporter: A historic speech emphasizing Canada’s strengths and laying out Carney’s plan for the country. A plan the Prime Minister hopes will unite Canadians in the face of threats from the South. Carney: We are seeing the danger of over reliance on the United States. We're spending over 75 cents on every dollar of capital spend for defense goes to the United States. That's not smart. We look to Europe, we look to Asia, we look to new partners.”

SFX: Buzz

News clip

<https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/campaigns/speech-throne/2025/speech-from-the-throne.html>

“To build Canada strong, the Government is working closely with provinces, territories, and Indigenous peoples to identify and catalyze projects of national significance. Projects that will connect Canada, that will deepen Canada’s ties with the world, and that will create high-paying jobs for generations.

Critically, the Government will undertake a series of measures to help double the rate of home building, while creating an entirely new housing industry – using Canadian technology, Canadian skilled workers, and Canadian lumber. The Government will introduce measures to deliver affordable homes by creating Build Canada Homes.”

Mary Barroll: That was, of course, excerpts from King Charles reading the Throne

Speech, which, according to Chris Holz, is one place the nonprofit sector can look for clues on what issues this government will be prioritizing. Holz sees three main issues where the nonprofit and charitable sector may see some opportunities to advocate for increased support and funding. They are housing, immigration from border communities, and upskilling for workers.

Chris Holz: There are opportunities for the charitable nonprofit sector. So, let's be now specific. Housing, affordable housing, homelessness, clearly an issue, there is a lot that will be coming from that. And I think that's something that the charitable nonprofit sector will want to engage in. Candidly, our U.S. relationship, there is border traffic that is happening. We know that folks are to be coming over the border. And you know what? It is happening. But support for new immigrants to Canada, refugees and others, there will be more funding for that because there will be a need for that. And we can already see that in our border communities, Windsor, Quebec and all across. We talked about affordable housing, but also just building new housing. There's lots of nonprofits that are operating in this space. This will not be solely private sector. There will be funding available, I'm sure, for charities and nonprofits. It's important that charities and nonprofits engage to be able to be sure that they can capture some of that funding and build the housing, the supportive housing that is needed, right across the country and in the north. It's not like it's a downtown Toronto issue. It's a national issue, up and down, left and right, east and west. So those are just some areas. I would say another one, candidly is up-skilling. So, we can clearly see, with some of the impacts in the auto sector, there's going to be a need for upskilling, re-skilling, for new kinds of employment because of what's happening and hopefully is temporary. So, there's lots of charities and nonprofits that operate in that space. And I think that's certainly an opportunity for funding because it will be needed to deliver that kind of service to address a unique market space where we need to fill it with skilled employees.

Those are just a few areas. There will be more through grants and contributions.

Mary Barroll: Having long served as a finance and regulatory expert for Canada's philanthropic sector, Andrew Chunilall is CEO of Community Foundations Canada. He gives us *his* two cents on what working with the new Liberal government might mean for the nonprofit sector.

Andrew Chunilall: You know, one of the things, when the election was happening was, just looking at the different platforms, particularly with the Liberals and the Conservatives and the NDP. When we look at the Liberal platform, there wasn't anything specific to the nonprofit sector or to philanthropy or to community foundations, but they were tackling the issues that we were tackling, through our network of community foundations. And I think this is a big issue today and that's cost of living. And so, the Liberals, within their platform had specific tactics to deal with that. One of them was reducing the income tax rate on the lowest income tax threshold by 1%.

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News clip

<https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/campaigns/speech-throne/2025/speech-from-the-throne.html>

“The Government is guided by its conviction that the economy is only truly strong when it serves everyone. Many Canadians are struggling to get ahead. The Government is responding, reducing middle-class taxes and saving two-income families up to \$840 a year. It will cut the GST on homes, at or under \$1 million for first-time homebuyers, delivering savings of up to \$50,000. And it will lower the GST on homes, between \$1 million and \$1.5 million.”

Mary Barroll: Andrew Chunilall's says that he welcomes the government's proposed tax cuts but reminds us that this strategy still leaves many Canadians out.

Andrew Chunilall: That helps everybody that has a job and that pays taxes. But at the same time, it doesn't help those people that don't pay taxes. So, there's a bit of a gap there. The other thing was the Liberals canceled the increase in the capital gains inclusion rate that the previous government had. And that's a really positive thing to not be taxed on your capital or to be taxed less on your capital. But again, it only helps people that have capital to be taxed on. One other thing that was in the Liberal platform around cost of living is the elimination of GST on the purchase of new homes, up to a million dollars. And that certainly makes it easier for people to get into the housing market. But that's only if you have enough money for a down payment to buy a home. You know, the average home price in Canada is around \$700,000, clearly much higher in places like Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, like the big centres. But what if you don't even have enough money to do that?

Mary Barroll: If the new federal government's proposed policies are leaving lower income or unemployed Canadians out, Andrew Chunilall proposes that this important gap is one place where the nonprofit sector can step in and advocate for those whose needs are not being addressed.

Andrew Chunilall: And so, the Liberal platform addresses some of these issues, but they still kind of leave some people out. And that's where philanthropy comes in. And that's where we have an opportunity to communicate with government and say, hey, these are great things, but what about this other group of Canadians are being left out from some of these policy decisions?

Mark Carney's strength is, you know, he's a central banker. He's been a central banker in two very progressive, Western economies, Canada and the UK. He's got a business degree from Harvard, University of Oxford, I believe. He's written books on the economy. So, that's his strong point, everybody's really focused in on the economy.

Growing the economy is something that we've been doing for a long time. That's not specifically the issue right now. The issue is wealth and income inequality. The challenge is that we're growing the economy in such a way that the people that hold the

top 20% of the wealth in this country are getting a disproportionate higher share of that wealth than those at the bottom 40%. So, if I could break this down into numbers: The top 20% of wealth holders in Canada hold two thirds of the aggregate wealth in Canada. The bottom 40% of wealth holders in Canada hold 3% of the aggregate wealth in Canada. That disparity has never been higher than it is right now. And the four things that drive which are obvious. People that hold financial assets like stocks and bonds, that's part of the wealth generation.

People that own real estate, we talked about housing, that's part of wealth generation. People that receive intergenerational wealth transfers, that exacerbates the distance between that 20% and the 40. And the final one is this, is access to education and skills development. So, we look at those four factors. I think that's where a government really has to pay attention to those factors because those are the things that are driving the wealth inequality, as the economy grows. So, it's not just growing the economy, but it's growing the economy so that the bottom 40% can have an opportunity to hold financial assets, hold real estate, have access to education and skills development and so on. And that's how we, sort of, bring the bottom up, so to speak. And that helps to deal with cost of living, housing, immigration, healthcare, education, all those other issues.

Take a look at what is probably the most expensive thing for many Canadian families, and that's housing. The average price, as I mentioned, of a house in Canada is let's say \$700,000. In order to qualify to purchase a house like that, you need to be making around \$130,000 a year. That should be your median household. That's just at the bottom end, that's as worse as you can do. But when you think about what the mortgage payment is against your income, that's half of your income. Half of your income is going to housing. You need cars, you need insurance, you need food, you need clothing, you've got to all these other expenses. And the numbers just don't add up. And that's why the middle class is feeling this more than anyone because it's not just that housing's unaffordable, but everything else has become unaffordable as well. And so, the ability to enter, to acquire that significant asset that is real estate is so difficult that it's causing the further distancing of that top 20% and the bottom 40%.

Mary Barroll: Chris Holz emphasizes that the Liberal government's plan for addressing the unaffordability crisis is mainly through its announced policy on tax cuts. These cuts are intended to put more money in Canadians' pockets.

Chris Holz: With respect to affordability, the Liberal policy platform is pretty specific on a whole variety of things. If we talk about things like food security or food in schools and supporting children, and not just in schools, in the summertime, also need food support, especially in particular communities where that's missing. There are policy things that the Liberals have committed to, in that space. There will be some more that I think charities and nonprofits might want to build the case for a particular investment in X or Y, to deal with a particular challenge in a series of communities. But the biggest thing, candidly, is from a pocketbook perspective, the tax policy stuff that the Carney Liberals have announced. That is their core element. There's still funding available or would be available, but that's the thrust of it. Those tax cuts are intended to put more money in

people's pockets to make things a bit more affordable.

Mary Barroll: Of 7 priorities listed in the Mandate Letter the government put out on May 21, "Bringing down costs for Canadians and helping them to get ahead, was number 3. The 7th and final one was "Spending less on government operations so that Canadians can invest more in the people and businesses that will build the strongest economy in the G7."

SFX: Sound of cash register

What does the government's clear intention to spend less mean for the nonprofit sector, reliant on government funding?

Jean-Marc Mangin is the president and CEO of Philanthropic Foundations Canada. Currently sitting on the Government of Canada's Advisory Committee on the Charitable Sector, he has also had a long career serving in international development with the UN, NGOs and the Canadian government in responding to global humanitarian disasters and development challenges. He has this to say.

Jean-Marc Mangin: It's my understanding that the government intends to control the operational side of expenditures. Even though there's a promise not to cut any transfer payment to provinces and individuals, it's hard to see how they're going to square the circle of massive new investment on the housing front, of the national infrastructure and defense. And, at the same time, keeping a lid on operational expenditures without touching any of the transfer payments schedule. The maths are rather challenging, in the context of a recession where the economic pie will decline, when the tax revenues are likely to decline. So, it's going to be a great deal of pressure on this government to achieve its ambitious goals. My concern is that all government, not only at the federal level, but provincial and municipality as well, will look at the natural profit, the charitable sector as a gap filler. And we simply don't have the resources to replace tens of billions of dollars that may be missing from government to table. Governments, provincial governments, in particular, remain the most important funder of the social safety net.

The charities, Canadians, individual giving and foundations help, but in the overall scheme of things, they are complementary partner to government funding. We're not a substitute. We're not a gap filler. We can support social innovation, on some of these important files and do it faster than government. So, we can help government achieve their goals, but we cannot substitute ourselves for their role or their funding.

Mary Barroll: Jean-Marc Mangin is not alone in his conviction that philanthropy cannot replace government funding.

Mitzie Hunter: Nonprofits cannot be expected to replace government in terms of funding. There just isn't the ability. And so, it's really important that the nonprofit sector be very, very clear and maybe doing some prioritization of our own in terms of the focus areas that are really important.

Mary Barroll: That's Mitzie Hunter. With 30 years of experience working in the private and nonprofit sectors and in government, she was the first Black woman to serve as Ontario's Minister of Education. She was also Minister of Advanced Education and Skill Development and Associate Minister of Finance. Today she's the President and CEO of the Canadian Women's Foundation and an advocate for women, girls, and gender diverse people across the country. She has this to say about the role nonprofit leaders should play, when it comes to the new government's policy-making and funding decisions. So, how *can* the nonprofit sector help this government achieve its goals? How should leaders of organizations position themselves?

Mitzie Hunter: There's a legitimate worry there, for non-profits, that perhaps the new government will not prioritize some of the focus areas that were there, previously. And that can affect budgets for non-profits. I would say that, that's why that bold, coordinated approach, right up front, is something that I would recommend, to be clear about the funding that is needed as well as how this is gonna be a solution, in fact, reduce costs in the long run. And if we don't pay attention to these particular areas, then it's going to cost the government more, with that delay. So, making the solid case, an economic one, will probably speak to this new government under Prime Minister Carney.

I believe that nonprofits should be right at the table when it comes to policy development, as we move forward. And we, at the Canadian Women's Foundation, recognize that 80% of the nonprofit sector workers are women. And so, we are very keen to listen to what the sector is saying and to offer and lend our support, where possible.

Music

One of the things that we, at the Canadian Women's Foundation, are very focused on is that gender lens. It's 51% of Canada's population and it's important that we see that the social infrastructure, across our country, has investments, continues to be a vital part of our public realm. And think about it in terms of affordable childcare.

SFX: Sounds of children playing

Mitzie Hunter: This was a major policy shift that was brought on board, certainly, in the last decade. It was fought for, for many decades, in fact, by the sector. But it's now here and it's making a big difference, in terms of women's labor force participation in the job market. And that's actually contributing to the gross domestic product of the country. And so, we can see that that's a win-win, in terms of public policy. It gives families choice, in terms of participation in the labor market, and the labor market benefits as a result.

Housing is also one of those other really critical sectors that affects people's affordability, where they choose to live and work, and we feel that that should continue to be a priority. Decent jobs. 80% of the nonprofit sector is women, and we want to see those decent jobs put in place and that women have an equal access to those jobs so

that you can close that gender wage gap that we're very well aware of, and fair wages. Also, equal pay, that will go a long way. So, these are some of the gendered issues that I feel is important at this time. We can't lose sight of that, despite the fact that we've made the gains because women are part of the economy, a vital part of the economy and no conversation should be happening about the economy without them at the table.

What Prime Minister Carney is saying is that his government was elected to stand up for our country and to build a strong economy that works for everyone. Canada's economic potential depends, I believe, on gender equality. There are so many aspects to this, that we see. And women make up 51% of our population, but also a very significant portion of our labor force. It's around 46%. So, there are still too many barriers that stand in the way of full economic participation and those are areas that we want to see prioritized. So, the government must continue to prioritize gender equality, not as a side issue, but as a fundamental issue of growth, innovation and resilience. And the evidence is clear that when women and gender diverse people are thriving, our economy thrives. When we invest in women, we invest in families, but we also invest in communities and in the health of those communities and women give back. I want to give you a concrete example of adding gender lens to decision-making. Whenever there is a crisis, an economic crisis, a health crisis, like we had in the pandemic, any of those crises, even environmental, what we see is that there's a rise in gendered violence and that affects women's safety. And so, what we believe is that for emergency preparedness policies that there has to be a gender lens. We have to ask the question explicitly: How will this crisis affect women? And address those in a direct way.

SFX: Buzz

News clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gOFztp74kM>

“I Richie Valdez, do solemnly and sincerely promise and swear that I will truly and faithfully and to the best of my skill and knowledge execute the powers and trust reposed in me as Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State, Small Business and Tourism. (Applause) Reporter: “An Interesting note here, is there was no portfolio for women and gender equality in Mark Carney’s first cabinet, he was criticized for this and here it is, a full Ministry, not a Secretary of State position, it’s the Small Business and Tourism that’s a Secretary of State position. A full ministry. Women voted heavily for the Liberals. So, it didn’t hurt them last time. It was a recognition, I think, to secure it up.”

Mary Barroll: Mitzi Hunter highlights the re-introduction of the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality, into Mark Carney’s cabinet, after it disappeared in the initial, transitional cabinet. She believes this is an important example that demonstrates when the sector unites and advocates, the government will listen.

Mitzi Hunter: When Prime Minister Carney first took the role, there was sort of this immediate cabinet that was set up. Some called it a wartime cabinet because we were fighting the tariff war. But notably, the wage department, the Women and Gender Equity department was missing from the table. This was the first time in over 50 years that there was not an explicit voice at the cabinet table. This was a miss, and the sector spoke up about it and let our voices be heard. Other organizations as well throughout the country joined forces and said this is not acceptable. There was an open letter signed by over 400 organizations. So, with the new cabinet established, we see a full position at the table and that shows that the government is listening, that the new Prime Minister is listening, when we speak up.

And that’s an important signal for the sector to continue to let our voices be heard and it’s important that we have access at the table. It’s important that our government listens and makes corrections. And if I would give advice to nonprofits and their leadership is to be bold and be direct with ideas, issues if you see them, but also with solutions and work in that partnership and collaboration with government to get the things done that the sector is so well equipped to do and to be that partner. And so, we see that the key step towards progress made for gender equality and for diversity and inclusion, particularly in this global context is that we have to make sure that we have a strong, bold voice, be prepared for any areas, and to really fight for that ground. that was so hard fought for, by generations who came before us.

SFX: Buzz

News clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFaPb9ZReTE>

“We've ended the tyranny of so-called diversity, equity, and inclusion policies all across the entire federal government and, indeed, the private sector and our military. (Applause) And our country will be woke no longer.”

Mary Barroll: South of our border, we are now seeing a backlash to those hard-won fights, with the current U.S. administration pulling back and away from DEI or diversity equity, and inclusion. As an advocate for women, girls, and gender diverse people across the country, Mitzie Hunter is especially well-placed to provide her perspective on how she expects the Canadian federal approach to gender, equity, diversity and inclusion to evolve under the current government.

Mitzie Hunter: Prime Minister Mark Carney has promised to do that by having a gender-based analysis, a GBA-plus lens. So, across departments when decisions are being made that we ask that gender question, which we know is so important to do. And that will give us assurance that we have a dedicated voice at the table, but across government departments, there's also the question being asked, because we know being 51% of the population, that women's voices do matter and the concerns that we have matter as well. This is a time when there is great stress and crisis and we see that. The direction that the Prime Minister has set, which is, you know, we're going to grow the economy and we're going to do all of these things well. I certainly know the work that we do. Women are an integral part of the economy and investing in women is an investment in the economy. And that's the argument that we will continue to make.

SFX: Buzz

News clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBD1UfIVwAI>

Pride Toronto, one of the largest 2S LGBTQ+ plus festivals in North America, is facing a significant setback, as some of its major corporate sponsors have pulled their support for this year's event. Pride Toronto says the sponsors, which are major companies operating on both sides of the border, cited changes in their mandates, as part of a broader corporate push against DEI initiatives.

Mary Barroll: Despite some evidence that U.S. headquartered companies are rolling back their DEI support for sponsorships, even among their Canadian subsidiaries for high profile events like Pride Toronto, Jean-Marc Mangin believes that most Canadians support DEI and reconciliation, but agrees with Mitzie Hunter that the nonprofit and philanthropic sector has an important role in advocating the government and society to stop any potential erosions of these important values Canadians hold dear.

Jean-Marc Mangin: But in terms of our positioning in the world. I mean, these are the attack on values that are dear to the great majority of Canadians. And we've seen that the support for diversity, equity and inclusion, in Canada, remains strong. We're not immune from some of the attacks and I think the government will do less virtue signaling, but the work will continue. So, I move for the work will continue on

reconciliation, on gender, the support to new immigrants, to Black communities. So, the important work, the Mofo will still continue, but there'll probably be less virtue signaling that we had from the previous government. In terms of our positioning with other liberal democracies, with a small L, it's important for Canada to, as a system that we've known since World War II, is collapsing, what will emerge reflects as much as possible our values.

Music

Mary Barroll: The Philanthropic Foundations of Canada recently published a report called *Trump 2.0 and U.S. Philanthropy: Reflections and Actions for Canadian Philanthropic Foundations*. Jean-Marc Mangin tells us about some of the findings and recommendations.

Jean-Marc Mangin: It's very clear that the second Trump administration is quite different from the first. And the systematic dismantling of state capacity, of long-standing programs, of USAID, the attacks on university and foundation, and we see it more spectacularly with Harvard, when there's new announcements almost daily. Some of the fragility of the media space in the States, where there's some real desert where people don't have access to evidence-based news. So, the fragility of the U.S. democracy, at this time, is very concerning. And the increasing number of foundations and of organizations that represent foundations that say, we have to take a stand. There's no point playing dead or having a low profile, this government intends to disrupt any kind of civil society, disrupt organizational voices that may be perceived as having a different agenda than the government. It goes beyond Liberal-Conservative, like it's any autonomous source of perceived power. So, there's an increasing number of foundations that are taking action to protect their partners, to protect them themselves and to take a stand. Obviously, it's not stopping the action of the administration, but there's a form of resistance that has emerged since the report was published. Now, the threats are real. They have nothing to do with it. It is so different from the Canadian context.

The context in the U.S. is so radically different from the one in Canada. We're not immune to some of the erosion of democracy, so we have to pay close attention. I just came out of from, very interesting conversation with several members, several initiatives to support the media space, to address online aid, to see what could be done to for Canadians to understand the importance of the Charter. So, this interesting piece of work that's happening to reflect also some of the erosion in Canada, but it is nowhere close to the attacks, the systematic attacks that we've seen from a kleptocracy that we don't have in Canada.

SFX: Buzz

News clip

<https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/campaigns/speech-throne/2025/speech-from-the-throne.html>

“Today, Canada faces another critical moment. Democracy, pluralism, the rule of law, self-determination, and freedom are values which Canadians hold dear, and ones which the Government is determined to protect. The system of open global trade that, while not perfect, has helped to deliver prosperity for Canadians, for decades, is changing. Canada’s relationships with partners are also changing.”

Mary Barroll: Canada’s relationship with the U.S. is indeed changing and it’s an important moment for the new Canadian government to show how it distinguishes itself from the American one. It’s also an excellent opportunity for leaders in the nonprofit sector to affect policy by offering the government its partnership, its expertise, and its access to community, says Andrew Chunilall.

Andrew Chunilall: A key part of this process is to know where each cabinet member is going, what their priorities are. And then we can sort of align resources and leadership from within our sector, to say, hey, know, this particular housing strategy is unfolding, this particular mental health strategy is unfolding. How does that align with what we’re currently doing? Start to have those conversations and then build the partnerships.

Music

I think there’s a marriage between the work that the government does and the work that civil society does, which helps to bridge the federal policies, how resources are moved into civil society, in a way where the resources are reaching the intended or delivering on the intended outcome, at the community level. And that’s really around partnership. But the real impact happens when those levels of government are partnering with civil society, because we’re the ones on the ground. We’re the ones that are hearing the story, dealing with people, collecting that important data to help drive and optimize how resources are allocated and helping us to deliver better outcomes overall.

The federal government is very Ottawa centric, but it’s also riding centric. It’s not necessarily community centric. And so, there is an opportunity for government to partner with civil society, organizations like community foundations or otherwise. We have that reach. We’re in community.

We have the relationships. We have the knowledge and the data to inform good decision-making at a very local level. We’re all Canadians and there’s a strong sort of a unifying thing about being a Canadian. And we certainly feel that right now, but we’re still very hyper-local. People belong and connect to where they are. And federal governments, doesn’t matter which country or which economy, have difficulty in reaching those different constituencies. And so, there is a natural gravitation to partner in those areas, to optimize, not only what philanthropy is doing, but also what the federal government might choose to do, in terms of policy or the movement of resources and capital around the system.

Mary Barroll: Chris Holz agrees that it’s a crucial time for the nonprofit and charitable

sector to partner with government – and he believes this government is prepared to listen.

Chris Holz: So, I think a lot of people might make the assumption, banker, central banker, Canada, United Kingdom, and therefore business is the answer to everything. That would be completely wrong. That would not be a good read on Prime Minister Carney. Meaning, the Prime Minister has been pretty explicit with respect to, look, there's no question that there's a role for business and industry and private sector investment.

But that is not the antidote to every situation or every challenge. There's a role for government and there's absolutely a role for the charitable and nonprofit space. I'll give you an example. And this is true. So, our colleagues at Capital W say this all the time, that the charitable and nonprofit sector is Canada's largest private-public partnership by a significant margin. It's billions of dollars.

So, there is absolutely a recognition from the Carney Liberals that there's a role for charities and nonprofits, absolutely. And that there's a role for that in government service delivery, in solving challenges that, candidly, business can't always do and government cannot always do. There's a role for all of us in this.

Mary Barroll: Andrew Chunilall outlines where some of this government's priorities could impact how community foundations invest in their local communities.

Andrew Chunilall: When you take a look at the expenditures from the federal government, we all know that most of the spending goes into healthcare, education, physical infrastructure, et cetera. And I think, at the base level, we need those systems operating extremely well. When I speak to healthcare workers, when I speak to teachers or people who work in the education system, those systems are overrun.

SFX: Sounds of automated transactions

And one of the things that was in the Liberal platform is to invest \$4 billion in community healthcare infrastructure. I don't know exactly what that means and we'll probably learn about what that means, in the coming months. But that's going to be critical.

When I look at the demographics of Canada, those that are aged 65 and over, when we get to 2030, that will be almost a quarter of the Canadian population. Think about that. One out of four people, when we get to 2030, are going to be over the age of 65. And having community healthcare infrastructure in place to deal with healthcare needs, isolation needs, food security issues, just general care, love, empathy and belonging, we're going to definitely need that. And I think where philanthropy can play a role is being really smart and working and partnering with government, in terms of informing how those decisions and how those investments are made.

Mary Barroll: Related to community healthcare infrastructure, Mitzie Hunter brings up

another issue that will become critical for nonprofits and advocacy groups in the coming years.

Mitzie Hunter: I think that the care economy is one that has done quite a service. And when we think about the pandemic and we think about who we relied on, those that provided personal care, hands-on work, braved all of the risks on our behalf while we stayed home.

I do think it's time we turn our attention to the care economy, recognize it, and find ways to make sure that the pay, the working conditions are recognized and are boosted. And I believe that that is something that is also in alignment with, if we have an aging population, looking at care from all sides and all aspects, is something that needs and deserves attention and I believe the returns will be invaluable across our society.

Mary Barroll: And of course, the majority of people in a caregiver role within the nonprofit sector are primarily women.

Mitzie Hunter: Women provide the care, whether it's in paid or unpaid work, across our society, the majority of it. And so, we see this as an area that will close that gender pay gap that we see that's been so persistent. And so, there's tremendous opportunity in that space.

Mary Barroll: The government is looking for partners right now, and Jean-Marc Mangin believes that the philanthropic sector, and particularly private foundations could become some of those key partners, especially around the issues of housing.

Jean-Marc Mangin: The government is looking for partners, in terms of the catalytic investment they're seeking, from the private sector, also looking at the philanthropic sector as a potential partner, especially in the space around housing.

SFX: Sounds of construction and workers.

The scale of effort that's required goes beyond what government can bring to the table, goes way beyond what the philanthropy can come to the table. But collectively, private sector, philanthropy, government, yes, we can move the needle.

I think foundations could play a very useful contribution, if some of their investments are being de-risked by government removing some of the risk of these investments by saying, we can either through bonds or through loan guarantees, that within a 20-year period span of a specific housing investment, for example, if for any reason the investment does not turn a profit as a 5%, we'll guarantee at least 5%. And when people build a portfolio and we all have money instruments, in our respective portfolio, that could be quite enticing. So, if the de-risking is done effectively and through market templates and for social governance, it's giving itself over the years, that it could attract investment not only from the foundations, but from the private sector.

Many of our members have a family office that runs the business and then they have the foundation that runs the philanthropic arm. So, that would raise some interest potentially from some of the members, if the signals are effective. Again, in the context of asset volatility, the tendency is not to invest.

What the government is giving itself is and being given a mandate by the Canadian people to transform the economy. And I think there's an interest for foundations to contribute, but make it in such a way that the risk profile of these investments is quite low so that foundations could sustain the granting because the interest income or the earnings from the investment pays for the granting over time. So that, to sustain both sides of the equation is, I think, this possible win-win proposition that could emerge.

Mary Barroll: Jean-Marc Mangin says that if Carney's government can show sensitivity to risk aversion, it may make it easier for foundations to join as partners.

Jean-Marc Mangin: One of my concerns is the interest risk aversion is not only on the foundation side, it's the public service itself. It's not used to these kinds of partnerships, and they tend to look at the granting side of what foundations do that can be at a constitutional return. And we encourage them to look at truly as an investment partner, as an early investment partner that could send a signal to the wider market, that these are serious investment ventures and make economic sense and make sense, in terms of predicting our national sovereignty and reimagining our economy. But, in many instances, to attract significant investment, you're going to need to de-risk it. So, there's a range of ways that the government can do that. So, the political signals have to be cleared, incentive structure for the public service, to work in different ways has to be clear.

Mary Barroll: Jean-Marc Mangin believes the sector may be able to advocate that the government find a different way of working with foundations. Rather than depending on foundations as a grant-making organizations, they could see them as investment partners, especially on large, infrastructural projects that are intended to transform the Canadian economy.

Jean-Marc Mangin: The Philanthropic Foundations Canada, Community Foundations of Canada in 2012, supported a goal that 10% of our investment should be for impact investment. So, align with the mission and to contribute to the public good, while still having a return and it could be anywhere from food security to climate technology to housing, housing being the bulk of most of what the impact of this is going towards. We have a huge unaffordable housing crisis in this country. So, the new government intends to create a new agency and speed up the process. They're gonna be needing partners at the table. PFC is sending a very clear signal to our government partners that we are ready to be a partner at the table.

We have a public service that's been actively discouraged from taking risks. And this time around, we do need to move fast. It does imply making risk. It does imply that some programs investment will be failures, but we have sufficient gain in building that

new infrastructure that overall, it lays the ground for renewed prosperity for Canada. So that culture of risk, I think it applies to us as a foundation sector, it also applies to our partners, in the public sector, and more broadly to the private sector as well.

Mary Barroll: Though we *are* living in risk averse times and, private foundations need to protect their investments, in this period of volatile markets, Mitzie Hunter proposes another way to think about the question of risk.

Mitzie Hunter: Risk is something that we have to manage and whether or not governments are paying attention to the work that we do, we have to do this work because it's about making sure that our communities are healthy and who we represent is having voice.

Music

And as I said, sometimes that takes that persistent voice and that advocacy voice. And so, you know, I know that those headwinds are still strong because of the economy and the risks to our economy with the terror threats and some of the global challenges that we're seeing affects markets, and consumer confidence, affects business confidence, affects employment, and that affects pressure that we feel, on a social service sector that is oftentimes under resourced and over demanded in terms of its ability to meet the need. Totally get that.

At the same time, we've got to look for those opportunities. And where can we make lasting change, systemic change? Where can we make improvements? I still believe in that old adage, let's put the food bank out of business by the growth and the sharing that happens across our society. I would love to say the same for the work that we do at the Canadian Women's Foundation when it comes to ending gender-based violence.

Mary Barroll: Amidst all of the political and economic challenges we're facing, nonprofits need to find ways to be bold and innovative so as to be able to continue delivering services and helping Canadians. The federal government is also moving faster and more boldly than usual. This is what Chris Holz sees.

Chris Holz: Because of the amount of stuff that seems to be happening and the amount of change that's happening, I can tell you, it's been back-to-back today. And what I mean by that is things that would have taken weeks or whatever. It's like, we can make a decision today. So, things are happening, things are bolder. We will take risks. We will do things that normally, we would take a long time to. We're very Canadian. Let's think about it for a long time before we say yes to something. The decision-making is much, much more quick and I think that as a government, for the things that are not particularly political, which really require a level of analysis, for a lot of other things, it's going to be pretty quick.

Mary Barroll: Chris Holz suggests that nonprofits may be able to use this fast-paced energy to their advantage, by galvanizing around a popular issue to engage

governmental decision makers.

Chris Holz: I think channeling that energy is the rocket fuel the charitable nonprofit sector needs and has, and some use it. Enthusiasm and, you know, a sense of pride is important. And to the extent that it can be channeled, it's even better. But to the extent that it can be channeled and is linked to the commitments of the governments or new issues that have emerged that have captured the attention of the public. There's some things that we could be calling for that there's no interest, by anybody in government to do. So, all simply to say, yes, I think it's a great opportunity and something that can help the charitable non-profits have to stand out, particularly on some core issues, and can galvanize the attention of the public that we serve, our donors, the donor communities that we serve, and certainly engage decision makers. How that plays out, I think, is the magic. I think, is the skill that many charitable nonprofit leaders have. So, to the extent that it's done skillfully, very effective.

Mary Barroll: Chris Holz outlines the steps needed to establish working relationships with the government.

Chris Holz: So, in advance of an election, engaging with public servants, early on. So, some of the materials that go into briefing materials, for whoever is successful in a government, is captured. Certainly, dealing and engaging with ministers' offices or opposition critics around platform commitments, all those things help. Post-election, part of it is engaging, again, with public servants. So, these are the civil servants, the folks that are part of the professional public service, is one way and the typical path to go. Part of it, also, is to wait until the throne speech is out.

Cabinet is officially announced. Mandate letters which some levels of government issue and are public and others don't. And identifying, of course, the political staff in those that support those ministers. Let alone, the MPs or MLAs or MPPs, depending on what government we're talking about. So, what do you do? Speech on the throne is high level but is useful. The platform is the most important candidly. So, speech on the throne second. Mandate letters, super specific and very, very helpful. Engaging ministers' offices, specifically the political staff that support those offices. And/or, and usually in parallel, but separate, the public servants that are relevant to your issue or to the mandate item that you want to speak to or turning a platform commitment into something specific that you're proposing. That's essentially the order of operations.

Mary Barroll: In these turbulent times, it is especially important for nonprofit leaders to understand the current political landscape so that they can engage with government effectively. To wrap up this episode on how this new federal government will affect the work of the nonprofit sector, I asked each of our guests what practical advice they can offer.

Chris Holz: I think the biggest thing is, look at the platform. Look to the Liberal platform. Look to the speech from the throne, the mandate letters, who the cabinet ministers are, and their political staff. And I say all that because, whatever we are and what we want,

it's always about figuring out how we fit within the frame of decision makers. Let's also look at the bigger picture, some of the bigger issues that are consuming any government. We have to be mindful that just because we really care about *this* program doesn't mean that anybody's paying any attention to it over there, because the United States is causing absolute havoc with respect to not just us. We are not alone. It's all over the place. So, I would say look to all those things, determine how we fit, and then figure out what the best approach is.

Mitzie Hunter: Nonprofits should see themselves as a vital part of the Canadian economy, of the political landscape, and really prioritize the issues, because we can't do everything. And I hear that signal from this current government, that's not going to do everything. So, prioritize the issues, those that are most important, most impactful, provide the solutions and how you will work in partnership with government to solve those issues and what the differences that it's going to make for people. And don't do it alone. Work with others. And we see that when we work with others and we're clear about the issues that the government listens.

Jean-Marc Mangin: My message is, like, more will be expected of us. And we need to be at the forefront of these efforts to protect our national sovereignty, national prosperity, and to make sure that that effort includes all Canadians. There's been a massive mobilization by Canadians since Trump to us has coming back into power. So, let's build on that. And regardless of our political difference, regional differences, there's a strong sense of national emergency, national unity, and philanthropy, and the charitable sector has a lot. The ties that bind us as a society comes from the sector, and they're under a great deal of pressure and we have to ensure that that work is as relevant as possible, in a context that will remain extremely difficult, moving forward.

Andrew Chunilall: Any time the R word comes up, like recession, or now it's the T word, tariffs, and both those things go hand in hand today, people start to feel unsafe. They start to feel like their jobs could be at risk. They start to feel like, even if they have a job, things are getting more and more expensive. And so, that impacts people's moods. It impacts their demeanor. It impacts how families operate and family wellbeing and mental health. And so, that can create a whole other set of issues for people when that level of stress is in the household. So, I'm really concerned about that. And I think philanthropy is an important role there, in terms of building community and fostering a sense of belonging within those communities. And the last I'll say is just hope. And I think having a leader that can offer, that, it's a difficult time, but there's a pathway to a better future and I think we, as leaders in the sector, can offer that as well.

Mary Barroll: With the great challenges and adversity facing Canadians, from economic uncertainty, ever increasing cost of living; housing and food insecurity, threats to our sovereignty and heightened political turmoil, south of our border, Canadians have a new opportunity in its new government to rebuild Canada. So far, Canadians have faced the challenges before us with unity, a sense of urgency and determination. There is a new willingness to look beyond our political and social differences, to come together for a common purpose – not just to build a stronger economy, military and industrial

infrastructure, but also a stronger society. The nonprofit sector will play a key role in guiding that common purpose to ensure that working together, while we rebuild our country, we also continue to preserve our unique Canadian values, reflected in our social safety net, our universal medical care and services to those in need -- so no one gets left behind, in the Canada of the future. We hope that this episode has provided you with some ideas of how to work with the new federal government, and as Andrew Chunilall has said – provided you a sense of community, belonging and hope.

CharityVillage Connects theme music

That brings us to the end of our episode, giving much food for thought on the subject of what to expect from our new government and how we can best work together to serve Canadians. Thank you to all our guests for their keen insight and wise advice. Be sure to visit our website and our show notes for more information on the resources, reports and programs mentioned in this episode. If you'd like to hear more of what our guests have to say check out our full video interviews on our website. CharityVillage is proud to be the Canadian source for nonprofit news, employment services, crowdfunding, e-learning, HR resources and tools, and so much more. Please take a moment to check out our website at charityvillage.com.

In the next episode of CharityVillage Connects, we take a close look at the insights revealed in the 2025 CanadaHelps Giving Report and what they mean for charities across the country. Joined by sector experts, we examine evolving donor trends, shifting giving patterns, and the broader implications for fundraising in today's uncertain economic climate. This episode offers nonprofit professionals the knowledge and tools to adapt and thrive, in an ever-changing, and challenging, fundraising landscape. I'm Mary Barroll. Thanks for listening.