

Checklist: Nonprofit Startup

The following checklist is meant to be used as a starting point for your nonprofit. The list is not considered all inclusive. Check all that apply to your situation.

Before you incorporate

- Define the nonprofit mission
- Research your niche
 - Decide to support an existing cause or to start a new nonprofit
- Set up (recruit) a board of directors
- Write the bylaws
- Write a business plan

Incorporate

- Choose a name
 - Must be different from existing nonprofit names
- Choose the jurisdiction and act under which to incorporate
 - Provincial: Societies Act or Companies Act
 - Federal: Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act
- Reserve the name: Nuans report
 - Provincial Nuans report can be performed at Alberta registry or Corporate Registry Alberta
 - Federal Nuans report can be performed at Alberta registry or online at www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/075.nsf/eng/home
- Decide if the nonprofit will apply for charity status/registration number to issue tax receipts
 - Objects/purposes filed in the articles of incorporation must be charitable as per Canada Revenue Agency Income Tax Act
- File articles of incorporation
 - With Corporate Registry Alberta for provincial nonprofits (in-person at Corporate Registry Alberta or by mail)
 - With Corporations Canada for federal nonprofits (online or by mail)

Charity registration (optional)

- Charity status/registration number allows you to issue tax receipts to donors
- Decide if registration is right for your organization
 - Registered charities are more regulated: fill out the forms
 - Local charities vs. international charities (operate programs abroad)

Other

- Open a bank account for the nonprofit
- Seek professional advice from experts in nonprofit (consultant, lawyer, accountant): this is important from the beginning
- Build your nonprofit's professional network

Fund development

- Start fundraising
 - Explore various revenue streams
 - Identify grant opportunities and research the sources
 - Nonprofit grant writing can be a major challenge especially in the earliest days of your organization

Educate yourself

- Many free resources are available:
 - Board Development Alberta
 - Volunteer Alberta
 - Muttart Foundation
 - Imagine Canada
 - Charity Village