

— FREE RESOURCE

The Canadian Non-Profit Website Checklist

35 things to audit on your organisation's website — covering accessibility, SEO, conversion, trust signals, and legal compliance. Built for Canadian non-profits and purpose-led organisations.



2026 Edition

Use this checklist to audit your current website or brief a new one. Score one point for each item your site passes. A score of 28 or above means your site is well-positioned. Below 20 and you likely have significant gaps affecting trust, search visibility, or conversions.

28 – 35

Strong — minor improvements only

20 – 27

Moderate — several gaps to address

Under 20

Significant work needed

1 Accessibility & Inclusion

7 items

- Colour contrast passes WCAG AA** LEGAL
Text vs background contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 for normal text, 3:1 for large text
- All images have meaningful alt text** LEGAL
Decorative images use empty alt="" — informational images describe their content clearly
- Site is fully keyboard navigable** LEGAL
Every interactive element can be reached and activated without a mouse
- Forms have labelled fields** LEGAL

Every input field has an associated label — placeholder text alone does not count

- Heading structure is logical** SEO
One H1 per page, followed by H2s then H3s — no heading levels skipped
- Videos have captions or transcripts** LEGAL
Required for AODA compliance in Ontario — best practice everywhere
- Site passes automated accessibility scan** LEGAL
Run a free check at wave.webaim.org — zero errors is the target

2 SEO & Discoverability

7 items

- Every page has a unique title tag** SEO
Under 60 characters, includes primary keyword and organisation name
- Every page has a meta description** SEO
Under 160 characters, written to encourage click-through — not just a summary
- Organisation schema markup is present** SEO
JSON-LD in the site header identifying your organisation's name, URL, and contact info
- Site loads in under 3 seconds on mobile** CRITICAL
Test at pagespeed.web.dev — Core Web Vitals should all be green
- Google Search Console is connected** SEO
Tracks impressions, clicks, and keyword rankings for your domain
- Key pages answer specific questions directly** SEO
Each page addresses a question your audience searches — AEO-ready for ChatGPT and Perplexity
- XML sitemap is submitted to Google** SEO
Ensures all pages are indexed — submit via Google Search Console

3

Trust & Credibility

6 items

- Charity registration number is visible** CRITICAL
 In the footer or About page — builds immediate trust
- Board or leadership listed with photos** UX
 Governance transparency is a trust signal for donors and funders
- Annual report or financials linked** CRITICAL
 Demonstrates accountability — required for Imagine Canada accreditation
- Client or beneficiary testimonials present** UX
 Real quotes with name and role — generic praise has little impact
- SSL certificate active (https://)** CRITICAL
 Required for trust — browsers flag http:// sites as "Not Secure"
- Privacy policy is current and linked** LEGAL
 Required under PIPEDA — must accurately describe data collection practices

4

Conversion & Action

6 items

- Donation button is above the fold** CRITICAL
 Visible on every page without scrolling — in the navigation or hero
- Donation form has 3 fields or fewer** UX
 Name, email, and payment — every additional field reduces completion

5

Content & Messaging

5 items

- Mission is clear within 5 seconds** UX
 A visitor who knows nothing about you should understand what you do immediately
- Impact numbers are current and specific** UX
 "We served 1,240 families in 2025" is far more powerful than "we help thousands"
- No placeholder or outdated content** CRITICAL
 Check for programs that ended, staff who have left, and events that have passed
- Blog or news updated in last 90 days** SEO
 Signals to both visitors and search engines that the organisation is active
- Plain language used throughout** UX
 Readable at grade 8 level — avoid sector jargon that excludes new visitors

6

Technical & Security

4 items

- Site is backed up automatically** CRITICAL
 Daily backups stored off-server — test that restoration actually works
- CMS and plugins are up to date** CRITICAL
 Outdated WordPress plugins are the #1 cause of Canadian non-profit site hacks
- Data is hosted on Canadian servers** LEGAL
 Required for many government-funded organisations under PIPEDA and FOIPPA
- Cookie consent banner is implemented** LEGAL

Mobile donation flow tested end-to-end CRITICAL

Complete the full process on a phone — most donors give on mobile

Required if using Google Analytics, Meta Pixel, or any third-party tracking

Tax receipt information is clear LEGAL

Canadian donors expect a CRA-compliant receipt — confirm it arrives automatically

Volunteer signup is easy to find UX

Clear CTA and a short form — don't make interested volunteers hunt for it

Contact page has a real person's name UX

Generic "info@" addresses reduce trust — a named contact converts better



Pragmatica

Need help addressing items on this checklist?

Pragmatica is a Canadian web design agency based in Vancouver and Toronto, specialising in accessible, high-performance websites for non-profits and purpose-led organisations since 2004. We offer free website assessments for Canadian charities.
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