

QUESTION & ANSWER

Q: What are the requirements to obtain and maintain charitable status for a conference or council?

A: An organization must meet a number of general requirements to qualify for charitable registration under the Income Tax Act. The charitable purposes are the objectives that an organization is created to achieve. Activities are the ways that an organization furthers its purposes. To be eligible for charitable registration, an organization must show that each of its purposes is charitable at law, and that its activities further these charitable purposes in a way that complies with the requirements of the common law and the Income Tax Act.

A charity, in the legal sense, must be set up to carry out activities that fall within one or more of the following headings:

Relief of poverty;
Advancement of education;
Advancement of religion;
Useful for the community (provide a tangible benefit to the community), such as:

- Health promotion
- Contributing to the appreciation of the arts by the public
- Environmental Protection
- Treatment and prevention of the special needs of children and young people
- Treatment and prevention of problems facing families
- Relief of conditions associated with old age
- Relieving conditions associated with impairment
- Provide public services
- Promotion of Trade and Industry

The general requirements for charitable registration guidance is reflected in guidance CG-017.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/policies-guidance/guidance-017-general-requirements-charitable-registration.html>

with more explicit description under “What is charitable?”

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/registering-charitable-qualified-donee-status/apply-become-registered-charity/establishing/what-charitable.html>

Once charitable status has been obtained, the main obligations of a registered charity are:

- Devote its resources (financial, human and real estate) to its charitable purposes and activities;
- Manage and direct the use of all its resources (financial, human and real estate);
- Ensure that official donation receipts are complete and accurate at the time of issuance;
- Maintain up-to-date accounting records in Canada and allow the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to review them upon request;
- File the annual T3010 form, Registered Charity Information Return, within six months of the end of the fiscal year.