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## HIGHLIGHTS OF CRA REGISTERED CHARITIES NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2008

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*By Terrance Carter, B.A., LL.B., and Trade-mark Agent  
Assisted by Pamela Shin, B.A., LL.B., Student-at-Law*

### A. INTRODUCTION

This *Charity Law Bulletin* highlights some aspects of Canada Revenue Agency's ("CRA") Summer 2008: *Registered Charities Newsletter* No. 30 ("Newsletter")<sup>1</sup> released on August 18, 2008. The Newsletter focuses on information regarding: new updates to the CRA Web site; CRA's commitment to assisting small and rural charities; availability of charities checklists; and updates on the Charities Partnership and Outreach Program.

### B. UPDATED CHARITIES AND GIVING WEB SITE

In response to client suggestions, CRA has created a more efficient way of accessing policies, procedures, and legislation that are relevant to charities. Under the "Operating a Registered Charity" heading, CRA has added new Web pages on topics such as: checklists for charities; receiving gifts; audits and sanctions; and policies and technical information. In addition, visitors can find more details by following links to corresponding definitions, publications, and policy statements.

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<sup>1</sup> CRA, *Registered Charities Newsletter* No. 30, online: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/charitiesnews-30/charitiesnews30-e.pdf>

Another change to take note of is a new question and answer structure on the Web site that is organized according to areas of interest and subject matter.

### C. GIVING A VOICE TO SMALL AND RURAL CHARITIES

While CRA recognizes the contributing value of small and rural charities, it also understands their limits and challenges in meeting regulatory obligations under the *Income Tax Act*.<sup>2</sup> To address these concerns, the CRA has launched The Small and Rural Charities Initiative.

Six workshops in October 2007 were held in the first phase of the Initiative. Soon after, the second phase took place, which involved three meetings with nine panel members who previously participated in the first phase. One of the important results of the Initiative is CRA report: RC4457, Small and Rural Charities: Making a Difference for Canadians (available online at, [www.cra.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/rc4457](http://www.cra.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/rc4457)).

One of the highlights of the report is a plan to help small and rural charities meet their legislative and regulatory obligations with greater ease. CRA has undertaken to:

- ◆ provide tailored services to the sector;
- ◆ reduce compliance burden;
- ◆ improve awareness and access to information;
- ◆ provide educational tools;
- ◆ lead collaborative initiatives with federal, provincial and territorial partners; and
- ◆ advance sector roles and responsibilities.<sup>3</sup>

### D. CHARITIES CHECKLISTS

In accordance with its commitment to small and rural charities, CRA has sent those charities (and all other registered charities) checklists, which deal with key compliance issues that are relevant to *all* charities. Of the two checklists, one is for the charity's board of directors and the other is for the person(s) responsible for managing the charity's books, records, and filing.

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<sup>2</sup> R.S.C. 1985, c. 1 (5th Supp.) [*ITA*].

<sup>3</sup> *Supra* note 1 at 2.

The checklists are also available online at [www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/chrts/chcklsts/menu-eng.html](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/chrts/chcklsts/menu-eng.html) or by phone order at 1-800-267-2384. CRA also offers electronic updates to the checklists and any changes to CRA's regulations of charities. Individuals who wish to register for CRA's electronic mailing list can do so at [www.cra-arc.gc.ca/esrve-srvce/mlst/sbscrbchrts-eng.html](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/esrve-srvce/mlst/sbscrbchrts-eng.html).

## E. CHARITIES PARTNERSHIP AND OUTREACH PROGRAM UPDATE

The Charities Partnership and Outreach Program aims to provide funding by donation to registered charities and non-profit organizations that serve the charitable sector in Canada to assist in developing and delivering innovative compliance-related education and training projects for charities.

Agreements for the following six projects have been signed:

- ◆ Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia
- ◆ The Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development and the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks
- ◆ Imagine Canada
- ◆ The Legal Resource Centre of Alberta Ltd.
- ◆ The Canadian Association of the Deaf
- ◆ The Canadian Council for International Cooperation

Funding for the last four projects will be aimed at providing the recipients with education and training on issues such as fundraising and maintaining books and records.

### 1. Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (LISNS)

The goal of the LISNS project is to teach the charitable sector about its legal obligations under the *ITA* and the *Registered Charity Information Return* (Form T3010A). The LISNS prepared annotated versions of the Form and the others necessary to complete a registered charity's annual information return. These forms are available at [www.legalinfo.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=152](http://www.legalinfo.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=152).

In addition, LISNS updated its *Guide to Law for Nonprofit Organizations in Atlantic Canada* to include additional information about the *Registered Charity Information Return*. This is available at [www.legalinfo.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=158&Itemid=206](http://www.legalinfo.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=158&Itemid=206).

2. The Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development and the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks

“The Charities File: Information and Resources to File Complete and Accurate T3010 As on Time” contains two training modules to help registered charities complete their *Registered Charity Information Return* (Form T3010A) package. Of the two modules, the first covers administrative practices that charities must comply with under the *ITA*, while the other guides people through the Form. There is also a Web site that has resources and e-learning tools; more information on this project is available at [www.voluntarygateway.ca](http://www.voluntarygateway.ca).

## F. CONCLUDING COMMENT

Charities will find that this CRA Newsletter provides very helpful direction on a range of important issues, especially with respect to CRA’s commitment to assisting small and rural charities, charities checklists, and updates on the Charities Partnership and Outreach Program.

All charities, including board members should give careful consideration to CRA’s various guidelines found in their newsletters available at: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/chrts/whtsne/menu-eng.html>. Other summaries of recent CRA newsletters can be found at [www.charitylaw.ca](http://www.charitylaw.ca).