Charities & Not-For-Profit

Canada's charitable and not-for-profit sector operates within layers of federal and provincial regulations that continue to evolve. Ranked Band 1 by Chambers Canada for nine consecutive years, BLG's Charities and Not-for-Profits Group is nationally recognized as a leader in navigating this complex legal landscape.

The group is co-led by Ryma Nasrallah and Katherine Carre, among the sector's most actively engaged lawyers in Canada, with Ryma serving as Past Chair of the Canadian Bar Association's Charities and Not-for-Profit Section, and Katherine as current Chair of the Ontario Bar Association's Charity and Not-for-Profit Section.

We understand both the operational realities organizations face and the specialized legal frameworks that govern them. Clients across Canada and beyond depend on our team’s deep sector knowledge, bilingual capabilities and cross-border experience to achieve their missions while staying compliant. They span diverse charity and not-for-profit organizations, with a strong presence in the healthcare and education sectors, including hospitals, universities, colleges, social clubs, trade associations, charitable foundations, and community organizations.

How we can help charities and not-for-profits

As a full-service law firm, we support charitable and not-for-profit organizations across the full lifecycle – from formation and governance to regulatory compliance, strategic initiatives and disputes – helping them navigate complexity and deliver meaningful impact. Core practice areas include corporate and commercial, governance, charity, tax, labour and employment, intellectual property, real estate transactions, and regulatory compliance.

Our services range from incorporation and organization to obtaining and maintaining charitable status, corporate restructuring and reorganization, mergers, collaborations, and integrations. Governance services include board orientation and training, board manuals, regulatory compliance guidance, and risk assessment and management. We also advise on real estate purchases and leasing, corporate reviews and strategic planning, labour and employment issues, branding and licensing matters, and integration planning and execution.

In addition, we assist with structuring charitable gifts, securing funding and grants, revenue-generating activities, fundraising compliance, and establishing endowments.

Our lawyers regularly serve on charity boards and committees, bringing practical governance experience to legal advice, and many hold leadership positions in industry associations, staying current with sector

developments. This commitment extends beyond our legal practice: The BLG Foundation supports dozens of charities annually across Canada, reflecting a firm-wide investment in the communities we serve.

Experience

- LawZero in its establishment as a not-for-profit corporation advancing safe-by-design artificial intelligence.
- Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCADU) in its strategic financing of and partnership with ArtHubs Toronto Inc., the not-for-profit successor to Toronto Artscape Inc.
- Pembroke Regional Hospital Inc. and The Phoenix Centre for Children and Families in their amalgamation to enhance regional mental health services in Renfrew County.
- London Health Sciences Centre in a mandate for the government-appointed supervisor covering forensic investigation, executive restructuring and governance renewal.
- Greater Toronto CivicAction Alliance in its pro bono merger with CivicAction Leadership Foundation, involving asset transfer and dissolution.
- A network of primary care teaching clinics in its formation, governance, tax and financing to ensure compliance with all applicable laws.
- A polytechnic institute in connection with a donation of a state-of-the-art research facility, marking the largest corporate gift ever made to a post-secondary institution in Alberta.
- The hospital and college sectors in the development of leading governance guides.
- A hospital system on the complex commercial real estate aspects of Canada's largest hospital project, a $13.9 billion landmark public-private partnership.
- Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in its merger with Durham Humane Society.
- YMCA Sudbury and YMCA North Bay in the amalgamation forming YMCA of Northeastern Ontario and subsequent amalgamation with YMCA Timmins.
- DeafBlind Ontario Services in its merger with Array Community Support Services and related matters.
- A Toronto-area university in the transfer of substantially all assets of its foundation to the university and integration of the foundation's operations and staff into the university's division of advancement.
- A Toronto-area university in the establishment of an executive education and innovation program and related matters.
- The Regional Municipality of Halton and The Regional Municipality of Peel in the restructuring of the not-for-profit housing provider known as Union Housing Opportunities (Peel-Halton) Inc.
- YMCA Greater Toronto in the formation of YMCA Academy, an independent urban high school and related matters.
- YMCA of Kingston and YMCA of Brockville in the amalgamation forming YMCA of Eastern Ontario and related matters.
- Restaurants Canada on various ongoing governance, corporate and commercial matters and special projects.
- Canadian Institute of Quantity Surveyors in a national governance restructuring.
- The Children's Wish Foundation of Canada in various fundraising, commercial and revenue generating activities.

BLG | Canada's Law Firm

As the largest, truly full-service Canadian law firm, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG) delivers practical legal advice for domestic and international clients across more practices and industries than any Canadian firm. With over 800 lawyers, intellectual property agents and other professionals, BLG serves the legal needs of businesses and institutions across Canada and beyond – from M&A and capital markets, to disputes, financing, and trademark & patent registration.

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