

# Accreditation Communications Toolkit for Canadian Charities and Nonprofits

Prepared by Abby McIntyre Consulting

October 2025

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## Introduction

Accreditation can feel overwhelming — especially for small charities without a dedicated communications team. This toolkit was created to make the process easier. It gives you clear, practical steps to communicate your accreditation journey with staff, board, funders, and your community.

### Why it matters:

- Accreditation is an independent review that confirms your charity meets standards of governance, accountability, and program quality.
- It helps you build trust with donors, funders, and the community.
- Strong communication shows leadership, even when resources are limited.

## What is Accreditation?

Accreditation is a process where an external body reviews your organization's governance, programs, and accountability practices.

- For charities, it means proof of credibility and trustworthiness.
- For boards and staff, it's a tool for continuous improvement.
- For funders and the public, it's assurance their investment is well-managed.

Examples: see Appendix A

## Quick Tip Sheet: Communicating Accreditation

### For Staff & Volunteers

- Share short FAQs in team meetings or newsletters.
- Highlight how accreditation supports staff, volunteers, and the families you serve.

### For the Board

- Add accreditation updates to every board agenda.
- Provide a one-pager with key messages and milestones.

### For Funders & Donors

- Use newsletters or grant reports to highlight milestones.

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- Frame accreditation as “building trust and accountability.”

## For the Community

- Post milestone updates on social media.
- Celebrate publicly once accreditation is achieved.

## FAQ: Common Questions

### Q: Will this add a lot of work?

A: No. The toolkit is designed to repurpose communication you already do.

### Q: What if we don’t have a communications person?

A: Appoint one lead, even if it’s part-time. Simple updates go a long way.

### Q: What if we don’t pass?

A: Share that you’re committed to continuous improvement. Accreditation is about progress, not perfection.

### Q: Is the language too technical?

A: Use plain words. Accreditation = proof you’re accountable and trustworthy.

## Evidence Tracker (Template)

Date	Audience	Channel	Message	Evidence (e.g., link, minutes, screenshot)
Oct 2025	Staff	Newsletter	Why accreditation matters	PDF saved
Nov 2025	Board	Meeting agenda	Accreditation update	Board minutes

## Myths vs. Reality

- **Myth:** Accreditation is just red tape.  
**Reality:** It’s proof of trust, accountability, and quality.
- **Myth:** We don’t have time.  
**Reality:** Small updates add up — this toolkit is designed to keep it simple.

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- **Myth:** It's only for big organizations.  
**Reality:** Many small charities use accreditation to build early credibility.

## Communications Timeline (Sample)

### 12–18 months out

- Introduce accreditation to staff and board.
- Share the “why” in plain language.

### 6–12 months out

- Quarterly updates to board/funders.
- Share milestones with staff/community.

### 3–6 months out

- Increase frequency of updates.
- Highlight visible progress (policies updated, training completed).

### Review period

- Acknowledge the milestone.
- Thank staff, board, and community.

### Post-accreditation (0–12 months)

- Celebrate publicly.
- Share annual updates on progress and continuous improvement.

## Glossary

- **Accreditation:** Independent review of your organization's governance and practices.
- **Standards:** Benchmarks you're measured against.
- **Continuous improvement:** Ongoing process of making things better, not one-time fixes.

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## Final Word

Accreditation isn't just about meeting standards — it's about showing your community, donors, and staff that you're trustworthy, accountable, and committed to quality.

This toolkit is a starting point. Use it to save time, build confidence, and turn accreditation into an opportunity to strengthen trust.

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## Appendix A: Accreditation Options in Canada

Organization	Focus / Scope	Relevant Notes
<a href="#"><u>Accreditation Canada</u></a>	Health, social, and community services	National accreditor with strong reputation in hospitals and community settings.
<a href="#"><u>Canadian Accreditation Council</u></a>	Human service organizations	Originally focused on child, youth, and family services, now broader human and social services across Canada.
<a href="#"><u>Canadian Centre For Accreditation</u></a>	Community-based health & social services	National non-profit offering accreditation for community health and social service organizations across Canada.
<a href="#"><u>CARF Canada</u></a>	Health & human services	Accredits services in aging, behavioral health, child/youth, rehabilitation, and more.
<a href="#"><u>COA Accreditation (Social Current)</u></a>	Social and human services	Accredits full organizations in Canada, including nonprofit, government, and mixed delivery environments.
<a href="#"><u>Imagine Canada Standards Program</u></a>	Governance, finance, fundraising, HR, volunteer engagement	Accreditation for charities and nonprofits to demonstrate accountability and transparency. Widely recognized by funders and corporate partners.

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## Appendix B: Alignment Notes

Toolkit Element	What It Does	Alignment Across Accreditors
Quick Tip Sheet	Keeps groups informed and engaged	Stakeholder engagement + governance transparency
FAQ	Reduces confusion and builds understanding	Staff/volunteer education + board readiness
Evidence Tracker	Documents updates and proof points	Provides audit trail reviewers expect
Myths vs. Reality	Corrects misconceptions, builds confidence	Supports quality improvement + leadership accountability
Timeline	Maps messages across the cycle	Matches continuous improvement cycles
Glossary	Simplifies accreditation terms	Supports equity, accessibility, cultural safety
Measurement Tips	Captures stakeholder input	Aligns with continuous improvement standards
Storytelling & Visibility	Builds donor and public trust	Aligns with community accountability standards

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## About Abby McIntyre



Abby McIntyre is a strategic communications and brand consultant who works with public-serving organizations across Canada. She specializes in helping leaders turn complex processes — like accreditation — into clear, practical communications that build trust, strengthen culture, and align teams.

With nearly 20 years of experience in healthcare, education, and the nonprofit sector, Abby has led communications strategies for hospitals, universities, and charities of all sizes. During her time at Brockville General Hospital, she supported multiple successful accreditation cycles, ensuring staff, board, and community were engaged and informed throughout the process.

She is known for her 5C Framework (Clarity, Connection, Courage, Consistency, Compassion) and for her people-first, plain-language approach.

Abby partners with executives, boards, and staff to deliver communications that are not just about messaging, but about leadership and impact.

## Contact

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