



From Foundations to Impact

Advancing Nonprofit
Digital Resilience

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW 2026-2029



Canadian Centre
for Nonprofit
Digital Resilience

Acknowledgements

CCNDR's work is rooted in collaboration. This Strategic Overview reflects the insight, generosity, and shared commitment of a broad community working toward a more digitally resilient nonprofit sector in Canada. We extend a special thanks to Open North, who led the initial sector-wide consultation and provided a report with recommendations that helped shape our strategic direction. We also recognize and appreciate all those who have contributed their time, expertise, and belief in this mission.

We extend sincere thanks to the members of our Advisory Council, whose strategic guidance, sector insight, and thoughtful stewardship continue to shape our direction. Their leadership helps ensure that our work remains grounded in equity, responsive to sector realities, and aligned with the evolving needs of nonprofits and grassroots organizations across the country.

We are grateful to our funders and partners whose investments make this work possible. Your commitment to strengthening digital capacity across the sector signals that digital resilience is not optional, it is essential infrastructure for nonprofit health and community impact. Your support enables coordination, experimentation, and shared learning at a national scale.

We are proud to be stewarded by Imagine Canada, whose leadership and advocacy for the nonprofit and charitable sector create a strong foundation for our work. Being housed within Imagine Canada strengthens our ability to connect national priorities with community-rooted realities, and to align digital resilience with broader sector advancement.

We also acknowledge the more than 200 advisors and supporters who have contributed to CCNDR's journey to date. Your insight, peer leadership, and willingness to test ideas, share experience, and build alongside us have been instrumental in shaping our early growth. As we thoughtfully close this chapter of formal advisory and supporter networks, we do so with deep appreciation for your impact. The groundwork you helped lay continues to inform and strengthen the path forward.

Finally, we thank Canada's nonprofit and grassroots organizations. Your openness in sharing challenges, your readiness to adapt, and your commitment to serving communities with care and integrity are the driving force behind this strategy. The more than 100 professionals who engaged in our national consultation, and the many others who continue to shape this work, remind us that digital resilience is built collectively.

We acknowledge the lands on which we work and collaborate, and honour the Indigenous peoples who have stewarded them for generations. We recognize that we are visitors on these unceded ancestral lands, with a shared responsibility to care for them.

Together, we move forward grounded in equity, community, and shared responsibility, building a confident, connected, and resilient nonprofit sector for the future.

Note from our Executive Director

The Canadian Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resilience (CCNDR) is a national collaborative helping Canada's diverse nonprofits and grassroots organizations use data and technology with confidence, security, and purpose.

When CCNDR was established in 2022, it emerged at a pivotal moment. Expectations across the sector were on the rise, risks were evolving, and digital tools were becoming inseparable from how services are delivered and trust is maintained. Between 2022 and 2024, CCNDR built immense momentum, making the case that nonprofits needed a dedicated, sector-led space to coordinate digital efforts nationally, advocate for investment, and assert the sector's right to keep pace in a society increasingly shaped by data and technology.

By the time I joined as Executive Director in late 2024, that momentum was undeniable. The mission was strong. The need was clear. The sector was ready for change, yet direction was lacking, although ideas or willingness were not. Met with a crowded, fragmented, and fast-moving landscape, the question before us was simple but demanding: what does it actually mean for nonprofits to be digitally resilient?

This strategy is our answer.

Over the past year, we listened closely to nonprofits and grassroots organizations across Canada. What we heard was a resounding call for focus, coordination, and practical support. Organizations spoke about the responsibility of safeguarding deeply personal information, the desire to use data more confidently to tell their stories and guide decisions, and the need to engage emerging technologies, like artificial intelligence, without losing sight of their values or the communities they serve.

Through this process, it became clear that this sector is rich with motivation and ingenuity. Leaning into that reality revealed a powerful opportunity for CCNDR to enable that energy. We can step into this space to provide alignment, connecting shared priorities, weaving trusted pathways, and creating the conditions for organizations to learn, act and grow together. This ability to adapt in the face of digital change, with confidence, capability, and purpose is the mark of true digital resilience.

The Strategic Overview for 2026–2029 reflects this very ambition. It carries us from humble, community-rooted foundations toward national-scale impact, clarifying the role CCNDR is here to play. By operating as a network of networks, we extend local trust, knowledge, and learning across the country, allowing community-rooted work to travel further while remaining grounded. The strategy commits us to act with greater clarity and intention, aligning our efforts where they matter most and advancing digital progress through collaboration.

My hope is that this strategy does more than guide CCNDR's work. It offers the sector a clearer sense of itself as data and technology are further woven into the fabric of nonprofit work. It is a chance to cement confidence over caution, coordination over fragmentation, and responsibility over ambiguity. Above all, it is an invitation to build something lasting together, recognizing that the challenges ahead are shared, and so too must be the solutions, as we work side by side in service of the communities that rely on us every day.



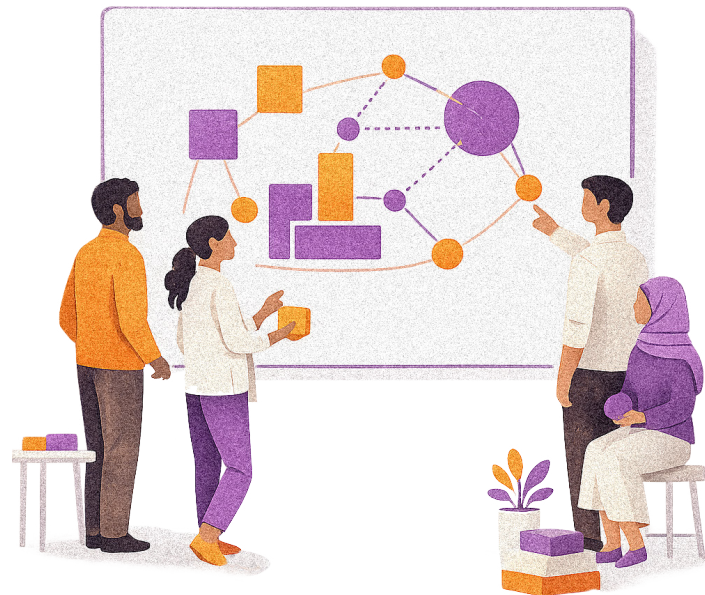
Wilfreda Edward
Executive Director
Canadian Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resilience
(CCNDR)

Our Foundation

A shared vision for a resilient, connected nonprofit sector

The Canadian Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resilience (CCNDR) is a national collaborative helping Canada's diverse nonprofits and grassroots organizations (referred to together as "organizations") use data and technology with confidence, security, and purpose. CCNDR strengthens the sector's digital capacity, builds digital resilience, and supports thoughtful digital transformation that helps organizations thrive in a changing world.

For us, digital means more than using tools for their own sake. It's about applying data and technology in ways that make nonprofits and grassroots organizations stronger, while deepening impact in the communities they serve. We work alongside organizations of every size and role, from boards and funders to executives and frontline staff, connecting each to the trusted networks, expertise, and resources that flow through our digital pipes — enabling support to reach organizations equitably and in ways that honour the diverse contexts they serve. To extend this reach and strengthen our relevance, CCNDR operates as a network of networks, mobilizing the intermediaries, associations, and community-rooted organizations whose trusted relationships span regions and communities nationwide.



Our work centres on small and medium-sized organizations, particularly those serving equity-denied communities, including BIPOC, disability-serving, rural, newcomer, and language-diverse populations that face systemic barriers to digital access and inclusion. Larger organizations play a complementary role by sharing knowledge, infrastructure, and experience that strengthen the wider ecosystem and help drive collective progress.

This dual operating model, combining direct support with a network-of-networks reach, allows us to build the kind of digital capacity organizations need to move forward with confidence. Digital capacity means having the people, practices, and systems to put technology to work in practical, effective ways. Digital resilience is what naturally follows, bringing the ability to adapt, stay secure, and continue serving communities as conditions change. Since 2022, CCNDR has helped advance this work across the sector, emerging as a collaborative voice for digital transformation and a driver of shared progress among Canada's diverse nonprofits and grassroots organizations.

Our Values

At CCNDR, our values are the principles that shape how we work, the choices we make, and the way we move forward with community. They reflect the kind of sector we are working to build together, by being grounded in:

Equity over Exclusion

Digital resilience grows when equity comes first. We prioritize building digital capacity among smaller, equity-denied organizations to ensure progress is shared across the sector.

Community over Isolation

Solutions are found in community. We listen and work alongside nonprofits and grassroots organizations so digital challenges are faced collectively and progress is shared.

Collaboration over Duplication

Progress accelerates when we build on what already exists. We use our expertise to identify, coordinate, and amplify sector strengths – reducing unnecessary duplication while encouraging shared learning that strengthens resilience.

Practice over Theory

Impact increases when we move from ideas to action. We share practical tools and approaches that organizations can use in their day to day work, while working with community partners to close persistent gaps.

Trust over Uncertainty

Confidence grows when people know where to turn. We provide a reliable space to access credible resources, peers, and solutions organizations can count on to navigate digital change.

Systems over Symptoms

The sector thrives when root issues like funding inequities, power imbalances, and digital mistrust are addressed. Lasting change comes from building sustainable solutions, not just patching what's visible on the surface.

Our Vision

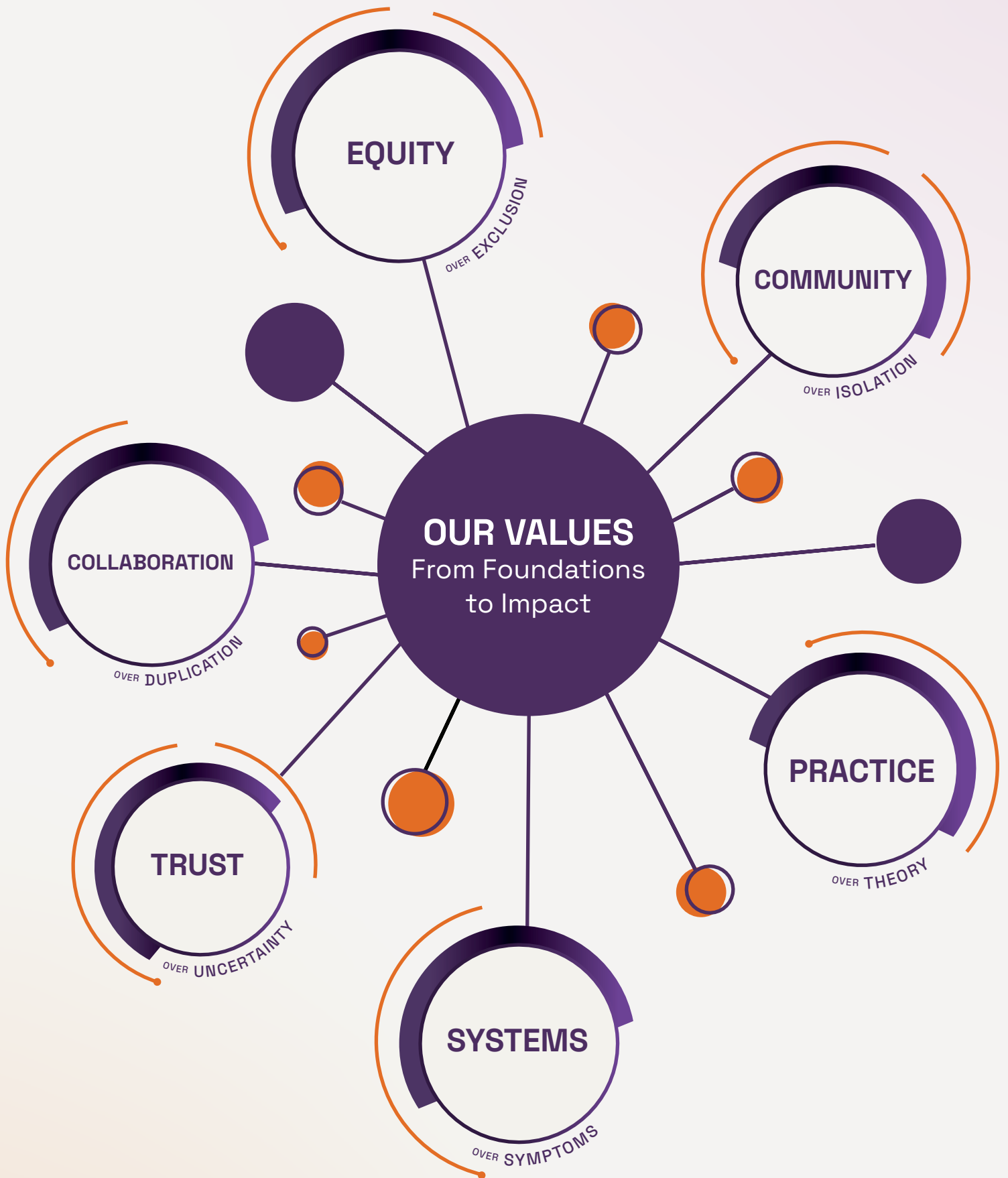
We envision a future where every nonprofit and grassroots organization in Canada, regardless of size or budget, has the confidence, skills, and support it needs to shape, adapt to, and thrive in a digital world.

By enabling shared learning, access to practical tools, and solid connections across the sector, CCNDR is helping build a nonprofit landscape where digital confidence and collaboration are the norm, rather than the exception.

When nonprofits and grassroots organizations have the tools and confidence to use data and technology effectively, missions advance, trust deepens, and communities benefit.

Our Mission

We help nonprofits and grassroots organizations across Canada use data and technology with confidence, to strengthen their teams, reach more people, and multiply their impact.



The Challenge

The sector is ready to adapt, but lacks the capacity and support to do it.

Canada's nonprofit sector is the backbone of our communities and economy, contributing over 8% of GDP and employing 2.8 million people (Statistics Canada, 2023). Yet many organizations are working hard to keep pace in a fast-changing digital world. Expectations are rising, risks are evolving, and the critical infrastructure and coordinated supports needed are still catching up. When the sector falls behind digitally, the impact is felt across organizations, people, and communities alike.

Nonprofits have the vision and creativity to adapt, but too often lack the funding and capacity to carry it through. Boards, leaders, and staff want to use data and technology more effectively, yet face real constraints in time, resources, and skills. Despite these barriers, the sector's readiness and resolve are clear and nonprofits are eager to lead digital change. To fully realize that potential, organizations must navigate these pressing digital challenges:

Cyber risks are growing

Nonprofits and grassroots organizations often hold deeply personal data (from donors, health, housing, immigration, children's programs, etc.), yet are among the least resourced to protect it. Building stronger cybersecurity protects relationships, data, and the people served, reinforcing community trust.

Digital tools are unevenly adopted

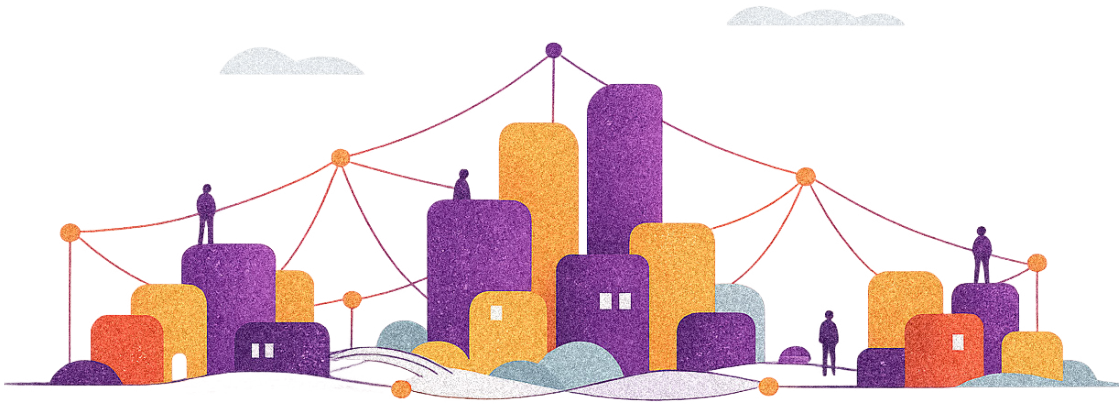
Some organizations advance while others struggle to keep up, creating fragmentation instead of shared progress. When every nonprofit and grassroots organization can access and use digital tools confidently, the whole sector moves forward together.

Data stewardship remains under-resourced

Gaps in governance, privacy, and ethical use erode trust and limit the sector's ability to make evidence-based decisions. Supporting responsible data practices empowers organizations to learn, collaborate, and demonstrate impact with confidence.

AI is accelerating the pressure to keep up

Emerging technologies like AI are reshaping how services are delivered, decisions are made, and trust is built. Helping organizations engage safely and ethically ensures technology strengthens missions and values, rather than disrupts them.



Talent is stretched and often untrained

Staff and volunteers want to learn and innovate but need time, training, and support. Investing in people builds lasting capacity and confidence, creating ripple effects that sustain change across the sector.

Access and inclusion remain uneven

Equity-denied groups face unique barriers to digital participation. Embedding accessibility and equity in all digital initiatives ensures progress benefits all and strengthens trust.

Funding for digital needs is limited

Digital is still too often seen as a cost rather than an investment. When funders and policymakers treat digital capacity as essential to mission delivery, organizations in the sector gain the stability to innovate, connect, and grow.

In the wake of these challenges, organizations have been clear: another platform or another consultant is not the answer. What's needed is something deeper: tailored training, trusted guidance, and the confidence to make better use of existing tools and talent to serve communities with strength and resilience.

Through our 2025 national consultation on nonprofit digital resilience, CCNDR reached more than 8,000 nonprofit professionals from across Canada to understand current digital realities, needs, and aspirations. From the hundreds of responses received, three urgent truths emerged:

- **Technology adoption and cybersecurity** are urgent priorities.
- **Data management and privacy** challenges are widespread.
- **Funding and skills gaps** continue to limit progress.

This evidence reinforces what we already know: nonprofits and grassroots organizations are ready to adapt but need coordinated support, practical guidance, and sustained investment in people to succeed. The rise of artificial intelligence marks a pivotal moment, where the choices we make now will decide whether technology deepens divides or becomes a lever for equity, collaboration, and community strength.

Our Approach

The 4As — a simple, collaborative framework for building digital resilience

From the beginning, CCNDR's work was guided by nine priorities that continue to shape our vision for a more digitally resilient nonprofit sector:

1. Building sector motivation to undergo digital transformation
2. Mobilizing government to invest in digital capacity
3. Mobilizing grantmakers and donors to invest in digital capacity
4. Cultivating digital literacy and skills among nonprofit executives and staff
5. Cultivating digital literacy and skills among nonprofit boards and volunteers
6. Creating shared platforms, services, and infrastructure that strengthen how nonprofits use technology



7. Building trust and improving relationships between technology vendors, consultants, and nonprofits
8. Improving sector data practices for more ethical and effective use of information
9. Expanding internet access, connectivity, and community programs that support skillful technology use

These priorities showed us what nonprofits and grassroots organizations need most to adapt and thrive. To carry that work forward, we developed the 4As Framework, as a streamlined, practical approach to turn shared learning into collective progress toward digital resilience.

At CCNDR, the 4As define how we work: rooted in equity, collaboration, and community.

They offer a path we walk together, open enough to meet every nonprofit and grassroots organization where they are, and focused enough to move the whole sector forward.

Each “A” builds on the next, turning learning into action and action into progress.



Assess

We start by building a shared understanding of where the sector stands, mapping digital strengths, gaps, and risks across organizations and regions. This work activates new and diverse contributors to research and learning, inviting partners and communities to take part in data collection and sense-making. These insights help identify priorities, inform investments, and guide collective action.



Access

We connect organizations to trusted knowledge, tools, and networks that make digital progress possible. By coordinating resources and amplifying what already exists, we make it easier to find what’s needed and fill gaps where supports are missing. This work also catalyzes access by engaging new funders and partners whose investments expand the reach of digital programs across the sector.



Act

We move from insight to action through co-creation, experimentation, and collaboration. By cultivating spaces where emerging issues can be explored and new actions can take shape, we help the sector respond collectively and creatively to digital challenges.



Amplify

We lift up stories, evidence, and lessons so change feels visible, possible, and contagious. By showcasing progress and learning, our work helps nonprofits strengthen trust, attract investment, and inspire continued momentum across the sector. This work also helps reshape how digital progress is measured, ensuring diverse experiences are reflected in an evolving digital landscape.

Accountability is woven through every part of the 4As.

We commit to transparent reporting, shared learning, and ongoing feedback with the sector, ensuring that what we learn together informs what we do next. This commitment is grounded in the Digital Equity Iceberg, which reminds us that visible needs like tools and training are only the surface.

True digital resilience comes from learning together to address what lies beneath, the structural challenges of funding inequities, power imbalances, and digital mistrust that shape how progress is made and shared.

Our Focus Areas

Three levers for change shaping Canada's nonprofit digital future

Over the next three years, CCNDR will focus on three levers for change that reflect what we heard through our 2025 national consultation. When asked which areas would most empower nonprofits and grassroots organizations to build digital confidence and resilience, respondents pointed to the areas where better understanding and adoption would make the biggest difference, and where current gaps pose the greatest risk to the sector's work. These areas form the basis for protecting information, using data with confidence, and preparing for emerging technologies. Each is approached through collaboration and equity, ensuring every organization, regardless of size, region, or capacity, can engage in Canada's digital future, through:

Data Management & Literacy

We help nonprofits build the capacity to use data with confidence, turning information into insight that tells their stories, builds trust, and strengthens community outcomes. By highlighting shared best practices, standards, and peer learning networks, we make responsible data use both accessible and actionable.

Cybersecurity Readiness

We collaborate across the sector to strengthen digital safety and protect communities from growing risks. Our approach blends readiness tools, co-created learning spaces, and partnerships that make cybersecurity accessible and practical for organizations of every size.

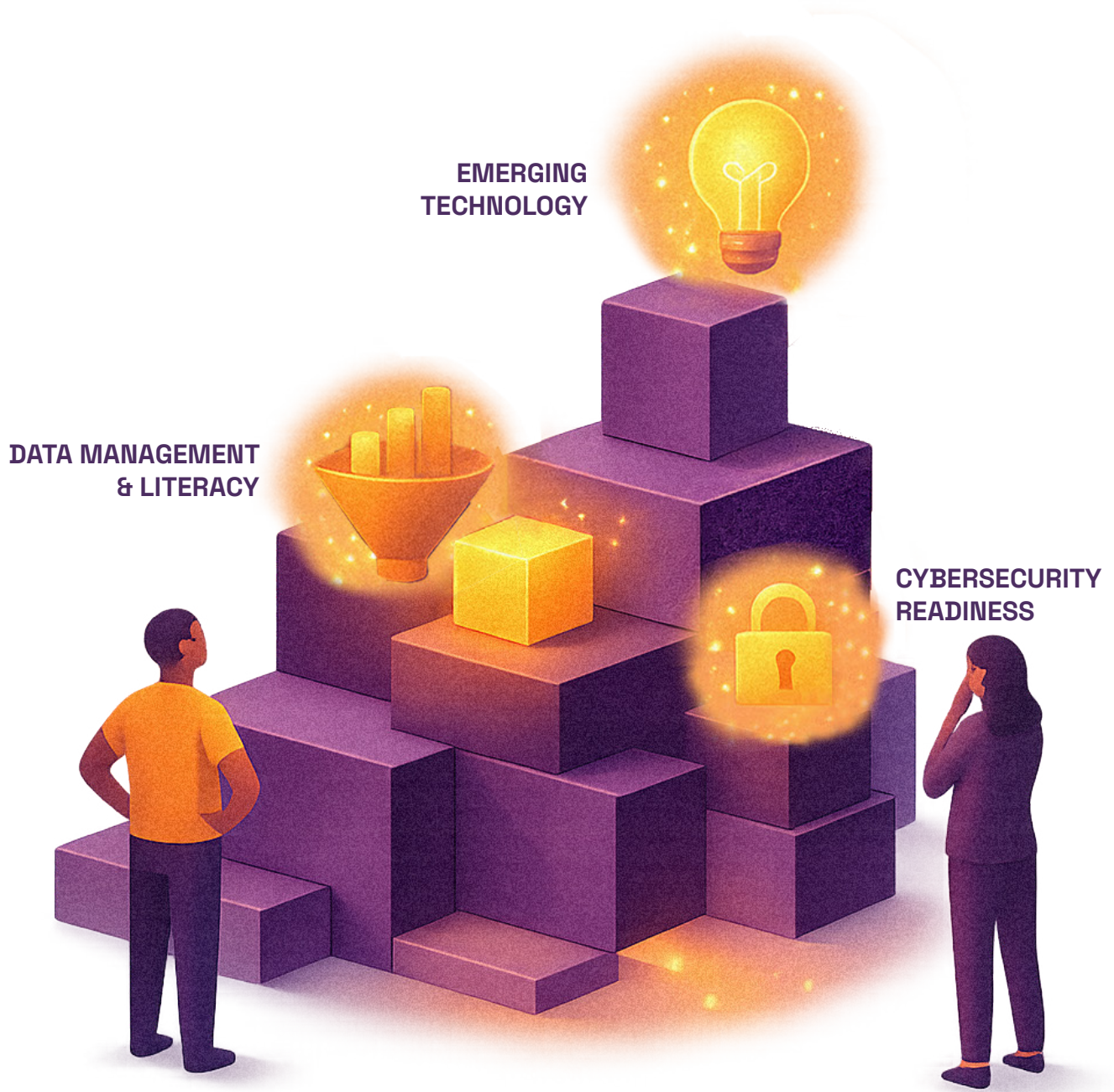
Emerging Technology

We help prepare organizations for emerging technologies, like AI, in ways that serve missions and communities. Through ethical frameworks, skill-building, and shared experimentation, we help the sector approach innovation with curiosity, care, and collective support.

Across all three levers for change, our efforts centre on the people and tools that already drive the sector's work.

Existing People (Talent): Supporting the confidence and capacity of current boards, leaders, funders, and staff — the people who know communities best.

Existing Tools (Technology): Helping organizations make the most of current systems and tools, while advocating for affordable, equitable access to digital infrastructure where gaps remain.



Our Impact

Tracking the progress and change that shows digital resilience taking root

Together, these focus areas set the stage for measurable change, the signals of progress that show digital resilience taking root across the sector. Our impact will be seen not just in numbers, but in reach, relationships, and results. It will demonstrate how nonprofits grow their confidence, how collaboration strengthens across the ecosystem, and how learning and feedback continuously shape what comes next.

Progress will be shared openly with the sector through transparent reporting, shared learning, and feedback loops, making it clear what's changing, what's working, and where more support is needed.

By 2029, nonprofits and grassroots organizations in Canada will live in a reality where:

1. CCNDR is trusted and enabling collective progress

THEME

Institutional maturity and national coordination

CCNDR functions as a national connector, and network of networks, bringing together funders, and practitioners around shared digital priorities. Governance and operations are rooted in collaboration, flexibility, and equity, giving the organization the stability to scale impact while staying grounded in community. Transparent reporting, shared learning, and continuous feedback keep the work accountable and adaptive.

SIGNAL OF IMPACT

At least 5,000 nonprofits and grassroots organizations across Canada, particularly smaller, equity-denied organizations, are engaging with CCNDR-supported networks and tools to find trusted guidance, share learning, and apply solutions that strengthen their digital capacity.

FUTURE SNAPSHOT

A small rural nonprofit facing a digital challenge quickly finds the right guidance, peers, and tools through CCNDR's network, gaining what they need to move forward with confidence and care.

2. The sector is digitally confident and connected.

THEME

Organizational capacity and skill building

Organizations of all sizes, especially those smaller and equity-denied, are building digital confidence through shared learning, peer networks, and applied practice. Teams can manage data, protect information, and use technology responsibly because opportunities for learning and experimentation are consistent, practical, and accessible. Shared platforms and standards are replacing fragmented approaches, making digital adoption more equitable and affordable. A growing base of digital talent, both within organizations and across the sector, is strengthening the workforce, ensuring that knowledge, skills, and leadership are sustained over time.

SIGNAL OF IMPACT

Digital confidence is visible across the sector, where boards, funders, leaders, and staff use data and technology with skill, care, and trust. Through learning and experimentation together rather than in isolation, collaboration now feels routine, not exceptional.

FUTURE SNAPSHOT

Teams across the country use digital tools to make informed decisions and deliver better outcomes, supported by a diverse and growing pool of digital talent that drives innovation and keeps learning active across the ecosystem.

3. A culture of resilience is taking root.

THEME

Systems change and shared ownership.

Organizations are approaching emerging technologies like AI with confidence and purpose. Guided by ethical practices and community priorities, digital resilience is now woven into daily work. The sector is shaping how technology serves missions and communities, learning, adapting, and leading change together through practice and collaboration.

SIGNAL OF IMPACT

Shared resources, standards, and infrastructure are widely used and continually improved by the sector. A national digital ecosystem is taking root, in a collaborative, inclusive, and self-sustaining way, where nonprofits lead change through shared responsibility and collective care.

FUTURE SNAPSHOT

Organizations are co-creators of a connected system that grows stronger through participation. They share tools, knowledge, and strategies so progress is collective, equitable, and built to last.



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