



Statement by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
on the 2019 Canada Summer Jobs Program

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCBC) is pleased with the positive revisions which the Government of Canada has made in the 2019 version of the Canada Summer Jobs application and welcomes the same changes, which not only indicate a willingness to listen seriously to faith-based organizations, but likewise the importance of respect of conscience and freedom of religious expression. It is certainly a step in the right direction as the controversial language associated with the 2018 attestation was removed. This significant improvement vis-à-vis the 2018 version will allow for a number of those groups, agencies, organizations who hold different religious and moral views, true to their faith tradition and/or conscience, to apply for the federal grants without compromising integrity, life values or being obliged to commit to contentious moral positions. We were grateful for the numerous opportunities provided by the Government over the past several months to enter into frequent dialogue regarding the program.

However, an area of concern remains in the ‘eligible activities’ section of the application with language relating to ‘restricting or undermining rights’ and how this wording will be interpreted for applicants. We will closely monitor the participation of charities and faith-based organizations in the 2019 program and trust the review of applications will be undertaken in a fair and equitable manner, consistent with the rich make-up of Canadian society which includes people of faith.

Canada has long been a bulwark of tolerance and diversity, plurality and multi and interculturalism. Moreover, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is meant to protect all those basic freedoms which are the building blocks of any healthy, democratic and truly free society, namely: freedom of belief, conscience, religion and thought. In the common pursuit of a more just, caring, peaceful and respectful society, the Canada Summer Jobs program remains a commendable initiative that contributes to the formation of future leaders by affording opportunities to our young people through mentorship and training.

10 January 2019