



National Service to Support Community and National Security: A preliminary outline of components, implementation, and costs

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May 1, 2025

Introduction

We are living in extraordinary times. Events beyond our control have upended Canada's longstanding prosperity, security, and stability. Two in five Canadians believe it is at least somewhat likely that the US will attack Canada militarily in the next five years (Environics, April 2025). A similar percentage of Canadians 18-34 years old would vote to be American if offered citizenship (Ipsos, March 2025). Canada faces existential threats from dissolution and absorption by an aggressive neighbour when international norms are weakening. Military power alone will not preserve Canada. National identity, cohesion, commitment of all Canadians to support broad-based emergency preparations are all urgently needed.

Message from the Prime Minister

We are launching a National Service initiative to preserve the Canada we love.

Our new government cannot be business as usual. If Canada is a post-national state without an identity, we will lose it. A national effort is needed to ensure Canada's survival as a state, and with it, the values that Canadians cherish. This is not a short-term endeavour. We must begin with urgency and energy for an effort that will continue for decades and perhaps generations. It will be hard. We are facing a crisis of many dimensions—a “polycrisis” of economy, society, environment, politics, and security. We cannot know how fast or how far the threats will evolve. We know we will need a coordinated national approach to address threats we are only beginning to understand. The

¹This proposal was prepared for the Cascade Institute by David Last, with contributions from James McKay, Ryan Jurkowski, Odin Bartsch, Binyamin Solomon, and anonymous contributors and reviewers (27 April 2025, 2100 ET). The author, contributors, and reviewers have no other affiliation with the Cascade Institute or its research programs.

federal government is only part of the solution. It will take all Canadians to preserve and advance our country.

I pledge to work with all parties, leaders, and members of parliament in Ottawa to mobilise the best ideas and energies. National service begins in parliament and the public service. We need the cooperation of every province, territory, municipality, and community in Canada. Every citizen and every resident of Canada can contribute. Canada needs all of us. We must act together with calm determination, respecting our different identities and opinions and drawing our strength from tolerance and diversity.

Canadians want a good life. Housing, employment, education, and equitable access to this country's riches are achievable, but not as an American vassal state in a war-torn world, and not as independent provinces abandoning each other. Canadians know our proud heritage of fighting fascism, resisting communism, standing up to authoritarian governments, building an international order, and sustaining rights. Others have found refuge here from civil wars, persecution, and environmental disaster. We know what we are fighting for. Our chance at a good life begins with the opportunity to understand and to serve our country.

Executive Summary

The Government will engage Canadians in a whole-of-society response to a broad spectrum of emerging threats. A program of national service will lay the foundation for agile national responses to these threats for generations to come.

The National Service Initiative consists of **four components**, together open to Canadians of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels. All components would be recruited through existing Service Canada, Canada Post, and other nationally distributed franchises, which would be expanded to provide information and accept online applications.

1. National Service solicits volunteers for one year of paid training and service in uniformed and civilian security services, including:

- The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)
- The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
- The Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA)
- The Canadian Air Transport Safety Agency (CATSA)
- Canadian Coast Guard (CCG)
- Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)
- Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC)

The program envisages between 117 days and 12 months of paid training and service with a security agency. A single point of intake and shared candidate data optimise use of specialised skills and unique characteristics, including fitness, military skills, languages,

technical competencies, and motivation. Self-selection for pre-intake fitness training may be an option. An initial common phase of training and testing prepares candidates for any service and helps stream them to appropriate forms of service. Work placements, scholarships, qualification certificates and post-secondary credits for learning may be awarded after service. There is an expectation of continued part-time service or availability to deploy suitable candidates.

2. National Civil Defence solicits civilian volunteers with relevant skills or seeking to develop deployable skills anywhere in Canada. The same single recruiting point will optimise use of available talent based on screening tools. Initial deployment training will be completed in short courses, online and in person, to accommodate part-time and family commitments. Training in first aid, traffic control, communications, inter-organisational cooperation, and other skills will evolve to monthly upgrade training and routine testing of key skills. Organised in regionally based units, the Civil Defence assets could be deployed to support any national, provincial, or municipal emergency under existing funding arrangements. The federal government would be responsible for national exercises to enhance preparedness for fire, flood, pandemic, refugee crisis, environmental damage, or national mobilisation in conjunction with security services.

3. Community Protection Service is a federally supported program coordinated with provincial and territorial authorities to develop cadres of volunteers in every community available for immediate response. Community Protection Service provides a national and local framework for deploying and supporting National Civil Defence units and security services in any affected area. This enables early establishment of command posts, reporting, mobilising, and providing reliable local knowledge.

4. Youth Development Program is the single most critical aspect of national service because it addresses the problems of national identity and socialisation for the future. The Cadet movement is the largest youth movement in Canada, followed by Scouts. Youth groups inculcating Canadian values and the service ethic will be expanded with high-quality resources dedicated to the Cadet Instructor Corps, training, and summer camp resources. Youth programs can support community protection, talent spotting, and leadership development for civil defence and national service. At the same time, non-traditional youth development can expand inclusion and the availability of unique skills. Identity, diversity, and inclusion are not ends, but essential means to maximise human potential.

National Service Components and Analogues

All elements of the Strategy for National Service are policy experiments with clear aims and varying hypotheses about what will work under different circumstances. Continuous evaluation and adjustments at short intervals are to be expected. Maintaining public trust and confidence is essential.

Across All Components: Single Process for Recruitment and Remuneration

Service Canada provides Canadians a single access point for government services and benefits. In 2021, there were 604 in-person points of service, including 317 Service Canada Centres, 247 scheduled outreach sites and 15 Service Delivery Partner sites. Canada Post operates about 6000 post offices, including corporate-owned and private dealer-operated outlets.

This is a national framework for the single point of recruitment for national service, in addition to online applications. Volunteers at these service outlets can elicit interest, answer questions, and direct volunteers to local resources. The single point of recruitment initiative will be continuous and long-term, not temporary. Protocols will be adjusted according to experience.

National Service Liaison Council to enhance employer and stakeholder support. Modelled on the [Canadian Forces Liaison Council](#), this element may also need provincial, territorial and local analogues to smooth large-scale national involvement.

Screening, selection, and allocation tools will be essential to get applicants to the right place. If the call to serve is successful, Service Canada may be flooded. People need fast answers and reinforcement to feel empowered and valuable in an hour of national need. AI and online triage can handle a lot of the volume, but there will need to be humans in the loop to reduce frustrations. A response—"Yes, I want to serve"—can be directed to any of the four components or sub-components. [CANADEM's roster and screening model](#) of initial application, then human checks and interviews for specific employment could be applied more broadly. Online courses and [profile updating](#) could increase selection probability for specific employment.

Public Affairs and a national communications plan will go beyond the normal publicity for programs. It is conceived as a domestic influence operation with all-party support, building enthusiasm for national service and targeting groups with weak affiliation to the country. Measuring and reducing "citizens of convenience" over time is a national security priority.

Adjust the legislative framework over time to minimise the interference of conflicting requirements for public service employment, financial administration, etc.. Pre-emptive use of the Emergency Act and the Notwithstanding Clause may be considered.

Remuneration beyond pay and allowances can include earning nationally recognised qualifications, earning academic or trade credits or qualifications, earning points towards scholarships or reduction of student debts, donating voluntary hours for tax credits, earning housing bonus points towards subsidised mortgages, gaining access to travel credits or subsidies. Managed carefully, these low-cost alternatives to pay can increase commitment and buy-in for national service.

A fast and easy (“quick and dirty”) claims process will improve satisfaction. This means blunt instruments of accounting and standard rates, rather than fine-tuned claims based on receipts and the status of employment. It could be done by “opt-in” to receive generic compensation quickly rather than detailed claims later. This could be a money-saver.

1. National Service

Military, gendarmerie, policing, security and intelligence tasks cut across the security agencies listed in the Executive Summary. National Service is a way to break down the legal and organisational silos that make security cooperation difficult. We can envision a future in which soldiers, police, civil defence, and community protection workers from across the country may all have done common training in a national service program.

Specialised units can address new capability requirements for languages, technical skills (drones, 3d-printing, supply-chain management, food security support, etc) or operational experience (Arctic, northern, rural, regional, urban, etc.).

Personnel transfers between services can optimise all security service access to special skills under different circumstances.

Common qualifications (all components), reflected in a universal service record, which follows people as they move from one task or service to another, will optimise employment and help convey accumulated skills for prospective employers.

Call-ups for voluntary National Service are regular nation-building events. “[National Service] evolves with time. The training system undergoes constant development to meet the Defence Forces’ evolving requirements and needs. In call-ups, we reach the majority of Finnish youth—including those who will not do military or non-military service for a reason or another. Call ups are socially important events because they allow us to reach out for young people and help prevent social exclusion.” (from [Finnish website on Conscription](#) options).

2. Civil Defence

National deployments should be exercised early and often, integrated with CAF and security services, reserves, Civil Defence, and Community Protection, then made part of the public relations narrative (information operations).

The national framework for command and control of multiple agencies will require strengthening all components with experienced leaders. Relevant experience extends beyond security services to other national networks, including corporations, churches, and NGOs with national reach.

Regional coordination must extend to the political level with good situational awareness and rolodex-style databases of key individuals, regularly updated.

Provincial and Territorial arrangements may be independently pursued for speed and efficiency, with best practices regularly reviewed. We should not expect all regions to operate the same way. This means that liaison and points of contact should be established at the lowest level. Community Protection command centres can be the local points of contact for deployments and should be regularly exercised in conjunction.

Specialised units can be drawn from national assets like Defence Production 1956, Air Canada, CN Rail.

A Schedule of national exercises can develop connections between the national service components.

3. Community Protection

Universal elements of community protection include [Volunteer auxiliaries](#) for fire, ambulance, police, utilities, traffic control, shelter support, food and water distribution, transport, emergency communications, command and control, public announcements, and local intelligence or situational awareness.

Enhancing emergency measures involves bringing more people into the circle of willing volunteers and knowledgeable contributors. Citizen engagement will evolve from minimal preparedness, such as having a go-bag and 72 hours of food and water, to most community members knowing how to respond to various disasters. Everyone can contribute in some way. At peak readiness, everyone knows what that contribution is.

Offsetting the risks of social mobilisation entails developing reliable and effective leadership, ensuring oversight and reporting of activities, and good stewardship and maintenance of resources.

Local, regional, and national exercises in response to plausible scenarios should involve all the other components of national service and serve to develop the national narrative of readiness and resilience.

4. Youth Development Program

The Cadet and Scouting movements together reach more than 100,000 Canadian youth. This is the core of a National Youth Development Program. Other organisations and programs can be incorporated in the search for cost-effective ways to build skills, leadership, and national cohesion. Small grants can be effective incentives, but effective leadership and a clear vision of the national purpose underlying Youth development must guide expenditures.

Incentives for youth and youth leadership cadres can include honours and awards, expense reimbursement, honoraria in lieu of reimbursement, nationally recognised qualifications transferable to other national service components (e.g., coveted parachute or diver qualifications), civilian employment or apprenticeship opportunities, reduced insurance rates for driving courses, national scholarship competitions, points towards tuition reduction, student loans, or relief of student debts.

[Canada Service Corps](#) helps place volunteers. It could be incorporated as part of national youth development and other national service components.

[Katimavik](#) was conceived as a nation-building program. Its objectives and format could be built into a more integrated national youth development program. Every Canadian should have a comparable opportunity as part of a national youth development scheme.

[The Duke of Edinburgh Award](#) program develops initiative, leadership, and resilience. It can be incorporated more broadly into national youth development opportunities.

[Specialised cadet corps](#) can foster specific skills and bridge to employment opportunities or connection to Community Protection, Civil Defence, and National Service as adults. Some of the specialties that could be developed (with specific sponsorship) include: drone corps (manufacturers), 3d-printing supply corps (manufacturers) cyber security (software companies), public affairs (legacy media), transport (truck companies), fire prevention and response (fire departments), and utility corps (plumbing, electric, and carpentry unions).

Canada's commitment to [avoid militarisation of youth groups](#) has been conflated with the demilitarisation of cadet corps, which have a necessary and useful role in the preparation of youth for national service. Understanding national service to extend from security through to civil defence, community protection, innovation, and employment opportunities opens new possibilities. Specialised and even general service cadet corps and scout troops can be assigned operational missions for reconnaissance and support to community protection and civil defence.

Departmental Coordination and Mandate Letters

No one department has the lead for this strategy. Many departments and agencies are involved in leading different components. This creates potential conflicts with ministerial responsibility for resource allocation and funding. Umbrella legislation might be needed to enable national programs.

Phased Implementation

Enhancing the Mandate

The centre of gravity is public trust and confidence. Partisan opposition from the election and in preparation for future elections risks derailing the program at the start. Reaching out to all federal parties, provincial and territorial premiers, and national stakeholders is a necessary preliminary step in building a mandate for national service at a time when there will be many other government priorities and distractions. Urgency demands that this is concurrent with developing and rolling out the program, and therefore, an ongoing national conversation.

Establishing the Enabling Factors

All-party consensus or government of national unity. It is essential to move beyond partisan advantage and earn the trust of all who did not vote for the winning party.

Federal-provincial consensus. This can begin with the expedient of all provinces and territories accepting the offer of support for developing emergency measures capacity and the intent to build towards national service, acknowledging that different circumstances will require different resources.

National influence operations enhancing Canadian identity. This should be undertaken as a phased and deliberate campaign with significant resources, perhaps combined with influence operations in the US and resistance to foreign interference.

Interdepartmental agreements will be necessary at the federal level on the division of labour and assets for support of the national service strategy. Provinces and territories may also be involved in these agreements. Candidates and cadres might be allocated 60-20-10-10 per cent for CAF, RCMP, other security, and specialised tasks as an initial allocation, to be adjusted according to need.

National Employer Support can be elicited through a liaison-council model.

Recruitment infrastructure, including screening, triage, and allocation (see above) will need to be developed early. The speed with which Service Canada windows and software can be turned to support national service will determine the roll-out of subsequent phases.

Common Training elements can be negotiated between key stakeholder departments. The focus must be on concrete skills for bona fide operational requirements, for which personnel will receive formal recognition and proportionate compensation (see varieties of compensation above).

Enabling legislation may be initiated in skeleton format. Orders in Council, if necessary with emergency legislation, can serve as a stopgap.

Information infrastructure and software must be developed with security requirements in mind. It should be simple and robust with some redundancy. Cybersecurity, access to information, and privacy are considerations.

Initial Roll-Out

National Youth Development Program can be announced for Summer 2025 with additional funding for cadet camps.

Community Protection can initiate pilot projects in Q3-Q4 of FY2025-2026 in select mid-sized towns (the average population of Canadian municipalities is about 10,000, which is manageable as a test case).

Competitive National Service Scholarships can be announced in spring 2025 for a fall 2025 start, open to applicants for all national security agencies.

Strategic Communications

A strategic communications plan is attached with suggested talking points.

Budget and Value Proposition

A bare-bones version of the National Service program could be delivered for \$1.1 Billion. A program with more overhead and infrastructure costs might cost \$5.2 Billion. Actual costs would depend on the nature of the programs and activities delivered. See Annexes A and B below.

National service could make important contributions to productivity and innovation. Wide distribution of small payments and incentives could have a stimulus effect targeted to regions. Youth introduced to new skills, transitioning to employment, could enhance innovation and reduce the number of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET).

Attachments:

Annex A: Bare-Bones costing model

Annex B: Costing Note

Annex C: Strategic Communications Plan

Annex A: Bare-Bones Costing

This Version Assumes 10 thousand recruits complete training in 117 days with no attrition or staggered recruitment and training profile.

National Service

Operations and Maintenance/ Training Costs

FY24/25

Initial Cost Move (BTL)	500.00
First move after training	100.00
Annual Training cost	26,912.74
Base Support Reserves	15,830.57
O&M Sub Total	43,343.32
Total O&M for 10K recruits	433,433,153.29
Annual Capital Spending for Trainings	46,873,134.26

Pay and Allowances

Federal Minimum Wage/hr	17.75
Reserve Days	117
Total Pay for 10K recruits	155,756,250.00

Surge Costs*

Reserve Incremental Surge	\$ 120,394
Civ Avg Wage	\$ 61,468
Contractor Avg Cost	\$ 120,233
Prof, Services Computer for Testing	\$ 658,315
Medical Surge	\$ 1,115,879
O&M	\$ 4,516,919

Infrastructure

Educational Institution Lecture Hall	\$ 54,193,750
Student Residence	\$ 39,525,000
Multi-Use Recreational	\$ 14,437,500
Trucks - Capital	\$ 126,038,637
Trucks - O&M	\$ 86,294,076
Ammunitions	\$ 50,000,000
Simulators and Training Aids	\$ 50,000,000
Small Arms	\$ 100,000,000
	\$ 520,488,963

Total 1-year Cost **\$ 1,156,551,500**

including Pay, O&M, Capital and Surge

*Based on Planned procurement announced by CAF/DND 10% of ammo budget of DND

Annex B: Costing Note: National Service and Civilian Defence Proposal

This Annex provides a preliminary costing analysis of the proposed National Service initiative outlined in the referenced memo. The costing methodology is based on the Parliamentary Budget Officer's Strategic Personnel Generation Model (SPGM), which estimates the cost of producing trained military personnel. The model incorporates pay, operations and maintenance (O&M), infrastructure, and support costs. It excludes pensions, internal transfers, and policy effectiveness assessments.

Important Disclaimer: While the SPGM forms the basis of this analysis, this application has neither been endorsed nor reviewed by the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. This cost estimate is the very definition of rough order of magnitude" (ROM) cost estimate.

For the purpose of this estimate, the model is adapted to reflect the memo's objectives. Key refinements include:

- Adjustment of attrition rates, salary assumptions (minimum wage), and training tempo (condensed to a one-year cycle).
- Surge capacity assumptions to account for the potential need for new facilities, training equipment, simulators, small arms, and vehicles.
- Utilization of existing training infrastructure from RCMP, CBSA, and DND where feasible.
- Modified assumptions to ensure approximately 95% of Non-Commissioned Member (NCM) recruits complete training within a year.

The scenario assumes an experimental cohort of 10,000 recruits over three years, with 45% achieving full training completion in the first year. The model dynamically adjusts intake to account for attrition, ultimately producing 10,000 fully trained and operational individuals within the timeframe.

For the Civilian Defence and related programming, cost estimates are not yet modeled in full but are expected to add approximately \$1 billion. This estimate is based on extrapolation from the Reserve training cost structure and may alternatively be funded through enhancements to existing grants and contributions programs across national security departments.

All cost estimates are presented in then-year dollars and should be treated as indicative, pending further definition of scope and policy intent.

Results:

National Service cost estimate **\$4.1B**

Other Civilian Defence Initiatives **\$1.1B** (similar to the recruitment-training cost for national service)

Youth Program similar to the cost of the Cadet Program (not costed)

Recruitment Training Cost					
Pay	\$	276,865,610	to	\$	283,139,528
Capital	\$	318,063,232	to	\$	323,525,901
O&M	\$	328,902,988	to	\$	496,047,278
Total Recruitment and Training Cost	\$	923,831,830	to	\$	1,102,712,707
Total Full Cost of Grads before steady state					
Res Pay	\$	782,537,437		\$	1,351,848,195
Total Cost					
Pay	\$	1,059,403,047	to	\$	1,634,987,723
Capital	\$	318,063,232	to	\$	323,525,901
O&M	\$	1,092,435,326	to	\$	1,681,893,908
Total	\$	2,469,901,605	to	\$	3,640,407,532

PBO's Strategic Force Generation Model using the Reserves (Primary) and NCM modules
Author's adjustments and calculations so neither endorsed nor attested by PBO.

Surge Costs			FY24/25
Reserve Incremental Surge			\$ 120,394
Civ Avg Wage			\$ 61,468
Contractor Avg Cost			\$ 120,233
ProfServices Computer for Testing			\$ 658,315
Medical_Surge			\$ 1,115,879
O&M			\$ 4,516,919
Infrastructure			
Educational Institution Lecture hall			\$ 54,193,750
Student Residence			\$ 39,525,000
Multi-Use Recreational			\$ 14,437,500
Trucks - Capital			\$ 126,038,637
Trucks - O&M			\$ 86,294,076
Ammunitons			\$ 50,000,000
Simulators and Training Aids			\$ 50,000,000
Small Arms			\$ 100,000,000
			\$ 520,488,963

Based on SPGM Parameters and data from the following sites:

Simulators and Small Arms https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Planned_Canadian_Forces_projects

Ammo <https://www.noscommunes.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/NDDN/meeting-128/evidence>

Some additional back-of-the-envelope calculations for discussions and not a formal costing:

1. On average the 17-year-olds number and will number about 460 thousand between now and the next five years. (Statistics Canada

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710005701>

If we pay each 17-year-old cohort minimum wage for 117 days (typical reserve training days), the cost will be \$7.1B. This estimate assumes no additional training costs, no incremental government funding for schools, bases, government and private training facilities and personnel.

2. During the Second World War, Canada spent about \$21.8B (1945 dollars) for recruitment and training. This expense covered the 5-year period and amounted to roughly \$380B in current dollars; it involved a complete war-footing, with resources re-directed from the civilian economy. *Department of Finance, The Economic and Financial Review: Post-War Period, and Public Accounts of Canada (1946–47).*

Annex C: Strategic Communications Plan

National Service for a Stronger Canada: A Call to Serve Initial Strategic Communications Framework for Implementation DRAFT

StratCom Guide

The following is a simplified strategic communications framework designed to empower leaders in understanding, and transmitting, the need for a national service program, seeking support from public sector leaders, select private sector leaders, and community leaders from the national to the provincial and municipal levels.

It is designed around a main narrative that simplifies the key messaging required to understand the program and its urgency, which is underpinned by a series of supporting narratives explaining key aspects of the program, but which remain nested within the main narrative.

It is accepted that language would change based on political imperative, however, the critical aspect of successful strategic communications is retaining simplified language for all to understand. Additionally, audiences and channels are speculative based on the intent to seek stakeholder buy-in and support prior to implementation.

Additional supporting narratives will inevitably be needed, even more so as the framework is implemented, but they must remain well thought-out and concise, able to be used in different scenarios. There cannot be supporting narratives for every conceivable issue as the framework becomes unwieldy.

Importantly, StratCom is not solely about public affairs or conventional media: it uses all available channels, ideally backed by both image and words with the latter either in print, media, or in person, with the goal of building relationships and understanding.

The StratCom framework for this initiative will unfold in two phases. The first phase would engage various leaders to accept a need for national service. A second phase would build on this current framework, yet be significantly broader in both audience and channels.

DRAFT Main Narrative

Note: bold text is used purposefully to highlight key themes

Canada is **changing**. The world around us is changing. And with that change comes **new risks**; risks that don't just threaten our institutions, but reach into the **daily lives** of all Canadians. These new threats range from foreign interference in our democracy to climate emergencies, all with terrible impact if Canada – and Canadians – are not **cognitively and physically prepared**. Bluntly, **traditional systems** alone can't keep up. To stay strong and united, we need **to involve our people directly**. A national service program would give Canadians meaningful ways to support civil defence, community resilience, national security, and youth development. This isn't about conscription or replacing institutions; it's about **building a culture of readiness, shared responsibility, and national pride** in **collectively protecting** the country we call home. The world has changed. Our response must also.

Audience:

Public Sector:

- National political leadership
- Senior Civil Servants or equivalents
- Provincial and municipal political leadership
- Indigenous national and regional leadership
- National and provincial healthcare leadership

Private Sector:

- Select private industry leadership
- Secondary and post-secondary school leadership
- Select community organizations (ie, Rotary Clubs, the Boy Scouts, etc)
- “think tanks”

DRAFT Supporting Narratives

(note: additional supporting narratives may be required)

1. The Threat Environment Has Changed

The nature of **conflict has evolved**. Canadians are no longer targeted by force of arms, but through **efforts to divide our nation**, erode trust, and exploit vulnerabilities across social, economic, and environmental lines. These threats **strain our institutions, threaten national unity, and risk weakening the liberal democratic** values we hold dear. While our systems work hard to manage these pressures, their ability to do so is under growing strain.

To protect what matters most – our people, our communities, and our future – **we must engage Canadians directly** in service, education, and collective preparedness.

Audience:

All with focus on:

- Senators and MPs from all parties
- PCO
- National Security Advisors through their department heads
- “think tanks”

Channels:

- Private briefings
- Roundtables
- Fireside chats
- Pamphlet / glossy
- Podcasts / publications through “think tanks”

2. Government Alone Can’t Do It All Anymore

For **generations**, **Canadians** have **trusted** strong **institutions** to protect **rights**, deliver **services**, and **respond** in times of need. That trust remains well-placed, but today’s challenges of increased global and societal **interconnectedness** and **unprecedented** levels of **unpredictability**, demand more than existing Canadian institutions **alone can provide**. From defending against foreign interference to responding to disasters, the burden has **outpaced our system’s capacity**. What’s needed now is a **shared societal approach**: a **partnership** where **citizens** meaningfully contribute to **community safety and national resilience**. A **national service program** will **strengthen** the systems that Canadians rely on and reinforce the collective fabric that holds our country together.

Audience:

All with focus on:

- The DM level
- Provincial and municipal leadership
- Community leaders (ie, Rotary Clubs)
- “think tanks”

Channels:

- Roundtables
- Fireside chats
- Townhalls
- Pamphlet / glossy
- “think tank” publications
- Op-Eds / Blog Post: From trustworthy senior public servants, retired or serving

3. It's Not About Forcing People; It's About Inviting Them

National service is **not conscription**. National service is a **voluntary, values-driven invitation** for Canadians to contribute to a **societally shared purpose: helping** one another, **strengthening** communities, and **safeguarding** our nation. It builds on Canada's tradition of civic engagement and honours our **regional diversity** by offering flexible ways to contribute, from emergency preparedness to supporting our national security apparatus'. Participation would **respect** people's time, beliefs, and abilities, grounded in the **freedoms and responsibilities affirmed in our Charter**. When Canadians choose to serve, they **strengthen themselves**, their **communities**, and the **collective resilience** that keeps all Canadians safer.

Audience:

All with focus on:

- Regional and municipal political leadership
- Community leaders
- Provincial education leaders
- Secondary and post-secondary education leaders

Channels:

- Roundtables
- Townhalls
- “think tank” publications
- Pamphlet / glossy

4. It Will Take Investment, but the Cost of Inaction Is Higher

Building a national service program will require a **tremendous** amount of **personal** and **institutional energy**. But the cost of doing **nothing is far greater: fractured** communities, deeper **divides**, and a population **unprepared** for modern threats. Like investments in

public health or education, national service is a **form of shared national insurance**, strengthening our ability to respond to emergencies and protect one another. It offers Canadians – especially our youth – a **meaningful** way to contribute to something **larger than themselves**. This is **not a burden**; it is a smart, forward-looking **investment in the people** to sustain Canadian **unity**, reinforce societal **resilience**, and to secure our **future**.

Audience:

All with focus on:

- PCO
- National Security DMs
- Non-National Security DMs
- National business councils
- Select private sector leaders

Channels:

- Roundtables
- Townhalls
- “think tank” publications
- Pamphlet / glossy

5. The program: National Service for Community and National Security

National service will draw on **Canadian citizens, empowered** by leadership across the **public** and **private sectors**, to strengthen community and national security through four pillars. First, **national service volunteers**, civilian or uniformed, will augment Canada’s national security agencies when needed. Second, **national civil defence volunteers** will be trained in first aid, crisis management, and emergency support. Third, **community protection volunteers** will provide immediate assistance to local communities at risk, supporting both security and civil defence efforts. Finally, and most critically, **youth development programs** will expand to foster civic engagement and build a new generation prepared to meet tomorrow’s security challenges.

Audience:

All

Channels:

All

6. Considerations

- Absent a stated national identity, this is a very difficult, but not impossible, communications space.
- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was built on the foundation of shared liberty, protection, and the collective good. A national service program continues this legacy—not by imposing it, but by inviting Canadians to live it, together.
- Regional applications and considerations are paramount.
- Language must be apolitical, and it cannot be bellicose; but must retain urgency.
- Potential additional supporting narratives:
 - Who will lead this?
 - How does my institution fit into this?
 - What is national security and why is it important?
 - What departments contribute to national security?