

Deadline to nominate volunteers approaching

By Sarah Sobanski

Time is running out to nominate volunteers for Canada's volunteer awards.

The deadline to nominate volunteers, not-for-profit organizations that solve social challenges and community-responsible businesses for the Canada Volunteer Awards from the federal government is Feb. 3. There are 21 awards in all. Recipients can identify not-for-profits of their choice to receive \$5,000 or \$10,000 grant.

"I'm so pleased to announce the launch of the call for nominations for Canada's Volunteer Awards. Volunteers are the heartbeat of our community, and it is through their contributions that so many great programs and community gatherings are made possible. I cannot thank our local volunteers enough for all that they do," said Hastings-Lennox and Addington MP Mike Bossio in a Employment and Social Development release on the awards.

This year Canada is paying special attention to young volunteers. According to the release, it will honour its 150th birthday by dividing the awards' emerging leader category from one nation award to five regional awards. Young community volunteers from Hastings, Lennox and Addington could be recognized for their contributions to the community.

Close to 13 million Canadians ages 15 and older volunteer. Almost 82 per cent give money to a charitable or not-for-profit organization. The Canadian government estimates volunteers gave back over two billion hours of their time in 2013. As much as 66 per cent of youth 15 to 19 and 42 per cent of 20 to 34 year olds had volunteered the same year.

"Volunteers across the country give countless hours of their time to strengthen our communities. As we celebrate our 150th anniversary as an inclusive, diverse country, I encourage all Canadians to consider the volunteers and organizations who are making a difference in their lives, and nominate them for Canada's volunteer awards," said Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Jean-Yves Duclos in the release.

In 2015, Canada ranked sixth in the World Giving Index, which aims to provide insight into the scope and nature of giving around the world.

Nominations can be submitted at Canada.ca/volunteer-awards.