



Presentation of the National Strategic Plan

At the June 2026 ANF in Halifax, the National Strategic Planning Committee presented the strategic plan to members during a plenary session. So that all Vincentians can have the same information, for their awareness and understanding, we will publish a series of articles that include key elements of the strategic plan.

In the 1st article, "[The National Strategic Planning Process and Its Principal Outcome](#)" (Article 1 out of 5)", we describe that the national strategic plan is structured around one main outcome and four pillars, each associated with specific outcomes.

The pillars are:

- Our relationship with values
- Organizational structure
- Leadership
- Membership

In the second article, "[Our Relationship with Values](#)" (the 2nd of 5), we explain that the SSVP's core values remain central and influential among its members.

This article focuses on the "Organizational structure" pillar.

Pillar: Organizational structure (Article 3 out of 5)

If values are what unite us, organizational structure is what allows those values to be lived out effectively.

Over the years conferences, PC, CC, and RC developed distinct models or processes to primarily ensure the continued functioning of SSVP. These adaptations reflect the cultural differences present in the country. They have helped maintain the contribution and impact of the SSVP in various regions, supporting communities and people with specific needs.

However, these differences have also created inconsistencies between the intended organizational structure and the way it is applied in practice, which at times can lead to confusion, tension, or hesitation in having open dialogue. This pillar aims to restore coherence within the SSVP of Canada and, in doing so, increase its visibility without erasing the different models that have emerged over the decades.

Outcomes stemming from this pillar:

Create a Playbook/Framework outlining minimum standards for recognition as an SSVP entity

From you we heard, conferences, stores, and councils are operating in increasingly complex environments than when many of our current structures were first established. many are now navigating incorporation, provincial regulations, grants, municipal bylaws, and even labour laws when employing staff.

Especially around stores, participants shared that the lack of clear legal standing or incorporation can create confusion and uncertainty about accountability.

This proposes a national playbook or framework that outlines minimum standards for recognition as a SSVP entity is how we address this.

The intention is not to enforce uniformity, but to provide clarity A shared baseline that ensures every recognized SSVP entity operates with legitimacy, accountability, and alignment with our values... no matter what their local structure looks like.

Acknowledge the gap between ideal/traditional organizational models and on-the-ground realities

A consistent message was the growing gap between traditional or ideal organizational models and the realities conferences and councils face today.

Many conferences have adapted out of necessity not because they wanted to diverge from the model, but because adapting was the only way to continue serving their communities.

It is important to acknowledge the reality that how SSVP operates in practice does not always match how it appears on paper, and that recognizing this is a necessary step towards clarity, trust, and constructive dialogue.

Recognize and support regional adaptations that enable continued service to deliver

We heard clearly that many of these differences exist for good reason.

Across the country, conferences and councils have developed different models or processes primarily to ensure the continued functioning of SSVP in their communities. These adaptations have helped sustain services, respond to local needs, and maintain impact.

It is important to recognize that there are multiple models, and these models should be supported when they align with core values and enable service.

Because adaptation is not a failure of structure — it's a sign of resilience.

Promote transparency and accountability through regular communication between local and national levels

A reoccurring message was the need for stronger, more consistent communication across levels, not just when something goes wrong, but as part of how we normally operate.

Participants talked about regular check-ins, clearer communication channels, shared updates... even ideas like train-the-trainer models or neutral support roles to help navigate challenges.

At its core, this is about transparency, making sure expectations and decisions are clearly understood, and about accountability that is rooted in support, not oversight alone.

Encourage councils and conferences to share innovative practices and local adaptations

Finally, we heard there is a wealth of innovation already happening across the country — and that it is not always visible.

There are councils and conferences doing really creative, effective work... and others who could benefit from learning from them.

So, this outcome encourages sharing — whether through presentations, videos, or peer connections.

Because when we share what's working, and local adaptations are seen as an asset, we strengthen the whole organization.

Taken together, these outcomes are really about creating clarity and connection — without taking away the flexibility that allows SSVP to thrive locally.

The key message for this pillar is: The diversity of models within the SSVP reflects the commitment of conferences and Councils to serving our neighbours in need. The challenge is to establish, based on the SSVP's mission and values, a frame of reference that considers regional realities as well as the

laws and regulations applicable throughout Canada, while strengthening the organization's cohesion and visibility through an easily recognizable identity.

In the next edition of Chez Vincent, we will explore the "Leadership" Pillard.

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