

Questionnaire Response: Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN)

1. If elected, will you ensure that the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010 (ONCA), that was passed unanimously by all three political parties, is proclaimed immediately to end the legislative limbo so Ontario's nonprofit organizations can grow and develop? The ONCA will support transparency and accountability in the governance and operations of nonprofit organizations. It replaces 60 year-old legislation that our sector currently works within. Bill 85, a supplementary bill that contained the technical amendments that are required to proclaim the ONCA, died when the election was called. A commitment to re-introducing and ensuring a timely passage of the former Bill 85 is essential to a strong and resilient nonprofit sector.

The *Ontario Non-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA)* is a foundational piece of legislation for non-profit corporations. It increases accountability while allowing for a more efficient incorporation process. ONCA will make it easier for approximately 55,000 Ontario non-profit corporations to operate in today's marketplace.

As you know, Bill 85 *The Companies Statute Law Amendment Act 2013* was introduced in June 2013 and includes a number of housekeeping, clarifying and transitional amendments that are required prior to proclaiming ONCA. Ontario Liberals introduced and supported this Bill, but partisan tactics from both the NDP and PCs stalled the Bill's progress. As well, the NDP's decision to trigger an election meant that Bill 85 died on the Order Paper.

If returned to government, Ontario Liberals are committed to re-introducing the former Bill 85. We will continue to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure the quick implementation of ONCA.

2. Will you commit to supporting the creation of a youth internship program for postsecondary graduates that will provide paid, meaningful work experience while supporting the training and development of the next generation of community leaders in the nonprofit sector?

Ontario's community nonprofit organizations employ more than 600,000 people, making them a major economic driver in the province.



They are also a source of job creation. At the same time, the sector is facing a serious leadership gap, with two thirds of all executive directors expected to retire in the next five years without succession plans in place.

The Ontario Liberal Party is committed to the continued success of the postsecondary education system in Ontario, and giving students the tools needed to succeed in today's economy with job-ready skills and experience. A large part of that is the vast network of experiential learning opportunities at many of Ontario's colleges and universities. Ontario Liberals have supported institutions drive for more experiential learning through a number of grants and programs - including our \$20 Million Campus Link Accelerator Fund - which supports groups like Ryerson's Digital Media Zone and Waterloo's VeloCity.

The Ontario Liberal Party is helping our young people acquire the job skills and experience they need to be successful in the new economy. Our Youth Jobs Strategy - introduced last year - has already had an impact in connecting our young people with employers here in Ontario. Through the Youth Employment Fund - introduced as part of our Youth Jobs Strategy - over 11,000 young people have been employed and they have acquired the valuable work experience that comes with it.

We have committed to adding \$38 million to the Youth Employment Fund in 2014-15 and to extend the Strategy to September 2015 which would place 30,000 young people in jobs that will move them into future careers. Notably, our plan also commits to work in partnership with communities and the private sector, to launch Experience Ontario - a nine-month paid community work and service program - to support graduating high school students before they go on to apprenticeship, work, or postsecondary education. Through the Jobs and Prosperity Fund, we would invest \$10 million to support this program.

Furthermore, we remain committed to existing co-op programs and are supportive of institutions looking to expand their program options. We recognize the value of experiential learning and in particular, the value of co-operative education as a strategy to advance and transform the sector. We continue to be committed to creating better links and building relationships with employers and communities to increase opportunities for experiential learning.

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Finally, we believe in making it easier for students to choose to work in the non-profit sector. The Ontario Liberal Government recently changed the repayment of OSAP loans to allow for a total 12-month grace period where the government pays the student's interest if they choose to work at a charity or nonprofit organization. This program covers both the provincial and federal student loans and it is in its first year of implementation.

3. If elected, will you work with the nonprofit sector to develop a workplace-based pension plan and ensure the sector's inclusion in the development of any future provincial pension plans?

The majority of people working in nonprofit organizations have no workplace-based pension plan. This is an issue that has affected the development of the nonprofit sector's labour force and is increasingly making it difficult to recruit and retain employees.

The Ontario Liberal party is not prepared to wait for the federal government to step up to address the retirement income challenge currently faced by today's working Canadians. Unless action is taken now, there is a risk that the retirement savings problem will worsen over time. We will not stand by while Ontarians who have worked hard all their lives face insecurity in their retirement years. Consequently, an Ontario Liberal government would move forward with a new mandatory provincial pension plan — the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) — that would be cost-effective, responsible and designed to meet the needs of a 21st century workforce.

The ORPP would be the first of its kind in Canada and would expand pension coverage initially to more than three million working Ontarians who currently rely on the CPP, OAS and their own savings for retirement income. Coverage would encompass all workplaces, including those in the non-profit sector, except those that offer pension plans that are comparable to the ORPP and those under federal jurisdiction. The self-employed and low-income Ontarians (who are better served by existing programs such as GIS and GAINS) would also be excluded from the ORPP. An Ontario Liberal government would continue to work with its Technical Advisory Group to determine how best to assist the self-employed and low-income Ontarians.

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The ORPP would include the following design features:

- Provide a predictable stream of income in retirement by pooling longevity and investment risk, and indexing benefits to inflation, similar to the CPP's retirement benefit;
- Require equal contributions to be shared between employers and employees, not exceeding 1.9 per cent each (3.8 per cent combined) on earnings up to a maximum annual earnings threshold of \$90,000. The ORPP maximum earnings threshold would increase each year, consistent with increases to the CPP maximum earnings threshold; and
- Aim to provide a replacement rate of 15 per cent of an individual's earnings, up to a maximum annual earnings threshold of \$90,000. This replacement rate, when combined with CPP could provide income replacement of between 30 per cent and 40 per cent to middle-income earners.

4. Will your party commit to implementing a cross-government nonprofit sector council, led by the Premier and community nonprofit leaders, to advance the mutual interests of the overnment of Ontario and nonprofit organizations?

A strong partnership between the nonprofit sector and government will open up opportunities for innovative and efficient policies, programs and services that serve our communities. All ministries of the Ontario government have a stake in a healthy nonprofit sector and an "all of government" approach that brings together representatives from across Ministries is essential to ensuring a streamlined, coordinated and effective relationship.

5. Will your party commit to working in partnership with the nonprofit sector to cut the red tape in administering the sector's funding so that both government and nonprofits can save money and time in order to reinvest in more services?



The government of Ontario in partnership with the community nonprofit sector stewards billions of dollars (through transfer payments and grant programs) to provide services to millions of people throughout the province. Modernizing the funding tools and rules is essential to an effective and responsive public service delivery system.

Answers to questions 4 & 5:

Partnership is a priority for Ontario Liberals and is a key part of our economic plan.

The government and the not-for-profit sector have common goals. In 2010 the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration launched the Partnership Project to help us better understand what we could do to support not-for-profit organizations, and how to strengthen our relationship with the sector.

A number of initiatives have been developed. The Partnership Grant Program for example, invests \$7.3 million over three years to help 27 organizations find ways to strengthen the not-for-profit sector's networks, build collaboration and improve responsiveness to clients, communities, and stakeholders. The Ministry has also convened with representatives from the not-for-profit and corporate sectors through a Partnership Forum to share ideas and guide current and future government action.

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration is working with other ministries to find ways to reduce administrative burden and to ensure that other government initiatives consider the business needs of the not-for-profit sector. For example, we are participating in the government's Open for Business strategy with the not-for-profit sectors and various ministries to find ways to simplify and standardize the transfer payment process to not-for-profit agencies.

A not-for-profit online channel is also being developed within Service Ontario to provide a one-stop shop for not-for-profit organizations to access information that is relevant to them in dealing with the government.

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