

Vision 2020: Transforming the funding relationship between the Government of Ontario and the community nonprofit sector

The purpose of funding reform is to allow both government and nonprofit organizations to spend less time on administration and more time on program delivery and improving results.

Our Vision by 2020

- Administrative processes have been streamlined and standardized across ministries and programs.
- Nonprofits function more efficiently because there is predictable, stable long-term funding.
- Reporting processes are easier to navigate and focus on outcomes.
- Savings generated by streamlining processes are reinvested in communities and pay dividends in terms of a healthier and more resilient province.

By 2020, the Government of Ontario and the nonprofit sector operate in the knowledge that:

- The two sectors are essential partners in the delivery of community programs.
- Streamlining administration reduces costs while strengthening accountability.
- Information should be collected only if it can be used, rolled up, and shared to support evaluation, research, and learning from experience to improve program design.
- The two sectors have complementary roles:
 - Government creates and stewards policy and legislation; determines program objectives; ensures that public dollars invested in community nonprofits are producing intended outcomes.
 - Nonprofits find solutions to complex community issues, deliver programs efficiently and effectively, and engage local partners in meeting needs, leveraging community capacity, and using front-line knowledge to inform policy development.

The ongoing work

In 2020 and beyond, the two sectors continue to work together to achieve the following:

- Achieving policy and program outcomes that lead to healthier, more resilient communities
- Minimizing administration while demonstrating financial transparency and accountability for results to maintain the public's trust
- Creating opportunities to discuss emerging priorities, innovative community development strategies, and funding processes and practices that are responsive to changing environments
- Communicating the benefits of the partnership for Ontario communities

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Features of an investment-oriented funding relationship

Funding reform requires a shift in perspective to recognize both the long-term benefits of community programming and the real cost of providing those services. By 2020, community nonprofits have become adept at demonstrating results; they have also been clear about the true cost of sustaining their services without shortchanging their workforce or clients. As a result, public and government attitudes have shifted by 2020 so that the funding framework focuses on:

- Systems planning across ministries and organizations to support community planning and program continuums
- Achieving outcomes, not just managing compliance, with designated support for innovation based on program and system evidence – recognizing that progress in tackling complex issues is not always predictable or linear
- A funding approach that is flexible within reasonable limits, that allows for long-range planning, and that takes into account real costs, such as organizational administration, professional development, program evaluation, reporting, quality assurance, and fiscal management
- A streamlined interface for nonprofits' interactions with government ministries, including:
 - standardized and simplified administrative processes
 - one-time reporting of basic information
 - technologically-supported application and reporting processes
 - clear and timely communications throughout the funding cycle; and
 - proportional risk management
- Data-driven decision-making supported by an Open Data framework
- Conscientious relationship management that builds trust and cooperation.

This vision has been endorsed by the Joint Funding Reform Forum, a government-nonprofit sector process through which the views of the nonprofit sector in Ontario inform the planning and implementation of the Ontario Government's funding reform and transfer payment modernization initiatives.

This summary is based on "A Vision of the Future - Real Partners in Investment: The vision for a modernized funding relationship between the Ontario government and community nonprofit organizations" by the Ontario Nonprofit Network. Available upon request.

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