



YMCA Ontario

2019 Pre-Budget Submission

Introduction to YMCAs in Ontario

For more than 160 years, YMCAs have been at the centre of communities across Ontario – helping people to reach their full potential and making life easier for hardworking families.

Today, 17 YMCA associations serve 1.2 million people across 125 Ontario communities. Our programs are tailored to meet the needs of Ontarians in cities big and small and in suburban and rural areas. As a charity, YMCA programs are accessible to all.

We are more than just “gym and swim”. We are the largest provider of licensed child care in the province – with more than 55,000 licensed spaces. We are experts when it comes to delivering programs for youth, newcomers and other people facing barriers, including employment programs and training supports. And, our physical structures serve as vital community meeting spaces – bringing families together and supporting people of all ages to lead productive and healthy lives.

We are proud to be a solutions-oriented, high-performing government partner. As community service providers on the front-lines, YMCAs have amassed a tremendous amount of expertise when it comes to supporting the well-being of hardworking Ontarians. As such, we believe there are three priorities that must be addressed in this year’s provincial budget:

- **Ongoing Funding for Child Care and Early Learning**
- **Better Coordination of Employment Services and Supports**
- **Priority Investments in Social Infrastructure**

CHILD CARE and EARLY LEARNING



YMCAs are largest provider of licensed child care in Ontario – with more than 55,000 licensed child care spaces at more than 800 locations across the Province. That makes us the number one choice for child care amongst hardworking Ontario families.

YMCAs also deliver a full continuum of early years’ services including EarlyOn programs; before and after-school care, summer camps and recreation programs. Our programs help

children to develop and grow in healthy and safe environments so that parents participate in the workforce and contribute to the economy.

While we believe the current system of child care funding is working well and should continue, there is always room for improvement. Licensed child care is cost-prohibitive without government subsidies and hardworking Ontario families continue to struggle to afford it. **YMCAs call upon government to continue providing ongoing operating support, including funding for general operations, fee subsidies, special needs resources, wage enhancements and administration.** This support is crucial to ensure licensed child care programs are accessible for Ontario families.

Additionally, many families in Ontario continue to struggle to find licensed child care for their children, and many YMCA child care programs have long wait lists. YMCAs in Ontario are well positioned to expand child care programs in many urban, suburban and rural communities to provide families with even more child care services. Providing more high-quality care brings more women into the workforce and stimulates local economies. **YMCAs call upon this government to provide capital funding to YMCAs to fund further expansion to ensure quality licensed child care can be provided to more hardworking Ontario families in convenient locations close to home.**

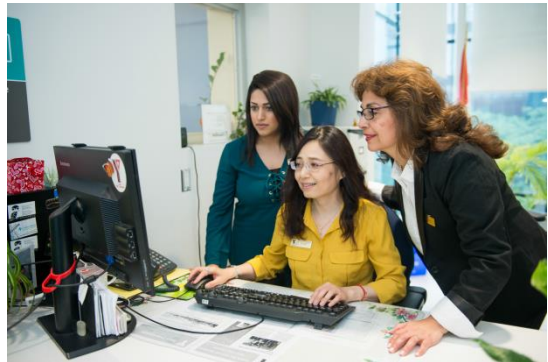
Parents also tell us they want quality care. Child care quality must not take a back seat while the government considers cuts to reduce the deficit. The most important contributor to child care quality is the professional capacity and expertise of staff. **YMCAs need government support to ensure high quality programs continue to employ qualified, well compensated staff. Ongoing wage enhancement grants are crucial, as are supports for ongoing professional development.** For example, training staff to improve their ability to support children with special needs, particularly behavioural needs, is a top request from our workforce.

Additionally, the child care sector is currently facing a staffing shortage. Recruiting and retaining qualified Registered ECEs is an ongoing challenge – particularly in rural settings. **Finding ways to accommodate staffing shortages in the short term, while developing a long-term human resource strategy, is key to ensuring YMCA child care programs continue to serve Ontario families,** while reducing the administrative burden facing operators related to human resource management.

Finally, with regard to reducing red tape and administrative burden, YMCA’s Provincial Child Care Work Group has developed a list of items that could help streamline the system and make the business of delivering child care easier for operators. **We urge the government to create a Child Care Advisory Group where these recommendations can be further discussed.**

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES and SKILLS-BUILDING

YMCAs in Ontario have been delivering employment programs for nearly 50 years. As a network of federated agencies, YMCAs in Ontario have a provincial reach that sets us apart from most other Employment Service providers. There are currently 8 YMCA associations delivering employment programs in close to 25 program sites across all 4 MTCU regions. In 2017, more than 110,000 people were served through our employment programs, including nearly 30,000 who received 1:1 support through participation in structured programs such as Employment Services, Youth Job Link, Youth Job Connection and Youth Job Connection Summer.



YMCAs have deep roots in the community and understand community needs. We have strong relationships with employers and work diligently to meet their needs – and it shows: our programs are effective and we routinely meet or exceed Ministry targets.

YMCAs believe a more coordinated approach to Employment Services is required. YMCAs are well-positioned to play a larger role in the delivery of Employment Services provincially. **YMCAs therefore recommend that the government take steps to enhance the role of YMCAs as service providers in a new approach to system delivery.** Some options could involve: expanding the role of YMCAs to coordinate services at new and existing YMCA locations; providing YMCAs with opportunities to facilitate regional planning; elevating regional YMCAs as leads under a consolidated transfer payment system; and streamlining reporting via the YMCA network.

Taking steps to enhance the role of YMCAs as providers of Employment Services would:

- ✓ **Target funding more efficiently;** improving planning and coordination, reduce administration and duplication.
- ✓ **Better serve people;** job seekers want a one-stop-shop that is easy to identify and easy to access – YMCAs provide both.
- ✓ **Better serve employers;** YMCAs have deep roots in the community, know what employers want, and have a vested interest in the health of the local economy.
- ✓ **Streamline reporting and focus on the attainment of meaningful outcomes** for individuals and the businesses alike.

YMCA Ontario welcomes the opportunity to discuss how an enhanced role for YMCAs could help to reduce red tape and costly duplication, in order to better focus on results for businesses and job seekers alike.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE



The Canada-Ontario bilateral infrastructure agreement presents Ontario with a tremendous opportunity to improve our system of social infrastructure by investing in community-driven projects that help Ontarians connect with each other and lead more enriching lives. **YMCAs call upon the government to prioritize the *Community, Culture and Recreation* stream of the bilateral agreement and support the YMCA’s applications for funding.**

Social infrastructure has the potential to transform communities. Investing in the infrastructure of YMCAs will improve the health and quality of life of the people of Ontario. Where they exist, YMCAs are vital meeting spots in the community – providing welcoming spaces that reduce social isolation.

Last year, [ground-breaking new research across the GTA](#) revealed that those who participate in YMCA programs experience higher levels of well-being than those who do not. What’s more – this research also revealed that communities with YMCAs experience higher levels of well-being overall – even for people that do not interact directly with the YMCA! This means that just having a YMCA in the community brings benefits to everyone living there – a stunning finding that speaks to the far-reaching impacts that centres of community can have on people’s lives – both directly and indirectly.

The Benefits of Investing in YMCAs

YMCA centres of community are vital community assets that act as pillars of community health and well-being. YMCAs help to build healthy communities by providing opportunities for personal enrichment, belonging and connection, and helping people and communities to reach their full potential.

The YMCA portfolio of community programs and services:

- ✓ **Nurtures the potential of children and youth** through child care, after-school programs, camps and youth leadership programs.
- ✓ **Promotes healthy living**, helping people to stay physically fit and reach optimum health.
- ✓ **Supports older adults and seniors** to remain active and develop their social network.
- ✓ **Connects job seekers with jobs and help employers** to train and hire people with the right skills, ensuring local economies succeed.
- ✓ **Supports newcomers** by connecting them with community supports and resources.
- ✓ **Provides programs that help hardworking families** to improve their lives.
- ✓ **Gives people the chance to volunteer**, learn, connect and give back to their community.



Leading the Delivery of Innovative Health Care

YMCAs are increasingly finding innovative ways to provide important healthcare services to Ontarians, outside of costly hospital environments. For example:

- In Hamilton, the YMCA partners with the Hamilton Health Sciences Centre and McMaster University to deliver the [CanWell](#) program – a 12-week exercise and education program for people experiencing cancer.
- In London and Owen Sound the YMCA hosts a satellite program in partnership with the St. Joseph’s Health Care London to deliver cardiac rehabilitation and secondary prevention program (CRSP) for heart attack patients and others with heart disease once they leave the hospital.
- In the Simcoe Muskoka regions of Barrie, Innisfil and Collingwood, YMCAs deliver cardiac and post-cancer diagnosis rehabilitation with local hospital partners, with programs scaling-up to new regions this year.
- Other YMCAs offer joint chronic disease prevention and wellness programs, supervised rehabilitation and exercise classes, education programs for stroke survivors, and nutrition and physical education for patients with alzheimer’s, lung disease, osteoporosis and osteoarthritis.

The YMCA Model – Centres of Community

YMCAs across Ontario own, operate, manage, lease and/or deliver programs in hundreds of sites across the province. These sites – health, fitness and aquatics centres, child care centres, youth centres, employment centres – are the *Centres of Community* where YMCAs deliver services that people rely on. New and improved YMCA facilities provide inviting spaces that draw people in – enabling YMCAs to deliver programs and services that strengthen communities and promote economic and social well-being. That is why we need the Ontario government’s partnership and investment in social infrastructure.



How YMCA Centres of Communities are Developed



YMCAs have tremendous assets that can be leveraged, but new YMCA facilities require financial commitments from the provincial and federal governments to bring plans to fruition. Once these commitments are in place, YMCAs pride themselves in being self-sustaining. The unique delivery model of YMCAs as charities, with fee-for-service components, means that YMCAs can fully sustain operations without the need for ongoing provincial dollars. Furthermore, in large multi-site associations (e.g., YMCA GTA) certain YMCA sites can operate at a loss, taking a charitable benefit approach to community service delivery, because other more profitable locations can “fund” their operation. YMCAs have been active in Ontario for more than 160 years.

The YMCA *Centre of Community* model has stood the test of time and will continue to work for the people of Ontario in the years ahead.

APPENDIX – YMCA Infrastructure Opportunities in Ontario

Bridletowne Neighbourhood Centre YMCA, Scarborough - Agincourt

The proposed Bridletowne Neighbourhood Centre (BNC) is a partnership between the YMCA of Greater Toronto, City of Toronto, United Way Toronto & York Region, The Scarborough Health Network, and Agincourt Community Services Association, in collaboration with local community agencies and residents. Once open, the Bridletowne Neighbourhood Centre will be a leading example of healthy infrastructure meaning it will be a YMCA-led community feature designed, built, and operated to promote community health. A truly integrated hub, it will house a new YMCA Centre of Community; medical services provided by The Scarborough Hospital to include a Centre of Excellence in Chronic Disease Management; health related providers and clinics; and a consortium of community service agencies led by Agincourt Community Services Association. A wide variety of programs and services will be available for children, youth, adults and seniors, of diverse backgrounds.

Once completed, the BNC will be about 150,000+ sq. ft. – 55,000 sq ft to house services run by the Scarborough Health Network, for which funding has been approved by MOHLTC. The remaining 94,000 sq ft will house the YMCA Centre of Community and community agencies and is projected to cost \$62.7 million, representing a \$42.6M request to the provincial and federal governments.



YMCA Downtown Barrie

The YMCA in Barrie has been serving the community since 1907. In partnership Royal Victoria Hospital, The County of Simcoe and the City of Barrie, the YMCA is creating a new YMCA Centre of Community in the heart of downtown Barrie that will become a community hub for services in the west end of downtown. This new facility has been designed in conjunction with many partners to provide a wide spectrum of health related services including Transitional Youth Housing, Cardiac Rehabilitation, seniors care and child care. Along with traditional health and wellness facilities, this facility will also broaden the YMCA's offerings to youth in arts, culture and music through innovative partnerships with both the city and local theatre and art organizations. Located in the west end of downtown Barrie, this project is one portion of a multi-million dollar redevelopment that also includes a new Centre of the Performing Arts and 650 units of retail, rental and condominium housing.

The 67,000 sq. ft facility is projected to cost \$34.5 million, representing a \$15M request to the provincial and federal governments.



YMCA Port Credit

This YMCA Centre of Community will be a 63,000 square foot facility offering individuals, families and the community opportunities for healthy living, connections with the outdoors, and safe spaces for children and youth to grow and learn. Residing along the Lake Ontario shoreline with access to water, land and development opportunities, the Port Credit YMCA will offer health & fitness, child care, urban outdoor education, summer day camps, and child & youth programs. Features of the Port Credit YMCA also include: children's play structures, community meeting spaces and green spaces. The 63,000 sq. ft. facility is projected to cost \$52 million.

YMCA Belleville

The YMCA of Central East Ontario is currently exploring options with the City of Belleville for a new YMCA. The new YMCA would be a joint development between the YMCA, the City and other local partners including Volunteer and Information Quinte and Quinte Vocational Support Services. The project is expected to house a health and fitness facility, community programs, child & youth programs, summer camps and with the possibility for child care. The 65,000 square foot facility is expected to cost approximately \$30 million.

YMCA Northumberland (Cobourg Branch)

YMCA Northumberland is developing options for a new and improved Cobourg YMCA to serve the growing community. The 14 acre property is owned by the YMCA and the project has benefited from a community feasibility study, hydraulic and hydronic report and a long-term engineering assessment. An architect has been selected to complete a site plan and conceptual drawings with 3 options currently being explored: i) build a brand new facility, ii) build a new addition onto the existing facility ii) build onto and renovate parts of the existing building. The project is expected to increase the current square footage of 36,000 to 60,000 square feet with projected costs between \$15M - \$30M.

YMCA Stratford – Grand Trunk Community Hub

The YMCA of Stratford-Perth is exploring the redevelopment of the Downie Street Branch. This project is a joint venture of the City of Stratford, the University of Waterloo and community partners. The project involves the re-development of a former railroad engine repair station adjacent to the current YMCA, where a new YMCA would house health, fitness and various children's and community programs, along with a senior's centre, a university student life centre and more. The projected cost of re-development is estimated to be approximately \$50M.

YMCA Kingston

The YMCA of Kingston/Brockville is exploring the redevelopment of its Wright Crescent Branch, close to downtown Kingston. This project would be a joint initiative with the City of Kingston on land donated by the Sisters of Providence. This YMCA would house health and fitness facilities, community programs, child & youth programs, summer camps and with the possibility for child care. This project is currently in the exploratory phase, and is estimated to cost approximately \$30M.