

Dear women's economic empowerment ally,

Women's economic empowerment is only possible when women are offered decent work in the nonprofit sector.

80% of the nonprofit sector labour force across Ontario and Canada consists of women workers¹. In the sector women, especially racialized and immigrant women and women with disabilities, experience unequal outcomes. Let's build a stronger women's economic empowerment movement together so we can impact the most marginalized women workers, while raising the floor for everyone.

We want to work with like-minded allies like you

You are committed to the movement and are already mobilizing with similar values. So let's combine, share, and amplify the movement together to increase impact.

Expanding the way we think about women's economic empowerment

One of ONN's policy priorities is strengthening Ontario's nonprofit sector labour force, one that is highly gendered and racialized. Our research on women's employment experiences in the sector revealed that:

- The sector is women-majority but not women-led
- Women have lower compensation than men
- Women experience sexism at all levels
- Women overwhelmingly experience bullying and some sexual harassment
- Gender plays a significant role in shaping labour market structures in the nonprofit sector
- Racism and ageism are other common forms of discrimination

These experiences and their solutions often get lost in broader women's economic empowerment movement. Moving the needle requires using an intersectional lens to not only get more women into male-dominated sectors and occupations, but also by improving working conditions in women-majority sectors.

Decent work for women in nonprofits is:

- Equal pay, equal pay for work of equal value, and pay transparency
- Stable employment
- Maternity and parental leave top-ups
- Safe reporting mechanisms for discrimination and harassment
- Pathways to professional development and advancement
- Gender parity and diversity in sector leadership
- Not reproducing gendered roles in organizations
- Recognizing the impact of being a feminized sector on the type of employment opportunities available

¹ ONN uses an inclusive definition of women that recognizes and welcomes trans women, queer women and nonbinary people.

Everytime we talk about women's economic empowerment, let's make it clear we also mean women working in nonprofits

Here are the ways we can work together:

1. Spread [#decentwork](#) across networks with shared messages:

Decent work means looking at supports women workers particularly need in the workplace.

Investing in women-majority sectors is equally as important as investing in non-traditional sectors. Women should have decent work in whichever industry and occupation they choose to work in (STEM, trades, carework).

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2. Advocate together on public policy impacting women workers:

Advocating to the Government of Canada:

Modernizing EI maternity and parental benefits is an opportunity to promote gender equity by reducing the EI benefit waiting periods for new parents, reducing the number of hours required to qualify for benefits, and providing adequate income replacement levels during maternity and parental leaves.

Advocating to the Government of Ontario:

Transparent pay scales, not asking for salary history, no reprisals of sharing salary info, and gender wage gap reporting all level the playing field for women workers to earn a fair living. We know that when employees are earning fair wages, organizations are better equipped to meet their missions. Learn more about pay transparency from a nonprofit lens in ONN's Ministry of Labour consultation [submission](#).

3. Share resources:

New evidence to help inform your advocacy work:

[Decent Work for Women - A Literature review of women working in Ontario's Nonprofit Sector](#)

[Women's Voices: Experiences of women working in Ontario's nonprofit sector](#)

ONN's [10 solutions](#) to increase decent work for women in nonprofits

Tools to use or replicate:

[Decent Work Charter](#)

[Decent Work Checklist for Organizations](#)

Maternity and parental leave top-ups: How we can do better in Ontario's nonprofit sector (*coming soon*)

A gender-based intersectional approach to compensation practices in nonprofits (*coming soon*)

Share your work, messages, tools, and success stories so we can amplify them

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The ONN is the independent nonprofit network for the 58,000 nonprofits in Ontario, focused on policy, advocacy and services to strengthen the sector as a key pillar of our society and economy. We work to create a public policy environment that allows nonprofits to thrive. We engage our network of diverse nonprofit organization across Ontario to work together on issues affecting the sector and channel the voices of our network to government, funders, and other stakeholders.

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