

## Federal Election 2019 - Ontario Nonprofit Network - Election Platform

There's a federal election coming up on October 21! It's a great time for nonprofits and charities to share their stories and get the issues and priorities of our communities on the public policy radar. Although ONN works primarily on provincial policy issues, we speak out on federal issues if they have a critical impact on our provincial network of nonprofits working for public benefit.

Contributing [8.1 percent of Canada's GDP and employing 2.4 percent of the workforce](#), nonprofits and charities need a collective policy agenda to strengthen our sector. [Imagine Canada](#) is encouraging nonprofits to ask federal candidates whether they would support the creation of a "home" or secretariat in the federal government for nonprofits and charities; the growth of nonprofit social enterprise through social value procurement; and better economic and employment data on the sector -- all asks that ONN supports.

In addition, based on what we've heard from the sector, we have identified three key federal recommendations that we encourage our network to promote, in addition to their mission-oriented areas, in the lead-up to the federal election.

We encourage federal political parties to take up these recommendations. And we encourage parties to consider the needs and priorities of the nonprofit sector, in developing their policy platforms. For a deeper dive on sector issues, readers should also review the just-released report from the Senate of Canada, [Catalyst for Change: A Roadmap to a Stronger Charitable Sector](#).

**Nonprofits: Time to speak up!** What are your policy issues that political parties should pay attention to? Now's the time to share your stories, meet with prospective MPs, and focus voters' attention on what matters to your community. Share your election asks with ONN via [Twitter](#) or [email](#)!

### ONN's Policy Recommendations for Federal Election 2019

#### **#1: Promote gender equality through labour market measures intended to support women-majority sectors like the nonprofit sector.**

- **Modernize Employment Insurance (EI) and enhance EI maternity and parental leave supports.**

Employment & Social Development Canada (ESDC) should launch a review of the EI program and explore ways to [enhance EI maternity and parental benefits](#) to better support Canadian families, especially the nonprofit sector's women-majority labour force.

Enhanced measures for maternity & parental leave beneficiaries should include:

- Eliminating the EI benefit waiting period
- Cutting in half the number of hours required to qualify for benefits (from 600 to 300 hours)

- Increasing the benefit rate from 55 percent to 67 percent of earnings
  - Expanding EI Family Supplement eligibility to all those under Canada's official poverty line, and
  - Creating an incentive program for employers to provide income top-ups to workers on maternity & parental leave.
- **Support a universal child care program to create decent work conditions for women.**  
Working with provinces, territories, and Indigenous peoples, ESDC should implement a universal childcare program to ensure women have equal opportunity to participate in the labour force. High-quality and affordable childcare will not only make life easier for parents, including the women workers who make up 80 percent of the nonprofit labour force, but it would also improve the working conditions of women that are the majority of workers in the nonprofit childcare sector. Because we believe in [Decent Work for Women](#), ONN is supporting child care advocates by endorsing [The Affordable Child Care for All Plan](#). It asks the federal government to ensure that all families in Canada have access to affordable high-quality early learning and child care by 2030.

## **#2: Support the nonprofit sector's mission-focused work by providing an enabling legal framework for public benefit nonprofits.**

- **Create a distinction in law between public benefit nonprofits and member-serving nonprofits.**  
**The** Government of Canada should [create a distinction in the Income Tax Act between public benefit nonprofits and member-serving nonprofits](#). This will enable distinctions between the two groups in areas such as access to public funding streams, earning non-taxable revenues, elections advocacy, Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation, and lobbyist registration. Currently the government has no legal way to differentiate between a nonprofit housing society and an industry association in these policy areas.
- **Remove constraints on public benefit nonprofits earning income to reinvest in their missions.**  
Amend the Income Tax Act to [clarify that public benefit nonprofits and charities can generate surpluses and reinvest them in their missions](#), so that these organizations can earn income through enterprise activities without regulatory barriers.

## **#3: Recognize the role that public benefit nonprofits play in building inclusive local economies.**

- **Procure goods and services from nonprofit social enterprises.**  
Public Services and Procurement Canada should implement a robust [social value procurement strategy](#) across government to create access to business opportunities for nonprofit social enterprises. These enterprises reinvest surpluses back into their mission

and often employ marginalized people, creating meaningful work, building economic self-sufficiency for local communities, and reducing reliance on social programs.

- **Tailor the design of the Social Innovation Strategy and the Social Finance Fund to enable the scaling up of local, community-led solutions.**

Focus the forthcoming Social Innovation Strategy, and the Social Finance Fund in particular, on supporting [community-led solutions to the biggest challenges of our time](#). Specifically, ensure that funds are accessible to nonprofit social enterprises; that private capital and risk is not unfairly subsidized by government; and that nonprofit and cooperative associations/intermediaries (linking organizations) are supported to connect small community nonprofits with larger-scale investment streams.

- **Collect nonprofit sector data.**

ESDC, working together with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and Statistics Canada, should institute a program of regularly collecting, analyzing and publishing robust [labour market information and economic statistics](#) on the nonprofit sector, as they do with other major industries that are often the same size or smaller than the sector.

#### **Tools:**

[Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[Decent Work for Women Gender Allies Communications Toolkit](#)

[Nonprofits Step Up! The role of nonprofits in democracy](#) infographic

#### **About ONN**

ONN is the independent nonprofit network for the 58,000 nonprofits in Ontario, focused on policy, advocacy and services to strengthen Ontario's nonprofit sector as a key pillar of our society and economy.

ONN works to create a public policy environment that allows nonprofits to thrive. We engage our network of diverse nonprofit organizations across Ontario to work together on issues affecting the sector and channel the voices of our network to governments, funders, and other stakeholders.