



The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General
George Drew Building, 18th Floor
25 Grosvenor St, Toronto, ON M7A 1Y6
By email: sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

July 24, 2019

Subject: Streamlining Police Record Checks across Ontario

Dear Minister Jones:

On behalf of the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), we are writing to ask about next steps for improving the police record check system for volunteers and nonprofits under the Police Record Checks Reform Act, 2015 (PRCRA).

The ONN is the independent network for the 58,000 nonprofits and charities in Ontario. The nonprofit sector is a key economic driver in Ontario, contributing \$50 billion to our province's GDP. As a sector, Ontario nonprofits receive less than half of their revenues from governments, which means they can leverage public investments - via business activities, donations, and the contributions of volunteers - into significantly higher value in the services they deliver to Ontarians, all while creating jobs locally. As you know, ours is a women-majority and volunteer-led community based sector, well-positioned to support the Ontario government to build a stronger economy and a resilient province.

We were pleased to see the Police Record Check Reform Act come into effect last November, helping to clarify the types of police record checks permitted and ensuring consent in the process. ONN appreciated your support while in opposition to address the burden on volunteers to obtain police record checks. We are also grateful for your support during the debates on the PRCRA and in tabling your own private member's bill, the Helping Volunteers Give Back Act.

There is now an opportunity to further modernize the police record check system and reduce burdens for nonprofit employers, those seeking employment, and volunteers. In the system's current form, volunteers, along with students, prospective employees, and nonprofit employers, are still being put in the untenable situation of waiting weeks and months for checks to be completed, in order to ensure a safe environment for those that are the most vulnerable in our communities. Furthermore, approximately half the police services in Ontario charge volunteers for checks.

We recently learned through media reports that the Ottawa Police will now be asking volunteers to pay \$10 for a record check starting later this year, and \$20 in 2020. The cost for paid employees is rising from \$15 to \$90. As you know, many people volunteer for more than one organization and sometimes have to pay for more than one check. We are concerned that these fees and processing timelines will increase barriers to volunteering at a time when we should be encouraging more people to give of their time.

While police record check systems vary across the province, some police services use paper-based systems that add processing time and staff costs to the process. As a burden reduction measure for volunteers and nonprofits, we ask that your ministry work with police forces to modernize and digitize the police record check system across Ontario. We would ultimately like to see Ontario-wide regulations to control the cost and processing timelines for police record checks and harmonize the process across jurisdictions to alleviate the regulatory burden facing volunteers and nonprofits.

We would like to meet with you to discuss this issue and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cathy Taylor', written in a cursive style.

Cathy Taylor
Executive Director
Ontario Nonprofit Network

Copy to: The Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, via Prabmeet.Sarkaria@ontario.ca