



## ONTARIO NONPROFIT NETWORK

The Honourable Laurie Scott, Minister of Infrastructure  
Office of the Minister of Infrastructure  
College Park 5th Floor Room 5E200, 777 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3  
c/o Gary Rygus via [gary.rygus@ontario.ca](mailto:gary.rygus@ontario.ca)

July 24, 2019

Dear Minister Scott:

On behalf of the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), we are writing to congratulate you on your appointment as the Minister of Infrastructure. We look forward to working with you to support and strengthen communities across the province.

The ONN is the independent nonprofit network for the 58,000 nonprofits and charities 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 organizations across Ontario to work together on issues affecting the sector and channel the voices of our network to government, funders, and other stakeholders.

As you may know, Ontario's nonprofit sector plays a vital role as an economic driver, 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. The nonprofit sector is positioned to support the Ontario government to build a stronger economy and a resilient province. Working together, we can deliver real change.

We look forward to speaking with you further about how your government can support nonprofits in building community infrastructure in three ways:

- *Expanding nonprofit access to capital funding and low-cost loans via the Infrastructure Ontario Loans Program so that all categories of nonprofits are eligible, subject to a suitable business plan.*

This is a program that is cost-neutral to government; however, only some categories of nonprofits are eligible, resulting in uneven access across the sector. For example, arts training organizations are eligible but performing arts organizations, such as theatres that also train and hire graduates, are not.

- *Leveraging the existing ONN Nonprofit Lands Registry to make surplus public land available for nonprofit community groups to purchase in advance of going on the open market.*

As part of the Ontario Realty Directive, government ministries and eligible nonprofits have access to surplus properties for public use. Nonprofits access those properties through the Nonprofit Lands Registry. However in some cases, these lands are not made available on the registry as some ministries and broader public sector organizations have their own internal processes, which limits access by nonprofits.

- *Leveraging government procurement dollars, through avenues such as social purchasing and community benefits agreements (CBAs).*

Social purchasing means widening the buyer's perspective beyond the lowest cost option to look at the broader impact of purchases on the local economy and public programs. CBAs are an indirect way of ensuring that positive community economic outcomes are included in the procurement of public works (i.e., infrastructure projects or land development). These two avenues are commonly referred to as "social value procurement" and provide opportunities for maximizing the impact of existing government dollars and ensuring that they leverage opportunities for job creation and prosperity in communities across the province.

We are keen to work together with your Ministry staff to increase local infrastructure to support communities across the province. We want to ensure that communities have opportunities to grow, create jobs and ensure that people's needs are met. To do this, nonprofits require the opportunity to be "open for business" too, because like government we want to maximize the impact of public funds, while minimizing waste and inefficiency.

We look forward to meeting with you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Cathy Taylor  
Executive Director  
Ontario Nonprofit Network

Copy to: The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Government and Consumer Services,  
via [lm.thompson@ontario.ca](mailto:lm.thompson@ontario.ca)