

Andrea Horwath



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May 29, 2020

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Bldg. Rm 281 Queen's Park,
111 Wellesley St. West
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Premier,

Recently, I met with representatives from the Canadian Cancer Society, Heart and Stroke Foundation, The Lung Association and Diabetes Canada to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on their operations. As Leaders in the Health Charity sector in Ontario, they shared the increased and urgent demand from their constituents for educational resources and online supports and services while at the same time the challenges that they and other non-profits and charities are facing as a result of COVID-19. They have been forced to lay off the majority of their staff; close storefront operations, some permanently; and scramble to keep operations afloat with huge drops in revenues from decreased memberships, cancellations of fund-raising activities, and losses in product and event ticket sales.

While each organization provided valuable suggestions for measures that might help their individual organizations, they all agreed on the need for broad-based support from your government. This support would not only ensure their immediate survival but guarantee they and other non-profits and charities are stable and strong enough to help Ontarians as we move towards recovery.

On April 30, the Ontario Non-profit Network (ONN) wrote to you asking that a stabilization fund be established for the sector to ensure non-profits and charities can continue to serve communities at a time when they will be most needed. In their letter, the Ontario Non-profit Network outlined the extreme financial challenges their member organizations face and estimated the stabilization fund should be \$680 million to meet this need.

On March 20, the NDP asked that the government include a stabilization fund for non-profit organizations in your Economic and Fiscal Update. I ask you today to support the request for a stabilization fund to assist non-profit and charitable organizations in the province. Ontario's non-profit sector employs tens of thousands of staff in full and part-time capacities and provides meaningful employment in social enterprises to thousands. From sports clubs to immigrant services, museums to food banks, these organizations often employ predominately female staff, folks facing barriers and organize an indispensable group of volunteers who support program delivery and fund-raising efforts. This work contributes to the province's GDP while receiving less than half their revenue from government sources.

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These organizations cannot be allowed to disappear because of COVID-19.

ONN has done important work to demonstrate the financial needs of the sector through a survey of its members taken at the end of March. Highlights from this survey have been shared with you in their letter dated April 30. ONN staff have also worked on calculating the financial impact the federal and provincial mitigations measures, announced since the start of the pandemic, should have on the sector. The hard reality is, the relief measures do not close the gap between COVID-19 losses and what is needed to continue operations. A stabilization fund is required from your government now, to ensure these non-profits and charities, their employees, volunteers, and the critical programming supports and services they provide in our communities continue to be available to Ontarians now and in the future.

I urge you to create this Stabilization Fund using money that has not yet been allocated through Ontario's COVID-19 Action Plan. As ONN has indicated in their correspondence with you, the Ontario Trillium Foundation provides an existing structure for applications and reporting and could be used as the provincial mechanism to administer grants from such a Fund.

Further, as recovery plans get underway, it makes good sense to create a 'non-profit advisory table' to provide insight and input to your government on those recovery plans and how non-profits and charitable organizations fit into this picture. Given they exist across the province, their staff and their ongoing work will be instrumental in ensuring a positive social and economic restart.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Horwath', with a long, sweeping underline.

Andrea Horwath,
Leader Ontario's Official Opposition

cc. Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance
Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, President of the Treasury Board