

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2020 - 2021**



ONTARIO NONPROFIT NETWORK

# LOOKING BACK ON 2020-2021

Remember 2020-2021? It was a blur for all of us... starting (and ending!) with lockdowns, multiple pandemic waves, moments of celebration, fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. Nothing prepared ONN staff and board - and all nonprofits - for the year we experienced.

We're tired. Overwhelmed. But we're also optimistic and energized. We've been working hard to support nonprofits and charities to weather this pandemic - and even thrive as we focus on recovery and rebuilding. The challenges facing our sector over this past year have been well documented. The sector has been incredibly innovative and resilient over the last year, proactively addressing community needs. This year tested the network model and it has proven that networks are even more valuable and resilient than we imagined.

We believe there are so many opportunities for our sector to engage in driving solutions and to support our communities. And yet we recognize how deeply equity must be centred in what we do and have embedded ONN's commitment to addressing racism, colonialism, and white supremacy in the nonprofit sector across our work.

The value proposition for the contributions of public benefit nonprofits to our society and economy has never been clearer - and more critical to our province's future. We will use our expertise and capacity to drive home that the future is nonprofit driven!

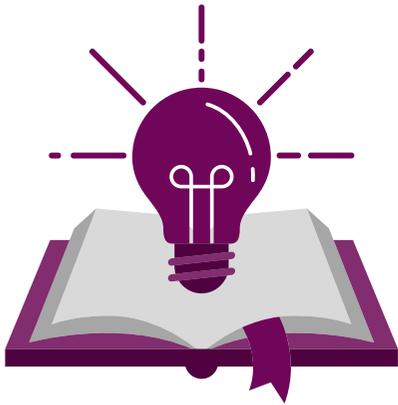
We are grateful to the commitment of our staff, board, members, partners, and our network. We know this to be true - we are stronger together!

**CATHY TAYLOR**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ONN**

**MICHELLE BALDWIN**  
**BOARD CHAIR, ONN**

# STRATEGIC PLAN

**3 priorities and 11 strategies to drive our work and strengthen Ontario's nonprofit sector**



## **PRIORITY 1**

Advocate for an enabling public policy environment so nonprofits can thrive



## **PRIORITY 2**

Champion the nonprofit sector's value and influence to strengthen its social and economic impact



## **PRIORITY 3**

Strengthen ONN's network and increase engagement and skills of the network to positively influence public policy and respond to changing environments

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

# KEY POLICY AREAS

## OUR PEOPLE

Strengthen and support the nonprofit sector labour force and its diverse and active volunteer base. This will result in the mobilization of a decent work movement in the sector.



## OUR FINANCING

Catalyze improvements in the Ontario nonprofit sector's funding environment by advocating for the reform of the sector's investment relationship with the government and for the removal of barriers for nonprofits to earn income.



## OUR REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Ensure that the Ontario nonprofit sector's legal frameworks – policy, legislation, and regulation – support and empower the sector's work.



# COVID-19 AND THE NETWORK

Throughout a global pandemic, ONN shifted to response mode for our policy work, advocacy, and engagement. Some of our existing policy priorities were deepened, while new priorities emerged critical to the sector.

ONN launched two COVID-19 “rapid response” surveys during this fiscal period and redirected our supports and policy work to meet the sector where they were at. We engaged our working groups, committees, and network to help inform our focus. This intel allowed us to communicate more effectively to decision makers on impacts and solutions, amplifying this information through media and our channels.

ONN worked with the sector to both lead - and amplify - advocacy to support nonprofits, paid workers, and volunteers, and the communities they serve. Our government relations strengthened as ONN came to be relied on for on-the-ground insights and policy recommendations.

ONN’s network approach was instrumental in our work. We are grateful and humbled by the response of our network - growing and deepening in ways we had not before imagined.

# COMMITMENT AND ACTION ON ANTI-RACISM

**ONN is committed to addressing racism and white supremacy and working towards racial justice in the nonprofit sector and the communities our sector works with.** This is a journey and ONN will continue to share updates as we act, learn, reflect, and remain accountable. In 2020-2021, we focused our work at three levels: by sector, network, and organization. The following are a few highlights:

## **SECTOR**

- ONN continued to build relationships with Black, Indigenous, and racialized leaders and organizations within the nonprofit sector, through our events, working groups, partnerships and projects.
- ONN embedded anti-racism and equity throughout our policy priorities, including advocating for racial justice and Indigenous justice to prioritize investments in jobs, infrastructure, and data that supports Black, racialized, and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.
- ONN began collecting and sharing anti-racism resources by the sector through our Resource Centre.

# COMMITMENT AND ACTION ON ANTI-RACISM

## NETWORK

- For our 2020 annual conference, ONN built on its internal commitments by publicly committing that over 50 per cent of speakers would be individuals identifying as Black, Indigenous, and racialized. We showcased a diversity of perspectives in our speaker lineup, including gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, subsector, and geography. We developed a policy to compensate speakers to address any financial barriers to participating, and provided 50 free passes to Black workers and volunteers whose organizations could not otherwise afford to register.
- We are grounding equity in our project work, including Reimagining Governance and our Data Strategy. For example, the next phase of Decent Work focuses on building racial justice and Truth and Reconciliation into decent work in the nonprofit sector.

## ORGANIZATION

- ONN staff and Board are participating in anti-Black racism professional development, working alongside experts to continue to develop our own practices and processes with a goal of being equity-responsive.
- ONN continues to review our human resource policies and processes with an equity lens, and we updated our compensation framework to ensure transparency and equity.

# **POLICY HIGHLIGHTS: OUR PEOPLE**

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) & emergency child care for essential nonprofit workers**

At the beginning of the pandemic, ONN worked with the sector and government to address front-line nonprofit workers' insufficient access to PPE. The Ontario Ministry of Education expanded the list of nonprofit workers eligible for emergency child care to include a broader range of essential workplaces in April 2020.

## **Health & safety guidance for reopening workplaces**

ONN asked the Public Services Health and Safety Association (PSHSA) to create COVID-19 workplace health and safety guidance documents. In May 2020, the Ministry of Labour and the PSHSA issued Health and Safety guidance documents to help employers navigate COVID-19 safety in the workplace, including nonprofit employers.

## **Phase 2 Vaccination prioritization for nonprofit workers, volunteers, and communities they serve**

ONN advocated to the Ontario government and public policy units for frontline nonprofit workers and their vulnerable clients, as well as those that serve racialized and low-income communities to be prioritized and in March 2021, many nonprofit essential workers and volunteers were added to the list.

# OUR PEOPLE

## **Decent work**

ONN continued to build a sector-wide decent work movement, profiling decent work practices, advocating for care work to be decent work, and amplifying calls for paid sick days. We released our new decent work toolkit and worked with funders to incorporate decent work into their funding frameworks. We partnered with Ontario provincial associations to further build a decent work narrative across the sector including with and for frontline workers. We also fostered a network of young leaders to lead on decent work.

## **Reimagining Governance asked bold questions**

Reimagining Governance grew its momentum during the pandemic as more governance leaders desired to align their governance with what nonprofits needed at the time, and to respond to complex futures. Despite challenging times, nine nonprofits decided to participate in Learning Lab opportunities to experiment and iterate resources for the sector. Early resources such as the Governance Framework, Board Essentials, and blog exploring equity and power in governance are available for nonprofits to engage with now, with more anticipated for early 2022. New governance Champions continued to join the movement, and our community of "governance reimagers" grew to almost 400.

# OUR FINANCES

## Stabilization Funding

From the start of the COVID-19 crisis, ONN advocated for a stabilization fund for nonprofits. Targeted measures were announced in spring and fall for health care, social services, arts, and sports groups. Finally in December 2020, a general operating support grant was released for small businesses and nonprofits more generally, though the maximum amount available was small.

## Funding Reform

We made some progress on Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) modernization within the Ministry of Children, Community and Social services (movement towards umbrella agreements). The Fall 2020 Budget also mentioned new flexibility in funding on the part of Ontario Trillium Foundation and Ontario Arts Council funding. Flexibility in TPA reduces administrative burden and allows nonprofits to focus their resources on keeping their doors open during the pandemic.

# OUR REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

## **COVID-19 liability protection for nonprofits**

ONN had been calling for liability protection for nonprofits and charities since June 2020. On Oct 20, 2020, Bill 218 was introduced to provide liability protection for nonprofits and charities that make an honest effort to follow public health guidelines and laws relating to exposure to COVID-19. On Nov 20, Bill 218 came into force (retroactive to March 17).

## **ONCA extension**

One of ONN's founding policy files, the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act 2010 (ONCA), had passed 3rd reading but had not yet been proclaimed. Its legislative shelf life was close to reaching repeal. ONN advocated for an extension of the legislation and in December 2020, legislation was passed to keep ONCA on the books for one more year. This enabled ONCA to be proclaimed in force in October 2021 without going back to the drawing board. ONN continued to engage with government to ensure the nonprofit sector's needs would be met by the corporate registration system necessary for when ONCA is proclaimed.

# ADDITIONAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

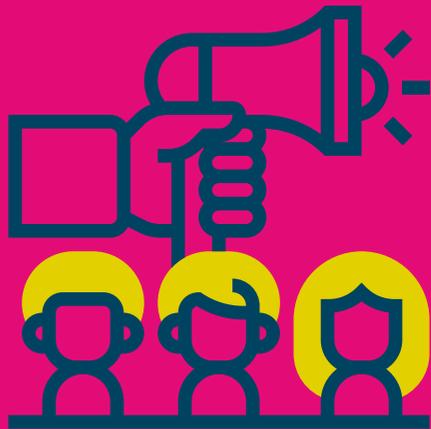
## Broadband

ONN has been advocating for investment in broadband internet in rural and northern Ontario to allow nonprofits in these regions to move to virtual work during the pandemic. ONN's surveys of nonprofits in 2020 highlighted this as a priority for rural and northern nonprofits. The Ontario government has made this a priority and included significant new investment in the Fall 2020 budget. The 2021 budget invested an additional \$2.8 billion in funding for broadband expansion.

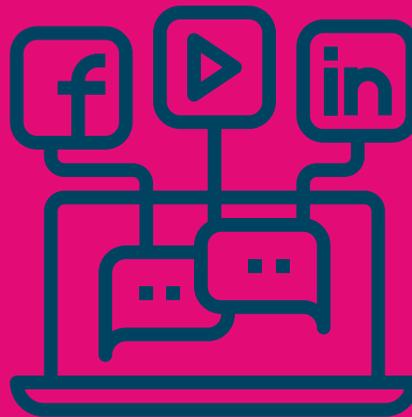
## A seat at the table for the nonprofit sector

We made progress advocating for broad sector representation on pandemic recovery tables. ONN was invited to convene a roundtable of sector stakeholders for the 2021 pre-Budget consultation process with the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and the Parliamentary Assistant to the Finance Minister on Feb 12, 2021. In addition, ONN was represented on the small business advisory committee to Associate Minister Sarkaria.

# BROADENING THE NETWORK AND CHAMPIONING THE SECTOR'S VALUE



**500+ members**  
and six regional nonprofit  
networks dedicated to  
advancing the advocacy  
efforts of Ontario's  
nonprofit sector



**Almost 2.5 million views**  
of our policy analysis,  
resources, and tools, and  
over 75,000 online  
engagements



**Growing earned media**  
Advocated for sector policy  
and supports and amplified  
voices with media coverage  
including Toronto Star, CBC  
News, CTV News, Radio-  
Canada, and Newstalk 1010

# COVID-FOCUSED SURVEYS AND RESOURCES



## Two surveys to gather data and stories

Rapid response and follow-up surveys conducted in March and June 2020, providing valuable data on early impacts to identify policy action and resources needed.



## COVID-19 webinar series

10 webinars with over 1,500 participants. Topics from managing employees and volunteers, running virtual programming, supporting frontline & essential workers, and financial management.



## COVID-19 resources

Virtual AGM how-to guide, employer resources and templates, event supports, public health information, mental health supports, and more tools created and curated.

# CONVENING SECTOR LEADERS ACROSS THE PROVINCE



**Convened two town halls** with Ontario Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and sector leaders.

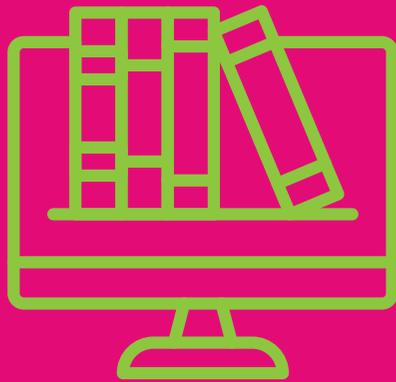


**95 provincial associations** updated and engaged with new human services-focused group to connect the dots on intersecting policy issues for collective advocacy.



**Nonprofit Driven went virtual!** Almost 500 connected, collaborated, and shared knowledge at our annual conference with a new event platform and virtual engagement tools - one of the first major online sector events during COVID!

# NEW SECTOR SUPPORTS



## Launch of the Resource Centre (RC)

RC saw significant growth and is proving to be a valuable support with 24,000 visitors in the last 12 months. Hundreds of resources were added to help nonprofits confront racism, build more equitable policies and practices, and grow their capacity for managing the workplace during the pandemic.



## Advocacy spectrum

ONN released a new resource to our suite of advocacy tools, outlining the many different actions organizations and individuals can take to make effective policy change, and identifying potential allies along the way.

# ONN CONNECTORS

Thank you to our ONN Connectors, a special group of forward-thinking leaders committed to a strong and resilient nonprofit sector in Ontario.



As of March 31, 2021

# ONN FUNDERS

Thank you to our funders who help us mobilize policy and advocacy action to connect the sector, government, and the communities we serve.



**United Way**  
Greater Toronto

**METCALF**  
**FOUNDATION**



**ATKINSON**  
For social and economic justice

**LAWSON**  
**FOUNDATION**



**Status of Women**  
**Canada**

**Condition féminine**  
**Canada**

Ontario  
Trillium  
Foundation



Fondation  
Trillium  
de l'Ontario

**Ignite**<sup>NPS</sup>  
*Turning Insights into Action*

# THANK YOU ONN LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS

## Board of Directors

Abdul Nakua, Andre Vallillee (Vice Chair), Emily Pang (Treasurer), Margaret Hancock, Maureen Fair (Secretary), Michelle Baldwin (Chair), Myna Kota, Peter Honeywell.

## Policy Committee

Sané Dube (Chair), Alyssa Brierly, Bill Sinclair, Carla Leon, Deborah Simon, Diane Davy, Helen Harris, James Janeiro, Jasmine Rezaee, Juliette Nicolet, Kat Hamilton, Kathleen Sharpe, Michelle Baldwin (Ex-officio), Paul Bubelis, Peter Cameron, Ryan Noble, Norm Ragetlie.

## Advisory Committees and Working Groups

Decent Work Advisory Group, Decent Work for Women Advisory Group, Reimagining Governance Steering Committee, Community Wealth Building Network, Transfer Payment Ontario Reference Group, Resource Centre Advisory Group

# STAFF TEAM FOR 2020-2021



Sarah Matsushita, Erin Kang, Jacquelin Heichert, Pamela Uppal,  
Lynn Eakin, Teshini Harrison, Jay Singh, Melanie Rodriguez, Liz  
Sutherland, John Saunders, Randall Terada, Cathy Taylor

**Thank you for your ongoing support!**

**Our work would not be possible without you.**

