



September 15, 2023

To: Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (peter.fragiskatos@parl.gc.ca)  
Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (arielle.kayabaga@parl.gc.ca)  
Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (lindsay.mathyssen@parl.gc.ca)  
Ms. Karen Vecchio (karen.vecchio@parl.gc.ca)

**Re: Concerns with proposed changes to the Canada Summer Jobs Program**

*“When young people learn, work and succeed, Canada thrives.”*  
~Employment and Social Development Canada Media Release

Dear Members of Parliament Fragiskatos, Kayabaga, Mathyssen, and Vecchio,

**We, the 24 undersigned organizations,** are writing to all of you together in acknowledgment of your shared care for our community – care that cuts across partisan divides. We are appealing to each of you, and to all of you, to advocate for a reversal of announced cuts to the Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program and, indeed, to seek re-investment in an improved and properly funded CSJ program for 2024.

The London region’s nonprofits are significant economic drivers and essential service providers, delivering on public priorities, serving those in need, and contributing to community development across a range of sectors, including social justice, mental health, safety, human rights, environment, sports, faith, arts, and more.

Nonprofits have been challenged by the same cascading crises that all Canadians have faced in recent years and months and have been slower to recover than other sectors, beleaguered by rising costs, rising demand, reduced giving, lowered business revenues, and reduced volunteering. Until these conditions are reversed at least to pre-pandemic levels, we are not ready for the withdrawal or reduction of supportive programs.

The CSJ program provides important learning opportunities for young people here in our community and is highly valued by a wide variety of organizations, especially in the midst of a human resources crisis in paid and volunteer workers. Indeed, CSJ is as close as we have now to a long-desired nonprofit workforce development program. In consequence, our member organizations, and the youth they've employed, have shared concerns about the impacts of recent cuts to the program budget, a lack of transparent and timely communications about CSJ budget changes, and late notifications provided to employers.

Investing in the Canada Summer Jobs program more fully would be an effective investment in Canada's struggling nonprofit sector and our shared aspirations for a better future for young people. We are offering some specific recommendations and concerns on behalf of our members and the youth and families of our community.

We encourage you to advocate that the Government of Canada:

- 1. Reverse further funding cuts to this critical program and commit to an increase in the Fall Economic Statement.** This year, CSJ grants and contributions were over 30% lower than the 2022-23 fiscal year, a loss of over \$124 million to CSJ employers in 2023. Compared to the 2021 peak, CSJ funding has dropped by \$448 million, and employers have lost over 119,000 positions through the end of fiscal year 2024-25. As a result, critical community organizations are reeling from the sudden loss of funding. CSJ funding is currently projected to be even lower in the 2024-25 fiscal year, amounting to a 50% cut, \$202 million below 2022 levels, and **\$60 million below even pre-pandemic years**. Young people and potential employers are rightly concerned. We urge you to advocate for additional CSJ funding in the Fall Economic Statement to ensure that organizations and young people are able to benefit from important employment opportunities in 2024 and beyond.

**2. Communicate CSJ funding projections to employers in a more proactive and transparent manner.** For recipient organizations and youth, the decision to significantly cut CSJ funding this year was both unexpected and severe. These cuts followed four years of consistent and increased CSJ funding and occurred without sufficient communication to past or prospective CSJ program recipients. Many employers – already reeling from spiking demand, rising costs, and lowered revenues and donations – felt blindsided and did not have time to adjust their operations and hiring plans to deal with the reduction in CSJ funding. Nationally, **the CSJ program received applications for greater than five times the funding available**, leaving many employers disappointed. Going forward, we urge you to communicate projected budget changes to employers in a proactive and transparent manner, before applications open, to help them prepare for any changes in funding.

**3. Move up decision making and review timelines to allow for earlier notification of employers.** Employers have consistently told us that the CSJ decision-making and notification timelines are too late in the spring, making it difficult to plan their summer programs and hire qualified staff. This was made worse this year when funding was cut so drastically. Although notification timelines were a few days earlier this year, employers still did not learn about the funding they would receive until mid-April at the earliest. Many post-secondary students are seeking jobs that run from May to August and have already secured less career-oriented employment by the time CSJ positions are posted. Employers would like to see CSJ application and decision timelines revised to align with post-secondary schedules so students can start work at the end of April or beginning of May. We ask Service Canada to notify employers by the end of March at the latest, to give them sufficient time to post and hire qualified staff.

Canada Summer Jobs is a valuable program that supports the work of many organizations and businesses and creates important job experience for young people, especially those that develop skills required in the nonprofit sector. In many cases, it is also a financial lifeline for community-based organizations and nonprofits who depend on CSJ funding to deliver essential community services, often on behalf of or for the government. With predictable, sustained funding levels, timely, clear public communication about projected budgets, and earlier notifications to employers, the

program could provide even more benefit to employers and young people across Canada.

We feel this issue invites cross-partisan collaboration. Indeed, our asks are based largely on the advocacy of another cross-affiliated group of MPs, spearheaded by Mike Morrice, and including Louise Chabot, Laurel Collins, and Alain Rayes.

Notwithstanding their advocacy to Minister Ien, we know that each of you is better positioned to understand the good work arising in London from Canada Summer Jobs. We look forward to working with you to strengthen this valuable program.

Sincerely,

Pillar Nonprofit Network

Urban Roots London	ReForest London
London Cycle Link	London Symphonia
Theatre Æzir	Culturx London
Leads Employment Services	Children's Health Foundation
Thames Talbot Land Trust	Forest City Gallery
London Lets Be Kind	Skilled Accents Inc
Komoka Railway Museum	London Heritage Council
427 (London) Wing RCAF Association	London Environmental Network
Climate Action London	London Waldorf School
Childreach	Grand Theatre
Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre	Meals on Wheels London
Hutton House Association for Adults with Disabilities	