



The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
c/o Budget Secretariat
Frost Building North, 3rd Floor
95 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1Z1

31 January 2022

Dear Minister Bethlenfalvy:

As nonprofit funders deeply connected to our local community, we have come together to share our recommendations on how the Provincial Government can address pressing and systemic social issues through the upcoming budget.

1. Address housing affordability

Ensuring that all Ontarians have access to adequate housing requires a systems-level approach. Leading up to the Ontario Housing Summit, a consortium of nonprofits who work with those dealing with housing concerns [provided 10 recommendations](#) that included:

- Increasing investment in Indigenous housing programs
- Increasing investment to make housing affordable to low-income households
- Making renting more affordable by amending the Residential Tenancies Act
- Giving renters more security by investing in community legal clinics

2. Increase social assistance rates

While we applaud the government's recent increases to minimum wage, social assistance rates in our province continue to be woefully inadequate, especially in the context of skyrocketing housing costs. Failure to address this urgent need will delay life stabilization, push people further into the margins, and lead to costlier issues such as homelessness, addictions and health care concerns.

3. Participate in the National Childcare Plan

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected all parts of the Canadian workforce; but working women more than most. As Ontario moves into pandemic recovery, attention must be paid to the challenges facing working women including access to affordable and high-quality childcare. To ensure a strong economic recovery, we cannot lose the critical economic contribution of working women. We urge the provincial government to continue to negotiate with the federal government to ensure participation in the National childcare plan.

4. Invest in the implementation of the Our London Family Act

This past June, the London area was rocked by an act of terrorism when a Muslim family was murdered for simply existing in our community. Hate should have no home in our province, and we urge the provincial government to support and allocate adequate investment to ensure the successful implementation of the [Our London Family Act](#) as proposed by the National Council of Canadian Muslims.

5. Expand programs that support decent work and implement paid sick leave for all workers

We appreciate the government's efforts to protect workers through Bill 27 and the increased focus on employment programs. We encourage increased investment to continue this momentum and for the government to prioritize access to additional paid sick leave so workers do not have to choose between endangering their coworkers and risking their livelihood.

6. Find a home in provincial government for the nonprofit sector

Nonprofit organizations in Ontario have been at the forefront of fighting COVID-19 and recovery efforts. All Ontarians rely on nonprofits, especially those that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Despite our province's reliance on the sector, we continue to face challenges related communication, financial support and participation in decision-making. We urge the provincial government to identify a Ministry or office that the nonprofit sector can work directly with so we can assist the government by sharing our expertise.

We thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly Ziegner, President & CEO, United Way Elgin Middlesex
Martha Powell, President & CEO, London Community Foundation
Gloria Rolfe, Executive Director, Westminster College Foundation
Sister Margo Ritchie, Congregational Leader, Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada