

PILLAR NONPROFIT NETWORK

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONTARIO BUDGET 2023 AND A RESILIENT NONPROFIT PARTNER



PILLAR
nonprofit network

TABLE OF CONTENTS



3	INTRODUCTION FROM OUR INTERIM CEO
4	RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR INVESTMENT
5	DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS
8	NOTES AND REFERENCES
9	ABOUT PILLAR NONPROFIT NETWORK



INTRODUCTION FROM OUR INTERIM CEO



Dear Minister Bethlenfalvy and members of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs,

Thank you again for the opportunity to share Pillar Nonprofit Network's insights and ideas with you about our hopes for Ontario's 2023 budget on your visit to St Thomas, and thank you also for the opportunity to expand on those ideas in this written submission. At Pillar, we see many ways in which a strong and resilient nonprofit sector can support your budget priorities, especially

- building Ontario's economy, and
- building Ontario's workforce.

As you know, Pillar member organisations work in a multitude of issue areas – arts and performance, environment, transitional housing, and a myriad of others. We have encouraged each of our member organisations to share their expertise and ideas with you, individually, or through their associations.

Though informed by our members' insights and experiences, our own submission focuses on issues that apply across the nonprofit sector.

We are grateful for the wisdom of our regional partner networks across Ontario, including the Ontario Nonprofit Network, with whom we know you also work closely. We are endorsing many of the recommendations they are making, but also illustrating how pan-provincial and pan-sector issues are being felt here in London and Southwestern Ontario, the communities we know best and help care for.

As you may recall, organisations in London from all sectors are currently engaged in a whole-of-community response to a homelessness crisis that no single sector can solve on its own. Nonprofits, naturally, will play a central role in delivering on the proposed solutions, just as nonprofits have always worked to build strong, connected, and prosperous communities -- in good times and in bad.

In the following pages, we propose investments in Ontario Budget 2023 that move beyond emergency response and help to build an ever-ready, resilient nonprofit sector, a partner to government, delivering innovative solutions on public priorities in a collaborative way.

Sincerely,

Maureen Cassidy,
Interim CEO,
Pillar Nonprofit Network



RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR INVESTMENT



1

Create a “home in government” for the nonprofit sector.

2

Help build a resilient nonprofit workforce.

3

Help rebuild a culture of volunteerism in Ontario.



DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONTARIO BUDGET 2023 AND A RESILIENT NONPROFIT PARTNER



1

Reduce red tape and inefficiencies by creating a “home in government” for the nonprofit sector.

Working in their many issue areas, Ontario’s 58,000 nonprofits and charities liaise individually with one or more of 16 of Ontario’s 29 government ministries, likely resulting in many similar or identical communications and clarifications, and likely missing the opportunity for broader and more impactful collaboration. As a sector, nonprofits account for 7.9% of Ontario’s GDP, on a par with some of the largest sectors and much greater than many who are represented by their own ministries. As the Ontario Nonprofit Network has pointed out in its pre-budget submission, a whole-of-government approach for Ontario’s nonprofits and charities could reduce inefficiencies and lead to better sector-wide solutions for better services to Ontarians. In London, we are seeing the opportunity for better services to the community when government is able to convene its sector partners in a whole of community response. We urge you to make a minister-level appointment and office for the nonprofit sector in Ontario. Should the government wish to take steps short of a ministerial appointment, we would urge you to explore the work of the Premier’s Council on Charities and Civil Society in Alberta as another model to ensure a home in government for this critical economic and social driver.

2

Make Ontario’s growth sustainable and equitable by helping to build a resilient nonprofit workforce.

Nation-wide data reveals that the nonprofit sector workforce is experiencing precarity at a time when both demand for and cost of services continue to grow. Locally, Pillar collaborated in 2022 with our regional workforce development board to analyse our most recent regional employer survey and found that nonprofit employers are facing disproportionate difficulty in attracting, hiring, and retaining workers, [1] as are care economy employers, [2] inclusive of public and for-profit employers. We know, from national surveying, that nonprofit workers are earning well below the nation’s average, and we know that this disparity shows up in Ontario. As of 2019, the average



DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONTARIO BUDGET 2023 AND A RESILIENT NONPROFIT PARTNER



salary of a worker at a community nonprofit was \$41,967 as compared to \$53,736 for all sectors. For some, the implications are stark: “If we’re an anti-poverty organisation, our staff should not be living in poverty,” one local nonprofit leader says. “In London, where we have the lowest unemployment rates, we really are struggling to be competitive.” [3]

Recruitment and retention problems are also magnified by severe burnout and moral injury in the sector, captured by a grassroots survey of frontline housing workers in London this past summer. [4] We also know that our nonprofit workforce is made up disproportionately of women, of newcomers, and of racialized people, making a nonprofit workforce strategy critical to creating more equitable opportunities for workers in Ontario. In addition, Ontarians are dependent on a strong nonprofit workforce to enable their own participation in the workforce. We applaud Ontario’s participation in the CWELCC and commitment to 53,000 new, affordable licensed child care spaces by December 2026, but we note that these spaces will need to be staffed and that many families will be left out of economic opportunity if they can not be. A strong, resilient nonprofit workforce is essential to ensuring economic opportunity and strong, sustainable services in Ontario, and so we join the Ontario Nonprofit Network in recommending that the Ontario government:

- Allocate funds from the Skills Development Fund or other appropriate mechanisms to support the development of a sector-wide labour force strategy and workforce development plan. The strategy will include promoting careers in nonprofits and creating opportunities for workers to attain in-demand skills.
- Phase in wage parity with annual instalments for similar groups of frontline workers across municipalities, hospitals, schools, and community settings to achieve equal pay for equal work in four years. Wage parity will lead to better talent recruitment and retention, resolving the HR crisis in community care and taking the pressure off institutional care.





3

Help us to rebuild a culture of volunteerism in Ontario.

Ontarians can be rightly proud of their volunteerism. In 2018, 41.5% of Ontario residents volunteered, contributing a total of 612 million volunteer hours annually. [5] Nonprofits have a special relationship to volunteerism. Half of Ontario's nonprofit sector is completely volunteer driven.

However, the pandemic has had an enormous impact on the capacity of the nonprofit sector to reconvene this community powerhouse. A sector survey this year showed that 62 per cent of organisations have lost volunteers, [6] and StatsCan reports that 68 per cent of Ontario nonprofits intend to recruit volunteers but 36 percent of them lack time and resources to do so. [7] We should also be concerned about the loss of health-related and social co-benefits to volunteerism, like the reduction of isolation for seniors and others. We know from the rise of micro-volunteering and mutual aid that Ontarians still want to be engaged and to help in their communities. But they are also having greater difficulty finding positions with organisations that offer training and ensure safe, rewarding experiences. We appreciate the role of government in marshalling Ontario volunteers in its emergency response but, alongside the ONN, we recommend for long term resilience in volunteerism that you:

- Create a provincial volunteer recovery strategy in consultation with the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network, volunteer centres like Pillar, and the broader nonprofit sector to address the negative impacts of the pandemic on volunteerism and prepare for future emergencies.
- Build on your removal of fees for Criminal Record Checks and Judicial Matters Checks by removing fees for vulnerable sector police record checks, which account for 80 per cent of checks conducted by municipal police services annually.





1. "New Report Shows Area Nonprofits Face Steep Workforce Recovery," Pillar Nonprofit Network, October 28, 2022. <https://pillarnonprofit.ca/news/nonprofitwork>
2. "London Area Employers in the Care Economy Facing Significant Labour Challenges," Pillar Nonprofit Network, June 7, 2022. <https://pillarnonprofit.ca/news/london-area-employers-care-economy-facing-significant-labour-challenges>
3. "Homeless agencies warn of 'perfect storm' with major consequences," London Free Press, Nov 9, 2022. <https://lfpres.com/news/local-news/homeless-agencies-warn-of-perfect-storm-with-far-reaching-consequences>
4. "FOR THE PUBLIC," #TheForgotten519, 2022. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QITcbagF3S4hvcMWwjWAD3irOOGxNwTm>
5. "Volunteer rate and average annual volunteer hours, by definition of volunteering and gender," Statistics Canada, January 26, 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=4510004001&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.1&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.3>
6. "State of the Sector During Uncertain Times," Ontario Nonprofit Network, 2022. <https://theonnc.ca/topics/policy-priorities/covid-19-resources/covid19-pandemic-surveys/>
7. "Impacts or expected impacts volunteer recruitment and retention challenges have had on the business or organization, fourth quarter of 2022 (Table 33-10-0618-01)," Statistics Canada, November 25, 2022. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3310061801>



ABOUT PILLAR NONPROFIT NETWORK



For more than 20 years, Pillar Nonprofit Network has championed cross-sectoral collaboration between and among governments, businesses, and the nonprofit sector as the three pillars of community impact and positive change.

Our mission is to strengthen, through a heightened equity lens, individuals, organisations, and enterprises that are invested in positive community impact and we envision an engaged, inclusive and vibrant community.

We deliver on our mission by increasing awareness of nonprofits and social enterprises as social and economic drivers; supporting them to develop inclusive workplaces; facilitating collaboration through a network approach that connects nonprofit organisations to each other and business and government; and finding new ways, programs, and services to address our community's most persistent challenges.

Our current strategic plan binds us and empowers us to put equity, change, and recovery in action: to acknowledge our shared complicity in anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism and all intersecting oppressions, and to drive ourselves and our network to action; to work together across sectors and shift inequitable structures and systems to create transformational change; and to promote an equitable and sustainable recovery that addresses the inequities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Representing thousands of people working in hundreds of organisations, we are a network of nonprofits, charities, foundations, social enterprises, cooperatives, social financiers, responsible investors, innovators, and caring individuals engaged in community care.

We are a ready and able partner in making Ontario better for those who live here now and those who will in future.

