

# PILLAR NONPROFIT NETWORK

## 2022 PROVINCIAL PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

A JUST ONTARIO FOR ALL



**PILLAR**  
nonprofit network

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 3 ABOUT PILLAR NONPROFIT NETWORK
- 4 INTRODUCTION FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
- 5 RECOMMENDED PRIORITY AREAS FOR INVESTMENT
- 6-9 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED BY OUR MEMBERS AND NETWORK



# ABOUT PILLAR NONPROFIT NETWORK



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nonprofit network

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

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

We deliver on this 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 organizations 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 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 organizations, we are a network of nonprofits, charities, foundations, social enterprises, cooperatives, social financiers, responsible investors, innovators, and caring individuals engaged in community care informed by our communities.

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



# INTRODUCTION FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Minister Bethlenfalvy,

We appreciate the importance of consultation, and this submission comes after inviting feedback from our 1500 members across hundreds of organizations and consulting more deeply with many. A few were able to present to the Standing Committee on Finance Public Hearings alongside us; some made their own presentations; and some have also submitted written materials. We regard them as experts in their own communities and we support their many ideas.

And we understand the inclination and the need to set priorities. We are proposing some. But we also understand, as our members have demonstrated, that there are a myriad of needs, and all are important. In the midst of another wave of COVID-19, a great number of people in Ontario are feeling unsafe, ignored, or forgotten, perhaps a greater number than ever before. Those of us in the community sector know that this has always been true for some, that everything happens at the margins, and that the pandemic has widened the margins and opened our eyes to how precariously people in Ontario are living and working.

And so, while we normally decry incremental change in favour of broad systems change, because the problems we face are wicked and connected, we also recognize that first among our priorities is to make some progress on all fronts.

Quickly. Because the problems people in Ontario face are connected. Progress in all of them, now, will change lives.

To take just one example of the ways our members feel this interconnectedness, local Indigenous-led organizations are fighting on many fronts: trying to maintain their usual services to Indigenous people and communities; leading and advising our organization and its members on a path to reconciliation; but also providing emergency winter shelter to people experiencing homelessness, disproportionately Indigenous; this after caring for other First Nations people sheltering in the London region while forest fires threaten their homes in the Summer of 2021; and still fighting through jurisdictional excuses for clean drinking water just outside of London, Ontario. We need to make our province safer in so many ways and support the people doing the work of mitigating harm to those left vulnerable. I am pleased for the opportunity to propose investments that would do so.

Sincerely,

Mojdeh Cox,  
Executive Director  
Pillar Nonprofit Network



# RECOMMENDED PRIORITY AREAS FOR INVESTMENT



To address the many needs of the organizations in the community sector, the people doing the work, and the people they serve, acknowledging and addressing all needs will amount to profound change. These are the priority areas identified through consultation with our members, followed by specific policy recommendations:

1

Invest in poverty reduction and increase investment in supportive housing.

2

Increased investment in mental health care including, but not limited to, harm reduction in addiction services.

3

Invest in women's economic wellbeing.

4

Invest in equity and inclusion by funding initiatives that advance reconciliation and eliminate racism and hate.

5

Invest in a green transition, cancelling harmful projects and subsidies and reinvesting in green projects and jobs.

6

Invest in full sector recovery and sustainability through stabilization funds, investments in digital transformation, and targeted funding for unincorporated community organizations.



# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED BY OUR MEMBERS AND NETWORK



1

## **Invest in poverty reduction and increase investment in supportive housing.**

London and communities all over this province don't just have a housing crisis, we have an affordable housing crisis and a homelessness crisis. This crisis is solvable with investment in genuine solutions that are proven to work and that sustainably address the root issues: affordable housing with supports is the solution to homelessness, and income is the solution to poverty. These policy recommendations have been prepared by Unity Project for the Relief of Homelessness.

1.1

Build quality, low-carbon and affordable social housing and particularly, rent-geared-to-income housing;

1.2

Raise social assistance rates – OW and ODSP – to achieve a minimum income of \$2000 monthly, and

1.3

Extend emergency funding for homelessness services to ensure recovery beyond the pandemic.

2

## **Increased investment in mental health care including, but not limited to, harm reduction in addiction services.**

These recommendations were included in the Public Hearings testimony from Pillar member London InterCommunity Health Centre.

2.1

Increase investments in community-based health and social services and reduce the red tape involved in getting projects approved and built; and

2.2

Increase access to team based primary health care. Grow resources within team-based models – Community Health Centres, Nurse Practitioner Led Clinics, and Family Health Teams – and target investments in communities that have citizens with high medical and social complexity, but low access to team-based care.



# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED BY OUR MEMBERS AND NETWORK



## 3

### **Invest in women's economic wellbeing.**

- 3.1 Invest in the child care sector by increasing base-funding and making additional investments to prevent nonprofit child care closures; Partner with the federal government to transition to a publicly funded child care system;
- 3.2 Invest in the education system so that children can learn in smaller classroom settings to avoid repeated school closures during this and future pandemic waves;
- 3.3 Invest in home and community care for better outcomes and reduced hospital care;
- 3.4 Stabilize enhanced funding for VAW shelters and create a provincewide strategy on gender-based violence;
- 3.5 Mandate 10 paid sick days immediately and repeal Bill 124.

## 4

### **Invest in equity and inclusion by funding initiatives that advance reconciliation and eliminate racism and hate.**

- 4.1 Adopt and fund the Calls to Action upon provincial governments from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, especially those to do with child welfare; with education for reconciliation, not limited to establishing senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education; and those calls to action to do with missing children and burial information;
- 4.2 Adopt and fund the provincial Calls for Justice from the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls;
- 4.3 Allocate funding for land claim settlements;



# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED BY OUR MEMBERS AND NETWORK



## 4 Invest in equity and inclusion by funding initiatives that advance reconciliation and eliminate racism and hate.

4.4 Adopt and fund the provincial recommendations made by the National Council of Canadian Muslims on the occasion of the National Summit on Islamophobia, beyond the \$10M committed in the Fall Economic Statement, especially those in the Our London Family Act, once passed;

4.5 Work with Black communities and the federal government to re-establish Ontario's role in eliminating anti-Black racism.

## 5 Invest in a green transition, cancelling harmful projects and subsidies and reinvesting in green projects and jobs.

5.1 Cancel the Highway 413 project and reinvest the estimated \$6 billion of taxpayer funding into public transit;

5.2 Phase out natural gas in Ontario's energy grid, increase investment in energy conservation efforts and invest in renewables and hydroelectric from Manitoba and Quebec to address Ontario's rising costs of electricity while reducing emissions;

5.3 Invest in nature-based climate solutions by going back to pre-2018 level investments in tree planting initiatives in Ontario. This initiative is especially important for London given the historical flooding of the Thames River at a time when tree cover was significantly less than it is today;

5.4 End fossil fuel subsidies and reinvest the savings in aspects of the Provincial government's "Preserving and Protecting our Environment for Future Generations: A Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan" which include investing in increasing energy storage, developing an Emission Reduction Fund, and investing in agricultural solutions;

5.5 Evaluate the impact on emissions when reviewing the draft Ontario Budget to review all decisions that impact Treasury Board decisions in Ontario's "Preserving and Protecting our Environment for Future Generations: A Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan".





# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED BY OUR MEMBERS AND NETWORK



6

## **Invest in full sector recovery and sustainability through stabilization funds, investments in digital transformation, and targeted funding for unincorporated community organizations.**

We are aware that the government has long worked closely with both the Ontario Nonprofit Network and the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network. We are members of both networks and support their work and recommendations.

**6.1** Establish a fund for community sector recovery to increase the visibility of supports for the sector and reduce the reliance on piecemeal programs with unclear eligibility. In the absence of such a fund, create targeted supports for the various subsectors identified in our priority areas, including the specific needs of the arts and performance sectors that are addressed in a written submission by Pillar member Eunju Yi of the London Arts Council;

**6.2** Introduce \$500 to \$5000 micro-grants for the 50 percent of nonprofits that have no paid staff, delivered through the Ontario Volunteer Centres that support them. Many of these organizations are grassroots initiatives with members from already-underserved populations that maintain themselves and social cohesion in their communities through small projects. They have experienced significant revenue declines and/or disconnection and typically do not have an existing funding relationship with the Ontario government. Volunteer Centres have stepped up during the pandemic, helping organizations under rapidly-changing circumstances. We ask that the federal and Ontario governments work together to cost-share this level of support;

**6.3** Per the testimony of Pillar member Champions of Change Canada, invest in youth-led grassroots organizations and include flexibility of funding so that program funds can be used for wages when identified as necessary;

**6.4** Establish a home in government for the nonprofit sector. This could take the form of an Associate Ministry, a secretariat or directorate. Or, as a stepping stone, establish a council of the community sector responsible to the Premier through the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services on the Alberta model. Such a council could help advise the Premier on the sector's readiness as a partner in addressing government priorities and help advise on policy to increase the capacity of civil society to make Ontario a place where all people can succeed. Where we all are safe. Where we all belong. A just Ontario for all.

