



The Honourable Maryam Monsef
Minister of Women and Gender Equality, and Rural Economic Development
Women and Gender Equality Canada
P.O. Box 9087, Station T CSC
By email: Maryam.Monsef@parl.gc.ca, minister-ministre@swc-cfc.gc.ca

January 15, 2020

Dear Minister Monsef:

On behalf of the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), we are writing to congratulate you on your reappointment as the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and the new portfolio of Rural Economic Development. We look forward to working with you to support and strengthen communities across Canada.

ONN is the independent nonprofit network for the 58,000 nonprofits and charities in Ontario, focused on policy, advocacy and services to strengthen the sector as a key pillar of our society and economy. We work to create a public policy environment that allows nonprofits to thrive. We engage our network of diverse nonprofit organizations across Ontario to work together on issues affecting the sector and channel the voices of our network to government, funders, and other stakeholders.

Across Canada, there are over 171,000 diverse nonprofits and charities engaging in public benefit activities. The sector plays a vital role as an economic driver, generating more than 7 percent of Canada's GDP and employing over 2 million people. Nonprofits receive less than half of their revenues from governments. This means they can leverage public investments - via business activities, donations, and the contributions of volunteers - into significantly higher value in the services they deliver, all the while creating jobs locally. Nonprofits and charities are particularly important in rural regions as they build communities and support local economies.

For this reason, we are pleased to see that your mandate letter highlights that nonprofits are a key group to engage with and a valuable source of knowledge as you implement your priorities over the next four years. ONN is well positioned to support your Department of Women and Gender Equality Canada and the Canadian government to build stronger, more inclusive and more resilient communities.

As you know, ONN has been working with your department on women's economic empowerment in the nonprofit sector through a project-based grant. Prior to our work, very little was known about how the sector's distinctive features, challenges, and trends significantly impacted its women workers who make up 80 per cent of the nonprofit labour force. Over the past three years, we've been exploring what challenges - such as the gender wage gap, 'glass ceilings', and leaky

leadership pipelines - immigrant, racialized, and Indigenous women, women from the LGBTQ2S community and women with disabilities face in our sector's labour market.

[We heard](#)¹ from 730 women workers across Ontario that the barriers women face in the broader labour market also exist in the nonprofit sector; however, they manifest differently given the sector's context. Since then, we have mobilized our research to mitigate and reduce these barriers by building and coordinating efforts at the systems (policy), network (sector-wide), and organizational levels, as evident in our 10-point [solutions](#)² plan. We have learned that when our sector's women workers can access decent work, not only do they do well, but our organizations better meet their missions, and as a result our communities thrive.

Our women's economic empowerment work can support your mandate priorities. In particular, we encourage you to consider:

- Introducing [decent work indicators](#)³ in your grant agreements as you sustain historic government funding commitments to women's organizations and equality seeking groups;
- Ensuring representation of nonprofit and charities on the national secretariat for a pan-Canadian childcare system as our sector is [proven to provide higher quality care](#)⁴ in comparison to other sectors; and
- Promoting ONN's [recommendations](#)⁵ on modernizing employment insurance maternity and parental leave benefits as you support the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development in the development of the Guaranteed Paid Family Leave Program

We urge you to take full advantage of the expertise, experience and community connections available through Canada's diverse nonprofit sector as you:

- Implement the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice;
- Develop a National Action Plan on Gender-based Violence; and
- Support the creation of a National Institute for Women's Health Research

As you embark on a second term in this critical portfolio, we thank you for your continued support in recognizing the nonprofit sector as a pillar of a strong sustainable economy and an inclusive society – alongside the public and private sectors – and for helping nonprofits to continue to provide high quality programs and services, good jobs, and meaningful volunteer opportunities.

¹ Women's Voices - Stories about working in Ontario's nonprofit sector:
<https://theonn.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work/womens-voices/>

² Decent Work for Women Working in Ontario's Nonprofit Sector: Summary of Research Findings and Solutions:
<https://theonn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/DWW-Findings-and-Solutions-Summary-2019-ONLINE-NOV-2019.pdf>

³ Decent Work Checklist: <https://theonn.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work/checklist/>

⁴ Childcare Briefing Notes: What research says about quality in for-profit, non-profit and public child care:
<https://www.childcarecanada.org/publications/briefing-notes/11/11/what-research-says-about-quality-profit-non-profit-and-public-chil>

⁵ Modernizing Maternity and Parental Employment Insurance Benefits: A Policy Brief:
<https://theonn.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work/ei-policy-brief/>

We have been delighted to provide information, analysis, and support to your department and look forward to continue doing so.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss next steps in developing a continued partnership with the nonprofit sector in the service of strong and thriving Canadian communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cathy" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Taylor".

Cathy Taylor
Executive Director
Ontario Nonprofit Network