



The Honourable Carla Qualtrough  
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion  
Employment and Social Development Canada  
140 Promenade du Portage  
Gatineau, Quebec, Canada K1A 0J9  
By email: [Carla.Qualtrough@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Carla.Qualtrough@parl.gc.ca)

January 27, 2020

Dear Minister Qualtrough:

On behalf of the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), we are writing to congratulate you on your appointment as the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion. 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 in Ontario, focused on policy, advocacy and services to strengthen Ontario's nonprofit sector as a key pillar of our society and economy. ONN works 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 governments, 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.

For this reason, we are pleased 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 Employment and Social Development Canada and the Canadian government to build stronger, more inclusive and more resilient communities. We urge you to consider three opportunities:

- Support the development of up-to-date labour market information for Canada's nonprofit and charitable sector when working to strengthen local labour market data with Statistics Canada and with the support of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry
- Review ONN's [recommendations](#)<sup>1</sup> on modernizing employment insurance maternity and parental leave benefits as you strengthen the program and support the Minister of

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<sup>1</sup> Modernizing Maternity and Parental Employment Insurance Benefits: A Policy Brief:  
<https://theonncan.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work/ei-policy-brief/>

Families, Children and Social Development in the development of the Guaranteed Paid Family Leave Program

- Take full advantage of the expertise, experience and community connections available through Canada's diverse nonprofit sector as you implement the new Canada Training Benefit with the support of the Minister of Finance

Labour force issues are important for our sector as our people are our biggest resource. Like you, ONN is concerned with good quality jobs, maximum labour force participation and a strengthened Employment Insurance program. For this reason, over the last eight years ONN has been working to develop and implement a Labour Force Strategy. Based on our research<sup>2</sup> we have learned that when our sector's 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. In turn, we have developed a sector-wide [employee benefits plan](#)<sup>3</sup> and a [pension plan](#)<sup>4</sup> to begin to address our sector's labour force needs.

However, the very limited current data available on the Canadian nonprofit sector's labour force inhibits our sector's ability to do further workforce development and strategize around current and imminent labour force challenges. Currently, we have no up-to-date and comprehensive labour market information (LMI) on the sector. We do not have data on the composition of the workforce (e.g., demographic diversity, full-time versus part-time versus seasonal/casual, etc.), compensation, benefits and pension coverage, union penetration, career patterns, turnover rates, variety of occupational classifications, and occupational risks. Many have noted the impact of this labour market issue, including the recent report from the Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector - [A Roadmap to a Stronger Charitable Sector](#)<sup>5</sup>. This can be resolved by **supporting the development of up-to-date labour market information for Canada's nonprofit and charitable sector when acting on your mandate priority to strengthen local labour market data.**

More recently, we have been working with the Department of Women and Gender Equality Canada 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 immigrant, racialized, and Indigenous women, women from the LGBTQ2S community and women

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<sup>2</sup> Shaping the Future:

<https://theonn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/ONN-Mowat-Shaping-the-Future-Final-Report-October2013.pdf>;

Change Work: Valuing decent work in the not-for-profit sector:

[https://theonn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Report\\_Changework\\_ONN-Mowat-TNC\\_Atkinson\\_2015-11-25.pdf](https://theonn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Report_Changework_ONN-Mowat-TNC_Atkinson_2015-11-25.pdf);

Leading our Future: Leadership Competencies in Ontario's Nonprofit sector:

<https://theonn.ca/our-work/our-people/leadership-competencies/>

<sup>3</sup> ONN Employee Benefits program: <https://theonn.ca/services/purchasing/onn-employee-benefits-program/>

<sup>4</sup> OPTrust sector-wide pension plan: <https://theonn.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work/pension/>

<sup>5</sup> Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector Catalyst for Change: A Roadmap to a Stronger Charitable sector: <https://sencanada.ca/en/info-page/parl-42-1/cssb-catalyst-for-change/#collapse-item1>

with disabilities face in our sector's labour market, such as the gender wage gap, 'glass ceilings', and 'leaky leadership' pipelines.

From our research, we [heard](#)<sup>6</sup> from 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](#)<sup>7</sup> plan.

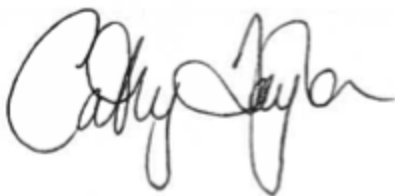
Our women's economic empowerment work can support your mandate priority to strengthen the Employment Insurance program and support the development of the Guaranteed Paid Family Leave Program. **In reviewing our [recommendations](#)<sup>8</sup> on modernizing employment insurance maternity and parental leave benefits, you'll notice that they not only benefit nonprofit workers, but all workers across Canada.**

Last, **our sector's expertise, experience, and community connections across Canada, as well as its ability to leverage public investments into higher value in the services they deliver, can be beneficial as you implement the new Canada Training Benefit with the support of the Minister of Finance.**

As you embark on your 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.

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,



Cathy Taylor  
Executive Director  
Ontario Nonprofit Network

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<sup>6</sup> Women's Voices - Stories about working in Ontario's nonprofit sector:  
<https://theonn.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work/womens-voices/>

<sup>7</sup> 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>

<sup>8</sup> Modernizing Maternity and Parental Employment Insurance Benefits: A Policy Brief:  
<https://theonn.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work/ei-policy-brief/>