

The Honourable Jane McKenna, Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues  
Office of the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues  
6th Floor, 400 University Ave.  
Toronto, ON M7A 1T7  
By email: jane.mckenna@pc.ola.org

June 25, 2021

Dear Minister McKenna:

On behalf of the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), we are writing to congratulate you on your appointment as the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues. It has been a pleasure working with you over the last few years to support Ontario's nonprofits and charities, and we look forward to continuing our work with you in your new role.

As you know, 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.

Ontario's nonprofit sector plays a vital role as an economic driver, contributing \$65 billion to our province's GDP. As a sector, Ontario nonprofits receive less than half of their revenues from governments, which means they can leverage public investments - via business activities, donations, and the contributions of volunteers - into significantly higher value in the services they deliver to Ontarians, all while creating jobs locally. The nonprofit sector is positioned to support the Ontario government to build a stronger economy and a resilient province. Working together, we can deliver real change.

Over the past four years, ONN has been working on women's economic empowerment in the nonprofit sector as women make up 80 per cent of the employees in our sector. That's approximately 800,000 women, many of whom are Black, immigrant and other racialized women. In our province-wide research we heard<sup>1</sup> from 760 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

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<sup>1</sup> Ontario Nonprofit Network. "Women's Voices - Stories about working in Ontario's nonprofit sector." October 2018. <https://theonnc.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work/womens-voices/>

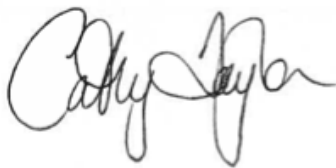
mitigate and reduce these barriers by developing and implementing sector-wide policy, and organizational solutions.<sup>2</sup> When women working in our sector can access decent work, not only do they thrive, but organizations can better meet their missions, and support the communities they serve.

As you, your team, and the new Task Force on Women and the Economy, consider the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and in particular what is needed to ensure their equitable economic recovery, we urge you to work in partnership with the nonprofit sector. To meaningfully move the needle on women's economic empowerment, the task force must include strategies and support for women-majority sectors, like the nonprofit sector. There is a serious risk of taking business, boards, and STEM as the only pathway to women's economic recovery: it does not impact the majority of women workers nor does it solve the undervaluing of work in which women are concentrated in historically and traditionally, such as care work. The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically affected nonprofits, impacting its 800,000 women-majority workforce. The task force can have real impact if it carves out and supports multiple pathways to women's economic recovery.<sup>3</sup>

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss how ONN and our network can act as a partner to the government in advancing gender equity in Ontario.

Congratulations again on your new role!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cathy Taylor', written in a cursive style.

Cathy Taylor  
Executive Director  
Ontario Nonprofit Network

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<sup>2</sup> Ontario Nonprofit Network. "Decent Work for Women" October 2020.

<https://theonn.ca/decentworkforwomen/#micro-sc5>

<sup>3</sup> Ontario Nonprofit Network. "The pathway to women's economic recovery is through the nonprofit and charitable sector." January 2021.

<https://theonn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/National-Action-Plan-for-Women-in-the-Economy-Briefing-Note-External-JAN-2021.pdf>