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**ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION – BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
ORDER-IN-COUNCIL APPOINTMENT OF
NATALKA FALCOMER ***

Prepared for:

Standing Committee on
Government Agencies

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THE ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION	1
MANDATE AND OPERATIONS	1
OTF Grants	2
Board of Directors	2
Grant Review Teams	3
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS	3
THE WITNESS	4
POSSIBLE QUESTIONS	4

INTRODUCTION

This paper has been prepared for Members participating in the Committee's review of the Order-in-Council appointment of Nataoka Falcomer as a part-time member of the Ontario Trillium Foundation Board of Directors. It describes the operations of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, presents information about the appointee, and identifies possible lines of questioning.

THE ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

Enabling Statute	Responsible Ministry
Corporations Act ; O.C. 2527/82; O.C. 2880/98	Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Agency type	Most Recent Annual Report
Operational enterprise	2019-20
Activities of the Agency	
The foundation provides time-limited grants to not-for-profit, charitable organizations in four sectors: social and human services, arts and culture, sports and recreation, and the environment. ¹	
Board Membership	
Statutory Number of Members: Not more than 25 Number Appointed by Cabinet: All Term of Office: Terms of one, two, or three years to a maximum of three terms.	Remuneration: Appointees are eligible to receive expenses.
Position Requirements: None specified.	

MANDATE AND OPERATIONS

Established in 1982 under the authority of an Order-in-Council and the *Corporations Act*, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF or the Foundation) is an operational enterprise agency of the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. It is accountable to the Ministry through a [Memorandum of Understanding](#). The Foundation's mission is to build healthy and vibrant communities throughout Ontario by strengthening the capacity of the voluntary sector, through investments in community-based initiatives.

In 2019-20, the Foundation awarded 645 grants worth over \$115 million to charitable and not-for-profit organizations.²

¹ According to the Foundation, "First Nations, and municipalities with a population less than 20,000 or their cultural and recreational agencies for initiatives in the Inspired or Active People action areas" are also eligible to apply. So, too, are "County Library Boards and Local Services Boards." See Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), [Who We Are: FAQs](#).

² OTF, [2019-20 Annual Report](#), p. 5.

OTF Grants

The Foundation provides grants to Ontario's not-for-profit and charitable organizations in the arts and culture, environment, human and social services, and sports and recreation sectors. Funding is allocated through different investment streams (each based on the size and need of its grantees) and customized granting programs. In 2019-20, the following programs were active:

- The **Seed Investment Stream**: Seed Grants range from \$5,000 to \$75,000 for a term of up to one year.
- The **Grow Investment Stream**: Grow Grants range from \$50,000 to \$250,000 per year for a term of two to three years.
- The **Capital Investment Stream**: Capital Grants (for capital-specific projects) range from \$5,000 to \$150,000 for a term of up to one year.
- **The Youth Opportunities Fund**: Administered on behalf of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, this annual \$13.95 million program provides grants and capacity-building support to youth-led grassroots groups that serve young people who face barriers to economic and social wellbeing.

Figure 1 shows the breakdown of OTF grants for 2019-2020.

Figure 1 – OTF Grants Summary, 2019-2020

Investment Stream	Amount Invested	Number of Grants
Capital	\$22,609,200	237
Seed	\$11,458,100	194
Grow	\$67,734,500	171
Youth Opportunities Fund	\$13,224,100	43
Total	\$115,024,900	645

Source: OTF, [2019-2020 Annual Report](#), p. 7.

The Foundation also administers [Local Poverty Reduction Fund](#) on behalf of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. This six-year initiative (totalling \$50M) was launched in 2015 as part of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy. It provides grants for community-driven projects and partnerships that improve the lives of those most affected by poverty. In 2019-2020, 65,094 people across Ontario were reached by the fund. Grantees have allocated \$22,025,834 for jobs to be created through the funding they have received.³

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meets, on average, four to five times per year in person, and four to six times via teleconference calls. In-person meetings are usually held in Toronto. Given the nature of the work, Board members typically spend 50 to

³ Ibid., p. 9.

150 hours each year on activities such as meeting preparation and Board and committee meeting time.⁴

The Board is accountable for the governance and oversight of OTF and has responsibility for the stewardship of the Foundation. The key responsibilities of the Board are set out in the MOU and are as follows:

- cultivate relationship with Ontario Government;
- establish strategic direction and performance expectations;
- undertake risk management and monitor the performance of the Foundation;
- ensure quality assurance;
- communicate with stakeholders;
- monitor and ensure effective governance;
- hire and monitor performance of the CEO;
- participate in the Grant Review and monitoring process; and
- provide oversight of OTF's operating plan.⁵

Grant Review Teams

Grant Review Teams are advisory committees to the Board of Directors. They ensure effective outreach and communications regarding funding programs, and review grant applications within the guidelines provided by the Foundation. Generally, between 18 and 24 members are appointed to the Grant Review Team for each of the OTF's 16 geographic areas.⁶

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In January 2019, the government announced a \$15 million reduction for OTF's 2018-19 budget.⁷ According to media reports, the budget reduction was part of the government's efforts to reduce the provincial deficit, but some commentators expressed concern that it would impact on the number of grants available.⁸

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the non-profit sector and its ability to support and serve communities across Ontario. In recognition of this, OTF recently launched the one-time [Resilient Communities Fund](#) (RCF) to support rebuilding the capacity of non-profit organizations that have been impacted by the pandemic.

⁴ Public Appointments Secretariat, [Ontario Trillium Foundation](#).

⁵ OTF, [Board Governance Framework](#).

⁶ OTF, [Grant Review Teams](#).

⁷ Christina Jung, "[Ontario Trillium Foundation \\$15M cut to make 'significant difference' to non-profit organization, charities](#)," *CBC News*, January 18, 2019.

⁸ Ibid.

In August 2020, the government announced an investment of \$83 million in support of the RCF which will provide grants of up to \$150,000 to help eligible non-profit organizations, including food banks, child and youth programs and Royal Canadian Legion branches, recover from COVID-19 and continue the delivery of programming in their communities.⁹ Eligibility and assessment criteria of the fund can be found [here](#).

The Foundation expects demand for the OTF grants will reach a record in the 2020-2021 period high due to the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19.¹⁰

THE WITNESS

The witness, Nataalka Falcomer, is seeking appointment as a part-time member.

According to the Office of the Premier, the witness, of Toronto, is the Founder and Managing Partner of Groundworks Firm Commercial Leasing Services, and the Executive Vice President Corporate Development for Chestnut Park Real Estate Limited Brokerage and Christie's International Real Estate. Her community involvement includes serving as a board member and Director of the Real Estate Institute of Canada.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

What has motivated the witness to seek this appointment?

How does the witness feel that the witness' professional, volunteer, or other experience will enhance the performance of the witness' duties in this role?

What particular contribution does the witness hope to make to the Board?

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the non-profit sector and its ability to support and serve communities across Ontario. What does the witness see as the role of the Board in overcoming the current challenges in Ontario's non-profit sector?

⁹ Ontario, [Ontario Supporting Non-Profits as Province Recovers from COVID-19](#), news release, August 5, 2020.

¹⁰ OTF, [2019-2020 Annual Report](#), p. 4.