

Amarjot Sandhu, Chair, Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, Ontario
Legislative Assembly

By email to Julia Douglas, Clerk: comm-financeaffairs@ola.org

From: Shelagh Paterson, executive director, Ontario Library Association

August 27, 2020

Subject: Study of the recommendations relating to the Economic and Fiscal Update Act, 2020 and the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on small and medium enterprises

Dear Mr. Sandhu and members of the committee:

We are writing in response to the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) August 19, 2020 presentation to the committee during which insights were shared on how the global pandemic has affected the Ontario non-profit sector.

The Ontario Library Association is a member of the ONN. We would like to share some specific impacts and examples from the perspective of a non-profit professional association.

Founded in 1900, the Ontario Library Association consists of 5,000 members who work in public, academic, school and health libraries. Our mission is to empower those in the library and information services sector to build informed, participatory and inclusive communities across Ontario. The association ensures that libraries support, engage, and enrich the lives of Ontarians.

Furthermore, our association's activities deliver a real impact for Ontario's economy. OLA's Super Conference, held annually at the end of January, attracts more than 4,500 exhibitors and delegates from across North America and generates an estimated \$2 million+ in revenues to Toronto and Ontario businesses. OLA Forest of Reading Festival is Canada's largest reading event for students and is held annually each spring in London, Kitchener-Waterloo and Toronto. In addition to directly driving \$2 million in Canadian book sales, the festival hosts more than 15,000 school aged children, over 100 Canadian authors and illustrators, and employs dozens of educator and arts organizations resulting in approximately \$400,000 in local economic impact.

Due to the impacts of COVID-19 which eliminate the opportunity to deliver these programs in physical spaces, we are facing a 50% revenue loss to our annual budget and are aware of the cascading financial loss to the external organizations who partner with us on these initiatives.

OLA has been able to receive some support through the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and the Service Canada Work-Share program (which involves a 40% reduction of staff time), but our landlord refused to participate in the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program. We have also made a number of decisions to significantly reduce our expenses for the foreseeable future. Combined, these have helped extend our ability to operate as a nonprofit association. However, due to the ongoing global impacts of the pandemic we continue to be concerned about the longer-term viability of our organization.

As such, we would like to emphasize our support for the recommendations put forth by ONN, especially:

- **A stabilization fund for nonprofits:** Stabilization funding for Ontario's non-profit sector to help it in the wake of an estimated \$1.8 billion in revenue losses in just the first three months of the pandemic.
- **"Good Samaritan" protection from liability** for non-profits that follow all emergency orders and public health guidelines.
- **A non-profit social enterprise/social procurement strategy:** A strategy to support social enterprises, including the inclusion of social procurement targets in regulations under the new Supply Chain Management Act.
- **A non-profit advisory table:** A dedicated non-profit advisory table to help non-profits contribute to Ontario's economic recovery and rebuilding.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input about the impact of COVID-19 on non-profit small and medium-sized enterprises and are happy to respond to any additional questions or clarifications as required.

Best regards,



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