



## ONTARIO'S BUSINESS SECTOR STRATEGY: Not-for-Profit Sector

**Ontario's Business Sector Strategy** has established an open and collaborative relationship between government and business stakeholders. Under the strategy, a sector association identifies five priorities that are within the jurisdiction of the provincial government that, if resolved, would strengthen their industry's success. The ministries with responsibility over the priorities have two months to address the issues or deliver alternate solutions that are acceptable to the sector.

### Ontario Nonprofit Network and Ontario's Business Sector Strategy

The business sector strategy process between the Not-for-Profit (NFP) sector and the Government of Ontario grew, in part, out of the government's commitment through initiatives like the Partnership Project to forge a stronger relationship with the sector. The *Business Sector Strategy* began with a listening session in August 2011, followed by a kick-off roundtable on March 26, 2012. The roundtable brought together senior political staff, deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers and staff from key ministries to hear the sector's leaders present their five priorities.

And, 70 days later, deputy ministers from the Ministries of Citizenship and Immigration; Economic Development and Innovation; Infrastructure; the Ontario Commissioner for Community Safety; and an assistant deputy minister of Government Services presented solutions that clearly demonstrate how the Business Sector Strategy process works to deliver quick, responsive and tangible results.

In a two-month period, the Government of Ontario delivered tangible recommendations and clear outcomes by working with the NFP sector, and added momentum to the priority of forging a stronger relationship between the sector and government. Ministries committed to providing support around volunteer screening and improved the process for accessing Vendor of Record. Steps are being taken to streamline and rationalize the funding/investment relationship, and work is in motion to help more eligible NFP organizations access the Infrastructure Ontario Loans Program and bid on surplus government lands.

In the words of ONN co-chair, Jini Stolk, the process has been "an historic opportunity, and the results prove that's the case." Tonya Surman, ONN co-chair, thanked Minister Duguid for his leadership in the Business Sector Strategy process and congratulated political and ministry staff for their hard work, saying "this has been an absolutely astounding process for us."

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The NFP sector is one of the most diverse economic sectors, affecting the lives of every Ontarian through social services, the arts, sports and recreation, environmental conservation, faith groups, and community health services. Ontario's 46,000+ NFP organizations employ about one million people, 15% of Ontario's total workforce, and have an economic impact of nearly \$50 billion. They also have a fundamental impact on Ontario's quality of life and the social well-being of the province. During the business sector strategy process, the sector was represented by the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN).

**Open for Business** is the Ontario government's initiative to create faster, smarter and streamlined government-to-business services and to establish a modern system of government. It's a key part of the government's commitment to make the province more attractive to business while continuing to protect the public interest. Open for Business has three key areas of focus:

- **Modern Government** – create a streamlined and focused regulatory environment that delivers results for business, while protecting public interest
- **Modern Services** – deliver better products and services, including service standards that support business needs
- **New Relationship with Business** – create an open and responsive working relationship between business and government

# Summary of ONN's Five Priorities and the Government's Response

## **Priority 1: Streamlining and Modernizing Government Funding**

By summer 2012, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration will establish a Funding Reform Working Group (FRWG), made up of senior representatives of nine government ministries and an equal number of sector representatives, which will investigate both short and longer term opportunities for reforming Ontario's funding system. The work of the FRWG will be based on guiding principles that aim to move the funding relationship towards implementing more risk based, outcome focused, transparent, and efficient investment processes across government. The sector and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration have already identified six short term reforms which they hope to implement by 2013-2014. The FRWG will also work on implementing broader reforms in the longer term. Funding reform will benefit the sector by simplifying and streamlining funding/investment processes, allowing sector management to focus more time and resources on program design, delivery and outcomes.

## **Priority 2: Police Records Check**

By summer 2012, the Ministries of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and Citizenship and Immigration, in consultation with ONN, will draft a statement referencing provincial legislative and regulatory requirements for police records checks. The statement will be an educational tool for the sector and ministries. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services will also work with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to draft and compile additional plain language materials to assist the NFP sector's screening activities. These resources and the statement will be posted on a website hosted by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Partnership Project. These outcomes will provide the sector with consistent information on provincial government requirements regarding police checks and will enhance the appropriate and effective use of police records checks in the screening process.

## **Priority 3: Expansion of the Infrastructure Ontario Loans Program to the Not-for-Profit Sector**

By summer 2012, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Infrastructure Ontario will form a joint working group with sector representatives to conduct a review of the previous expansion of the loan program to segments of the NFP sector, while at the same time identifying additional NFP sub-sectors for timely inclusion in the program. The working group will also identify and develop supports for facilitator organizations that can help eligible sector organizations prepare successful Loan Program applications and business plans. Following the recommendations of the working group, a proposal for the expansion of the program will be put forward for the government's consideration in late 2012 or early 2013.

## **Priority 4: Maximising Public Investment Returns for Government Surplus Lands**

Subject to government direction and approval, the Ministry of Infrastructure will seek the inclusion of "not-for-profit corporations without share capital that provide a public benefit purpose" in the list of entities that receive circulation of surplus government lands prior to the lands being placed on the open market for sale at market value. Similar to the entities to which government surplus lands are currently circulated (municipalities, public utilities, etc.), eligible NFP corporations would have 30 days in which to indicate an interest in a property. Properties are to be sold at the market rate. By July 2012, a working group will be formed to develop a process for the circulation of surplus lands, including the creation of a registry of eligible organizations to be developed and maintained by ONN.

## **Priority 5: Broader Public Sector Access to Provincial Vendor of Record**

The Ministry of Government Services will remove the requirement to meet any definition of "major transfer payment recipient" and instead implement a comprehensive risk-based framework to open up access to Vendor of Record for transfer payment entities, restricting access only on an exceptional basis. These steps will help some not-for-profits realize substantial cost savings which can be reinvested in other organizational priority areas. The new process will be launched by fall 2012.

For more information please visit [www.ontario.ca/openforbusiness](http://www.ontario.ca/openforbusiness)