



West Central
Women's
Resource
Centre

December 11, 2020

Honourable Rochelle Squires, Minister of Municipal Relations
344 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

cc: Premier Brian Pallister
Hon. Scott Fielding - Minister of Finance
Hon. Heather Stefanson - Minister of Families
Hon. Cameron Friesen - Minister of Health, Seniors, and Active Living
Hon. Ralph Eichler - Minister of Economic Development & Training
Hon. Eileen Clarke - Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations
Hon. Sarah Guillemard - Minister of Conservation and Climate
Hon. Cathy Cox - Minister of Sport, Culture, and Heritage

Dear Minister Squires,

We are writing you today as a group of 11 networks and associations, representing hundreds of organizations serving Manitoba communities. We want to thank you for hosting the roundtable discussion related to Manitoba's Non-Profit Strategy on November 3, 2020, which some of the undersigned were able to attend.

It was a beneficial opportunity to engage directly with the Government of Manitoba. We want to build upon this open and constructive dialogue through a sector table with scheduled, ongoing meetings between our sector and provincial decision-makers, including the Department of Municipal Relations. Multiple Provinces in Canada have established sector tables to serve this purpose, such as the Premier's Council on Charities and Civil Society in Alberta.

This table would enhance the communication and relationships between sector leaders and participating departments, improve the effectiveness of policy and programs targeting community-based organizations, and thereby support Manitoba communities through the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. We see this as an excellent opportunity for input and value-add to your department from agencies on the front-line in Manitoba communities.

We would like to emphasize other key recommendations and suggest them as areas of conversation for future roundtable discussions:

- Co-create and co-implement the Non-Profit Strategy with community organizations and their relevant networks, considering strengths and challenges of the sector.
- Create a stabilization fund to provide financial support for non-profits on the frontlines, especially those organizations that cannot enforce social distancing or work-from home for service or organizational reasons, learning from examples like Alberta's Recovery Fund.
- Expand emergency funding provisions (one-time funding or zero/low interest loans for non-profits, charitable and voluntary organizations which may be facing a funding crisis or drawing on their reserves).
- Provide flexibility measures to assist non-profits that receive funding directly from Government as they manage their agreements with the Province. This could include allowing funds to be moved between budget categories, extending funding agreements concluding in 2019/20 through the 2020/21 fiscal year, postponement of implementation of administrative guidelines, and recognition that program outcomes may shift.
- Articulate a clear strategy to ensure that the non-profit, charitable, and voluntary sector and their organizations remain viable and able to deliver critical services during the COVID-19 situation.

These conversations would be pertinent given their timing in the budget cycle. This is a natural opportunity for the Province of Manitoba to strategically align its resource allocations to the needs of Manitoba's community-serving agencies.

The past nine months have been exceptionally challenging, and we still have a long road ahead. The undersigned leaders and the networks we represent are fully committed to the communities we serve, and we look forward to strengthening our partnership with you and our colleagues in government.

Sincerely,

Margo Powell, Executive Director
Abilities Manitoba

Darcy Penner, Manitoba Network Manager
Canadian Community Economic Development Network - Manitoba

Greg MacPherson & Victoria Espey, Co-Chairs
Coalition of Manitoba Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations

Thom Sparling, Executive Director
Creative Manitoba

Vicki Sinclair, Executive Director
Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations

Glen Koroluk, Executive Director
Manitoba Eco-Network

Christina Maes Nino, Executive Director
Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association

Jackie Hunt, Executive Director
Volunteer Manitoba

Lorie English, Executive Director
West Central Women's Resource Centre

Trevor LaForte & Dodie Jordan, Co-Chairs
Winnipeg Indigenous Executive Circle

Jessica da Silva, Director
Youth Agencies Alliance