

**06
19**

POLICY CONVERSATION SUMMARY



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

**Ontario Nonprofit Network
United Way Elgin Middlesex
London Community Foundation
Mischievous Cat Productions Inc.,**

POLICY CONVERSATION: NAVIGATING THE NEW ECONOMIC REALITIES

Thank you to those who attended our first Policy Conversation on June 18, 2019. We appreciated everyone for bringing their ideas and energy as we discussed the current climate of uncertainty created by the 2019 Budget and Expenditure Estimates and how organizations can address these concerns to continue striving for their missions. During the conversation, we heard from Cathy Taylor, Executive Director of the Ontario Nonprofit Network and a panel discussion including Michelle Baldwin, Executive Director, Pillar Nonprofit Network and Sara Middleton, Director of Community Impact, United Way Elgin Middlesex.

In this report, we will share a brief summary of Ontario Nonprofit Network's presentation, the recurring themes identified throughout the table discussions, and the future actions we will take to continue this important conversation. This event was held in partnership with Ontario Nonprofit Network, United Way Elgin Middlesex and London Community Foundation, and we thank them for their support. Thank you to Jennifer Kirkham, Mischevious Cat Productions Inc. for moderating the panel.

Ontario Nonprofit Network: Setting the Context

On April 11, 2019, the provincial government released their first Budget since taking office in June 2018. The language used to introduce and represent the budget focus is "putting money back in people's pockets, making Ontario open for business and open for jobs and at the same time, reducing the deficit." This was followed by the release of the 2019 Expenditure Estimates on May 9, 2019.

Upon reviewing the expenditure estimates, it is apparent that there is a notable decrease in funding for various programs impacting the nonprofit sector and, in turn, the people and communities served.

Along with the funding cuts, there are also significant restructuring and systems changes to programs and services, which ultimately impact our communities and the citizens at the centre of these services. Later in this report, you can read more specific highlights from Cathy Taylor, Executive Director of ONN.

System Changes



Healthcare
Amalgamation of public health units.
Loss of community control.

Childcare Centres
More relaxed regulations including competition with for-profits.



Employment Training
Opened up to for-profit competition.

Themes from Table Discussions and Pillar’s Response

As a result of the engaging and thought-provoking table discussions at the session, the following themes emerged:

- Information and Resource Sharing
- Communications
- Learning and Development
- Financial Resilience and Diversifying Funding
- Future Planning

Along with each theme you will find our response, including resources and possible training opportunities.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCE SHARING

<p>What we heard from the table discussions:</p>	<p>Pillar’s Response:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Avoiding duplication of information · Sharing available tools, work, information, knowledge · How to best know about already available information, and how to share · How do we communicate as a whole group · Framing efforts (advocacy, results, writing) in ways that resonate with current government 	<p><u>Pillar’s Digital Online Community - #policytalks</u> This is a virtual hub for members to ask questions and exchange expertise and resources with others. Check out #policytalks where you can discuss topics and ask questions related to public policy and share successes/challenges related to your policy work.</p> <p><u>Policy Update: Ontario Budget</u> On this page, you will find policy-related resources and background documents for our sector to stay up to date on policies that are impacting our community.</p> <p><u>Sign Up to Receive Pillar’s Monthly E-newsletter</u> Everyone is welcome to receive our newsletter.</p>

	<p>Pillar Members – Receive Member-Only Emails</p> <p>One of the many benefits of being a Pillar member is that we send out member-only emails, which include policy updates, funding opportunities and resources. Email membership@pillarnonprofit.ca to receive these emails or learn more about membership.</p> <p>Top 10 Takeaways From Policy School</p> <p>Blog post from Michelle Baldwin, Executive Director of Pillar Nonprofit Network.</p>
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COMMUNICATIONS

What we heard from the table discussions:	Pillar’s Response:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Case for support focused on individuals changing people’s lives not on organizations or sector · Language of new government and how to integrate it into our advocacy efforts · Talk about red tape reductions, efficiencies and systems transformation 	<p>All About Boards: Government Relations Workshop (December 5)</p> <p>Join us to learn how a nonprofit can build relationships at municipal, provincial and federal levels of government, and the role of governance volunteers in developing organizational strategy related to advocacy and public policy.</p> <p>Nonprofits Driving Public Policy Series(Recorded Webinars)</p> <p>Nonprofits Driving Public Policy was a five-part webinar series to strengthen the capacity of nonprofits to actively participate in the development of public policy to influence positive change for communities.</p>

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

What we heard from the table discussions:	Pillar's Response:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Board workshop about advocacy and their role · Advocacy workshop across sectors that is practical about how to write letters to MPPs, write briefings, prepare for meetings, etc. · Workshop on unifications and mergers · Workshop on financial resilience and diversifying funding and understanding the true costs of our organizations 	<p>See other themes for tailored learning opportunities</p>

FINANCIAL RESILIENCE AND DIVERSIFYING FUNDING

What we heard from the table discussions:	Pillar's Response:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · How do we reduce our reliance on government and these changing tides? · How can we increase our earned revenue including social enterprise? · What other financial tools exist (e.g. social finance and impact investing) · Are there models of shared fundraising? · How do we capture the true costs of operating our organizations? 	<p><u>What the Heck is Social Enterprise Anyways?(Webinar, August 8)</u> This interactive webinar will explore social enterprise as a tool for community change. Learn how nonprofits, businesses & individuals are using social enterprise and social finance to examine their work from a new perspective.</p> <p><u>Are You Ready for Impact Investment? Alternative Financing for Nonprofits, Charities and Social Enterprises (August 20)</u> To help local organizations ensure they are ready and well-positioned to receive investment, we have convened our network of social finance funds, service providers, and support organizations to talk about</p>

	loans, lines of credit, community bonds and other sources of capital beyond/in addition to grants or donations.
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FUTURE PLANNING

What we heard from the table discussions:	Pillar’s Response:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · How do we plan for the realities of how these funding changes will impact us? · How do nonprofits and social enterprises do future state thinking 10-30 years out to understand trends and shifts that will impact their mission and organizations 	<p>Ongoing Policy Conversations:</p> <p><u>Policy Conversation: Beyond the Talk & Getting to Action (August 14)</u></p> <p>Policy Conversation: Future Forward Thinking (September 30) Full details coming soon</p> <p>Possible workshop idea: Strategic Partnerships, Mergers and Acquisitions Date to be determined, keep an eye out on our website.</p>

**Summary of Cathy Taylor’s Presentation:
What the Ontario Nonprofit Network Encourages for the Sector**

ADVOCATE

It is important to be an advocate for causes aligned to your organization’s mission and make the voices of your community heard. The Canadian Revenue Agency rule limiting charities from devoting more than 10% of their resources towards advocacy efforts has been lifted. There is no better time than now for organizations, as nonpartisan parties, to advocate for issues that impact the people they serve. It is also encouraged to involve and mobilize board members during advocacy efforts as their hours are voluntary and are not considered within the total lobbying hours.

PUSH BACK

Share your organization's impact stories and thoughts with your MPPs and make your concerns and input heard. Focus on engaging with your local MPPs, especially the backbench MPPs within the Conservative government, to influence policies and inform decisions. Your organization should focus your advocacy efforts on issues that closely align with your mission and support your peers across the sector as well. To diversify and strengthen your voice and collective story, it is also important to bring various voices to the table, including Board members, volunteers, and community members accessing services. To gain more interest, use the language that most resonates with the current government's objectives, such as emphasizing job creation and removing red tape.

SHIFTING GROUND IS AVAILABLE GROUND

Even amidst the unpredictable and unstable circumstances, it's important to remember that a shifting landscape provides valuable opportunities to make necessary changes and finally resolve and address previous issues.

PLAYING THE LONG GAME

The needs of our communities will persist for the next four years and they depend on our organizations' continual pursuit of our missions. Nonprofit organizations need to strengthen networks and collaborative efforts through these trying times.

ONN TRACKING IMPACTS

Nonprofit organizations need to be aware of their progress and circumstances by tracking both their direct and indirect impacts. Organizations such as ONN can collect this information to gain a better picture of our progress. Knowing your organization's current and real impact makes for more compelling stories to focus change on the people in our community and environment.

FOCUS ON HOW WE CAN SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY

Nonprofit organizations should ultimately focus on their impact beyond just their organization, but on the entire sector and whole communities.

We look forward to staying engaged and continuing these policy conversations. The Maytree Foundation believes that "when the nonprofit sector engages in shaping public policy, we end up with better decisions, better laws, and better programs."