



February 16, 2021

The Honourable Derek Johnson
Minister of Municipal Relations
Room 317 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Cc:

Honourable Brian Pallister, Premier of Manitoba
Bruce Gray, Deputy Minister of Municipal Relations
Hon. Scott Fielding - Minister of Finance
Hon. Heather Stefanson - Minister of Health and Seniors Care
Hon. Rochelle Squires - Minister of Families
Hon. Ralph Eichler - Minister of Economic Development and Jobs
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
Hon. Wayne Ewasko - Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration

Dear Minister Johnson,

Congratulations on your recent appointment as the Minister of Municipal Relations for the Province of Manitoba. We appreciate the relationship building you have already undertaken with some of the undersigned associations and our respective memberships across the province, and we look forward to continuing to work with you as we strengthen Manitoba's communities.

About Us

We are writing as a group of 10 networks and associations, representing hundreds of non-profit, charitable, and/or community-based organizations (CBOs) serving Manitobans. Our associations bring together organizations working across multiple sectors throughout Manitoba addressing a variety of social, economic, and environmental issues. We support Indigenous communities, people with disabilities, newcomers, women, trans, and non-binary people, youth, and more. In many ways, the non-profits, charities, and CBOs that are part of our networks are essential for Manitoba's economic, social, and environmental well-being.

Organizations within our networks have been rapidly pivoting their operations as the needs from their communities continue to shift in the pandemic, all while facing financial challenges themselves because of the pandemic. A 2020 Leger survey in partnership with the Manitoba and Winnipeg Chambers of Commerce identified non-profits as a key sector that has been deeply impacted by COVID-19 with specific needs for re-opening, recovery, and stability.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, CBOs have done more with less, providing services and programs to communities in our province without which the very face of Manitoba would look quite different.

Manitoba's forthcoming Non-Profit Strategy

We are encouraged by the fact that Manitoba is considering the crucial role of non-profits, charities, and CBOs through the development of a Non-Profit Strategy. We believe that the forthcoming strategy has the potential to both support members of our networks through COVID-19 and help understand, articulate, and harness the economic, social, and environmental potential of Manitoba's non-profits, charities, and CBOs beyond the pandemic.

We appreciated that your predecessor, Minister Rochelle Squires, hosted a 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.

Our Recommendation: A multi-departmental working group

Minister Squires received our recommendation of building upon this open and constructive dialogue in December 2020. We would appreciate your consideration of our recommendation of a multi-departmental working group with scheduled, ongoing meetings between our associations and provincial decision-makers, including the Department of Municipal Relations.

We believe creating this space for positive, solutions-focused communication and relationships between sector leaders and participating departments with a whole-of-government approach would be highly beneficial as we move into recovery from COVID-19 and as the Government of Manitoba shapes its Non-Profit Strategy.

Multiple provinces in Canada have established sector tables to serve this purpose, such as Premier's Council on Charities and Civil Society in Alberta. We believe models such as these improve the effectiveness of policy and programs targeting non-profits, charities, and CBOs. Additionally, we believe our suggestion could streamline future communications between the Government of Manitoba and our associations.

We see this as an excellent opportunity for input and value-add to your department from agencies on the front-line in Manitoba communities. Topics such as the creation and implementation of the Non-Profit Strategy, alignment, evaluation, resourcing, financing, and administration could all be explored through a multi-departmental working group.

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 eleven 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

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