

WOWC Financial Relief for Municipalities

WOWC appreciates the support from the Province with the announcement of \$1.6 Billion in the first round of emergency funding to the Safe Restart Agreement on a per household basis.

Municipalities have been hit hard with revenue losses, increased costs and closed businesses. Municipal services are key to safely re-opening the economy. Investing in municipalities now is necessary so that they can continue to provide services needed to help restart their local economies.

High speed fibre

The COVID-19 pandemic and need for people to work remotely and do business online has exposed the terrible lack of equitable access to high speed internet in southwestern Ontario. The WOWC is requesting direct funding from the Government of Canada in the amount of \$254M and from the Government of Ontario in the amount of \$221M to support the expansion of critical broadband infrastructure within the region.

WOWC supports Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) as Southwestern Ontario's funding mechanism to advance the expansion of critical broadband infrastructure across the region.

Combined with a \$68.4M commitment from the region and a \$105M contribution from the private sector (ISPs), we intend to successfully address the \$1B Southwestern Ontario infrastructure deficit and achieving the interim goal of providing 50/10 broadband services to 95% of the population within the region by 2025.

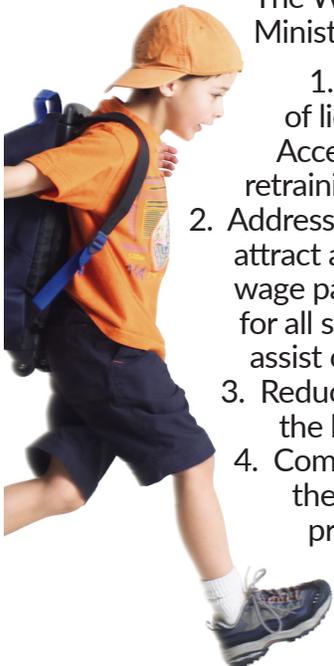


Economic Development

Direct investment in childcare is an investment in our workforce

The WOWC supports the County of Simcoe's recommendations as presented in their letter to Minister Lecce dated July 29, 2020.

1. Develop and implement a Public Messaging Campaign regarding the critical importance of licensed child care and professional early child educators to healthy child development. Access to reliable, high quality childcare enables parents to pursue employment or education/retraining endeavours.
2. Address inequities in compensation of Early Childhood Educators so that licensed centres can attract and retain the staff they need. ECEs working in community childcare programs should have wage parity with their counterparts working in school-based programs. Providing Pandemic Pay for all staff working in licensed child-care centres would acknowledge associated COVID risk; and assist operators in staff recruitment.
3. Reduce administrative burden for licensed child care operators by ensuring that all funding to the licensed child care sector flows solely through Municipal Service Managers.
4. Commit to maintaining and enhancing the number of licensed child care system spaces across the province as part of Ontario's economic recovery. Where operators are at risk of closure, provide enhanced System Sustainability Funding and other provincial funds in accordance with provincial reconciliation processes with Municipal Service Managers to ensure viability of licensed child care operators.



Direct investment in college satellite locations in rural Ontario is an investment in our future

The WOWC supports the recommendations presented by the Institute of Public Policy and Economy in the white paper *The Future of Ontario's Workers*.

There is a college presence in 200 of Ontario's 444 municipalities. They are uniquely able to up-skill and re-skill workers in partnership with business, they can undertake applied research to assist businesses solve problems or undertake process improvements. They offer a more affordable, accessible option to students and the ability to customize offerings to the specific needs of their region.

The COVID pandemic will greatly reduce the number of international students at Ontario's colleges and the loss of the revenue those students represent will impact the viability of the college campuses.

The report suggests that a comprehensive system of micro credentials should be developed as a rapid re-training tool that would aid workers displaced by COVID related job loss, support economic development and re-invigorate the colleges, especially among satellite locations in rural communities. This system would aid people to develop competency in needed skill sets quickly and cost effectively and provide assurance to business that the graduate has mastery of a needed skill. The report makes 17 recommendations on how to best accomplish this, including a tight linkage with Ontario Works, broadband investment, and making it easier for international students to access integrated learning opportunities such as co-ops and internships and increased employment.



Direct investment in social housing in rural communities is imperative

The WOWC supports Ontario Municipal Social Services Association's (OMSSA) position on Housing. As the federal and provincial governments pursue investments in infrastructure, increasing community housing supply across Ontario should be a key priority. Most of the community housing stock in Ontario is between 20 and 50 years old, with a significant backlog of needed repairs estimated at \$1.5 billion.

Given the current housing and rental market, it is crucial to focus on increasing the supply of rent geared to income rental housing and community housing so that all Ontarians regardless of income level have a safe place to call home.

Ensuring Ontario's food security now and for the future

The WOWC supports any considerations of funding to enhance food production and processing capacity in Ontario. Any recovery efforts must consider a move to ensure food security for the Province.

Funding to support activities that create strong rural communities in Ontario

The WOWC is requesting additional funding be provided to the Rural Economic Development Program (RED) to be used by municipalities to remove barriers to business and job growth, attract and retain a skilled workforce as well as marketing and promotion of local businesses.



Emergency Medical Services and Public Health

The WOWC is requesting active consultation on all future discussions related to Emergency Medical Services and Public Health.

WOWC supports AMO's position that, the local and provincial health care challenges exposed by the pandemic should be addressed as part of the next steps in the modernization and restructuring of public health and paramedic services.

A separate discussion on 2020 and 2021 funding is urgently needed. Municipal governments cannot be expected to make up for reductions in provincial funding, nor can they bear the costs of provincial restructuring. As Ontario recovers from the COVID-19 emergency, it has become clear

that sustained, reliable funding to public health is more important now than ever.

The WOWC supports AMO in continuing to ask for long anticipated improvements to the paramedic dispatch system, for which the Province has 100% funding responsibility. As well as calling on the provincial government to expand and fully fund community paramedicine across Ontario.

While demand has been increasing for this service, no new provincial funding from the Ministry of Health has been provided. This is despite the fact that community paramedicine is a form of primary health care, which is a provincial responsibility.

Long Term Care and Seniors Funding

WOWC has a strong concern surrounding the municipal capacity to deliver Long Term Care and Seniors' Services without more support from the province.

In 2017, the WOWC confirmed that our region alone has a provincial funding shortfall of \$74.3 million annually for 3,428 beds. The WOWC region continues to experience a significant increase in the acuity of new admissions but without the needed increase in the funding envelope to address the strain to the system particularly in the areas of staffing.

Arbitrary staffing requirements, coupled with design standard restrictions, create a highly inflexible arrangement for the public sector licensees. The continued fiscal grandfathering policies for Preferred Revenues is unrealistic and inequitable for each home. Further, the imposed funding restrictions on Basic Room Rates equalling the sum of Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) + Old Age Security (OAS) + Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) + Guaranteed Annual Income Supplement (GAINS) creates a local fiscal burden that is not sustainable.

WOWC seeks creation of a continuous and stable operating and capital reinvestment model for the entire sector:

- Increase public sector resident monthly accommodation rates – create a special envelope for those residents in a publicly funded home to receive an additional supplement
- Increase the Long-Term Care funding envelope and adjust the RAI/CMI process to properly address the increased acuity of residents and provide four of care per resident per day.
- Provide additional funding avenues to municipalities seeking redevelopment and expansion of Long-Term Care and Seniors' Services facilities
- Revisit the legislative requirements to allow all facilities to realize economies of scale and address funding options for Nurse Practitioners in addition to Medical Director
- Redefine staffing requirements and work towards innovative solutions to sector wide human resource shortages





COVID-19

WOWC acknowledges the work municipal providers have done in collaboration with Ministry staff to ensure the best possible safety and wellness for our residents.

WOWC supports the Independent Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission. We are dedicated to working with the Province to ensure the safety of our long-term care home residents and staff.

WOWC welcomes the announcement by the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MOLTC) to modernize the Long-Term Care Development Program. This revised program supports the call for operators to access additional construction funding to build new long-term care (LTC) homes and redevelop existing homes in order to provide a safer, healthier environment for staff and residents.

- LTCHs had staffing shortages prior to pandemic, but the pandemic has further exacerbated this issue – there is a need for immediate, medium and long-term solutions to address the unique challenges of recruitment in rural communities.
- Increase # of FT staff
 - Fund Infection Prevention and Control Nurse (IPAC)– expertise in IPAC measures which will support outbreak management and containment
 - Strategy should include education/training, recruitment and retention
- Develop strategy for new development/redevelopment that considers IPAC
- Continue the prevention and containment operational funding; and extend the temporary pandemic pay or transfer temporary pandemic pay to permanent



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