

Office of the Honourable Tony Clement, Minister of Industry
C.D. Howe Building, 235 Queen Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

Dear Minister Clement,


The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) was disappointed at the Federal Government's significant changes to the 2011 census. This severe decision will be detrimental to the work of organizations like OCASI which use the census data to inform public policy, to program plan and to develop services geared to the successful settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees.

OCASI is the umbrella organization in Ontario with over 220 member agencies providing services to immigrants and refugees. The information garnered from the census long-form has led to effective programming and services geared to increase labour market access, language programs that are more responsive to immigrant and refugee women's needs and strategies to address the increasing underemployment and poverty rates of racialized immigrant and refugee communities, including a focus on youth programming with an emphasis on education and other opportunities for youth engagement as examples.

We are also concerned that the change from mandatory participation will result in skewed and bias data. The mandatory collection of information through the long-form version on demographic and socio- economic indicators such as ethnicity, employment, education, housing, among other things has led to sound public policy and programs that are intended to address social inequities and gaps and as important, to inform and support research and development in industry and business.

We strongly urge the Department to reverse this decision and to review its funding support for the critically important work undertaken by Statistics Canada.

Sincerely,



Josie Di Zio
President
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)