

## 2020 Pre-Budget Submission by OCASI – Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

### To Ontario Ministry of Finance – 2020 Budget Consultations

February 11, 2020

---

a. Newcomer Settlement Program and Language Training enable community-based organizations to deliver services to help newcomers become established more quickly. They are an important resource for the rural and northern immigration pilot program and expansion of the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program.

#### **#1: Enhance investment in the Newcomer Settlement Program and language training programs.**

b. Investing in Women's Futures Program enable women's centres to deliver programs in a safe and welcoming environment for women. Immigrant and Refugee Communities Newcomer Friends and Families Program (IRC/NFF) is an important resource for raising awareness of gender-based violence in newcomer communities.

#### **#2: Increase funding for Investing in Women's Futures Program and IRC/NFF, and renew funding in a timely manner to avoid layoffs and service discontinuity.**

c. Employment supports are critical to ensuring immigrants can become employed in their field at a level consistent with their experience and skills. Community organizations have expertise and years of experience in delivering effective employment programs

#### **#3: Ensure the new Employment Ontario model addresses the unique realities of immigrants, and that immigrant-serving community employment organizations are included in the delivery.**

Affordable childcare enables Ontarians, especially women, to access employment, education or training or start a business and get out of poverty. Investing in childcare and ensuring workers are paid a living wage will lead to positive long term economic and social outcomes. Childcare workers themselves must be paid appropriately to reflect the value we place on children.

#### **#4: Restore childcare funding; invest in an Ontario childcare strategy.**

**#5: Immediately increase minimum wage to \$15 per hour.**

**#6 Include adult newcomers in incentives for Ontario employers to hire and retain full-time workers, and enhance investment in incentives for hiring younger workers.**

d. Access to justice is a fundamental right and should not be limited by poverty or other factors. People of colour, immigrants and refugees and women are over-represented among low-income and working poor people, and more likely to be denied access to justice. Women facing violence and women living with disabilities are particularly vulnerable.

**#7: Reverse the cuts to Legal Aid Ontario and restore funding for refugee and immigration law services.**

e. The Anti-Racism Directorate (ARD) needs increased investment to support Ministries and other departments including police services and school boards on how race-based data can better inform public policy decisions, and ensure the safety of racialized youth across Ontario.

**#8: Appropriately resource the Anti-Racism Directorate to provide for the collection and analysis of disaggregated data across Ontario Ministries and public institutions – including the Ministry of Health.**

f. Public transit system investment, and investment in other infrastructure is needed to address population growth and climate change, and ensure newcomers and all Ontarians can access affordable, safe and sustainable public transit.

**#9 Invest in public transit systems including for capital and operations cost, discounted fares for low-income Ontarians, and more transit services for underserved communities.**