



September 8, 2020

Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier,

We are appreciative of this government's leadership in doing what it can to ensure the safety of Ontarians and the complexities of dealing with Covid-19. As we start to turn attention to the ongoing re-opening Ontario, we would ask that your government does what it can to support businesses who remain crippled.

On behalf of the Whitby Chamber of Commerce business community representing close to 700 members, we are writing to you to highlight a few areas that our members have expressed concerns over. We hope that these will be given consideration at your command table as you continue to move forward to re-opening the economy.

1. Businesses that have freelance workers, many of which have been operating successfully for many years still do not qualify for current government programs, like the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). Regardless of their revenue or how long they've been in business or the revenue/freelancers they employ, if they don't give T4 slips to employees they are forgotten. The Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) alone does not cover the costs a business owner carries. Can those who employ significant amounts of freelancers (particularly in the event industry) be considered to receive financial assistance in order to survive? We ask that business support programming be reviewed for broadening the scope of SMEs left outside the parameters.
2. Health regulations have crippled the entertainment industry from restarting and now confirmed events like weddings are asking for significant reductions in price as a result. We ask government to align health restrictions for categories like restaurants to the event industry for consistency and renewal of this critical business category.
3. The event and entertainment industry have lost bookings for corporate events, galas and school events; and although some have moved their event dates to the following year this currently doesn't support these business owners or employees. The Not for Profits are experiencing significant losses, as a result of a lack of events/larger gatherings. Many organizations worry about being able to survive and provide support to our most vulnerable. We ask the province to establish a financial incentive for organizations that leverage unique ways in delivering larger scale events. Financial

incentives will help off-set costs for social distancing, PPE etc and other measures to meet safety requirements and align health restrictions for categories like restaurants to the event industry for consistency and renewal of this critical business category.

4. Tourism continues to suffer as the impact of financial constraints on consumers, COVID safety precautions and a lack of employees coming back to work (choosing to remain on CERB) result in closures. The implications of employees choosing not to return to work is significant. Please consider increased messaging to encourage employment.
5. As identified by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, we support reskilling of unemployed and underemployed Ontarians. Economic recovery will require a rapid return to work for many Ontarians. Given the urgency, provincial and federal funds could be flowed through Employment Ontario to support short-term micro-credential programs that meet local and sectoral needs. Employment Ontario has specific, pre-existing programs at its disposal which could be helpful, such as Second Career, which is designed for displaced workers and delivered by public and private colleges. Colleges have many Program Advisory Committees composed of employers that could help identify relevant skills.

At first it seemed to these business categories that supporting local businesses included everyone. Now that the majority of people are back to work, many entrepreneurs are just left sitting at home staring down bankruptcy, second mortgages or relocating their families. We respectfully request the Provincial government ensures the needs of our businesses and community are addressed in a timely manner. Please consider expanding qualifications for financial aid to entrepreneurs; increase spending supporting tourism (awareness campaigns, funding); and consider "Phase 4" approaches to expand allowable event requirements for those in the event businesses categories and particularly for our Not-For-Profits to return to delivering services.

Regards,

Corette Miller

Corette Miller
President, Board of Directors
Whitby Chamber of Commerce
c.c.

The Rt. Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Mr. Rod Phillips, Ontario's Minister of Finance
Mr. Lorne Coe, MPP Whitby
Mr. Ryan Turnbull, MP Whitby
Mr. John Henry, Regional Chair & CEO
Mr. Don Mitchell, Mayor Town of Whitby
Honourable Perrin Beatty, Canadian Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Rocco Rossi, Ontario Chamber of Commerce