



Pillar Nonprofit Network Public Policy Strategy

As our communities become more diverse, nonprofits, charities, and social enterprises increasingly need to consider the systems that impact equity and inclusion and adopt leadership practices and strategic approaches that engage and represent the communities they are part of if they want to address persistent challenges and advance quality of life for all.

As an organization that originated as a “voice for the nonprofit sector,” Pillar Nonprofit Network’s commitment to public policy engagement and government relations is built into its foundation. This work has typically been performed in partnership with other organizations at the local, provincial, and federal government levels. With this strategy, we are recommitting to our duty to participate in public policy. Please note: This strategy is adaptive and fluid; we will host local policy conversations that will impact its focus and direction.

With regard to the role of public policy in matters of equity and inclusion, Pillar Nonprofit Network has three focal points that address each level of government:

1. Municipal - City of London Leadership Tables & Diversity
2. Provincial - Navigating the New Economic Realities in Ontario
3. Federal - Inclusive & Place Based Social Finance

1. City of London Leadership Tables & Diversity

Organizations with inclusive Boards are better positioned to advance innovations, make better decisions, achieve results, and contribute to a stronger community ([onBoard Canada](#)). In 2016, in partnership with Western University, MITACS, Volunteer Ottawa, and Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, Pillar led a research project entitled, [“Visible Minorities Significantly Underrepresented in Leadership Positions”](#) which found that visible minorities were severely under-represented in leadership positions in London, including municipal agencies, Boards, and Commissions.

For 11 years, Pillar has worked with nonprofit and charitable organizations to increase representation of marginalized communities on Boards of Directors and on committees. In 2014, we proposed that the City of London should introduce voluntary disclosure of diversity to its application process for Advisory Committees, Boards, and Commissions; it is our view that this would enable Striking Committees to apply an equity lens in their selection of candidates and ultimately better reflect the diversity of the London community at these decision-making tables.

Our goal is to see this proposal approved and implemented before the next municipal election and committee selections process and, additionally, to advocate for inclusive practices (with a focus on timing, location, and child-minding options) to City Council and City staff in order to reduce barriers to participation for diverse groups on these committees.

Resources

- [Visible Minorities in Senior Leadership Positions](#) - MITACS Research showed 7.9 per cent of senior leaders in London were visible minorities across sectors, 3.1 per cent of these were women, and 0 per cent of municipal senior leaders were visible minorities
- [Community Diversity & Inclusion Strategy](#)
- [Diversity in Public Appointments](#)
- [Equity and Inclusion Within the City of Toronto](#)

Partners & Contacts

- MITACS and Western University
- Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Advisory Committee, City of London
- Community & Diversity Inclusion Strategy Committee
- London Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership
- Cathy Saunders, City Clerk
- City Council Governance Committee
- City Council
- Human Resources at City of London

Desired Outcomes & Metrics

- Voluntary Disclosure policy added to process for Advisory Committees, Boards and Commissions
- Striking Committee uses new policy and process in 2023
- Time, location and child-minding accommodations implemented
- Diversity goals established
- MITACS Research in 2020 to measure for shift in impact and metrics related to diversity
- Bi-weekly updates to members

2. Navigating the New Economic Realities in Ontario

In 2018 Ontario saw a change in government, from a Liberal government that had been in power for three terms to a Conservative government. The 2019 budget was released on April 11, 2019 and we learned subsequently that ministries with which the nonprofit sector works primarily would see funding cuts as high as \$185-million (23 per cent). For ministries that appear to be receiving additional funding (e.g. healthcare) it should be noted that these increases are in fact lower than the rate of inflation, meaning an erosion of services in real dollar terms. We do not yet know the cumulative impact of these cuts.

The Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), with a mission to engage, advocate, and lead with – and for – nonprofits that work for the public benefit in Ontario, is tracking funding reductions as well as impacts to programs and services delivered by nonprofits. Pillar’s Executive Director helped develop ONN and it is Pillar’s key partner for nonprofit advocacy at the provincial level. Our aim is to work alongside ONN to support the nonprofit sector in our region in navigating the new economic reality in Ontario.

Resources

- [Pillar Nonprofit Network Policy Update: Ontario Budget](#)
- [Ontario Nonprofit Network Ontario Budget Update](#)
- [Ontario Nonprofit Network Budget Estimates](#)
- [Ontario Budget 2019](#)
- [Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations](#)

Partners & Contacts

- Pillar Nonprofit Network Members
- Ontario Nonprofit Network
- London Community Foundation
- United Way Elgin Middlesex
- Local MPPs
- Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
- Ontario Social Economy Roundtable

Desired Outcomes & Metrics

- Strong partnerships with all partners
- Engagement level with community for policy alerts, policy conversations
- Review of strategic plan and programs
- Bi-weekly updates to members

3. Inclusive & Place-Based Finance Innovation

Nonprofits and social enterprises are both social and economic drivers in communities. While most would concur that the social sector contributes to enhancing quality of life, many are not aware that the nonprofit sector contributes more than 8 per cent to Canada's GDP ([Imagine Canada, 2019](#)). This sector is also highly engaged in efforts around inclusive innovation, inclusive economy, community wellbeing, and community wealth-building. Our sector has explored decent work, social procurement, community benefits agreements, social enterprise, and social finance as part of these concepts.

When Pillar committed to a social finance framework in 2012, it was to address the gap in access to capital for social enterprises. Since 2008, we have provided capacity-building supports – including: resources, workshops, consulting, and financing – to support the start-up and growth of social enterprises. These businesses create solutions that balance disparities in communities and often embrace inclusive access as a core factor to creating change.

At Pillar, we believe a “place-based” social finance (or local-to-local investment) approach that leverages local investment for local impact, and is grounded in the understanding of the unique and vital needs of the community, has significant potential for creating positive impact in communities. Accordingly, we have engaged in multiple networks that have provided input to provincial and federal governments about their role in enabling a more vibrant, place-based social finance ecosystem. Some of the initiatives governments have implemented include: capacity-building

grants, investor readiness programs, funding to help place-based social finance intermediaries become sustainable, and provision of first loss capital (which encourages investors to engage with impact investment funds and vehicles).

The goal of our work as a localized collaborative is to connect local, caring investors with organizations that have a social and/or environmental mission at their core. At the federal level, Pillar partners with [Imagine Canada](#), which works alongside charitable sector organizations –often in partnership with the private sector, governments, and individuals in the community – to ensure that charities continue to play a pivotal role in building, enriching, and defining our nation.

With Canada’s recent report and recommendations leading to the development of a [Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy](#), in addition to a Federal Government announcement of \$755 million over the next 10 years for a social finance fund and \$50 million in capacity-building funding, our partners, VERGE Capital, and Pillar are advocating for this money to flow to local communities through place-based intermediaries. This would allow such initiatives to launch and grow to sustainability, which could unlock private capital and redirect investments to community impact for years to come.

Resources

- [Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy](#)
- [Announcement of Investment Readiness Fund](#)
- [Social Innovation & Social Finance Case Studies](#) (featuring VERGE Capital)
- [Federal Budget Plan](#) (in which the VERGE Capital case study was highlighted)
- [Social Innovation Social Finance Co-Creation Steering Committee Recommendations](#) (2018)

Partners & Contacts

- MaRS SVX
- VERGE Partners:
 - London Community Foundation
 - Libro Credit Union
 - Sisters of St. Joseph
- Local MPs
- Scaling Impact Partners
- National Impact Investing Practitioners Table
- FedDev, Employment & Social Development Canada (ESDC), UN Social Development Goal’s (SDGs) Unit
- Social Innovation & Social Finance Strategy & Co-Creation Committee
- Community Foundations of Canada

Desired Outcomes & Metrics

- Federal Government invests capacity building and investment capital with regional and place-based social finance intermediaries
- VERGE Capital model open-sourced learnings leveraged by other communities starting social finance funds

- Investment capital pool creates sustainable model in our region and across country
- Bi-weekly updates to members

Implementation & Work Plan

| GOAL | OBJECTIVE | SUCCESS INDICATORS | WHO | COMPLETED BY |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <i>Research & Strategic Inquiry</i> | To provide reliable and adequate background research and inquiry to support policy strategy objectives | -Research phase completed -Key stakeholders & partners consulted for each of the three policy strategies | ED & Director Diversity & Governance | May/June 2019 |
| <i>Planning & Getting Organized</i> | To complete policy strategy and work plan including presentation at Policy School | -Policy School Presentation -Policy Strategy Completed -Policy Strategy approved by Board -Policy Strategy Presentation | ED, Directors & Board | April/June 2019 |
| <i>Internal Processes</i> | To consult and gather input from staff, Board and members To develop a Public Policy and Government Relations Committee | -Review policy strategy with staff and share updates -Share policy strategy with Board -Member input at June 18 Policy Conversation -Bring recommendation to Pillar Board in September with draft terms of reference to expand role of Policy Committee -Recruit for committee -Launch new expanded committee | ED Partners ED Pillar Board Pillar Members | May/June 2019 Sept/Dec 2019 |
| <i>Government Relations</i> | To strategically connect with staff and political representatives related to policy strategies | Municipal -Inquire on status of voluntary disclosure of diversity -Meet with City Councillors -Meet with Mayor Provincial -Attend Nonprofit Network Conference -Consult with ONN -Consult with CCVO Federal -Consult with Imagine Canada, MaRS, NIPP and FedDev | ED, Interim ED, Partners ED Director Social Innovation Volunteer Advisor | Feb/March 2019 Ongoing June Ongoing Ongoing |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|---|
| <i>Advocacy</i> | To determine advocacy approach through key consultations | <p>Municipal -Determine if CDIS is possible avenue</p> <p>Provincial -Participate in #nonprofitsadvocate social media campaign ONN -Share ONN policy info with network in newsletter, social media, in person -Local policy conversation action plan -Meet with MPPs</p> <p>Federal -Connect with CFC about approach for capacity building funds for social finance -VERGE Partners -Firm up FedDev grant -Meet with MPs</p> | <p>Director Diversity & Governance ED</p> <p>ED</p> <p>Director Social Innovation Volunteer Advisor</p> | <p>May-Sept 2019</p> <p>June-December 2019</p> <p>May- July 2019</p> |
| <i>Communications</i> | To develop clear and continuous communication policy strategy with staff, Board, members and key stakeholders | <p>Municipal -Pillar Staff and Board, meetings and email -Members, bi-weekly policy alerts for all levels of gov't, newsletter, conversations, social media -CDIS -LCCLC and LMLIP -City Clerk Office, HR, meetings and emails -UW and LCF, meetings and emails -City Councillors, meetings & email -Mayor, meetings and email</p> <p>Provincial -ONN social media #nonprofitsadvocate -Share info with staff, board and members through emails, newsletters, policy alerts, meetings and social media -Policy Conversations including invite to EDs by Lore</p> <p>Federal -VERGE Partner updates at meetings and by email -MaRS and NIPP meetings, emails</p> | <p>ED Staff Board</p> <p>ED Staff</p> <p>Director Social Innovation Volunteer Advisor</p> | <p>June-October 2019</p> <p>June- December 2019</p> <p>June-August 2019</p> |

APPENDIX: Pillar Nonprofit Network Public Policy Priorities 2019-2020

Preamble

The following represents Pillar Nonprofit Network's current focus in terms of proactive policy advocacy. Our Board of Directors and Executive Director set public policy direction and priority areas. Our key policy priorities are sector-focused, rather than issues-focused. We recognize other sector-focused priorities may emerge in this timeframe.

LOCAL

Pillar Nonprofit Network (Pillar) provides a leadership role in sector-focused municipal public policy.

Diversity & Inclusion

Area of Focus: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Our Director of Diversity & Governance, Dharshi Lacey, sits on the London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership - Inclusion and Civic Engagement Sub-Council.

Our Director of Diversity & Governance, Dharshi Lacey, sits on the following committees:

- Respect and Social Inclusion Task Force - Age Friendly London
- Planning Committee - Life as a Refugee Conference
- Steering Committee - Network for an Inclusive Community
- Application submitted to join Implementation Body - London Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Economic Development and Inclusive Innovation

Areas of Focus: Social Enterprise & Social Finance and Cross-Sector Collaboration

Our Executive Director, Michelle Baldwin, sits on the Economic Road Map Action Group #1.

Our Social Enterprise Manager, Julie Forrester, participates in Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Coffee Meetings and the #LondonCan committee.

Social Enterprise Procurement

Area of Focus: Social Enterprise & Social Finance

Our Director of Social Innovation, Andre Vashist, is monitoring opportunities for community benefits agreements and social procurement with the City of London.

Municipal City Council

Areas of Focus: Nonprofits and Cross-Sector Collaboration

Our Executive Director, Michelle Baldwin, and Interim Executive Director, Lore Wainwright, along with Pillar Board members, meet with City Councillors and the Mayor to discuss the nonprofit sector and social enterprises as both economic and social drivers.

The City of London 2019-2023 Strategic Plan consultation was hosted at Innovation Works for feedback from Innovation Works co-tenants, Pillar members, and community members.

London and Area Association for Volunteer Administration

Area of Focus: Volunteerism

Pillar is a member of London and Area Association of Volunteer Administration (LAVA). Our Network & Support Services Coordinator, Mitra Cameron, is a member of LAVA and serves as Secretary. LAVA has a mandate to influence public policy related to volunteerism. For more information, visit: <https://londonava.wordpress.com>

PROVINCIAL

Ontario Nonprofit Network

Area of Focus: Nonprofits and Social Enterprise & Social Finance

Pillar is a member of Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) and contributes to its public policy advocacy. Pillar's Executive Director, Michelle Baldwin, is ONN's Vice-Chair and incoming Chair.

To review ONN's public policy priorities for 2018-2019, visit: <http://theonnc.ca/our-work/our-policy-priorities/>

Ontario Social Economy Roundtable

Area of Focus: Social Enterprise & Social Finance

Pillar contributes to public policy advocacy through Ontario Social Economy Roundtable (OSER), with a focus on advocating on behalf of social enterprises. Our Director of Social Innovation, Andre Vashist, sits on the OSER Committee.

To review the framework and charter for OSER, visit:

<http://seontario.org/home/about-social-enterprise-ontario/strengthening-the-social-economy-in-ontario/>

Social Enterprise Impact Measurement – Ontario Government

Area of Focus: Social Enterprise & Social Finance

Pillar is represented by our Director of Social Innovation, Andre Vashist, on the Common Approach to Impact Measurement project: <https://carleton.ca/commonapproach/about-us/>

Our Director of Social Innovation, Andre Vashist, sat on the Ontario Social Enterprise Impact Measurement Task Force.

For more information, visit:

<https://carleton.ca/3ci/projects-and-initiatives/ontario-social-enterprise-impact/>

Ontario Social Enterprise Network

Area of Focus: Social Enterprise

Our Director of Social Innovation, Andre Vashist, represents Pillar on behalf of Southwestern Ontario in a province-wide collaborative of regional hubs that includes: Centre for Social Innovation (Central), Impact Hub Ottawa (Eastern), and Nordik Institute (Northern). This collaborative supports the development of social enterprise knowledge, support services, and networks.

Ontario Volunteer Centre Network

Area of Focus: Volunteerism

Pillar is a member of the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network, which has a mandate to influence public policy related to Volunteer Centres and volunteerism.

For more information, visit: <http://www.ovcn.ca/>.

NATIONAL

Imagine Canada

Area of Focus: Nonprofits

Pillar is a member of Imagine Canada, which is engaged in federal and pan-Canadian public policy. Pillar's Executive Director, Michelle Baldwin, participates in key initiatives, such as Hill Day, and is Pillar's liaison with Imagine Canada.

To learn more about public policy at Imagine Canada, visit:

<http://www.imaginecanada.ca/our-programs/public-policy>.

Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks

Areas of Focus: Nonprofits

Pillar is a member of the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks (CFVSN), strengthening cross-sector networks and facilitating pan-Canadian public policy dialogue.

Our Executive Director, Michelle Baldwin, participates in monthly teleconference calls.

To learn more about CFVSN, visit: <http://thefederation.cloverpad.org/>

National Impact Investment Practitioners Table (NIIPt)

Area of Focus: Social Enterprise & Social Finance

Pillar and VERGE Capital are represented by VERGE SVX Chair, Lina Bowden, at the National Impact Investment Practitioners Table (NIIPt), a social finance fund community of practice. The mission of this network is to: share best practices; identify shared policy, legislative, and regulatory priorities; and speak as a single, influential voice working to shape a strong, enabling environment for social finance in Canada.

Scaling Impact

Area of Focus: Social Enterprise & Social Finance

Convened by Social Venture Connexion (SVX), Pillar is represented in a community of practice made up of place-based social finance intermediaries. VERGE SVX Chair, Lina Bowden, represents Pillar and VERGE Capital in this collaborative that aims to ensure our place-based social finance ecosystem can start and scale funds and develops strong intermediary models.