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Archived - September 2016 Mandate letter: Citizenship and Immigration

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities.



September 23, 2016

The Honourable Laura Albanese
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
400 University Avenue, Sixth Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1T7

Dear Minister Albanese:

Welcome to your role as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. As we mark the mid-point of our mandate, we have a strong and new Cabinet, and are poised to redouble our efforts to deliver on our top priority — creating jobs and growth. Guided by our balanced plan to build Ontario up for everyone, we will continue to work together to deliver real benefits and more inclusive growth that will help people in their everyday lives.

We embark on this important part of our mandate knowing that our four-part economic plan is working — we are making the largest investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history, making postsecondary education more affordable and accessible, leading the transition to a low-carbon economy and the fight against climate change, and building retirement security for workers.

Building on our ambitious and activist agenda, and with a focus on implementing our economic plan, we will continue to forge partnerships with businesses, educators, labour, communities, the not-for-profit sector and with all Ontarians to foster economic growth and to make a genuine, positive difference in people's lives.

Collaboration and active listening remain at the heart of the work we undertake on behalf of the people of Ontario — these are values that ensure a common purpose, stimulate positive change and help achieve desired outcomes. With this in mind, I ask that you work closely with your Cabinet colleagues to deliver positive results on initiatives that cut across several ministries, such as our Climate Change Action Plan, Business Growth Initiative, and the Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy. I also ask you to collaborate with the Minister Responsible for Digital Government to drive digital transformation across government and modernize public service delivery.

We have made tangible progress and we have achieved the following key results:

- Passed the *Ontario Immigration Act* in 2015 to help the province maximize the economic benefits of immigration. The legislation facilitates Ontario's work with the federal government on the recruitment, selection and admission of highly skilled immigrants to Ontario.
- Redesigned the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program streams to attract foreign business, entrepreneurs and select skilled individuals. New Corporate and Entrepreneur Streams were announced in late 2015. In June 2015, the Human Capital Priorities Stream and the French-Speaking Skilled Worker Stream were launched to work with the federal Express Entry system.
- Supported the Government of Canada's refugee resettlement plan by welcoming more than 12,000 refugees from the Syrian conflict since November 2015.
- Committed \$10.5 million in new funding, which included \$2 million for immediate overseas relief, and \$8.5 million over two and a half years for refugee resettlement and integration supports in Ontario.
- Helped immigrants succeed through programs like Language and Bridge Training, which helps build a highly skilled workforce, as well as the Newcomer Settlement Program.
- Developed a Volunteer Certificate Program for use in Ontario as part of the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games Legacy — over 23,000 Pan Am volunteers are the first to receive these certificates.
- Launched Ontario's Volunteer Action Plan to strengthen volunteerism across the province, including Spark Ontario, which is the cornerstone of the Volunteer Action Plan. Spark Ontario is an online recruiting resource that connects volunteers with opportunities available from organizations around the province.

Your mandate is to work with various partners to help individuals and diverse communities flourish and fully participate in Ontario life. Your specific priorities include:

Working with the Federal Government to Maximize the Economic Benefits of Immigration

- Initiating negotiations on a new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement that improves co-ordination and delivery of immigrant support services.
- Partnering with the federal government to modernize the immigration system to support investment and innovation.
- Continuing efforts to strengthen and modernize the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program to help meet Ontario's economic and labour market needs and build a highly skilled workforce.
- Working with the federal government to support Ontario's goals for immigration. This includes exploring opportunities to expand Ontario's allocations for the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program and maximize the province's ability to respond to its unique economic and labour needs.

Building Diverse and Inclusive Communities and Ensuring Newcomers Including Refugees Prosper in Ontario

- Continuing to collaborate with the federal government, municipal governments, community partners and across ministries to support the settlement and integration of newcomers, including refugees, in Ontario and apply lessons learned to future resettlement initiatives.
- Co-ordinating government-wide efforts to support refugees from the Syrian conflict that have resettled in Ontario over the past year, including as they transition from their first year in the province.

- Working with the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs to advance Ontario's efforts to attract Francophone immigrants and promote the achievement of Ontario's five per cent Francophone immigration target considering the input of the expert group on Francophone immigration that was launched in September 2015.
- Working with partners including the federal government to strengthen data collection and information sharing to track long-term outcomes of newcomers including refugees.

Supporting Volunteers, and Civic and Community Engagement and Recognition of Ontarians

- Collaborating with the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport to facilitate partnerships with Ontario's volunteer network to support Ontario's celebrations of the province's 150th anniversary in 2017.
- Working with government, not-for-profit and corporate sectors to facilitate partnerships with Ontario's volunteer network, and to strengthen volunteerism across the province through Ontario's Volunteer Action Plan.
- Delivering Ontario's honours and awards programs to celebrate the people who make our province a better place to live. This includes supporting the Lieutenant Governor's Visionaries Prize that will be delivered in 2017 as part of Ontario's celebrations of the province's 150th anniversary.

Building Ontario's Highly Skilled Workforce for the Modern Economy

- Supporting the implementation of the recommendations of the Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel, working with the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development, including the development of a learner-focused Adult Education System.

Making Everyday Lives Easier for Ontarians

- Developing and implementing initiatives such as e-learning to improve access to English/French as a Second Language to support the social and economic integration of adult immigrants to all parts of Ontario.

In addition to the priority activities above, I ask that you also deliver results for Ontarians by driving progress in the following areas:

- Continue to implement Ontario's Immigration Strategy and report progress annually on the strategy.
- Support the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development on the development of an international strategy focused on undergraduate and graduate education.
- Deliver and improve programs such as the government's Newcomer Settlement, Adult Non-Credit Language Training and Bridge Training programs to meet the needs of newcomers.
- Strengthen the Office of the Fairness Commissioner's ability to deliver on its mandate, including the consideration of new legislative tools, to ensure regulatory bodies have registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair, by enhancing its governance and accountability mechanisms.
- Lead and co-ordinate Ontario's work with the not-for-profit sector, including information and resources, to support a strong not-for-profit sector in Ontario.

As you know, taking action on the recommendations contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report is a priority for our government. That is why we released *The Journey Together*, a document that serves as a blueprint for making our government's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples a reality. As we move forward with the implementation of the report, I ask you and your fellow Cabinet members to work

together, in co-operation with our Indigenous partners, to help achieve real and measurable change for Indigenous communities.

Having made significant progress over the past year in implementing our community hubs strategy, I encourage you and your Cabinet colleagues to ensure that the Premier's Special Advisor on Community Hubs and the Community Hubs Secretariat, at the Ministry of Infrastructure, are given the support they need to continue their vital cross-government work aimed at making better use of public properties, encouraging multi-use spaces and helping communities create financially sustainable hub models.

Responsible fiscal management remains an overarching priority for our government — a priority echoed strongly in our 2016 Budget. Thanks to our disciplined approach to the province's finances over the past two years, we are on track to balance the budget next year, in 2017–18, which will also lower the province's debt-to-GDP ratio. Yet this is not the moment to rest on our past accomplishments: it is essential that we work collaboratively across every sector of government to support evidence-based decision-making to ensure programs and services are effective, efficient and sustainable, in order to balance the budget by 2017–18, maintain balance in 2018–19, and position the province for longer-term fiscal sustainability.

Marathon runners will tell you that an event's halfway mark is an opportunity to reflect on progress made — but they will also tell you that it is the ideal moment to concentrate more intently and to move decisively forward. At this halfway mark of this government's mandate, I encourage you to build on the momentum that we have successfully achieved over the past two years, to work in tandem with your fellow ministers to advance our economic plan and to ensure that Ontario remains a great place to live, work and raise a family.

I look forward to working together with you to build opportunity and prosperity for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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