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Archived - September 2016 Mandate letter: Digital Government

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities.



September 23, 2016

The Honourable Deborah Matthews
Minister Responsible for Digital Government
900 Bay Street
3rd Floor, Mowat Block
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N3

Dear Minister Matthews:

Welcome to your role as Minister Responsible for Digital Government. 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 your colleagues to drive digital transformation across government and modernize public service delivery.

In adopting a “digital by default” approach, we have already made tangible progress. Some examples include:

- Integrating government services and information into a single, easy-to-use digital platform: ontario.ca. By bringing all government websites onto one website designed to improve user experience, we are providing services that are clearer, centralized and simple to find.
- Bringing the LCBO into the digital age by introducing online sales to LCBO.com. This new and convenient way to buy alcohol allows customers to have their order delivered to stores or even their homes.
- Implementing our Open Government agenda, using the power of digital to get feedback from people all over the province. Our online consultation directory makes it easier for people to find and get involved in decisions our government is making. We have opened up the conversation on building our budget, eliminating red tape for businesses, addressing climate change and many other key government initiatives.

Your mandate is to make government work better for citizens by delivering simple and straightforward digital services and products. Your specific priorities include:

Signature Digital Projects

I ask you to work with ministries on an initial series of high-impact signature digital projects to demonstrate the digital difference. These projects will visibly and fundamentally change the citizen experience with government and achieve better value in measurable ways. Many of the projects will also make it easier for people to participate in government decision-making.

- Work with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to provide better access to information and data to help people make the right choices about their health and effectively navigate the health care system.
- Work with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development to make it easier for students to complete online tasks that support their postsecondary education or training. This work will include supporting the implementation of the Ontario Student Grant, which will make average tuition free for eligible low- and middle-income students, and will reduce the cost for many more.
- Work with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services and other ministry partners to improve key online transactions and support the development of a government-wide digital identity, including a pilot that explores opportunities to collaborate with federal, provincial and municipal governments, community organizations and the private sector, allowing Ontarians to view, apply for and access government services as well as verify their identity with partners outside of government.
- Work with Treasury Board Secretariat to develop new modes of public engagement, improve access to information, and track government performance against commitments.
- Work with the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth to develop new digital tools for engaging key sectors on reducing red tape, improving business information online, and developing new services and tools to attract investment as part of the Business Growth Initiative.

Canada's Most Open, Transparent and Digitally Connected Government

To fulfill Ontario's vision of transforming the way that citizens interact and engage with their government through the power of digital technology, your specific priorities include:

- Working with the Secretary of the Cabinet, recruit the province's first Chief Digital Officer who will serve as the champion for the user's experience with government, ensuring that our digital services, programs and transactions meet the highest standards of quality, usability and accessibility. The Chief Digital Officer will lead a new digital service office whose focus will be to make government work better for people through simpler, easier and more convenient services.
- Releasing the government's first Digital Government Action Plan to champion a citizen-first approach across government. This plan will serve as a roadmap for change, making recommendations that can advance digital transformation and promote economic growth.
- Empowering the next generation of digital talent through a digital talent strategy designed to attract and retain in-demand digital skills and nurture a digitally equipped organization.
- Removing barriers to, and enabling, wider digital adoption across the organization through the establishment of a modern, enterprise-wide digital standards framework for the public-facing digital channel, in partnership with the Treasury Board Secretariat and ServiceOntario.
- Making it easier for citizens to participate in government and for government to be more responsive to citizens, including developing a digital literacy strategy in consultation with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

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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