

# Ontario Museum Association

## 2024 Ontario Budget Analysis

On March 26, the Provincial Government tabled their 2024 budget. The Ontario Museum Association has reviewed this budget to understand the spending of the current government, and their priorities for the coming year.

This report contains an overview of the 2024 budget, elements of interest to museums and cultural organizations, and next steps you can take to advocate for the cultural sector in Ontario.

### Budget 2024 Priorities

Budget 2024, *Building a Better Ontario*, is consistent with provincial budgets released in 2022 and 2023 and works to balance ongoing economic uncertainty with promises of investment and growth. Ultimately, the budget focusses on two main priorities:

1. **Building Ontario:** The budget reveals significant investment in building physical infrastructure- from highways to public transit, and investment in manufacturing and mining sectors.
2. **Working for Workers:** The second priority focusses on providing support and opportunities in sectors such as healthcare, education, skilled trades, and manufacturing, and explores how the government plans to reduce costs for Ontarians by cutting taxes and red tape.

You can access the full budget [here](#).

### Items of Interest to arts, culture, and heritage organizations

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport is estimated to see an increase in funding by 4% from \$840 million in 2023 to \$870.2 million in 2024-2025. This increase is congruent with most other Ministries in the budget and is an improvement over the previous year's budget increase of 0% between 2022 and 2023.

#### Investments in public transportation

- \$5 million to support Launching the Ontario Transit Investment Fund (pg. 65)
- Bringing back the Northlander (pg. 64)
- Launching the Ontario Transit Investment Fund (pg. 65)

#### Investment in infrastructure

- Expanding High-Speed Internet Access (pg. 50)

## Other Investments

- \$200 million Community Sport and Recreation fund to address the need for funding in sport and recreation sectors. (pg. 48)
- The development of a new rural economic development strategy (pg. 44)

## As is, little relief for arts, culture & heritage organizations

Consistent with previous budgets, *Building a Better Ontario* provides little relief for arts and culture organizations or their workers as they recover from the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and face rising costs, inflation, and a climate crisis.

The OMA appreciates the existing support provided by the province of Ontario, and the recognition from the government of the challenges faced by all Ontarians, including museum workers. However, the chronic underinvestment in Ontario's cultural sector perpetuates inequitable work practices and erodes the resilience of a sector that contributes \$27 billion annually to the provincial GDP.

The current level of funding for museums and cultural organizations across the province is unsustainable. To empower museums and build a strong sector that all supports all Ontarians, the Ontario Museum Association recommends the following to the provincial government:

1. 10 million in support for community museums to reach 300 communities across the province.
2. 10 million in support of a digital response fund to strengthen and build digital infrastructure in community museums across the province.
3. 10 million in support of an infrastructure recovery fund to support community museums to build crucial infrastructure and capacity while facing rising costs.
4. Consistent property tax exemption.

Learn more about how you and your museum can get involved below.

## How you can take action:

1. **May is Museum Month:** May is Museum Month is a time for celebrating the contributions of museums, workers, and volunteers to their community, and highlighting the impact that museums have across the province. Use the [OMA's May is Museum Month toolkit](#) to share your achievements with your community and elected officials.
2. **Engage your local elected officials:** Develop your relationship with your local elected officials year-round to ensure they are aware of the ongoing role of museums in their community. Invite elected officials to your events and set up

meetings to share data-informed stats about your impact, and actionable solutions for how they can support your museum.

3. **Get involved in upcoming OMA advocacy initiatives:** We are stronger, together. By working in partnership and aligning our priorities across the sector we can amplify our collective voices.