

Ontario Museum Association

2019 Ontario Budget Submission

Improved museum services for all of Ontario

Museums, galleries, and heritage sites are vital cultural and tourism infrastructure in every community in Ontario. These institutions are essential to supporting Ontario's growing Culture and Tourism GDPs. In their communities, museums contribute to lifelong learning and creating distinct and vibrant places to **live, work, visit, and invest**.

Museums in Ontario are transforming to offer Ontarians:

- **Vibrant & Vital Museums,**
- **Relevant & Meaningful Collections,**
- **an Effective & Collaborative Workforce, and**
- **a Strong & Successful Sector**

Fast Facts about museums in Ontario:

- **19.4 million in-person visits** per year¹, more than 53,000 visits per day
 - **15% increase over 5 years**
- **93.5 million online visits** per year¹, more than 3 visits per second
 - **52% increase over 5 years**
- **2 million students per year participate in dedicated museum programs**¹
- **77% of museums offer programs linked to provincial curriculum**⁴

About the Ontario Museum Association

The Ontario Museum Association is the leading professional organization representing 700 Ontario museums, galleries, and historic sites, 11 000 museum professionals, and 35 000 museum volunteers who hold the collections of the province in trust for the people of Ontario.

Our Mission

The Ontario Museum Association strengthens capacity among institutions and individuals active in Ontario's museum sector, facilitates excellence and best practices, and improves the communication and collaboration of its membership. The Association advocates for the important role of Ontario's museums to society, working with all stakeholders, related sectors and industries, and other professional organizations.

Our Recommendations for Public Investment

The Ontario Museum Association (OMA) recommends four investments that will empower museums to help Ontario reach its potential—for tourism, economic development, employment, and education.

Four funding priorities:

➤ **Digital Access & Engagement**

Modernize and make museums in Ontario more effective with a \$5 million investment in digital initiatives to support engagement, including collection digitization and improved web presence.

- Improve accessibility and online presence for collections, with a focus on smaller, rural, Northern, and seasonal museums
- Develop tourist-and-visitor-focussed online resources for trip planning
- Promote Ontario museums through online marketing, promotions, and resources
- Encourage province-wide collecting practices, shared resources, and projects, such as curriculum programs and travelling exhibits
- Online museum training, for tourism skills, best practices and standards for data
- Registrations and attendance tracking programs, membership management & revenue development systems

➤ **Workforce development**

Use a \$5 million investment to create jobs for young and emerging professionals in museums across the province.

- Emphasize local employment and reduce rural and Northern outmigration
- Present opportunities for succession-planning and skills transfer through experiential learning (including internships, apprenticeships, and co-op programs)
- Develop transferable skills & employability, supporting especially in the tourism sector

➤ **Investment in annual funding for community museums and reduction of red tape**

Provide adequate and predictable funding for Ontario's community museums through the Community Museum Operating Grant, reduce administrative burden, and open the program to museums achieving best-practice standards.

- Increase to close the annual funding gap for community museums
- Reduce red tape for improved delivery of services
 - Multi-year funding options to reduce reporting
 - Tiered reporting requirements to reflect museum size
- Open community museum funding to achieving and performing museums in the province

➤ **Centralized museum services**

A \$4 million investment will develop the business of a shared services model and three to five pilot projects to modernize the delivery of museum services in the province, in areas like:

- Coordinated marketing
- Software licensing
- Training for staff, board members, and volunteers

The Impact of Museums in Ontario

Economic Development

Museums in Ontario are a vital part of the province's cultural and tourism offerings, directly contributing to Ontario's \$25.7 billion Culture GDP and \$34.1 Tourism GDP. Both Culture and Tourism GDPs are growing, showing the sectors as promising areas for investment.

Culture represents 3.7% of Ontario's GDP, and Tourism 4.3% of Ontario's GDP.

In Ontario, museums collectively spend more than \$1 billion a year, creating good jobs and supporting businesses.

Culture amenities, including museums, have an important role to play in local economic development. 83% of smaller Ontario cities have found culture amenities effective tools for renewing their downtowns² and 88% of people in Ontario see arts and culture as important for local economic development³.

Museums are valued by their local communities and visitors alike, to a total of 19.4 million visits per year across Ontario¹, a total that is growing faster than the province's population. Visits to museums and cultural heritage sites have grown by 15% over five years: Museums and cultural heritage sites are creating an audience of savvy culture consumers with a desire to see more and do more here in Ontario.

More than 2/3 of museums in Ontario are committed to interpreting, engaging with, and representing the stories and history of their local area—they identify as community museums⁴. 55% of museum visitors are locals⁴, these institutions build desirable places to live, work, and invest.

For communities across Ontario, museums also represent vital tourism infrastructure. **Museums in Ontario welcome more than 7.5 million visits by tourists every year from around the world^{1,4}**. The types of visitors to Ontario's museums represent higher-spending demographics of cultural and heritage tourists. **These tourists spend twice as much per visit on average** and, in the case of overnight visits, stay more than a night longer. Overnight cultural tourists spend \$4.1 billion per year in Ontario, representing more than one-third of total overnight visitor spending⁵. Ontario's cultural heritage sites provide opportunities for the province to reach its previously unrealised tourism potential⁶.

Employment

Ontario's museums, galleries, and heritage sites directly create more than 11,000 jobs¹. Through attracting and retaining skilled workers, encouraging and welcoming tourism, and supporting local economic development, museums' overall effect on jobs is much greater. In the North and rural communities, the jobs supported by museums prevent outmigration.

Museums are prime locations for workers, especially young workers, to gain practical skills in tourism services and other areas including health, safety, and wellness training: 90% of Ontario museums offer training and professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers⁴.

Ontario's museums are also supported by 35,000 volunteers working 2.3 million hours per year¹. Museum staff members can learn essential leadership, organization, and volunteer management skills by virtue of the many contributions of volunteers in the province.

Museums, depending on their area of focus and unique employment opportunities, may provide experience in back-of-house or public-facing roles. **Cultural heritage institutions across the province specifically offer many entry-level positions in visitor-first front-line services such as tourism reception.** The Ontario Chamber of Commerce agrees that skills development in tourism services is essential to closing Ontario's tourism labour gap and tourism gap overall⁶.

The seasonality of the museum tourist traffic, and subsequent increased staffing requirements, is an asset that supports youth education and experiential learning. Experiential learning is a key strategy for improving Ontario's employment outlook⁷.

These seasonal changes in museum employment also mean that there is an annual influx of employees entering the museum workforce in the sector for the first time and in need of orientation and workplace skills development.

Education

Heritage and culture institutions in Ontario have a vital impact on the quality of educational experiences in the province. More than 2/3 of Ontario museums provide programming that is directly linked to K-12 provincial curriculum⁴, and these highly beneficial resources see widespread usage. Museums welcome more than 2 million student visits annually as a part of these specialised programs¹, equivalent to 95% of the province's child population.

Museum visits show measurable increases in educational achievement. Students who visited museums in kindergarten showed higher achievement in critical areas of reading, mathematics, and science in third grade⁸. Older children have shown increased critical thinking skills⁹. The positive effects of museum visits on education are most pronounced for underserved demographics, such as those from rural areas and those of lower socioeconomic status^{8,9}.

The educational role of museums continues beyond the end of high school. They are vital resources for adult learning, handling more than 185,000 research requests per year¹, including genealogy inquiries and questions from academic researchers.

Museum websites are a critical part of the educational landscape. Learners of any age can access digitized collections and virtual exhibits wherever they are.

Appendix A: Budget Details

Recommendation A: Digital Access and Engagement

Context for Recommendation

Digital engagement is increasingly important for providing public access to museum collections.

The public can access many museums via the internet, whether through museum websites or a variety of social media platforms. Museum websites in Ontario welcome more than 93.5 million visits per year¹, 3 visits per second, and are accessible to the public regardless of the time of day or their location. This online traffic has grown by 52% over five years¹, demonstrating a growing need for increased digital capacity and skills.

A \$5 million investment in digital infrastructure and initiatives will make museum collections and research more accessible to a wider audience, improve online experiences for visitors, and allow for more effective practices of collection and artifact sharing across the province. It will make the sector more efficient through coordinated and connected efforts to improve public access.

If every museum collection in the province could be searched online, objects that are held in trust for the people of Ontario would be more accessible.

Accessible online collections can lead to a province-wide approach to collecting. Museums themselves could make more strategic decisions about the acquisition of new items for their collections based on the availability of similar objects in other museums. This could reduce duplication in a cost-effective way and strengthen the connections between regions of Ontario through shared history.

From a tourism perspective, digital engagement is a necessity. Nearly 3/4 of travelers research their destination online before booking flights or accommodation, making museums' web presence essential to their work as tourism assets¹⁰. The Association's public website, *Discover Ontario Museums* (www.museumsontario.ca) for example, sees 10,000 hits per month, making it a vital asset for member institutions for their online marketing and awareness efforts. Investment in digital access and engagement will make tourism in Ontario more attractive through effective online marketing, trip planning resources, and compelling museum offerings.

Digital engagement is an essential part of visitor experience, and investments in digital initiatives are for the benefit of museums and the public alike. Even in museums that exhibit ancient artifacts, work with digital engagement builds transferable skills for a modern, 21st-century world. New museum programs and exhibits help staff and visitors gain experience with technology, from Virtual Reality systems to 3D scanning and 3D printing.

Investments in digital engagement will make museum collections more accessible and relevant to everyone, and will allow museums to more fully participate in education and the tourism marketplace.

Recommendation B: Workforce Development

Context for Recommendation

\$5 million from the province of Ontario for job creation would represent a significant investment in youth and emerging professional workforce development.

These jobs would be in cultural and heritage institutions across Ontario's 15 Tourism regions, emphasizing local employment for youth in their communities. Alongside professionals in the sector, these younger employees would develop essential transferable skills in their local area. Museum jobs and training will help prevent outmigration from rural and Northern communities.

Many entry-level positions in museums are in client-centred public services such as visitor reception. **Every person working in museums substantially increases service for the public, including tourists.** Developing skills in these areas is critical for improving the quality of tourism in Ontario. An early experience in a tourism environment could further encourage participants to consider a career in the tourism sector, helping to address a known gap in Ontario's labour force⁶. Investment in workforce development can make museums a stronger asset in closing Ontario's tourism labour gap.

The experiential learning opportunity represented by these jobs is one of the key strategies for improving Ontario's employment outlook⁷.

The Ontario Museum Association could serve as the delivery agency for this type of program to the benefit of the Government of Ontario, following other models in the sector. The Canadian Museums Association, for example, administers a portion of the Young Canada Works program under the banner of "Building Careers in Heritage".

Ontario can develop skills among youth and emerging professionals through investing \$5 million in jobs in heritage and tourism.

Recommendation C: Community Museum Funding

Context for Recommendation

Ontario invests in community museums as central to community vitality and in bringing to life collections for the people of Ontario. In recognition of these valuable community assets, the government invests through the Community Museum Operating and Pay Equity Grant (CMOG) program.

CMOG is a valued program which supports exhibitions, educational programs, and workforce development in Ontario's community museums. Provincial funding is critical to museums, especially smaller community museums, and is often essential to leverage other levels of public and private investment. **An investment in museum operating funding is an investment that supports economic development, tourism, and education.**

Fewer than 200 museums in Ontario receive annual operating funding from the province, which represents less than one-third of the province's museums and heritage sites. **Increasing the amount of funding available and opening the application process in the CMOG program will build opportunities and help realise the potential of Ontario's community and tourism assets.**

Based on the most recently available data, CMOG-funded Ontario museums receive only 45% of the funding deemed eligible under the Ontario Heritage Act, Regulation 877⁴.

The most recently available data (2015) shows that Ontario's community museums, the institutions entrusted with the protection of Ontario's material cultural heritage under the Ontario Heritage Act, currently receive funding equivalent to \$0.36 per capita.

An increase in funding of \$5 million annually will help to close the funding gap in the CMOG program. This would bring the total amount in the CMOG program to \$10 million distributed among fewer than 200 museums. Additional funding will also help address the inflationary adjustment to current dollars from the program's last increase in 2007.

The delivery and implementation of the CMOG program can also be improved. **Dividing the reporting requirements among tiers of funding recipients would reduce the administrative burden on smaller institutions.**

A single approval process for multi-year funding opportunities would allow for longer-term, more strategic planning and reduce the red tape required to achieve funding.

CMOG-funded museums demonstrate greater capacity and impact in their communities; providing value all across Ontario⁴. Museums that achieve standards as Community Museums in Ontario warrant annual funding support under CMOG. Opening the program to new applicants not only recognises the important improvements many museums have made, but also allows high-performing community museums to deliver fully on their provincial mandate—welcoming the public to their program, exhibits, and collections. **An investment in annual operating funding is an investment in better museums for Ontario communities.**

In line with the Ontario government's Open Data initiative, CMOG data need to be made available as Open Data to increase accountability and provide valuable planning and benchmarking for sector-wide comparisons and metric development.

For museums to perform to their full capacity as tourism destinations, particularly outside of large cities, community museum funding is necessary to improve the cultural and tourism assets available in Ontario.

An investment in museum operating funding is an investment that supports economic development, tourism, and education.

Increasing funding and improving program delivery in the Community Museum Operating and Pay Equity Grant (CMOG) Program will benefit museum visitors and communities across the province and improve vital tourism infrastructure in Ontario.

Recommendation D: Centralized museum services

Context for Recommendation

Modernization, through centralized services, will maximize the public value and investment in Ontario's museum sector. To fully connect our museums in effective ways, current practices need to change. Centralizing service delivery and transferring responsibility to a connected organization will allow museum workers to be more effective for collections and the visitors who view them.

Economies of scale and effective collaboration can make museums more cost-effective in creating positive impact.

Centralizing museum services and connecting museums together can lead to a coordinated approach to travelling and virtual exhibits, engaging programs, as well as a province-wide approach to collecting.

Areas of museum work that can benefit from a centralized services model include:

- Marketing & Promotions
- Training for staff, board members & volunteers
- Partnership Development & Fundraising
- Exhibits & Curation
- Social media
- Purchasing
- Planning, Management & Governance
- Data Collection & Analysis
- Support for shared:
 - Standards-compliant storage
 - Standards-based technology and software training
 - Insurance
 - Technology and software licensing and acquisition
 - Website hosting
 - Staffing, scheduling, and volunteer management tools
 - Technology and metadata standards
 - Collections management systems

Modernizing the work of museums in Ontario through centralized services will reduce duplication and administrative burden and make museums more effective for everyone.

Appendix B: Further Resources

[Ontario's Museums 2014 Profile](#), Ontario Museum Association, 2016.

[Ontario's Museums 2025: Strategic Vision & Action Plan](#), Ontario Museum Association, 2016.

Sources:

¹*Government of Canada Survey of Heritage Institutions: 2017*. Department of Canadian Heritage, 2018.

²*Downtown Revitalization Strategies in Ontario's Mid-Sized Cities: A Web-Survey and Case Study*, by Christopher Lauder (Masters' Thesis) University of Waterloo, April 17, 2010.

³*Arts and Heritage Access and Availability Survey 2016-2017*. Environics Research Group, March 2017.

⁴*Ontario's Museums 2014 Profile*. Ontario Museum Association, 2016.

⁵*Ontario Arts and Culture Tourism Profile*, by Research Resolutions & Consulting Ltd. for Ontario Arts Council, November 2012.

⁶*Closing the Tourism Gap: Creating a Long-Term Advantage for Ontario*. Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2016.

⁷*Talent In Transition: Addressing the Skills Mismatch in Ontario*. Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2017.

⁸D. W. Swan, 2014. *The Effect of Informal Learning Environments on Academic Achievement During Elementary School*. Paper presented at the 2014 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

⁹J. P. Greene, B. Kisida, D. H. Bowen, 2014. *The Educational Value of Field Trips*. *Education Next*, Winter 2014, pages 78-86.

¹⁰*TripBarometer 2016: traveller Trends and Motivations Global Findings*. TripAdvisor Insights, 2016.