



**Promoting a Diverse Heritage Sector Workforce by Funding  
Innovative Community Based Museums**

Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance  
In response to the Pre-Budget Consultations  
In advance of the 2019 budget

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### **Recommendation 1:**

Enhance funding to the Canada Cultural Investment Fund by:

- Increasing the investment to the existing Strategic Initiatives stream by \$2 million a year, rewarding projects that work in partnership with community based groups, helping heritage organisations to improve their business practices and diversify their revenue.
- Introduce an exception whereby the government's contribution can cover at least 75% of total Strategic Initiatives project costs for community-based heritage organisations with an annual operating budget under \$1 million.
- Include community-based heritage organisations in the Endowments Incentives component, allowing small and newer organisations to grow, implement decent work provisions, build capacity, remain competitive and encourage new revenue streams.

**Recommendation 2:** Expand the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund to include investments in virtual and wall-less infrastructure, frequently used by community organizations to delivery exhibitions and programming not unlike traditional museums.

**Recommendation 3:** Invest in core operational funding for heritage organisations, so more diverse communities can exercise leadership in the sector.

## Executive Summary

Globally, UNESCO has invested in 1000 world heritage sites to promote economic development and tourism; 845 interpret cultural heritage. Canada currently has 19 of these sites (<https://everything-everywhere.com/unesco-world-heritage-sites-in-canada/>) but none highlights the economic, social and cultural investments that make Canada a global model for successful, multicultural societies. Within Canada, both museums and innovative community-based organizations meet national, international and tourist demand for the cultural interpretation of Canadian multiculturalism through virtual and real-time exhibits and programming.

Public funding for provincial and local heritage organizations has remained fragile and subject to changing provincial political awareness of multiculturalism as an economic, as well as a cultural strategy (the UNESCO model). See the Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 2015-2016: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/corporate/publications/plans-reports/annual-report-canadian-multiculturalism-act-2015-2016.html>) and [https://museums.in1touch.org/uploaded/web/docs/Advocacy/CMA\\_Recommendations\\_CHPC\\_2016\\_EN.pdf](https://museums.in1touch.org/uploaded/web/docs/Advocacy/CMA_Recommendations_CHPC_2016_EN.pdf) The Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage has identified “Cultural Hubs and Cultural Districts” as one mechanism for addressing some gaps in public funding.

Locally, the powerful, historical association of heritage work with economic privilege and “founders” discourages marginalized groups from seeing heritage as either welcoming to visitors like them or as sites of employment (See OMA Diversity and Inclusion Project: <https://members.museumsontario.ca/programs-events/current-initiatives/diversity-and-inclusion>) Yet marginalized Canadians, especially young people, repeatedly demonstrate interest in participating in and leading interpretations of Canadian multiculturalism by forming local, community-based organisations. Such organisations create exhibits and develop programs that attract substantial, paying audiences. However, as “museums without walls” they are excluded from many forms of public funding and find it difficult to implement decent work practices. (See <https://theonnc.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work/promising-practices/>)

As a new, small, community-based and innovative museum, the Toronto Ward Museum (TWM) has created models for involving young people from diverse backgrounds in the interpretation of Canadian multiculturalism. Working with partners from immigrant organizations, immigrant service agencies, arts, and academic organizations, TWM has collaboratively generated exciting public and virtual discussions of Toronto’s long history and current status as a thriving, tolerant, multicultural, global city. It has also partnered with other cities to begin to develop national interpretations of migration that privilege the voices and experiences of marginalized groups. With enhanced funding for community organisations that work with, but outside existing heritage museums of Canada, TWM, as a “museum without walls”, is now poised to contribute significantly to diversifying the workforce of the heritage sector in ways that will open possibilities for further building on the UNESCO model of investment in sites and programs that highlight Canadian multiculturalism.

## Rationale

Through strategic partnerships, multi-sector collaboration and community-based heritage work, organisations such as the Toronto Ward Museum (TWM) can create more nimble, flexible and efficient institutional models for the heritage sector by:

- Allowing innovation to surface through exchange, dialogue and partnership between diverse communities rather than through construction of buildings or curation of collections.
- Sharing stories, resources, networks and skill sets to inspire, train, and support migrants to strive and achieve success in multiple sectors.
- Honouring through programming the contributions made by migrants in building more inclusive societies.
- Highlighting how multicultural development has benefited Canada economically, historically and currently, both domestically and on the world stage.
- Providing young professionals from diverse backgrounds with the training, leadership skills and networks needed to become civically engaged citizens and leaders of their communities.
- Providing competitive employment opportunities in the heritage sector through non-exclusionary and exploitative practises and respect for decent work initiatives. Funding for core operating costs will provide decent and stable work opportunities for a growing labour force of local talent, and financial stability for community-based organisations that working to interpret multiculturalism in Canada.

Since incorporating, TWM's programming has focused on migration in specific neighborhood settings where human relationships and experiences are nurtured. By engaging marginalized groups as co-creators of knowledge, TWM bridges cultural, social, and economic divisions while seeking to identify and promote leadership roles for newcomers.

Our most recent program, *Block by Block*, which received funding from the Canada 150 and Ontario 150 funds, was built on TWM's community-led, partnership model. It brought together: 8 partners, 3 regional coordinators, 6 youth fellows and 30 storytellers from across Canada. Of the core team, 100% were immigrants or children of immigrants, of whom 92% were from racialized groups. When surveyed at the end of this year, an impressive 100% of the project's partners confirmed they benefited from partnering, mainly by expanding their network and reach, inspiring them to work more inclusively with youth, immigrant and racialized communities, and helping them to promote their organisation and work with new public audiences.

The partners supported TWM's research team. When surveyed, a hundred percent of respondents felt the project: created opportunities for immigrants and youth to lead and develop programming that mattered to them, voicing their concerns to the wider audience mobilized by multiple partners. Eighty-three percent agreed the project expanded their personal network introducing them to new organizations, resources, collaborators and community members.

From its founders to its Board and staff, TWM has assembled a team that reflects Canada's diversity:

- 57% of Board Directors are immigrants
- 67% of Founders are immigrants or the children of immigrants or racialized parents
- 94% of staff and contract workers are immigrants or children of immigrants, with 88% being racialized and 71% under the age of 30
- 63% of storytellers for our most recent program, *Block by Block*, are immigrants or children of immigrants with 77% being racialized

TWM is unique in the heritage sector; without walls it has earned wide recognition for its innovative programming and virtual exhibits. TWM leads by example, reflecting the changes it hopes to see in the heritage sector and proving that diverse community-based groups work best when collaboratively shaping programming and exhibits that matter to the communities they serve.

Beyond project specific grants, the work of building TWM has fallen to unpaid volunteers. This model is not sustainable. Public funding for core operating expenses would allow TWM and other community-based heritage organisations to sustain recent growth, to attract and retain diverse talent, and to expand collaborative programming with partners and the reach and impact of their work. An investment from the government would significantly contribute to the financial health of all community-based organisations like TWM, ensuring the sustainability of their work.

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## About the Toronto Ward Museum

The Toronto Ward Museum (TWM) is a community-engaged charity and a member agency of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI). We facilitate the preservation and sharing of personal stories of migration to urban centres and utilize collaborative processes to identify community needs and opportunities, then use those insights to create programming that promotes empathy and curiosity between storytellers, community members and the public. We also create forums for dialogue relevant to migration, citizenship and pluralism, and seek to serve as a catalyst in community initiatives, forging partnerships between individuals, communities, and organizations interested in working towards our collective empowerment. It envisions a society that values immigrants as makers of Toronto's past and present, bringing together people of all backgrounds to shape a more just, equitable and sustainable future.

In three years, through strategic partnerships and collaboration, TWM has built a network of 15 institutional partners from 4 different sectors and has partnered with 35 organizations on programming, achieving:

- 78,000 online visitors since 2015, with 48,564 visitors in 2017 alone.
- Programming in 23 venues across Canada.
- 10 community led programs.

Our work has been made possible through: in-kind support from our partners, private donations and funding from all three levels of government.

Last year TWM was nominated for a Heritage Toronto Community Heritage Award, receiving an honourable mention, and its Executive Director received the June Callwood Award from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration for her work on the museum.

This year, for the second time, we are nominated for a Heritage Toronto Award in Public History.

**Quotes of support:**

“The Toronto Ward Museum stands apart from previous attempts as it places immigrant communities at the very centre of its creation and programming. It is both a necessary and ground-breaking addition to Toronto’s rich cultural landscape. OCASI looks forward to championing an initiative like the Toronto Ward Museum, as it will highlight the multiple histories of immigration and ethnic communities in Toronto.” - *DEBBIE DOUGLAS Executive Director, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants*

“Every great city needs a space where the stories of newer immigrants can meet and mingle with the stories of older arrivals, creating a dialogue that allows all to appreciate the long history of everyday struggles and soaring hopes that built Toronto.” - *DONNA R. GABACCIA Historian, University of Toronto Scarborough and Tenement Museum Consultant since 1990*

“If Pier 21 was an immigration gateway Toronto, and the Ward in particular, was a destination. The staff and volunteers at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 look forward to partnering with the Ward Museum to tell “the rest of the story” in innovative ways that bring historic and contemporary migration stories together.” - *MARIE CHAPMAN CEO, Canadian Museum of Migration at Pier 21*

“The Toronto Ward Museum is an innovative and interactive cultural and educative program that will recognize the roots of Toronto’s rich immigrant history and merge it with current and future immigrant experiences and contributions to our great city.” - *KRISTYN WONG-TAM Councillor for Ward 27, Toronto Centre-Rosedale*