

# ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2023 - APRIL 2024

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# Who We Are

The **Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC)** is the indispensable partner of business and Canada's largest, most influential provincial chamber. It is an independent, non-profit advocacy and member services organization. The OCC has 60,000 members, including large multinational corporations, small-to-medium-sized enterprises, labour unions, postsecondary institutions, non-profits, associations and close to 150 chambers of commerce and boards of trade.



*OCC Staff Group Photo at the 2023 Ontario Economic Summit.*

## Mission

To convene, align and advance the interests of our members through principled policy work, value-added business services and broad engagement to drive competitiveness and sustainable, inclusive economic growth in the province.

## Vision

We aspire to be the most respected, trusted, and indispensable partner of business, driving government decision-making and leveraging assets across our province-wide membership to support their growth and a competitive business climate in Ontario.

## Values

In 2023, the OCC announced a set of new core values that will guide the organization's mission and operations for years to come.

### Non-Partisan

We approach every issue and decision without bias towards any political group, ensuring our actions are based on objective evidence and support the best interests of our members and greater economy.

### Integrity

Our commitment to honesty and ethical conduct drives our interactions, decisions, and operations, fostering a culture of trust, transparency, and accountability.

### Service Excellence

We consistently strive to exceed expectations, providing outstanding value, support and solutions to our members and stakeholders, enhancing their engagement and experiences.

### Entrepreneurial

Embracing innovation and creativity, we proactively seek new opportunities, adapt to changing landscapes, and champion bold ideas to drive growth and progress.

### Inclusive

We embrace diversity in all forms, ensuring that all voices are heard, respected, and valued, creating an environment of belonging, collaboration, equity, and mutual understanding.



# Company Snapshot

## Our Reach

**17,298**

X Followers

**23,630**

LinkedIn and  
Facebook Followers

**53,736**

Total Social Media  
Engagements

**2,260**

News Media Mentions

**769.18M**

Potential Media Reach

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## Our Impact

**42**

Advocacy Wins

**5**

Policy Councils

**18**

Policy and Advocacy  
Publications

*Letters, Reports, Briefs, etc.*

**2,200**

Businesses Supported  
through OCC's Programs

## A Message from the President and CEO

“I am excited to have joined the Ontario Chamber of Commerce during a time of historic challenge – and historic opportunity. Thanks to the dedication and expertise of our team and our members, the impact and influence of Ontario’s business community have never been stronger. As we set our sights on the future and develop a new strategic plan, I am both proud of our accomplishments and energized about the opportunities that lie ahead. I firmly believe in the power of dialogue, leadership and partnership, and I am eager to collaborate with all our members to build a more productive, sustainable, and inclusive Ontario.”

- **Daniel Tisch Echevarría, President and CEO**



## A Message from the Board Chair

“Serving as the Chair of the OCC’s Board of Directors has been a great privilege. I am proud of the work we have accomplished this year, which includes successfully navigating through a new leadership transition, tackling housing affordability, proactively advancing policy and knowledge in emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, and moving towards economic reconciliation. I am equally proud that, while meeting these accomplishments and serving its purpose, the OCC has fostered its core values of Non-Partisanship, Integrity, Service Excellence, Entrepreneurial Spirit and Inclusivity. As I hand over this position to our next Chair, I want to take a moment to thank my fellow board members, our passionate staff, and our invaluable members, without whom all of our work would not be possible.”

- **Joaquim Ballès, Chair of the Board**



# Board of Directors

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## Joaquim Ballès – Chair

*Executive Vice President, Corporate Development and General Counsel  
Trudell Medical Limited*

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## Vasudha Seth – Chair Elect

*Vice President, Strategy  
ArcelorMittal*

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## Ilda Dinis – Vice Chair

*Senior Vice President,  
Customer Experience  
Marketing and Innovation  
Northbridge Financial*

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## Hélène Lavictoire – Vice Chair

*Founder  
Lavictoire Consulting Inc.*

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## Aliya Ramji - Vice Chair

*Partner  
McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Toronto*

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## Sahezaad Pardhan – Honourary Treasurer and Vice Chair

*Executive Vice President and  
Chief Financial Officer  
Cadillac Fairview*

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## Don Ludlow – Past Chair

*Vice President, Small Business  
Royal Bank of Canada*

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## Tabatha Bull

*President and CEO  
Canadian Council for  
Aboriginal Business*

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## Luigi Ciciretto

*Partner, Assurance and Accounting  
BDO Canada LLP*

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## Jamie Doolittle

*Regional Head  
Business Banking  
BMO*

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## Gervan Fearon

*President  
George Brown College*

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## Teri French

*Executive Vice President, Safety,  
Operations and Customer Experience  
Hydro One; Hydro One  
Communities Inc.*

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## Yasser Ghazi

*Director and Team Lead  
Meridian Credit Union*

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## Tammy Giroux

*Manager, Government Relations  
General Motors Canada*

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## Melissa Hardy-Giles

*President and CEO  
ORIGIN*

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## Marilyn Horrick

*Senior Vice President,  
Ontario Market  
Desjardins*

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## Farah Jivraj

*Head, Market Access, Policy and  
Stakeholder Relations  
Biogen Canada*

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## Bilal Khan

*Managing Partner  
Head of Deloitte Data  
Deloitte Toronto*

---

## Michael Klubal, MBA

*Management Consulting Partner  
National Industry for Infrastructure,  
Government and Healthcare  
KPMG Toronto*

---

## Allan Lafontaine

*Executive Director  
Orillia District Chamber  
of Commerce*

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## Cathy Lennon

*General Manager  
Ontario Federation of Agriculture*

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## Rakesh Naidu

*President and CEO  
Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber  
of Commerce*

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## Chamirai Charles Nyabeze

*Vice President, Centre for  
Excellence in Mining Innovation  
and Network Director  
Mining Innovation  
Commercialization Accelerator*

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## Jennifer Smith

*Executive Vice President  
Corporate and Chief People Officer  
Burlington Enterprises Corporation*

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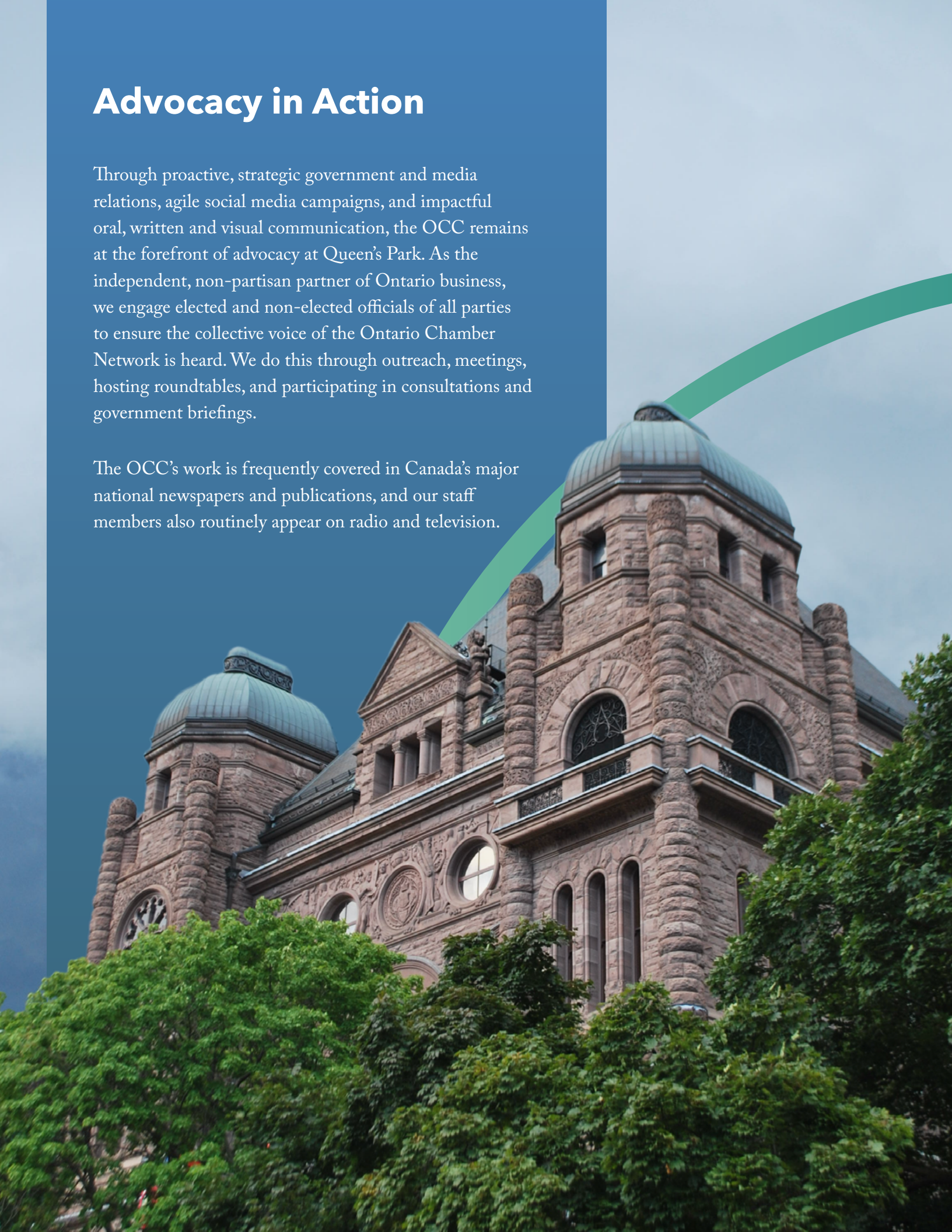
## John Tory

*Senior Vice President  
Business Development and  
Government Relations  
Dexterra*

# Advocacy in Action

Through proactive, strategic government and media relations, agile social media campaigns, and impactful oral, written and visual communication, the OCC remains at the forefront of advocacy at Queen's Park. As the independent, non-partisan partner of Ontario business, we engage elected and non-elected officials of all parties to ensure the collective voice of the Ontario Chamber Network is heard. We do this through outreach, meetings, hosting roundtables, and participating in consultations and government briefings.

The OCC's work is frequently covered in Canada's major national newspapers and publications, and our staff members also routinely appear on radio and television.





# Key Media Moments



OCC's President and CEO, Daniel Tisch, penned an op-ed on the troubling trend of populist business-bashing by federal political leaders, and on how business and government can work better together.

[Read more](#) ➤



OCC's former President and CEO, Rocco Rossi, joined Financial Post's Denise Paglinawan to discuss why an all-hands-on-deck approach is necessary to address the housing affordability crisis.

[Read more](#) ➤



The OCC, in partnership with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, released an introductory resource to advance economic reconciliation to build business capacity to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 92.

[Read more](#) ➤



OCC's Senior Policy Analyst, Simranzeet Singh Vig, joined Global News to discuss the impacts of the mental health "Echo pandemic" on Ontario business.

[Watch the discussion](#) ➤



OCC's Director of Policy, Claudia Dessanti, joined the Toronto Star to discuss the province's need to rethink its approach to procurement to deliver better outcomes and attract more investment.

[Read more](#) ➤

# Key Advocacy Wins



## Expansion of Team-Based Care

**Ask:** In the [2024 Provincial Budget Submission](#), the OCC called on the province to continue to prioritize and expand team-based care across the province.

**Win:** On February 1, 2024, the Ontario Government announced a \$110 million investment to expand interprofessional primary care teams, connecting over 300,000 Ontarians to a primary care provider.

[Read the release](#) ➤

## Supporting Immigration to Small, Rural and Remote Communities

**Ask:** The OCC and Ontario Chamber Network have long called for the federal government to make regional immigration pilots permanent in small, rural, and remote communities.

[Read the submission](#) ➤

**Win:** On March 6, 2024, the federal government announced new pilots for rural and Francophone minority communities as Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship continue to work toward creating a permanent rural immigration program.

[Read the release](#) ➤

## Federal Freeze on Beer and Alcohol Taxes

**Ask:** In the report, [State of Ontario's Tourism Industry](#), the OCC called on the federal government to freeze the federal excise tax on beer, wine and spirits, recognizing the need for much-needed stability for breweries and the hospitality sector as they recover from the pandemic and grow.

[Read the report](#) ➤

**Win:** On March 9, 2024, the federal government announced a two-year extension of the two percent cap on the annual alcohol excise duty inflation adjustment and a 50% reduction for two years on excise duty rates for the first 15,000 hectolitres of beer brewed in Canada.

[Read the release](#) ➤

## Province Investing in Cybersecurity Innovation

**Ask:** In the report, [In Data We Trust: Unlocking the Value of Data in Ontario](#), the OCC called on the government to work with industry groups to assess the strengths and weaknesses of cybersecurity defences across the economy and, where appropriate, help to address them.

**Win:** In August 2023, the Province [announced](#) an investment of up to \$5 million to help the Canadian Cyber Threat Exchange launch the Ontario Cybersecurity Excellence Initiative, which will support Ontario companies in developing and adopting cybersecurity technologies that enhance data security and protect company assets from cyber threats and other advanced technologies.

## Province Provides Regulatory Approval to Convert Landfill Methane to Renewable Natural Gas

**Ask:** In the [2023 Provincial Budget Submission](#), the OCC called on the Government of Ontario to reconsider the proposal to ban organic material from landfills or exempt landfills that convert waste emissions to renewable natural gas.

**Win:** In July 2023, regulatory approval was provided to Enbridge Gas to convert landfill methane to renewable natural gas. This progress will make Ontario a leader in greenhouse gas emissions in Canada.



# Driving Evidence-Based Policy Making in Ontario and Beyond

Policy work is at the core of our advocacy. Through policy-focused events, reports, letters, and submissions, the OCC provides insights, analysis, and recommendations on critical topics of importance to the business community.



*Panel discussion with CUTRIC's Dr. Josipa Petrunic, Enbridge Gas Inc.'s Jim Redford, ArcelorMittal Dofasco's Hon. Tony Valeri, and Sussex Strategy's Bonnie Hiltz at The Role of Natural Gas in Ontario's Energy Transition.*

## Home Stretched: Tackling Ontario's Housing Affordability Crisis Through Innovative Solutions and Partnerships

Meeting Ontario's goal of 1.5 million homes by 2031 will require an all-hands-on-deck approach. *Home Stretched* highlights innovative partnerships and approaches to address housing affordability and supply, with policy recommendations to build upon the success of these models.

[Read the report](#) ➤

## Mind the Gap: Addressing the Mental Health and Addictions "Echo Pandemic" in Ontario

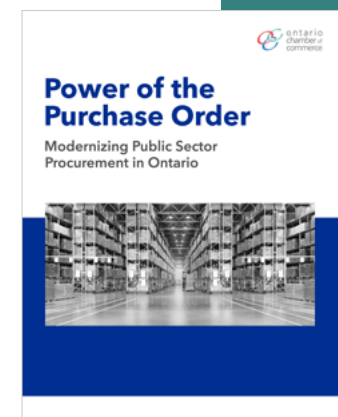
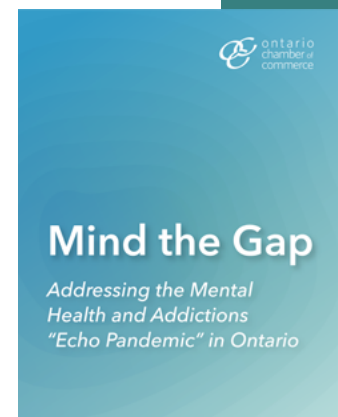
The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated mental health challenges and demand for mental health services, disproportionately impacting frontline workers, marginalized communities, and small and medium-sized enterprises. *Mind the Gap* explores the interconnected impacts of the mental health "echo pandemic" on these sectors and the provincial health care system, offering regional-level recommendations to industry and government for improvement.

[Read the report](#) ➤

## Power of the Purchase Order: Modernizing Public Sector Procurement in Ontario

Ontario spends nearly \$30 billion each year procuring goods and services; however, public procurement in the province often fails to deliver the highest value, lacks collaboration, discourages investment, and prioritizes short-term costs. *Power of the Purchase Order* examines Ontario's current challenges with procurement. It offers recommendations to drive better outcomes across the broader public sector, focusing on innovation, attracting investment from a range of businesses, and health care procurement.

[Read the report](#) ➤



## Sharing Prosperity: An Introduction to Building Relationships for Economic Reconciliation in Ontario

Economic reconciliation benefits both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities alike, enabling shared prosperity and long-term business success. The ongoing systemic exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from social and economic opportunities has led to disproportionate rates of poverty, intergenerational trauma, and poor access to critical physical and social infrastructure.

*Sharing Prosperity* is an introductory resource that provides non-Indigenous organizations and businesses with an overview of opportunities to advance economic reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in Ontario.

[Read the report](#) ➤

## Transitioning to Low-Carbon Fleets in Ontario

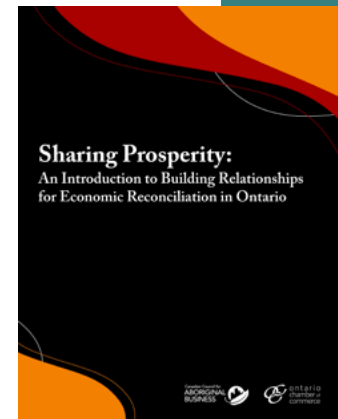
Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario. While there is a growing consumer shift towards electric and alternative-fuel vehicles, there are unique challenges involved with transitioning medium- and heavy-duty vehicles. *Transitioning to Low-Carbon Fleets* explores the technologies, policies, and investments required to decarbonize commercial fleets across Ontario.

[Read the report](#) ➤

## 2024 Ontario Economic Report

The OCC's *Ontario Economic Report* is the organization's flagship publication. This interactive report contains regional and sector-specific data on business confidence and growth, public policy priorities, regional forecasts, and timely business issues such as supply chains, employee well-being, diversity, equity and inclusion, economic reconciliation, and climate change.

[Read the report](#) ➤



# Policy Councils



The OCC's policy councils comprise a diverse cross-section of our members who come together to exchange ideas, inform OCC priorities, and advocate for thoughtful solutions to pressing issues through timely and relevant policy recommendations, statements, and government submissions.



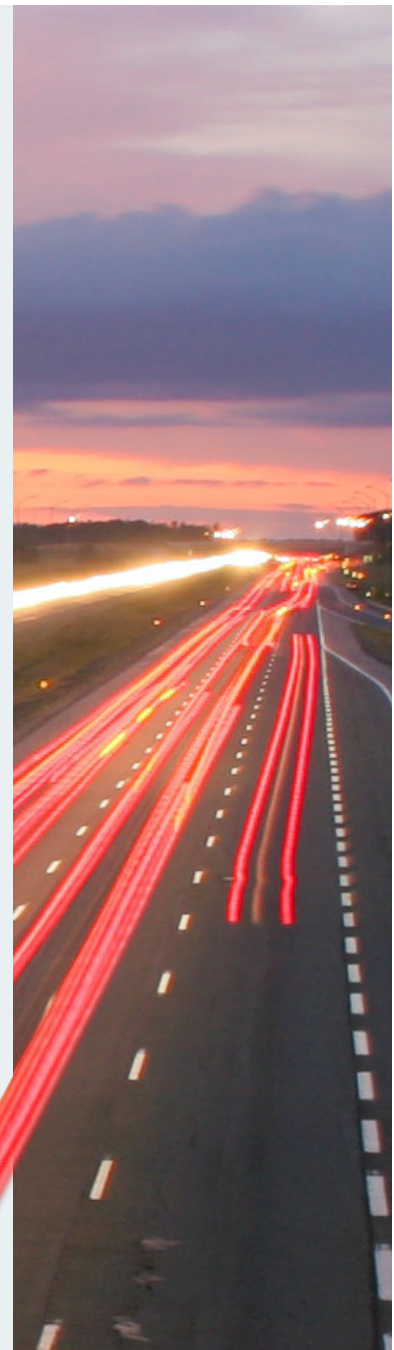
## Infrastructure Policy Council

Recent investment announcements by the federal and provincial governments underscore the imperative role infrastructure plays in driving strong and sustainable economic growth. The Infrastructure Policy Council offers evidence-based recommendations to government, focusing on critical priorities such as improving transit and connectivity, enabling technological innovations like 5G and electrification, decarbonizing infrastructure, building climate resilience, engaging Indigenous communities in development projects, and advocating for investments that yield optimal economic and social returns while fostering innovation to address productivity gaps.

### Highlights & Outcomes:

- ✓ Urged the provincial government to [take action](#) and repeal subsections 74(2)(d) and 74(3) from Regulation 941 under the Professional Engineers Act, ensuring all entities and practitioners offering professional engineering services to the public carry professional liability insurance to protect themselves, the public, and property.
- ✓ Participated in consultations for the brief [Home Stretched](#), providing insight into innovative partnerships and approaches across the province to address housing affordability and supply.
- ✓ [Consulted](#) on a draft regulation proposal to specify large project locate requests under the Ontario Underground Infrastructure Notification System Act, supporting Phase 1 and 2 while offering further recommendations to improve Locate requests for infrastructure owners and Locate Service Providers.

[Learn more](#) ➤





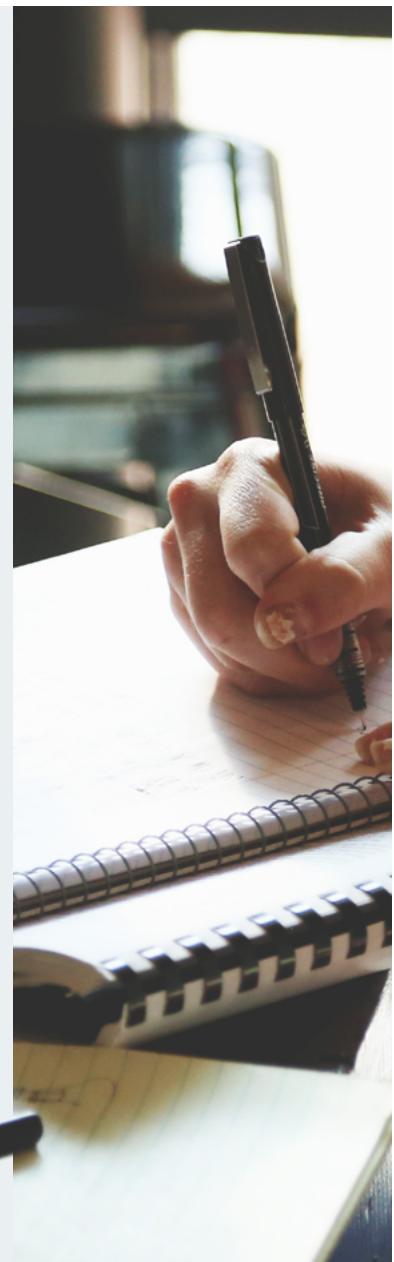
## Workforce Development Policy Council

Despite easing of labour shortages in 2023, key economic sectors like construction, transportation and manufacturing continue to experience a shortage of skilled workers. In addition, there have been a host of policy changes, such as increases to the employment insurance premium for employers and federal policy capping the number of international student enrolments, which have added uncertainty for employers. The Workforce Development Council informs the organization's policy positions on workforce development issues and provides thought leadership in key areas like upskilling and reskilling initiatives for emerging sectors like the green economy and Industry 5.0, attracting and retaining skilled immigrants, enabling a robust post-secondary sector, and tackling barriers to fostering a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

### Highlights & Outcomes:

- ✓ Outlined the need for the Province to evaluate the successful aspects of the government-paid sick leave program before ending or amending Ontario's [policy](#).
- ✓ Provided guidance to the [Blue-Ribbon Panel](#) on financial sustainability in the post-secondary education sector, offering recommendations to enhance the student experience and access, reward excellence and financial sustainability, improve labour market alignment, and promote economic growth and prosperity.
- ✓ Authored a [letter](#) to the Honourable Randy Boissonnault expressing serious concerns about the federal government's decision to increase 2024 Employment Insurance premiums and its impact on the labour market and businesses.
- ✓ Advocated for a financially robust post-secondary education sector by calling on the government to take additional measures to address funding shortfalls and obtain clarity on the impacts of the federal policy capping international student enrollment.

[Learn more](#) ➤



## Energy Policy Council

Businesses require clean, affordable, and reliable energy to operate productively and meet their climate goals. The ongoing energy transition elicits new opportunities and challenges for Ontario's business community and the broader economy. The province is approaching a period of electricity supply shortfalls that will require long-term investments in new infrastructure for the first time in several years. The Energy Policy Council is focused on driving collaboration and advocacy to support a reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy system for generations to come.

### Highlights & Outcomes:

- ✓ Met with the Ministry of Energy, Independent Electricity System Operator, Ontario's Electricity and Energy Transition Panel, and other stakeholders to drive advocacy efforts around energy planning and the energy transition.
- ✓ Authored a [submission](#) on accelerating energy infrastructure projects in Ontario.
- ✓ Authored a [submission](#) on the Independent Electricity System Operator's Pathways to Decarbonization study.
- ✓ Supported the OCC's [Transitioning to Low-Carbon Fleets in Ontario](#) policy primer, exploring the technologies, policies, and investments required to enable the decarbonization of commercial fleets across Ontario.
- ✓ Appeared before the Standing Committee on the Interior to speak on Bill 165.

[Learn more](#) ➤



## Health Policy Council

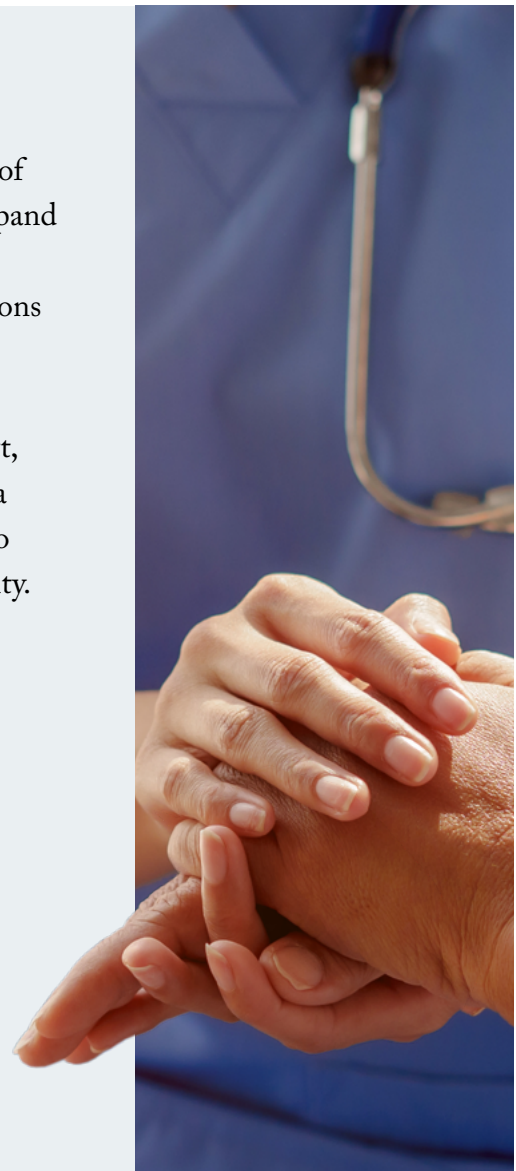
The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be felt, exacerbating vulnerabilities in our healthcare system, leading to unprecedented emergency wait times, treatment delays, staff burnout, and rising mental health and addiction challenges. As Ontario's population ages, chronic diseases and conditions are projected to rise, increasing demand on families, communities, and the health care system. The Health Policy Council champions the direct connection between a strong health care system and a robust economy, recognizing the private sector's unique role in supporting a stronger, more resilient public health care system and achieving positive health outcomes for all Ontarians.

Key priorities include supporting the aging population, tackling mental health challenges, addressing health human resource shortages, advancing data and digital services, advocating for cost-effective, evidence-based health solutions, and advancing Ontario's life science strategy.

### Highlights & Outcomes:

- ✓ Provided [feedback](#) and support to the Ontario College of Pharmacists on proposed regulatory amendments to expand the scope of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to administer additional vaccines, and offer treatment options for COVID-19 and influenza.
- ✓ Hosted a roundtable engagement with Dr. Jane Philpott, a meaningful discussion about the Ontario Health Data Council and the importance of leveraging health data to advance positive health outcomes while promoting equity.
- ✓ Took part in consultations for the brief [Mind the Gap](#), providing insight and recommendations on the interconnected impacts of the mental health “echo pandemic” on the provincial health care system.

[Learn more](#) ➤



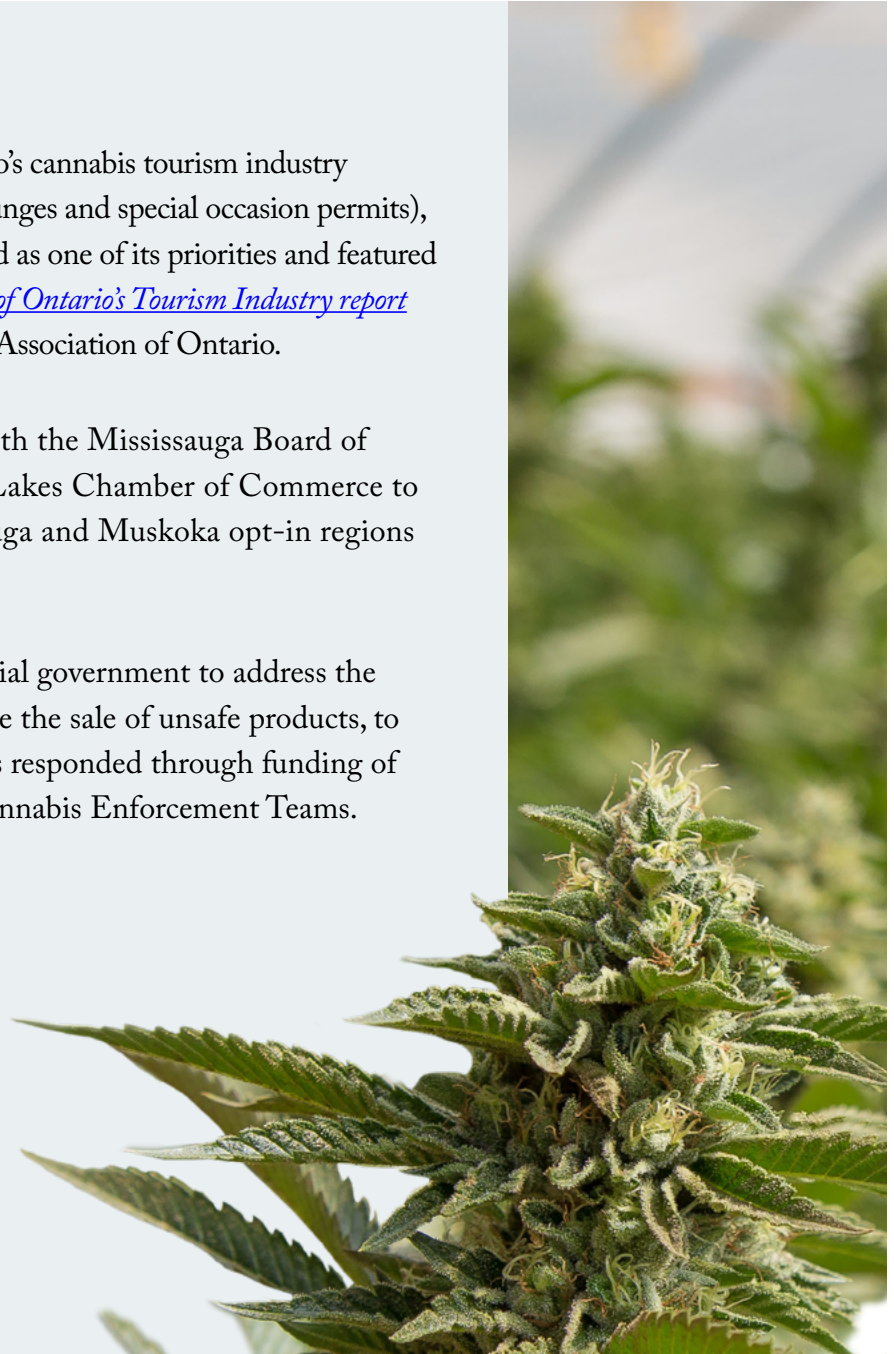
## Ontario Cannabis Policy Council

In the six years since recreational cannabis was legalized in Canada, it has quickly emerged as one of Canada's fastest-growing sectors. The Ontario Cannabis Policy Council is dedicated to fostering the growth of Ontario's cannabis industry while advocating for policy and regulatory changes aligned with the original goals of cannabis legalization in Canada: eradicating the illicit market and preventing youth access. Key priorities for include implementing recommendations from Ontario's Auditor General's report, advocating for pragmatic reforms to bolster sector growth, and pushing for structural changes to enhance the competitiveness of Ontario's cannabis industry.

### Highlights & Outcomes:

- ✓ Provided insight on Ontario's cannabis tourism industry (including consumption lounges and special occasion permits), which OCPC has identified as one of its priorities and featured as a major part of the [State of Ontario's Tourism Industry report](#) with the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario.
- ✓ Mobilized and worked with the Mississauga Board of Trade and the Muskoka Lakes Chamber of Commerce to help make both Mississauga and Muskoka opt-in regions for cannabis.
- ✓ Advocated for the provincial government to address the illicit market and minimize the sale of unsafe products, to which the government has responded through funding of Provincial Joint Forces Cannabis Enforcement Teams.

[Learn more](#) ➤



# Activating Ontario's Business Community

As a convener, the OCC facilitates engagement and collaboration with government and industry stakeholders, ensuring attendees remain abreast of policy developments, business climate shifts, and key industry insights. Through strategic partnerships and inclusive dialogue, the OCC enables businesses to take collective action, shaping the trajectory of Ontario's economic landscape.



*Group Photo at the 2024 Advocacy Day at Queen's Park.*

## Ontario Business Advisory Council

The Ontario Business Advisory Council (OBAC) series brings together high-profile ministers and senior officials from provincial and federal governments with key business stakeholders to discuss relevant issues. Businesses can provide insights to government on sector-specific opportunities or challenges, aligning organizational priorities and contributing to positive economic outcomes across the province.



[Learn more about the OBAC series](#) ➤

## AGM & CONVENTION

The OCC's AGM and Convention is a significant opportunity for Ontario business leaders to network, debate key policy issues, and shape the advocacy agenda for the year ahead. The 2023 AGM and Convention, hosted by the South Niagara Chambers of Commerce and the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce, took place from April 27 to 29. With over 160 attendees across Ontario, the event celebrated the Ontario Chamber Network's success and contributions to their communities at the Chair's Dinner and Award Presentation.

[Learn more about the 2023 award recipients](#) ➤



## Ontario Business Achievement Awards (OBAAAs)

The OBAAAs is a distinguished industry celebration in the province that recognizes exemplary business success. The 2023 OBAAAs showcased the incredible potential of Ontario’s homegrown talent, resources, and solutions in addressing sustainability challenges while simultaneously propelling Canada’s economic resilience forward.



Watch the 2023 OBAAAs [▶](#)



## Smart Growth Symposium

The OCC and the Climate Positive Energy Initiative at the University of Toronto co-hosted the inaugural Smart Growth Symposium, showcasing Ontario-led smart and clean technologies that improve economic efficiency, resiliency, and sustainability. The Symposium took place on November 21 at the University of Toronto’s Hart House, selling out with over 240 attendees, including key decision-makers from government and industry.

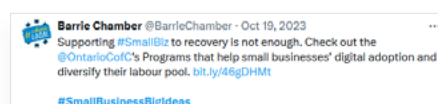


Learn more about the 2023 Smart Growth Symposium [▶](#)

## Small Business Week

The OCC’s annual Small Business Week campaign is an opportunity to celebrate and highlight the power of small businesses. Last year’s theme, Small Business, Big Ideas, underscored the impact and potential of small business innovation and the importance of supporting these businesses beyond recovery and towards growth.

Learn more about Small Business Week [▶](#)





For two decades, the OCC's flagship event, the **Ontario Economic Summit (OES)**, has united thought leaders from the public and private sectors to explore innovative policy solutions to the province's most pressing challenges. At the heart of the OES is a shared commitment to making Ontario more competitive and prosperous. Under the theme, Partnerships for Prosperity, the two-day event was held at Metro Convention Centre from November 1 to 2, highlighting the importance of collaboration amid a rapidly changing economy. Attracting 370+ attendees, including 22 partners, 10 Ontario cabinet ministers and leaders from all levels of government, the OES continues to drive impactful change, guiding Ontario towards a brighter future.

[Learn more about the OES](#) ➤



*The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Canada's Prime Minister, at the 2023 Ontario Economic Summit.*



*The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, at the 2023 Ontario Economic Summit.*



*Her Worship Olivia Chow, Mayor of Toronto, at the 2023 Ontario Economic Summit.*



## In Conversation with Ontario's Chiefs of Staff

This annual event is an opportunity for the OCC's premier members to engage in conversation with Ontario's Chiefs of Staff on the most pressing public policy issues facing Ontario business. In 2023, we were proud to host over 160 attendees, including 19 Chiefs of Staff and eight senior staff members from the Office of the Premier of Ontario.



## Advocacy Day at Queen's Park

On February 27, Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade from across Ontario (the Chamber Network) gathered in Toronto for the OCC's ninth annual Advocacy Day. As a key benefit of their OCC membership, all Chamber Network members had the opportunity to directly engage with Cabinet Ministers, opposition party leaders, critics, MPPs and political staff to share their local members' priorities, challenges and opportunities.

[Learn more about the 2024 Advocacy Day](#) ➔



# Services to Strengthen Businesses

The OCC is a trusted partner of the federal and provincial governments, delivering several programs that support the growth and capacity of businesses across the province.





In its second year, the CDAP has made a significant impact, assisting over 1,400 Ontario businesses in expanding their e-commerce presence through the \$2,400 Grow Your Business Online micro-grant. The program's success extended through a series of highly attended webinars, drawing over 800 participants. Funded by the Government of Canada, CDAP offers tangible support to small business owners in two ways: providing grant funds to establish or enhance online ventures and employing e-commerce advisors to assist with digital needs, applications, and resource links. With 453 e-commerce advisors hired to date and over 9,375 applications received, the OCC has granted conditional approval contracts to 1,552 businesses, totalling over \$3.1 million in support for Ontario SMEs. Furthermore, the OCC's dedication to equity, diversity, and inclusion is evident, with over 82% of e-commerce advisors and 67.5% of grant recipients identifying as part of equity-deserving groups, emphasizing its commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive business ecosystem.

[Learn more about CDAP](#) ➤





Funded by the Government of Canada, TOP supports employers nationwide in hiring college and university students for work-integrated learning placements. The program provides a wage subsidy of up to 50% (to a maximum of \$5,000) for each 'net new' placement or 70% (to a maximum of \$7,000) for under-represented groups, including Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, newcomers to Canada, first-year students, visible minorities, and women in STEM. As of April 1, 2024, TOP has approved funding for 8,707 work-integrated learning placements, with an extension agreement in place until March 21, 2025, targeting at least 649 placements.

[Learn more about TOP](#) ➤



The Skills Bridge Program is an initiative led by the OCC in partnership with the the Diversity Institute, Magnet, and la Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec funded by the Future Skills Centre to support small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) through online training solutions. The objective of the Skills Bridge program is to enhance business competitiveness by ensuring employers and employees have access to training in the skills needed to succeed in an evolving economic landscape. As of March 31, 2024 we have trained over 800 SMEs and from 55 Chambers and Boards of Trade across Canada.



# Behind the OCC

**Daniel Tisch Echevarría**  
*President and CEO*

**Louie Di Palma**  
*Vice President, SME Programs*

**Victor Korchenko**  
*Vice President, Finance*

**Keanin Loomis**  
*Vice President, Member Services*

**Daniel Safayeni**  
*Vice President, Policy*

**Adesola Adesina**  
*Executive Assistant to the President and CEO*

**Jon Ari**  
*Program Manager*

**Daniyal Azhar**  
*Program Manager*

**Kiran Balladin**  
*Events Specialist*

**Andrea Carmona**  
*Senior Manager, Public Affairs*

**Jason Chang**  
*Manager, Programs*

**Neeky Dalir**  
*Policy Analyst*

**Claudia Dessanti**  
*Director, Policy*

**Zeus Eden**  
*Senior Policy Analyst*

**Brent Edwards**  
*Key Account Manager*

**Maria Zumpano**  
*Senior Accounting Officer*

**Ester Gerassime**  
*Senior Economic Analyst*

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