



CBOs to Sask Party: Is this year our Lucky 13?

Dear Finance Minister Donna Harpauer:

Thirteen years ago, when the Sask Party was fresh in government, in your portfolio as the Minister of Social Services, you held a series of summits with community-based organizations (CBOs) to hear the challenges within this sector and listen to ideas on how government could invest in stronger community services for our province.

Thirteen years ago, we told you that sustainable, stable multi-year funding is *crucial* for CBOs to be able to provide important services to people in our neighbourhoods and broader communities.

Thirteen years later, we are still waiting for action. On behalf of our Provincial CBO Committee and on the eve of the 2021 provincial budget, we're asking: is this year our Lucky 13?

CBOs in our province have been woefully underfunded for decades. This has negatively impacted the important work these organizations do to support our most vulnerable families, children, newcomers, people with disabilities, victims of interpersonal violence, people experiencing homelessness, those struggling with mental health and addictions, and many others who need community support services in both rural and urban settings.

One of the biggest challenges we hear from our members who work in this sector is single-year funding from government.

Getting one year of funding at a time makes it impossible to provide stable, reliable services to clients. Organizations never know from one year to the next if they'll be able to keep their doors open to provide the meaningful services that make our communities stronger.

Single-year funding means that wages in this sector are perpetually low and unable to keep up with inflation. Job security is minimal, as workers never know from one year to the next if funding will come through. Staff retention and recruitment is difficult, as workers seek stability and wages that provide for them to make ends meet.

It also means that a lot of staff time goes to writing applications for additional public and private sources of funding – instead of spending that time with the people who need their help.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the incredible importance of CBOs, as your government relies on them extensively to support vulnerable people in Saskatchewan communities.



Now, it's time for community-based organizations and the people they serve to rely upon your much-needed and long overdue support.

Minister Harpauer, we asked you to step up thirteen years ago and you have let us down. Will you finally do the right thing and make sustainable, stable multi-year funding a priority in the 2021-22 provincial budget?

Sincerely,

Judy Henley
President
CUPE Saskatchewan

Barbara Cape
President
SEIU-West

Roseann Strelezki
Secretary Treasurer/Acting President
SGEU