



April 8, 2020

Ms. Kate Young

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (FedDev Ontario)

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0A6

Via email: Kate.Young@parl.gc.ca

RE: Support for COVID-19-related recovery funding for associations such as Dietitians of Canada

Dear Ms. Young:

I am writing as the CEO of an association that will lose significant operation revenue as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We need your support and are calling for urgent assistance by delivering association resources through Canada's Regional Development Agencies.

Workers have been supported through the Canadian Emergency Relief Benefit (CERB) and businesses will be supported by tax deferrals and other small business supports through the Business Development Bank of Canada. While not-for-profit organizations have been included in the list of eligible employers for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, criteria for eligibility need to reflect the diversity of thousands of associations and not-for-profit organizations that span all sectors and professions in Canada.

In our case, our work supports dietitians, to help them navigate this crisis as they are redeployed in new roles to nutritionally support COVID-19 patients and other sick individuals, as well as vulnerable populations such as the elderly in long-term care facilities or the many families who will be struggling to feed their children. While we need to ramp up how we can support them and we currently work diligently at it, we are very concerned about our own sustainability once this crisis will be behind us. The reduced financial capacity of many dietitians, either those working as entrepreneurs or running a private practice,

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will have long-lasting impact on our association as they struggle to renew membership or access learning activities.

Associations play a vital role in the Canadian economy. Over 600,000 meetings and events are held every year in Canada, generating over \$27 billion of GDP. In fact, investments by associations in these activities support other hard-hit sectors, including hotels, convention centres, travel industries and event management organizations. The spin off effects are enormous across communities from coast-to-coast-to-coast.

March, April, May and June are some of the busiest months for association trade shows, conferences and Annual General Meetings, and Dietitians of Canada is no exception having had to cancel our Annual conference in June and many smaller events throughout the country in March, April and May. Associations rely on these events for critical revenue through sponsorships and conference fees. This year, having to cancel events, associations like ours will be on the hook for many thousands, and sometimes, millions of dollars.

The Canadian Society of Association Executives estimates that the immediate loss to associations due to COVID-19 is \$156 million in total revenue, with unanticipated affects yet to be known. This lost revenue will force associations to further reduce staffing, scale back their activities and, in some cases, they will become insolvent. These situations are already occurring, and we must act without delay to mitigate the damage.

Associations provide support that is critical to the recovery of Canada's economy and to our society at large as we adapt to a post-pandemic world. Professionals and tradespeople will need training and professional development, businesses will need conventions and trade shows to create new and lasting partnerships, and charities will need to innovate in fundraising and programming.

We call on you to secure access to federal funds for associations that have lost revenue. The Regional Development Agencies could quickly support non-commercial activities that support innovation, business growth and social cohesion in the months to come.

I look forward to your response and encourage you to work closely with the Canadian Society of Association Executives to deliver a solution.

Sincerely,



Nathalie Savoie
Chief Executive Officer

c.c. The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages
Tracy Folkes Hanson, President and CEO, Canadian Association of Association Executives
Marie-Eve Guérette St-Amour, Federal Advocacy Lead, Dietitians of Canada