



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

The Honourable Marci Ien
Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth

May 25, 2023

RE: Concerns with Canada Summer Jobs Program

Dear Minister Ien,

We hope this letter finds you well. We are writing today – as Members of Parliament from four different political affiliations – to share significant concerns and recommendations to improve the Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program, on behalf of funding recipients and young people across the country.

To be clear, the Canada Summer Jobs program is valued by a wide mix of organizations and provides important learning opportunities for young people across the country. However, organizations, businesses and youth who rely on CSJ funding have shared concerns about the impacts of recent cuts to the program budget, a lack of transparent and timely communications about CSJ budget changes, and late notifications provided to employers.

We encourage you to:

1. Reverse further funding cuts to this critical program and commit to an increase in the Fall Economic Statement.

This year, CSJ grants and contributions were over 30% lower than the 2022-23 fiscal year, a loss of over \$124 million to CSJ employers in 2023. Compared to the 2021 peak, CSJ funding has dropped by \$448 million and employers have lost over 119,000 positions through the end of fiscal year 2024-25. As a result, critical small businesses and community organizations across the country are reeling from the sudden loss of funding.

We are concerned that CSJ funding is currently projected to be even lower in the 2024-25 fiscal year, amounting to a 50% cut, or \$202 million below 2022 levels. Although we understand that funding could not remain at pandemic levels, CSJ is currently budgeted to be \$60 million below even pre-pandemic years.

We urge you to advocate for additional CSJ funding in the Fall Economic Statement to ensure that organizations, businesses and young people are able to benefit from important employment opportunities in 2024 and beyond.

2. Communicate CSJ funding projections to employers in a more proactive and transparent manner.

For recipient organizations and youth, the decision to significantly cut CSJ funding this year was both unexpected and severe. These cuts followed four years of consistent and increased CSJ funding and occurred without sufficient communication to past or prospective CSJ program recipients.

As a result, many employers felt blindsided and did not have time to adjust their operations and hiring plans to deal with the reduction in CSJ funding. Nationally, the CSJ program received applications

for more than 5 times the funding available, leaving many employers disappointed. Going forward, we urge you to communicate projected budget changes to employers in a proactive and transparent manner, before applications open, to help them prepare for any changes in funding.

3. *Move up decision making and review timelines to allow for earlier notification of employers.*

Employers have consistently told us that the CSJ decision-making and notification timelines are too late in the spring, making it difficult to plan their summer programs and hire qualified staff. This was made worse this year when funding was cut so drastically. Although notification timelines were a few days earlier this year, employers still did not learn about the funding they would receive until mid-April at the earliest.

Many post-secondary students are seeking jobs that run from May to August and have already secured employment by the time CSJ positions are posted. Employers would like to see CSJ application and decision timelines revised to align with post-secondary schedules so students can start work at the end of April or beginning of May. We ask Service Canada to notify employers by the end of March at the latest, to give them sufficient time to post and hire qualified staff.

Canada Summer Jobs is a valuable program that supports the work of many organizations and businesses and creates important job experience for young people. In many cases, it is also a financial lifeline for small businesses, community-based organizations and non-profits who depend on CSJ funding to deliver essential community services. With predictable, sustained funding levels, timely, clear public communication about projected budgets, and earlier notifications to employers, the program could provide even more benefit to employers and young people across Canada.

We look forward to working with you to strengthen this valuable program.

Sincerely,



Mike Morrice
MP for Kitchener Centre
Green Party of Canada



Laurel Collins
MP for Victoria
New Democratic Party



Louise Chabot
MP for Thérèse—De Blainville
Bloc Québécois



Alain Rayes
MP for Richmond—Arthabaska
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