

TECHNATION^{CA}

TECHNATION's 2023 Ontario Budget Submission: Fueling Ontario's Economic Growth and Delivering Value to Citizens and Businesses

TECHNATION urges the Government of Ontario to prioritize investment in health system transformation and digital health innovation, in procurement modernization to support government transformation, in cybersecurity to safeguard our province, and to focus on the technology sector as a key driver of our economic future to set the path forward for sustainable economic success for Ontario.

Health Data Management through increased use of Digital Health Tools

TECHNATION applauds the Ontario Government's continued investment in developing and implementing provincial health data and digital strategies to further catalyze Ontario's health system transformation and digital health innovation.

We call on the government to continue investing in Ontario's health data to:

- Ensure access to essential products and equipment needed to support the future delivery of patient care promptly, safely, and securely.
- Further promote health equity through appropriate data collection, analysis, and use.

We also encourage further investment in the following innovative and technology-based areas:

- **Cybersecurity** – for continued safety, privacy and accessibility for the Ontario health system. These investments are needed to avoid the potential loss of billions of dollars in ransom payments, and lengthy shutdowns of healthcare facilities affecting citizens' access to critical healthcare services.
- **Health Data and Interoperability Standards** – the development and implementation of nationally and internationally accepted standards to provide healthcare data for clinicians and policy makers, between point of care systems and provincial digital health assets, including Ontario's Long-Term Care communities.
- **Ontario's Digital Health Regulation** – to ensure patients and caregivers get timely, digital access to their personal health information, so they are more informed and better able to manage their health, and to reduce costs for patients, caregivers, and government. Investment in the rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in healthcare continues to be critical.

Access to virtual care for Ontarians will continue to be significant. Indicators reveal that through efficient and effective use, access to virtual care has the potential to decrease emergency room and urgent care visits which will take the pressure off the hospital system. Continued investment in digital health tools contributes to reducing wait times to access much needed mental health services and support.

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Ontario's Digital First for Health Strategy continues to be a valuable approach, aligning best practices in decision making, governance and allocation of investment. Further commitment to identify the gaps in legislation and updating consent rules to align with a digitally integrated health data ecosystem while strengthening the protection of privacy in Ontario is crucial to success. We encourage the government to continue with this roadmap, to ensure the best quality and access to healthcare for all Ontarians.

Delivering Value through Procurement

An immediate and significant opportunity exists for the Ontario government to create a 'new normal' of nimble, agile government procurement integrating cutting-edge innovations into public service delivery, while fueling economic growth and delivering value to its citizens and businesses.

It is critical that the Government of Ontario continue with its modernization efforts, and that it fully embraces industry-leading innovations from its vast network of suppliers to deliver on the way forward. Ontario should consider piloting agile procurement, leveraging *Canada's Digital Marketplace*, to uncover the innovative domestic solutions available to address its most pressing challenges. This will afford the government a low-risk approach to working with tech scale-ups to experiment and prototype solutions across various ministries.

TECHNATION also encourages the Government of Ontario to engage tech industry leaders early on, developing a true collaboration approach as we have been afforded by the federal government, to assist with the province's digital transformation and procurement reform, in support of delivering online services to the citizens of Ontario.

Leveraging Ontario's immense purchasing power is a unique lever to drive Ontario's economic prosperity that must not be ignored.

Cybersecurity

Businesses, governments, and citizens face unprecedented and unrelenting cyber threats every day in Ontario. To confront this problem, a matter of simply increasing funding for cybersecurity is not enough. The government needs to do something more significant and direct, and not in isolation. We urge the Government of Ontario to consider co-creation of a cybersecurity strategy and roadmap with industry, and other government jurisdictions,

An 'all hands-on deck' industry-public sector approach to accelerate cyber talent and bolster Ontario's cybersecurity capacity for the increasing job gap is required to effect the following:

- Ensure the development of cybersecurity talent;
- Reskill and upskill talent to produce faster results through cybersecurity pilots;
- Rapid training and create better quality pathways to fast track cyber talent;
- Tax credits or wage subsidies for companies developing cyber talent;
- Provide training and resources for micro, small, and medium enterprises to better understand and mitigate cyber threats;
- Shared services approach to cyber landscape to protect municipalities across Ontario;
- Attract additional awareness and resources to the cybersecurity sector.

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This is essential to ensuring a robust cyber workforce able to effectively protect Ontario's citizens and businesses.

Ontario's Tech Sector – A Key Economic Driver

Ontario's tech industry (including large, medium, small and micro enterprises), continues to drive Ontario's economic prosperity, fuel the creation of innovative, high-quality, well-paying jobs, and position our province for sustainable, long-term success. The Ontario Government needs an aggressive and comprehensive tech strategy designed to leverage the best capabilities of Ontario's tech sector.

TECHNATION urges the government to:

- Help close the digital divide with continued investments in rural broadband, in hand with the federal government to ensure a national approach, working with industry to find creative methods of delivering this as quickly as possible;
- Identify, fund, and promote effective learning opportunities for individuals seeking tech sector employment to reskill / upskill;
- Support work integrated learning for young people, offering wage subsidies to enable more employers to leverage this emerging talent stream;
- Diversify its tech supplier base, and ensure more access to contracts for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), under-represented groups, and Indigenous businesses.

Together we can advance a digitally enabled Ontario Government to deliver modern services and keep Ontarian's information safe and secure.

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About TECHNATION

As a national industry association, TECHNATION is the industry-government nexus for technology prosperity in Canada. As a member-driven, not-for-profit, TECHNATION unites Canada's technology sector, governments, and communities to enable technology prosperity in Canada. TECHNATION champions technology prosperity by providing advocacy, professional development and networking opportunities across industry and governments at all levels; connecting Canadian scale-ups with global tech leaders; engaging the global supply chain; and filling the technology talent pipeline.

TECHNATION has served as the authoritative national voice of the \$230 billion ICT industry for over 60 years. More than 44,000 Canadian ICT firms create and supply goods and services that contribute to a more productive, competitive, and innovative society. The ICT sector generates more than 671,100 jobs and invests \$8.0 billion annually in R&D, more than any other private sector performer. For more information: www.technationcanada.ca. TECHNATION was formerly the Information Technology Association of Canada (ITAC).