

Investing in Storytelling and Literary Arts in Whitby

WHITBY – The Ontario Government is investing in Whitby to support local artists and strengthen Ontario’s vibrant cultural sector. Natural Born Tellers will receive \$11,460 through the Ontario Arts Council, an agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming. This funding is part of the government’s plan to protect Ontario by supporting workers, businesses, and communities in the face of ongoing economic uncertainty.

“Ontario’s arts and culture sector helps strengthen communities, preserve diverse voices and create opportunities for local talent to thrive,” said Lorne Coe, MPP for Whitby and Parliamentary Assistant to the Ministers of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, and Children, Community and Social Services. “This investment in Natural Born Tellers will help expand storytelling opportunities, support emerging Black storytellers and ensure Whitby continues to be a place where creativity and culture can flourish.”

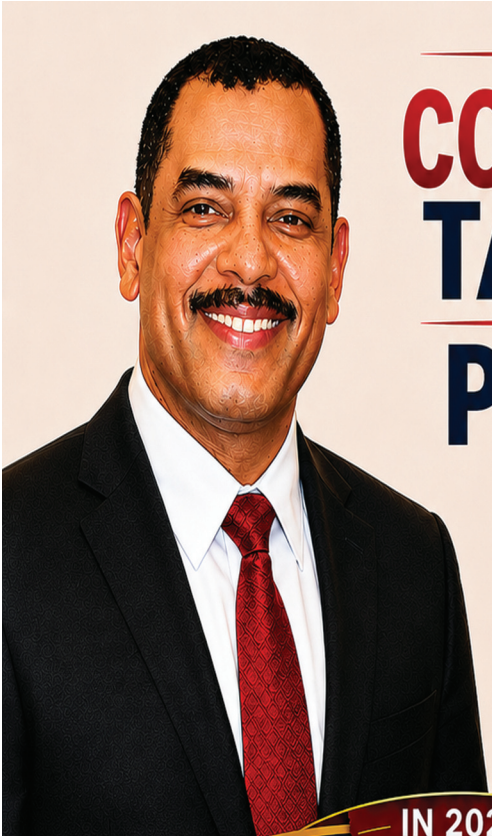
“This funding allows Natural Born Tellers to invest directly in the next generation of Black storytellers, giving them mentorship, community placements and grounding in Afrocentric storytelling methods through our OSP framework,” said Debra Baptiste Executive Director, Natural Born Tellers.

“Partnering with existing cultural organizations like the Inforada Institute for Excellence, and professional storytellers like Kesha Christie, we’re able to bring storytelling programming directly into communities across Durham Region. We are deeply grateful to the Ontario Arts Council and MPP Lorne Coe for recognizing the power of story to build community and open doors for emerging voices.”

This grant is being awarded through the Ontario Arts Council’s Literary Organizations Projects program. In Whitby, this funding will enable Natural Born Tellers to develop and pilot resources for Black storytellers in Ontario through mentorship, community placements and Afrocentric storytelling methods rooted in the organization’s OSP resource framework.

“Stories have the power to preserve history, strengthen identity, and create meaningful connections across generations. It’s an honour to work alongside Natural Born Tellers, helping community elders discover, shape, and share the stories that deserve to be heard. Every story shared today becomes a legacy for tomorrow.”

- Kesha Christie, TEDx Speaker, Story Strategist & Founder, Talkin’ Tales



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Metrolinx fare evaders, hikes fines

Metrolinx, the operator of GO Transit announced that effective September 8, fines for fare evasion on GO Transit and UP Express will increase – and repeat offenders will face progressively higher fines with each offence.

The move is aimed to strengthen fare enforcement.

New Fines Structure

Metrolinx said riders travelling without valid proof of payment will face the following fines:

First offence: \$200
Second offence: \$300
Third offence: \$400
Fourth offence: \$500
Fifth offence: A Provincial Offence Notice with a set fine established by the Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice

Sixth offence and subsequent offences: A court summons, with fines of up to \$1,000 upon conviction

Previous Fines Structure

Metrolinx had introduced a graduated fine structure to add a middle ground between warnings and large fines. This was approved by the Metrolinx Board of Directors in September, 2022.

First time offenders were to be issued a \$35 fine, reduced from \$100 to add a middle ground between warnings and large fines. Second offences, the fine was to be \$50. Third offences, a \$100 fine was to be issued. Passengers with four or more offences would be automatically served a Provincial Offence Notice, with a set fine of \$200.

Metrolinx said fare evasion affects everyone. Increasing fines helps protect a transit system that’s reliable and sustainable for all riders.

Pay your fare before you board to avoid fines, it advised.

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