

# Illinois-Canada Economic Partnership Program

## Our Speakers



### **Earl Provost, Ontario Agent-General, Chicago**

Earl Provost was appointed as Ontario's first Agent General in Chicago in 2019. He serves as Ontario's representative in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Prior to this appointment, he served as Senior Policy Advisor, Intergovernmental Affairs, in the Office of the Premier, Government of Ontario. In this role, he provided strategic guidance to the Government of Ontario on various issues including interprovincial trade.

In November 2022, the Government of Canada appointed Earl to serve as a Commissioner on the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, a Canadian-United States bi-national, treaty-based organization created to improve and perpetuate the \$7 billion Great Lakes fishery. Earl serves as Head of the Commission's Canada section.

Earl has been an active leader in politics and government for many years. He has worked on numerous political campaigns and projects, including the election of Paul Martin as Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada and subsequently Prime Minister of Canada.

Earl also acted as Deputy Campaign Manager for Mayor Rob Ford's successful election as Mayor of Toronto in 2010. After this election, Earl served in the Office of Mayor Rob Ford in senior roles including as Chief of Staff. He would later act as Chief of Staff to Deputy Mayor Norm Kell during an unprecedented time in Toronto politics.

While at Toronto City Hall, Earl established relationships with members of Toronto City Council, the business community and other important stakeholder groups. He worked tirelessly to move forward City of Toronto Budgets that reduced taxes, reduced spending and provided important investments in infrastructure for roads, transit and housing. Earl organized successful trade missions to Chicago, Illinois and Austin, Texas. These resulted in the renewal of the Chicago-Toronto Sister City Agreement and the signing of the Music Alliance Agreement between Austin and Toronto.

Earl earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Glendon College, York University in Toronto and a Master's in Political Management from The George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

## **Jean-François Hould, Delegate, Québec Government Office in Chicago**



Jean-François Hould was appointed Québec Delegate in Chicago on July 3, 2023.

This fourth posting in the United States is subsequent to his mandate as Director of the Québec Government Office in Washington, where he was responsible for bilateral relations between Québec and the U.S. federal government.

He worked in particular to position Québec as a business partner in several matters related to energy, natural resources, the battery strategy, transportation and trade policy issues.

This strategic role in the U.S. capital was in addition to his numerous achievements in supporting Québec's economic and political interests in the United States. He had previously served as the Québec delegate in Chicago, fostering political and economic relations between Québec and the U.S. Midwest. He was especially involved in Great Lakes issues and bilateral trade from 2017 to 2019. He also served as Cultural Attaché in New York from 2011 to 2014, promoting Québec's arts industries in the Mid-Atlantic.

Since 2001, Mr. Hould has acquired many years of experience serving the Québec government. He has held various political positions in ministerial cabinets, including serving as Deputy Chief of Staff and Political Advisor to the Québec Minister of Culture and Chief of Staff to the Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie.

Jean-François Hould graduated from the University of Montréal in 2003 and continued his studies at Laval University and HEC Montréal.

## **Bin Lau, Director, US Midwest Alberta Chicago Office**



Overseeing a territory that encompasses 14 states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Wisconsin), Bin Lau assumed his position in the new Alberta Chicago Office, co-located with the Consulate General of Canada, in June 2023.

As a communicator and relationship builder, Bin previously managed government affairs, stakeholder relations and communications for the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta, after having served as senior advisor to Edmonton's 35th mayor through his two terms in 2013-2021. Prior

to entering the political world, he worked as a communications professional in Canada and internationally.

A member of numerous boards and committees before relocating to Chicago, Bin was an Edmonton's Newcomer Centre board director in 2018-22, culminating as board chair. With a BA in economics from the University of Alberta and an MA in Southeast Asian studies from Cornell University, Bin is a fervent volunteer — most notably at North America's largest and longest-running fringe theatre festival for more than a decade.