

YWCA Muskoka Ontario Election Guide 2018



May 2018

Image by Jean Munson

This document is intended for use as a guide in the 2018 Ontario Election.

In this document

Ontario 2018 Election **Page 3**

*The 42nd General Election
YWCA Muskoka and the Provincial Election*

Election FAQs **Page 4**

*Why should I care about the provincial election?
How does a provincial election work?
I am not 18 yet, why should I care about the election?
I am unable to vote in Ontario, why should I care about the election?*

Voting Information **Page 6**

*Who can vote?
How do I vote?
What if I didn't get a Voter Information Card?
What if I do not have ID?
Examples of acceptable ID
What if I do not have a fixed/permanent address?
Will voting meet my accessibility needs?*

Resources to Engage Participants in the Election **Page 8**

All Candidates Debates **Page 9**

*What is an All-Candidates Debate?
Key Questions*

Keep your eyes peeled for more Elections coverage from YWCA Muskoka in the coming weeks! If you do not already, follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). You can also visit our website at: www.ywcamuskoka.com/takeaction.

2018 Ontario Election

The 42nd General Election

Ontario's 42nd general election starts on May 9, 2018 and ends on June 7, 2018, Election Day.

At dissolution, the Ontario Provincial Legislature had 107 seats: Liberal Party (56), Progressive Conservative Party (28), New Democratic Party (18), Independents (2), and Vacant (3). Women's representation stood at 34.6% with 37 seats.

It is important to recognize that in this 42nd general election the number of electoral districts and MPPs to be elected has increased from 107 to 122. Find your electoral district and learn more about the changes [here](#).

YWCA Muskoka and the Provincial Election

YWCA Muskoka is launching a provincial election strategy called **Women Vote For Action** (#WomenVoteON). In partnership with YWCA Member Associations across Ontario, we will highlight issues that are core to our mission:

- Continuum of safe, affordable housing;
- Universal, affordable, high quality child care; and,
- Investment in young women, girls and non-binary youth.

We will be circulating information about the campaign, including: an online petition (<https://www.ywcamuskoka.com/takeaction>) that allows supporters to send a message to their local candidates about our key issues and an interactive activity to ensure participant voices are heard in this election. Together, we will send a strong voice that gender equity must be front and centre.



Election FAQs

Why should I care about the provincial election?

The provincial government in Ontario is responsible for many key areas that have a direct impact on our daily lives, including:

- Health
- Housing
- Employment
- Child care
- Education
- Social Services
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing
- Human Rights
- Environment
- Natural Resources
- Energy and more

As people who reside in Ontario, we are all involved with these systems in one way or another. For example, you may pursue education at college or university or have a child enrolled in a local school, or use the health care system. Social services like child care, affordable housing, and social assistance are also under provincial jurisdiction. We know that women, girls and gender non-binary people, and the diverse populations within these groups, are disproportionately reliant on these public services.

The provincial government makes decisions that impact government priorities and spending. Participating in the election process, either by speaking out or by voting if you are able, is a way to elevate your voice as an Ontario resident. This election is an opportunity to push all political parties to talk about their vision for our province, especially on the issues that impact women, girls and non-binary individuals. Your participation and vote matters.

How does a provincial election work?

The Premier of Ontario informs the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario that she would like to call an election. The Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario then prepares the writs (a form of written command) of election. The Lieutenant Governor signs the writs, which starts an election. During a general election, eligible voters can vote for a local candidate in their electoral district (also known as a constituency or riding). The candidate who wins the most votes in each electoral district becomes its Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP). The political party with the most elected MPPs forms the new provincial government. When all MPPs meet in Ontario's Legislative Assembly, they make the laws that govern the province.

"At stake is the ability to change the lives of women for the better.... Politicians need your vote to get elected. They pay very close attention to who votes and to the issues that matter to voters. In other words, when young women vote in large numbers it forces politicians to stop and listen. Conversely, when young women disengage from politics, they become easy to ignore. Don't let this happen to you." – Mariam Al-Shikarchy is a member of YWCA Toronto's Advocacy Advisory Committee

WOMEN VOTE FOR ACTION – 2018 ONTARIO ELECTION

#WOMENVOTEON

I am not 18 yet, why should I care about the election?

Your voice in this election matters! Even if you are not currently eligible to vote, an election is a time to speak out on key issues that matter to you, your family and your community. An election period is a great opportunity to learn about the political process and the platforms of the different political parties. You can call on the party leaders and the local candidates in your area to speak to their plan to address the challenges faced by girls and young women, if elected.

Elections Ontario also maintains the Ontario Register of Future Voters for 16 and 17 year old Canadian citizens who reside in Ontario. If eligible, you can input your information ahead of time so that you do not have to go through the registration process later. Information from the Ontario Register of Future Voters is automatically transferred to the Voters List when a person turns 18. You can add yourself to this system using e-Registration [here](#).

I am unable to vote in Ontario, why should I care about the election?

Your voice in this election matters! Even if you are currently not eligible to vote, it is still important to engage yourself in what is happening during the provincial election. This is your opportunity to speak out about the key issues that matter to you, your family and your community. It is a time to make yourself aware of the political process and the platforms of the different political parties. You can call on the party leaders and the local candidates in your area to speak to their plan to address the challenges faced by women, girls and non-binary people, if elected. For example, engaging in social media, blogging about topics that matter to you, signing and initiating petitions, joining community groups that advocate for certain issues etc. are all great ways to exercise your political power without voting. Lived experience is policy expertise!

In addition, you can also influence those around you with informed discussion about the election and the key issues at stake. By engaging with those in your network – whether it is friends or neighbours or colleagues – you are contributing to a crucial dialogue that promotes civic engagement and highlights key issues that should be on the public agenda!

“I think all girls should want to know how candidates in the upcoming election plan to address gender equality and violence against all women. How urgent are these issues to them? They are really urgent to me. If about half of all girls growing up in Canada might experience violence, what will our government do to lower the chances of me experiencing violence because of my gender? And how do candidates plan to fix the wage gap? Is it going to be the way it is now by the time my peers and I are adults?” –

Rishona, a 12 year old member of YWCA Toronto's Girls' Advisory Council

Voting Information

Who can vote?

To be eligible to vote in a provincial election, you must be:

- At least 18 years of age on election day; and
- A Canadian citizen; and
- A resident of Ontario.

All three criteria must be met in order to vote.

How do I vote?

Electors who are on the Voters List will receive a Voter Information Card in the mail from Elections Ontario with information about when, where and how to vote. If you receive a Voter Information Card, you are on the Voters List. Bring your Voter Information Card **and** one piece of ID that has your name to vote.

You can vote on **Election Day, June 7, 2018**. The polls are **open for 12 hours from 9:00 am – 9:00 pm**, in person at an advanced poll, in person at your returning office or by mail using a special ballot, or by using Election Ontario's Assistive Voting Technology.

What if I didn't get a Voter Information Card?

If you did not receive a Voter Information Card, your name may not be on the Voters List. If you are eligible to vote based on the three criteria previously mentioned, you must add your name and address to the Voters List. Go to **eregistration.elections.on.ca** and upload ID that proves your name and where you live. During an election, you can register at a voting location or at the returning office for your electoral district with ID – once registered, you can vote.

What if I do not have ID?

You do not need government-issued ID to vote in an Ontario election. Instead you can use documents that show your name and address.

Examples of acceptable ID:

- Ontario driver's license, Ontario photo card, Ontario health card (with address), Ontario motor vehicle permit, statement of government benefits, CNIB ID, Band council identification; and:

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- Bank statement, credit card statement, loan statement or agreement
- Utility bill, cell phone bill, insurance policy or statement, hospital record or document, residential lease, mortgage agreement or statement, cheque stub, T4 slip or pay receipt
- School admissions letter, transcript or report card, school tuition or fees statement.

A full list of IDs can be found in the forms at elections.on.ca/futurevoters.

What if I do not have a fixed/permanent address?

- If you do not have a permanent residence, the place where you have returned the most to eat or sleep in the *last five weeks* is your address
- If you do not have identification that includes both your name and residential address, Elections Ontario has a temporary form of identification called a Certificate of Identity and Residence to meet the requirements to receive a ballot. To receive this certificate, speak to the administrator of a housing help centre (this includes shelters or any facility that assists in finding or sourcing housing for an individual) or a food bank that you use most often

Will voting meet my accessibility needs?

Elections Ontario is equipped with Assistive Voting Technology in all returning offices and satellite offices from first day of advanced polls through to the day before Election Day at 6:00 pm. This Assistive Voting Technology device will allow the voter to listen to ballot choices with the three different accessible options for voting. The polls are all accessible and voters can also bring a support person to assist with marking the ballot and those that require it can also book an ASL interpreter from the Canadian Hearing Society to accompany them and Elections Ontario will cover the cost of the interpreter.

Voters can also vote by mail, home visit, or in hospital. To mail your vote, you must complete an application form and provide ID electronically or as a photocopy – this must be **submitted no later than 6 days before Election Day**. Learn more about Accessible Voting [here](#).

Voters can arrange a home visit by contacting your local returning office. You can find information about your returning office on your Voter Information Card or by [contacting Elections Ontario](#) – two election officials will then bring an application and ballot to your home.

For voters who do not speak English or French, you are able to bring an English or French speaking friend or family member with you to vote – they will take an oath, after which they can proceed to assist you in the voting process. Contact Accessible Voting at: 1-888-668-8683 or info@elections.on.ca

Elections Ontario is your go-to source for election information:

Phone: 1-888-668-8683
TTY: 1-888-292-2312
Fax: 1-866-714-2809
Email: info@elections.on.ca
Website: www.elections.on.ca

Resources to Engage Participants in the Election

Program staff may find the following resources helpful to engage participants and clients in their programs around the provincial election:

[Elections Ontario – Learning About Elections](#)

This is the best site to learn about the process of voting in a provincial election in Ontario. It outlines how and when one votes, what documentation the voting process requires, and any frequently asked questions around voting and accessibility with clear headings and sections.

[Samara Canada – Vote PopUp](#)

This link provides a voting guide or “kit” for community organizations and civic leaders engaging community members in the provincial voting process to combat the decline in voter turnout. This downloadable guide is great for first time voters or citizens who do not have a lot of experience in the provincial voting process. The PopUp kit allows community groups to simulate the voting process by recreating a voting station – this allows folks to connect concerns and interests with the electoral process, asking rather than telling folks what is important.

[Maytree: How Government Works](#)

This site has a “How Government Works” toolkit for organizations and activists seeking practical tools to understand decision-making and how governments work. It is useful not only to understand how the provincial government operates but also how federal and municipal governments work and offers general information such as: how a bill becomes a law, what the roles of councils are, and what systems are controlled by the provincial government.

[Settlement.org – A Guide to Voting in Ontario’s Election](#)

This website takes you through what the voting process entails, similar to the Elections Ontario link, but includes videos that break down the provincial voting process in a visual way. This website also provides links to the different political parties outlining their platforms as well as their contact information. It also provides hyperlinks to expand on voting requirement details to further explain the process in an accessible way.

All Candidates Debates

What is an All-Candidates Debate?

An All-Candidates Debate is a public meeting that brings together all candidates running for elected office in an electoral district (also known as a constituency or riding) during an election campaign and invites the community to engage with the candidates. The general public has the opportunity to hear from the candidates on their party policies and to ask questions on issues of concern. All-Candidates Debates or Meetings can be sponsored by a single organization or organized by several working in partnership.

Key Questions:

During the Ontario Election, you may have an opportunity to attend one or several All-Candidates Debates in your area. Here are key questions to ask on the issues of focus in YWCA's Women Vote for Action campaign:

Safe, affordable housing:

- There is a critical need for gender-responsive housing options for women, including safe, affordable housing, emergency shelters, transitional and supportive programs. What concrete steps will you take to address the critical issues of housing and support for women, girls and their families?
- Women need access to violence against women shelters and to a safe place to live beyond shelters. How will your party work for change for women?
- How will your Party support housing strategies by and for Indigenous women and women's organizations?

Accessible and affordable child care:

- Accessible and affordable child care is central to gender equity and women's economic empowerment. What concrete steps will you take to build a universal, affordable, high quality child care system in Ontario?
- Will your Party commit significant dedicated funding to build accessible, high quality, not-for-profit child care systems?
- How many subsidized child care spaces will your Party commit to creating, and on what schedule?

Dedicated program funding for girls and young women:

- Currently, there is no dedicated program funding stream for girls, young women and gender non-binary youth. What concrete steps will you take to invest in girls and young women across Ontario?
- Ontario politicians need to start talking about, and investing in, girls. What concrete steps will your Party take to ensure girls are able to access support, build confidence and leadership skills?

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