

VOTE TODAY, CHANGE TOMORROW

ONTARIO ELECTION
READINESS HANDBOOK

Get Out
the
VOTE



WHAT SHAPES YOUR FUTURE!



**Ontario
student
voices**

WHY VOTE?

Because...

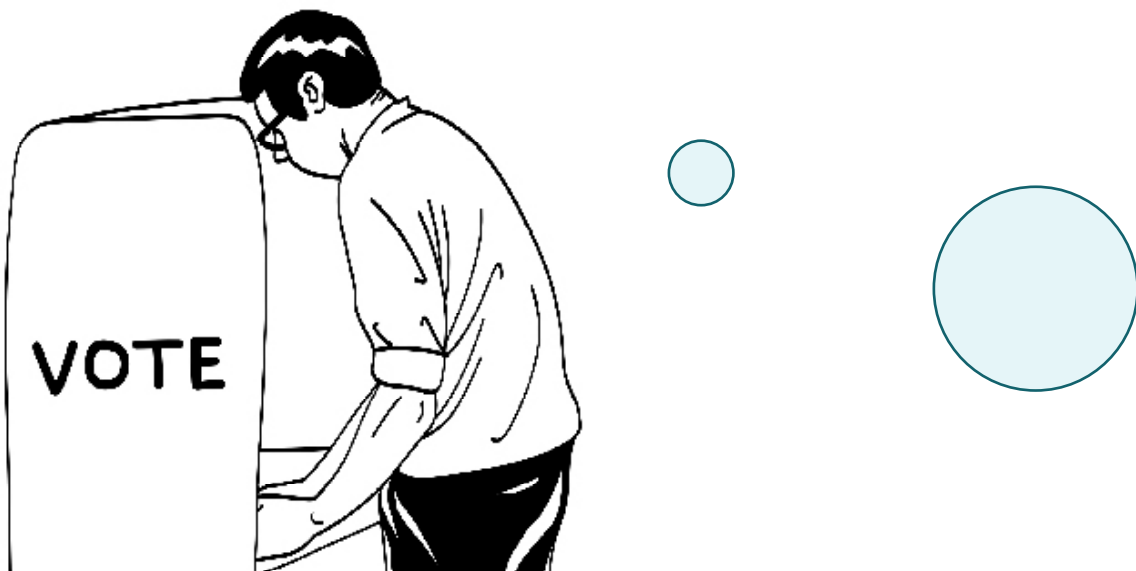
Your ideas matter. Your priorities matter. Your vote matters.

Start a movement-begin with your vote!

Highlights for the February 27th Election:

The deadline to apply to vote by mail is **6PM (Eastern Time) on February 21st**

Candidate nominations close at **2 PM (Eastern Time) on February 13th**



NAVIGATING YOUR PATH TO VOTING

Designed with your priorities in mind, this handbook gives you everything you need to make informed choices and have your say.

Start with Your Values

Explore what matters most to you—education, the economy, climate change, or mental health—and see how your vote connects to these priorities.

Understand the Process

Learn about key dates, how to register, and the simple steps to make voting stress-free and accessible for everyone.

Find Your Voice

Discover how to identify the candidate or party that aligns with your vision and goals for a better future.

Take Action

Step-by-step guidance to cast your vote and inspire your friends to do the same. Let's turn student power into student action!



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MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT WHERE IT MATTERS THE MOST

Your vote is your voice.

It's how you stand up for the issues you care about—whether it's better education funding, affordable housing, or action on climate change. Think about what matters most to you and make it count at the polls.



What are your top priorities?

- Affordable Education
- Mental Health Resources
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Better Job Opportunities
- Transit
- Sustainability and Climate Action
- Taxes
- Community & Child Care
- Affordable Housing/
Residence

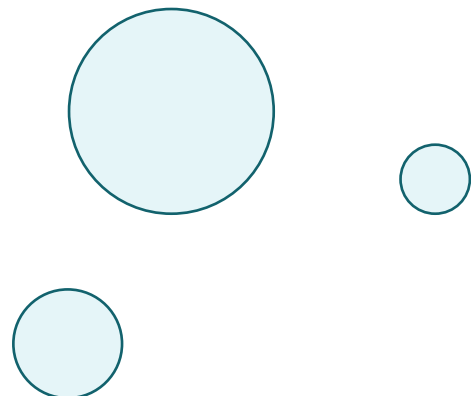


CHART YOUR PATH TO A BETTER FUTURE

Every great change starts with understanding what you care about. Take a moment to reflect on the issues that inspire you to vote.

Close your eyes. Imagine it's five years from now. What's changed? What does your ideal world look like? Write it down and make it happen.



Your Future Now:

Fill out these journaling prompts to dive deeper into your personal, family, and community priorities

"I wish my school had more..."

"In five years, I hope to see..."

"My family would benefit from..."

VOTING IS A PIECE OF CAKE

If you've got 10 minutes, you have got time to vote. It is quick, simple, and the easiest way to make your voice count!

THE VOTING QUEST:

Step 1:

Start Here - What's Your Situation?

- I have never voted before.
- I will be busy on Election Day.
- I am away from my voting location during the election period.
- I don't think I am registered to vote.
- I am a voting pro and ready to roll on election day.



Step 2:

Your Path to Voting

OPTION 1:

I have never voted before. Don't worry, first-time voter!

Voting is as easy as 1-2-3:

- 1.** Check if you're registered on the Elections Ontario website.
- 2.** Locate your polling station using their online tool.

<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://voterinformationsservice.elections.on.ca/en/election/>



- 3.** Bring ID and follow the instructions—it's that simple!



OPTION 2:

I will be busy on Election Day.

No problem! Here's how you can still vote:

1. Use advance polls (open from February 20-22). The locations will be announced on or after February 14th.
2. Find the nearest polling station and plan your visit during off-peak hours.
3. Locations will be announced on or after February 14th.



OPTION 3:

I am away from my voting location.

You're covered! Voting by mail is designed just for you:

1. Apply for a mail-in ballot online

<https://votebymail.elections.on.ca/>



2. Receive your ballot kit at your preferred address.
3. Fill it out and mail it back before Election Day.

OPTION 4:

I don't think I'm registered to vote.

Good news! You can register right at the polling station on Election Day:

1. Bring your ID and proof of address.
2. A poll worker will help you register on the spot.
3. Cast your vote—it's that easy!

OPTION 5 :

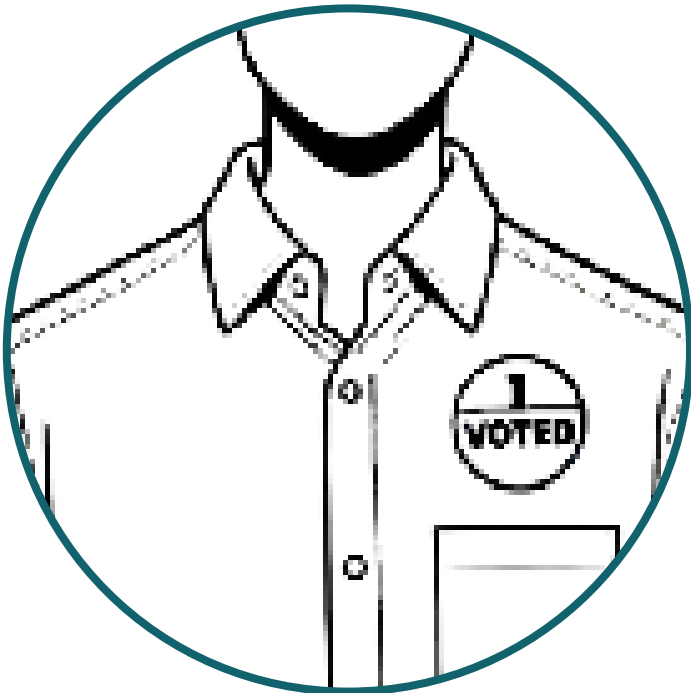
I am a voting pro and ready to roll on election day:

Already a voting pro, you would be on the voters list.

1. Check your voter registration. Ensure your details are current by using the Voter Registration tool. This helps you receive a Voter Information Card (VIC) with your voting details.
2. Choose your voting option (in-person, by mail, advance voting)
3. Bring your proof of identification (driver's license, utility bill, bank statement etc).
4. Mark your ballot- voila you are done!

Step 3:
Celebrate Your Power to Vote!

No matter what your situation, Ontario makes voting easy and accessible. Take the first step today—because your voice matters, and your vote counts!



Voting Made Easy:
How Students Can
Vote While Studying
Away from Home!

If you are 18+, a Canadian citizen, and an Ontario resident, you're eligible to vote! Check your registration at

eregistration.elections.on.ca



VOTE BY MAIL: Studying outside Ontario? Apply for a mail-in ballot or register as an absentee voter to receive a voting kit.

WHICH ADDRESS? You can choose either your school or home address for registration—it determines where you vote!

VOTE IN PERSON: If registered, you'll get a voter card with details. No card? Find your polling station at Voter Information Service on the Elections Ontario website.

BRING ID: With a voter card, show one piece of ID with your name. Without it, bring one ID with both name and address. Check accepted IDs at elections.on.ca/id-requirements.



Download the Elections Ontario App for your digital voter card, polling details, notifications, and candidate info.

Need help? Visit elections.on.ca, call **1-888-668-8683**, or email

info@elections.on.ca

YOUR VOTE: A REFLECTION OF TRUST AND EMPOWERMENT

Your vote isn't just a mark on a ballot, it is rather a declaration of trust in your ability to shape the future. It is a way to ensure your voice is heard and your community's needs are prioritized. Voting isn't just about choosing a representative; it is about choosing a vision for tomorrow. When you cast your vote, you reaffirm your belief in yourself, your values, and the democratic process that binds us all.

**Raise Your Voice,
Shape Your Future**



In a democracy, silence is a missed opportunity. Choosing not to vote allows others to make decisions on your behalf. But when you cast your ballot, you take control. You show up for your values, your beliefs, and your vision for a better tomorrow.

Throughout history, people have fought for the right to vote. They understood that change doesn't just happen, it is created by those who demand it. Your vote is the link between your ideals and the action needed to achieve them.

This is your moment to be part of something bigger. By voting, you are not just speaking up for yourself but also standing with your peers and your community. Together, you can build a future that reflects your collective hopes and dreams.

The power is in your hands. Use it wisely. Vote !

IT IS THE DAY:

WHAT IS AN ELECTION?

Big decisions are coming your way! Elections are a key moment when your voice shapes the future of your community and beyond. It is the time when candidates and political parties ask for your trust and your vote to lead on the issues that matter most to you.

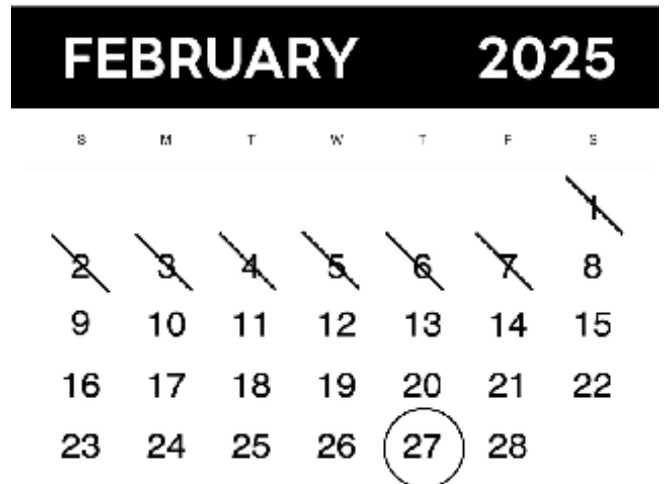
Every campaign is a conversation, a chance for you to learn, reflect, and decide who best represents your vision for the future. The most important chapter of this conversation- Election Day, where your vote becomes action.

Now is the time to dive in, explore your options, and get ready to cast your ballot. Let us ensure your voice is heard loud and clear when it matters most!

WHO CAN YOU VOTE?

To be eligible to vote, you must check off the below list:

- 18 years of age or older.
- Canadian citizen.
- Resident of Ontario.



WHO ARE THE ELECTION PLAYERS

Party Leaders running for Premier



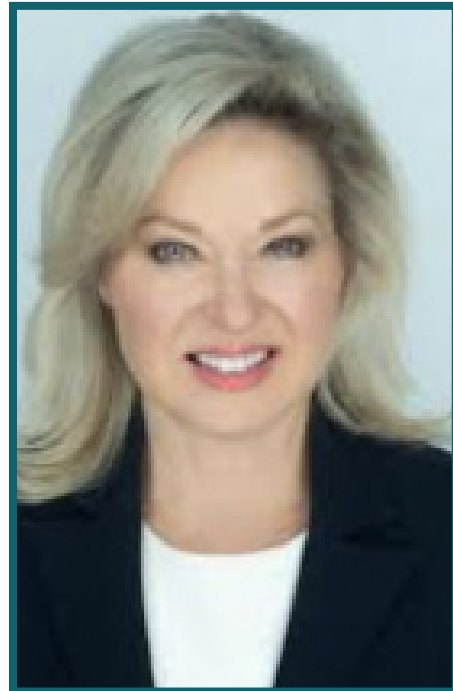
Marit Stiles – NDP



Doug Ford – PC



Mike Schreiner – Green



Bonnie Crombie – Liberal

WHO ARE THE ELECTION PLAYERS

CSI Ridings Nominees

MILTON



ZEE HAMID – PC



**KATHERINE-ANNE
CIRLINCIONE – NDP**



**SUSAN DOYLE
- Green**



**JOHN SPINA -
New Blue**



**KRISTINA TESSER DERKSEN -
Liberal**



MOHSIN RIZVI - CPO

WHO ARE THE ELECTION PLAYERS

CSI Ridings Nominees

GUELPH



CAMERON SPENCE
– NDP



MIKE SCHREINER
– Green



ROBERT COOLE
– PC



MUSTAFA ZUBERI -
Liberal



CARINA FRASER
- New Blue

WHO ARE THE ELECTION PLAYERS

CSI Ridings Nominees

CAMBRIDGE



MARJORIE KNIGHT
- NDP



BRIAN RIDDELL
- PC



CARLA JOHNSON
- Green



ROB DEUTSCHMANN
- Liberal



BELINDA KARAHALIOS
- New Blue

WHO ARE THE ELECTION PLAYERS

CSI Ridings Nominees

KITCHENER SOUTH – HESPELER



JEFF DONKERSGOED
– NDP



JESS DIXON - PC



ISMAIL MOHAMED
– Liberal



JESSICA RILEY
- Green



JOHN SOULE
- New Blue

WHO ARE THE ELECTION PLAYERS

CSI Ridings Nominees

KITCHENER CENTRE



COLLEEN JAMES
- Liberal



AISLINN CLANCY
- Green



BROOKLIN WALLIS
- NDP



ROB ELLIOTT - PC



PAUL SIMOES - New Blue



**SEBASTIAN
BUTNAR-STOICA**
- Ontario



CHRISTOPHER NUHN
- Independent

WHO ARE THE ELECTION PLAYERS

CSI Ridings Nominees

WATERLOO



CLAYTON MOORE –
Liberal



SHEFAZA ESMAIL –
Green



SUJA BIBER -
New Blue



CATHERINE FIFE – NDP



PETER TURKINGTON - PC



PETER HOUSE
- Electoral Reform



CHRIS MARTIN
- Ontario



JAMES SCHULZ
- Libertarian

WHO ARE THE ELECTION PLAYERS

CSI Ridings Nominees

KITCHENER – CONESTOGA



JODI SZIMANSKI
– NDP



MIKE HARRIS – PC



JOE GOWING -
Liberal



BRAYDEN WAGENAAR
– Green



JIM KARAHALIOS
-New Blue



PATRICK DOUCETTE
- Ontario

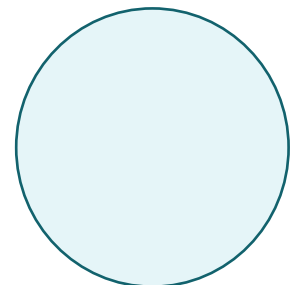
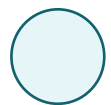
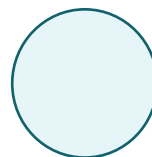
None of the parties resonate with you? No worries! Independent candidates bring fresh choices, explore and vote your way!

In Ontario, you can vote for independent candidates who run without party affiliation, offering a unique alternative to party-backed options.

How to Vote for an Independent:

- **Find Candidates** – Check Elections Ontario for independents in your riding.
- **Know Their Platform** – Research their policies, attend debates, or contact them directly.
- **Cast Your Vote** – On Election Day or during advance voting, mark their name on your ballot.

Your vote, your choice—explore all option



POLITICAL PULSE CHECK

Summarizing Key Party Statements

GREEN PARTY

The Green Party proposes an immediate 20% increase in funding for public post-secondary institutions, shifting from performance-based funding to an enrollment-based model, with annual increases tied to inflation.

They also advocate for integrating mental health and addiction care into OHIP, ensuring students can access essential services without financial barriers. To improve service delivery and reduce wait times, they propose an immediate 8% increase in base funding for the community mental health sector.



The Green Party has not announced their election platform yet but keep an eye on our social media and website and we will update the information

LIBERAL PARTY

The Liberal Party plans to permanently increase base funding for post-secondary institutions, reverse OSAP cuts, eliminate student loan interest retroactively, and convert loans to grants. They propose 40,000 paid internships and apprenticeships, a \$50,000 OSAP repayment threshold, and capping international student enrollment at 10%.

To support student well-being, they propose a universal mental health insurance plan and increased funding for college and university spaces, including mental health resources.

LIBERAL

The Liberal Party has not announced their election platform yet but keep an eye on our social media and website and we will update the information

POLITICAL PULSE CHECK

Summarizing Key Party Statements

NDP

The NDP pledges to reinvest in OSAP, eliminate interest on student loans, and prevent tuition hikes.

Their platform includes:

- Implementing rent control to address student housing affordability.
- Providing larger operating grants to post-secondary institutions.
- Maintaining the tuition freeze for domestic students.



PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE

The Progressive Conservative Party emphasizes collaboration with the post-secondary sector to equip students with the skills needed for in-demand, well-paying careers. They highlight a \$1.3 billion investment to stabilize the sector and maintain the tuition freeze to keep education affordable.



Ontario PC has not announced their election platform yet but keep an eye on our social media and website and we will update the information

NON-CITIZEN STUDENTS

You Can Still Make Your Voice Count in Elections!

1. Work with a club to host a “Policy Hackathon”

- Organize a collaborative event where international students brainstorm solutions for key issues like affordable housing or student mental health.
- Share their ideas with candidates or local advocacy groups to bring fresh perspectives into policy discussions.

2. Launch a “Global Perspectives on Voting” Series

- Organize storytelling sessions where international students discuss how elections and civic engagement work in their home countries.
- Use these discussions to draw parallels and highlight the value of voting in Ontario.

3. Start a “Democracy Dialogue Circle”

- Host open conversations where students (both international and domestic) discuss the impact of elections on issues like education, sustainability, and job creation.
- Use these dialogues to foster deeper engagement with the democratic process.

4. Create a “Students’ Impact Guide”

- Publish a guide that breaks down how government policies shaped by elections affect students’ lives, such as tuition fees, housing, or transit systems.
- Distribute it digitally or on campus to raise awareness among eligible voters.

NON-CITIZEN STUDENTS

You Can Still Make Your Voice Count in Elections!

5. Organize a “Debate Watch Party”

- Host an event where students can watch election debates together and discuss the candidates' positions.
- Provide a forum afterward for students to share their thoughts and encourage eligible voters to act.

6. Launch a “Pass the Mic” Social Media Campaign Series

- Feature international students on social media sharing their thoughts on issues that matter to them, even if they can't vote.
- Encourage eligible voters to take action on behalf of those who can't participate.

7. Volunteer for a “Get Out the Vote” Initiative

- Be a part of OSV's initiatives to help organize voter education drives, answer questions.
- Become an OSV Voting Ambassadors, helping organize engaging campus activities like voter registration drives, debate watch parties, and interactive “Why I Vote” displays.

8. Create a “Student Voices Matter” Blog Series

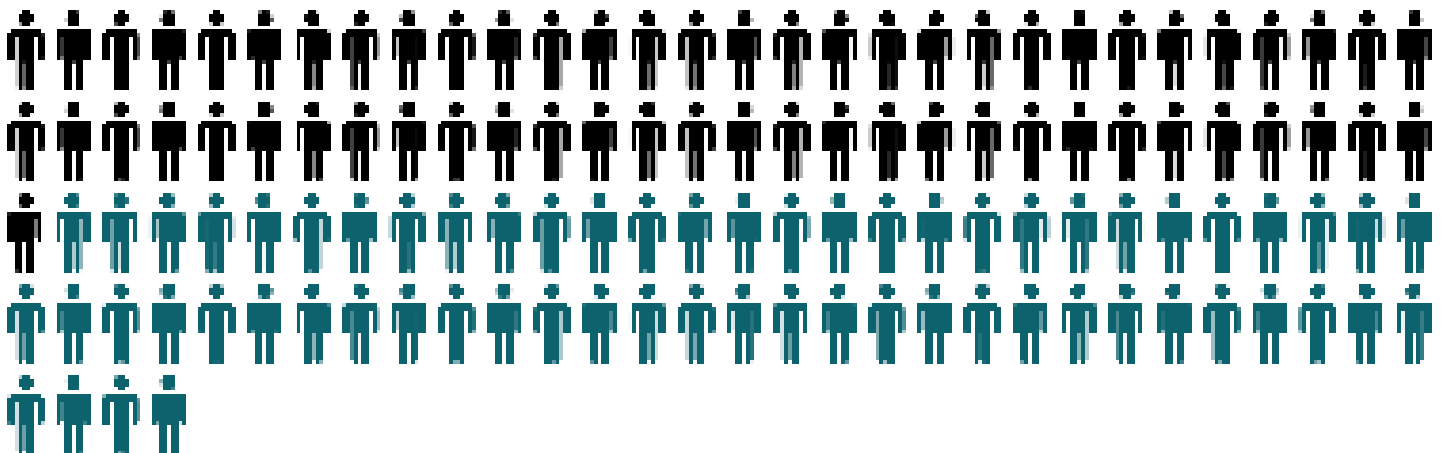
- Publish articles or posts where students discuss the importance of civic engagement, even if they can't vote.
- Highlight personal stories to connect with readers emotionally and intellectually.

YOUR VOTE: THE KEY TO FORMING A GOVERNMENT

When you vote, you choose a Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) to represent your local riding in Ontario's Legislature. There are 124 ridings in total, and your vote plays a direct role in deciding how the government is formed.

- **Majority Government:** A party needs to win at least 63 seats (more than 50%) to form a majority government, allowing them to pass laws without needing support from other parties.
- **Minority Government:** If no party wins 63 seats, the party with the most seats may form a minority government. To govern, they will need support from other parties for key decisions.

Ontario uses the First Past the Post system. The candidate with the most votes in a riding wins, even if they don't secure a majority of the total votes. This system ensures that every vote counts toward shaping the provincial government.



CANDIDATES

Who do you really vote for?

Do You Vote for the Premier?

No, you don't vote directly for the Premier. You vote for a Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) to represent your riding. The leader of the party with the most elected MPPs becomes the Premier, chosen internally by their party members.

Who Are You Voting For?

You are voting for a candidate running in your local riding. These candidates represent political parties or run independently, aiming to win a seat in the Ontario Legislature.

Who Chooses Candidates?

Political parties select their candidates through local nomination meetings, where party members vote to decide who will run. You do not need to be a Canadian citizen to join a political party and vote for the candidate. By joining a party, you can have a say in selecting the candidates who represent your riding.

How to Pick your Candidate?

What Matters to YOU?

Think about what you care about most—better schools, jobs, housing, or the environment. Your vote helps decide what happens next.

Learn About the Candidates

Think of candidates like superheroes with plans for your community. Read their platforms, watch debates, and see who shares your vision. Ignore the drama—focus on their ideas!

Ask Questions

Reach out to candidates! Call, email, or attend an event to ask them directly: What will you do about the issues I care about?

Watch Debates

Debates are like showdowns! Pay attention to who offers real solutions, not just flashy promises.

Make Your Choice!

Your vote is your power. Choose the candidate who speaks to your goals and dreams. You've got this!

HOW DO I KNOW IF CANDIDATES CARE ABOUT STUDENT ISSUES?

Focus on what is important to you and what are they promising?

For example, many candidates are talking about affordable housing—a key issue affecting students. But how specific are they about their solutions? Look beyond general ideas and check for detailed promises. For example, some parties propose building affordable housing near campuses, strengthening tenant protections, and investing in more student-focused housing developments.

Do They Explain the Impact?

If they promise more housing, ask: How will they fund it? Will it affect taxes or other services? A strong plan should clearly outline how it will make housing affordable for students without creating other problems.

Why This Matters?

For students, affordable housing is more than just a promise—it's about creating stability, reducing stress, and improving academic success. When listening to candidates, focus on who offers clear, realistic steps to address this critical issue. Your future depends on the choices they're willing to make.

What Matters to You the Most?

The best way to vote with confidence is to focus on what truly matters to YOU. Take a moment to reflect on the issues that impact your life and community—like education, healthcare, climate, or jobs.



WANT TO KICKSTART YOUR CAREER WITH ELECTIONS ONTARIO?

Here is everything you need to know:

To work as an election official, you must be:

- At least 18 years of age (at least 16 years of age for the position of Information Assistant and Tabulator Deputy Returning Officer);
- A resident of Ontario.
- You do not need to be a Canadian citizen for certain positions for example; Information Assistant



For more information head to

<https://www.elections.on.ca/en/about-us/employment-centre.html>



CAN STUDENTS JOIN A POLITICAL PARTY IN ONTARIO?

Yes! Students can join a political party, even if they can't vote yet.

Why Join?

- **Shape Leadership:** Help select party candidates and leaders.
- **Influence Policies:** Contribute to party priorities.
- **Gain Experience:** Volunteer, network, and build political connections.

Who Can Join?

- No citizenship required.
- No voting age needed.
- Many parties accept members as young as 14 or 16.

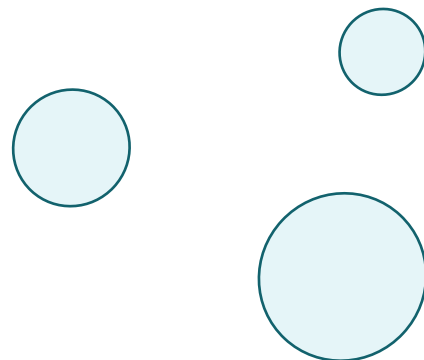


How to Get Involved?

- Pick a party that aligns with your values.
- Sign up on their website.
- Pay a small membership fee (some are free for students).
- Attend party events and leadership races.

Why It Matters for Students?

- Get involved in issues like education, jobs, and climate change.
- Help nominate candidates for your community.
- Build a path into politics, law, or activism.



FAQ'S

1. Where can I cast my vote?

Eligible voters in Ontario have several options:

- By Mail: Apply to vote by mail.
- At Your Local Election Office: Visit during the designated voting period.
- During Advance Voting: Participate in early voting at specified locations.
- On Election Day: Vote at your assigned polling station.

To find your specific voting locations, use the Voter Information Service. For details on accessible voting options, refer to the accessibility page.

2. What identification is required to vote?

- If You Are on the Register: Present one piece of identification (ID) showing your name.
- If You Are Not on the Register: Provide one piece of ID displaying both your name and home address.

For a list of accepted IDs, visit the accepted ID to vote page.

3. What if I cannot vote in person?

If you're unable to vote in person at your local election office, advance voting location, or assigned polling station on election day, you can:

- Vote by Mail: Apply to receive a mail-in ballot.
- Request a Home Visit: Under certain circumstances, you may be eligible for a home visit to cast your vote.

4. What assistance is available for voters with accessibility needs?

Elections Ontario offers various services to ensure voting is accessible to all, including:

- Assistive voting technology.
- Assistance at polling stations.
- Options to vote by mail or request a home visit.

FAQ'S

5. How can I decline my ballot?

Ontario law permits voters to decline their ballot publicly. To do so:

- Inform the election official of your intention to decline the ballot.
- The official will mark "declined" on the back of the ballot.
- The ballot will be placed in a separate envelope for declined ballots.

Declined ballots are counted after polls close and are included in the official results under "ballots declined by voters."

6. Can I vote if I don't have a permanent address?

Yes, individuals without a permanent address can still vote. The place where you have most frequently returned to eat or sleep in the past five weeks is considered your address.

If you lack ID showing both your name and home address, the administrator of a shelter, food bank, or community health facility you use can provide you with a Certificate of Identity and Residence form.

8. How is my personal information protected on the Register?

Elections Ontario is committed to safeguarding your personal information. Measures are in place to ensure data is used solely for electoral purposes, in accordance with the Election Act.

Ontario Student Voices

For more information, please contact:

info@ontariostudentvoices.ca

100 Niagara College Blvd.
Welland, ON L3C 7L3



OUR MEMBERS



OUR OBSERVERS

