



2018 Ontario Election Resource Kit

Take Action Now!

There are many ways you can get involved in the provincial election before it is time to vote on June 7, 2018. You can ask questions about poverty when candidates come to your front door, speak up at all-candidates debates, post questions on social media and submit an Op Ed to local media outlets.

This booklet contains resources to assist Ontario Campaign 2000's partners in engaging with their local candidates prior to the Ontario general election. If you have any follow up questions, please contact Anita Khanna at 416 595 9230 x250 or anitakh@familyservicetoronto.org.

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Eradicating Child and Family Poverty is Not Negotiable

Candidates and parties seeking to represent Ontarians need to make their anti-poverty program clear to voters before June 7, 2018. It is undeniable that people of all ages face tough realities in Ontario today and that many are demanding action from government.

[Ontario Campaign 2000's 2017 Report Card](#) shows that 475,230 (17.2%) of Ontario children under the age of 18 live in poverty with their family (Low Income Measure-After Tax, T1FF).

Many youth carry huge debt burdens from pursuing post-secondary education, while in 2017 youth unemployment was at 14%. Indigenous people are the fastest growing group in Canada, but 30% of Indigenous children in Ontario live in poverty. Among recent immigrant families, 1 in 2 children live in poverty.

Income security has improved for some as of January 2018, with minimum wage workers winning a raise to \$14/hour. Social assistance continues to leave families in poverty and in 2017, a couple with two children receiving Ontario Works is \$6,656 under the LIM-AT 2017 (T1FF). The persistence of child poverty in among families in precarious jobs or receiving social assistance leaves families struggling. It's clear that work is not working for families and that the social safety net is in tatters.

Child poverty compromises too many Ontarians' dignity, mental health and well-being. It is estimated that poverty costs Canada \$72 to \$86 billion per year. Child poverty impairs Ontario's long-term interests because it leads to higher healthcare costs, spending on social support services, lost productivity and limited opportunities. The negative impacts of child poverty mar childhoods, inhibit youth from reaching their potential and negatively affect achievements through adulthood.

Building a poverty-free Ontario requires the conception and implementation of policies and programs to create a society where everyone has access to the supports they need to live their best lives. We envision an Ontario where all families have access to universal, affordable child care; holistic and comprehensive health care services; secure, quality jobs with stable incomes; income security programs that provide adequate incomes; and safe, affordable and good quality housing. We envision an Ontario where youth obtain the education and other supports they need to succeed; and where all people, no matter their Indigenous identity, race, ethnicity, sex, gender, religion, immigration status, accessibility needs or sexual orientation, live free from discrimination and thrive.

In 2009, the Liberals, Ontario PC Party and the NDP unanimously voted for the Poverty Reduction Act. Under the Act, each has a responsibility to put forward a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) developed in consultation with the public that includes targets and timelines.

The first PRS, focused on reducing child poverty, lifted 40,000 children out of poverty and prevented about 55,000 children from falling into poverty. The second PRS focused on reducing child poverty, ending chronic homelessness by 2025, improving

employment and building an evidence base to support poverty reduction work. The government's results from the second PRS show child poverty has been declining and some progress in the other areas – particularly in enhancing employment standards and wages.

Modest success in reducing poverty proves that smart policies work and that leadership and investment are necessary to combat poverty. The next government needs to take concerted action and invest the resources to eradicate poverty in Ontario. They need to introduce anti-poverty measures that are bold and persistent in meeting the goal of lifting all Ontarians out of poverty

Each Ontario party has a responsibility to reduce poverty. Let's hold them to it.

Check out the latest facts and figures on child and family poverty in Ontario below along with Ontario Campaign 2000's recommendations to all parties.

Ending Child & Family Poverty Is Not Negotiable

Building Stronger Foundations for Ontario Families

1 in 6
 Children under 18
 live in poverty in Ontario

Women earn
 30% less than
 men in average
 annual
 earnings in
 Ontario

49.1%
 Recent immigrant
 children under 18
 live in poverty in
 Ontario

1 in 4
 Lone parent families
 live in poverty in Ontario

Vacancy rate
 in Ontario is 2.2%

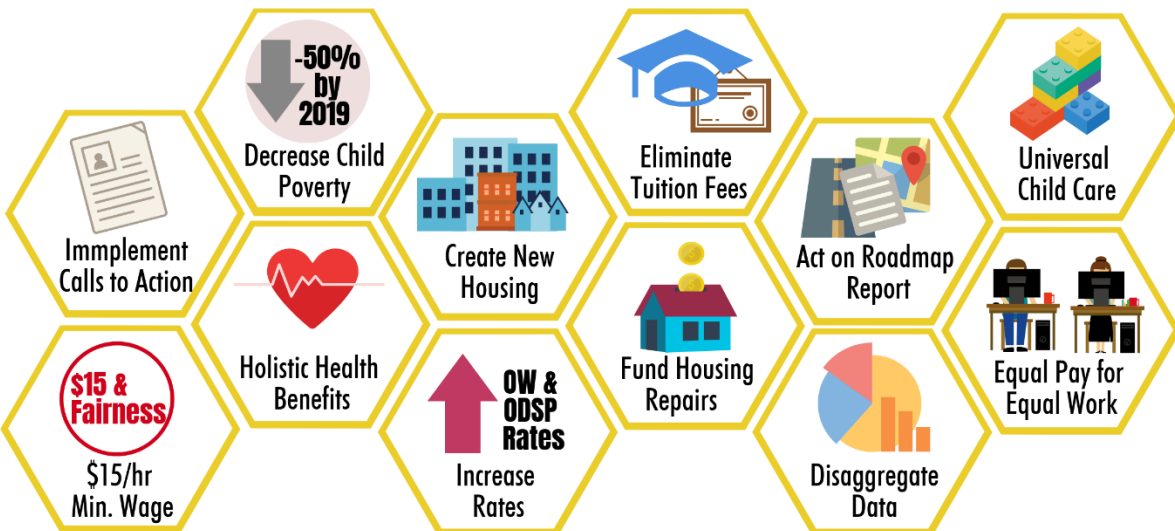
CAUTION
 NO DATA
 AHEAD

No recent household food
 insecurity data

14% Unemployment rate
 for youth 15-24

High child care fees keep
 parents out of workforce

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendations

Issue	Recommendations
End Child and Family Poverty	<p>Commit to eradicating child and family poverty. Start by reducing child poverty rates by 50% by 2019.</p> <p>Ensure household food insecurity data is collected every year.</p>
Make Paid Work a Path Out of Poverty	<p>Increase minimum wage to \$15/hr with no exemptions for sector or age.</p> <p>Update LRA and ESA to ensure principles of decent work. Commit to all Ontarians being protected at work, having 12 paid PLE days, equal pay for equal work, sufficient hours of work, stable scheduling, protection for temp agency workers, and respect at work.</p> <p>Ensure workers are protected from contract flipping, harassment during the process of unionization and expand access to unionization for workers in precarious work.</p> <p>Advocate to the federal government for reforms to Employment Insurance to improve access to benefits.</p> <p>Implement employment equity legislation. Create fair, equitable employment opportunities including community benefit agreements or similar mechanisms.</p>
Lift People Out of Poverty	<p>Commit to income adequacy to ensure all people live free from poverty, with good health, dignity and respect.</p> <p>Engage community on Income Security: A Roadmap for Change report and take immediate action on consensus recommendations.</p> <p>Implement immediate and significant increase to OW and ODSF rates in Budget 2018-19.</p> <p>Change definition of "spouse" to align with Family Law Act (to 3 years).</p> <p>Work with federal government to ensure all children have access to CCB and OCB, including Indigenous Peoples, people with precarious immigration status, and those who do not file tax returns.</p> <p>Increase OCB by \$200/year.</p>
Equal Health Care for Everyone	<p>Follow through on 2014 commitment to create a Low Income Health Benefit for all low-income people (children, adults, seniors) in Ontario, providing coverage for dental, prescription drugs, eye care, assistive devices and mental health services.</p>
Early Learning and Child Care for All	<p>Ensure access to early learning and child care by creating a universal, high quality, accessible, inclusive and affordable public, nonprofit and publicly delivered child care system, provided by a well-trained and well-paid workforce.</p>
Ensure Appropriate and Affordable Housing for All	<p>Create new affordable housing and improve access to safe, affordable, supportive housing, prioritizing new affordable housing for those in greatest need. Develop guidelines to assess what constitutes "greatest need."</p> <p>Release provincial lands to create affordable rental housing.</p> <p>Define affordable housing for programs and initiatives based on 30% of household income.</p> <p>Finalize inclusionary zoning regulations for municipalities to draft and adopt inclusionary zoning by-laws.</p> <p>End unlimited rent increases when units become vacant. Ensure rent increase guidelines apply to all rental units to maintain affordability when tenants change.</p> <p>Increase funding for the repair and maintenance of social housing units.</p> <p>Exclude child support payments from RGI calculations.</p>
Support Opportunities for Youth	<p>Guarantee access to post-secondary education for all students by eliminating tuition fees.</p> <p>Eliminate interest on student loans coupled with debt-relief programs for low and middle income students.</p> <p>Simplify application and intake process for children and youth with special needs to obtain respite, direct funding and other required Ontario services.</p> <p>Create a continuity of care plan for young people with special needs moving from child to adult systems to ensure there are no support gaps after people turn 18.</p>
Address Inequities faced by Marginalized Groups	<p>Implement the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report.</p> <p>Implement Equal Pay Coalition's 12 Steps to Close the Gender Pay Gap and the recommendations in the Gender Equity Report.</p> <p>Implement targeted policy priorities identified by Colour of Poverty-Colour of Change.</p> <p>Collect and report disaggregated data (for all equity seeking groups).</p> <p>Expand human rights protections to those who are poor, have precarious immigration status, have police records, or are discriminated against based on genetic characteristics, by passing Bill 164.</p>

Questions to Ask Your Local Candidates

Ontario Campaign 2000's goal is to have as many candidates as possible hear concerns about poverty on voters' doorsteps and at all-candidates debates. We have sent a survey on anti-poverty commitments to each party leader and will publish their responses widely. Please watch our website www.ontariocampaign2000.ca for updates!

Overarching question:

What will you do to eradicate child and family poverty in Ontario?

Questions on Specific Topics:

- 1. Wages and working conditions:** Workers caring for a sick child should never have to choose between parenting and a pay cheque. Will your party raise Ontario's minimum wage to \$15/hour on January 1st? Will you increase the number of paid sick days from two days and enforce the protection of vulnerable workers?
- 2. Income security:** What will you do to make sure everyone in Ontario has enough income to live free from poverty?
- 3. Housing and homelessness:** What will you do to end homelessness in Ontario and ensure everyone can find affordable housing?
- 4. Childcare:** Will your party commit to making child care more affordable by funding child care programs instead of individuals and putting in place low fees or no fees for parents?
- 5. Extended Health Benefits:** What will you do to make sure everyone in Ontario can afford to see the dentist and get the prescription drugs that they need?
- 6. Public Transit:** What will you do to create more affordable public transit for people across Ontario?
- 7. Post-Secondary Education:** How will you make sure everyone who wants to pursue a post-secondary degree can do so, without relying on student debt?
- 8. Equity Strategy:** What will you do reduce poverty and inequality among women, immigrants, people with disabilities and Indigenous and racialized people in Ontario?

Who to Follow on Social Media

There are several important campaigns and initiatives you can follow on social media to stay informed through the election period.

Twitter:

Ontario Campaign 2000, child and family poverty news & views: @Campaign2000

Ontario for All campaign to make poverty and inequality election issues: @ON4All

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, advocates for universal child care:
@ChildCareON

\$15 and Fairness: @fairwagesnow

Housing Advocacy for Tenants: @TenantAdvocacy

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' Ontario Office: @CCPA_Ont

Suggested hashtags: #ONEIxn2018, #VoteON, #ONpoli #poverty, #childpoverty, #cdnpoli

Facebook: facebook.com/OntarioCampaign2000

Call Outs from Sister Coalitions and Organizations

1. \$15 and Fairness

Ontario Election 2018: Vote for \$15 & Fairness!

The Workers' Action Centre and our allies have been organizing for years to raise the minimum wage as well as improve our basic labour standards. Now, the Fight for \$15 and Fairness campaign, made up of many labour groups, community organizations and individuals, has become a massive grassroots mobilization. Several victories have been won and we need to keep organizing to fight for decent work and wages. We know that many have now joined us to stop the spread of precarious work and eliminate poverty wages. **Download the campaign's new pledge form, which lists our next set of demands and ask your community to vote for candidates who support workers' rights. Check out more info and resources at [Workers Action Centre](#).**

2. Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC)

ISAC is Ontario's speciality legal aid clinic with a provincial mandate to advance the systemic interests and rights of low-income Ontarians around income security programs and low-wage precarious employment. ISAC has produced very useful [election tools you can use](#), such as election kits, questions for the parties/candidates, and facts about poverty by riding and demographics.

3. Ontario for All

[Ontario for All](#) is an alliance of non-profit community organizations, led by the United Way of Toronto and York Region, that has joined together to ensure the 2018 Ontario election focuses on what matters: building a fair, equitable and inclusive Ontario where everyone belongs. There are a number of great resource materials for the pre-election community work, including an [election toolkit](#) from one of the members of this network, the Ontario Non-Profit Network.

4. Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

[Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care](#) (OCBCC) is Ontario's central advocacy group for a universal, affordable, high quality, public and non-profit system of early childhood education and care. In late April 2018 the group launched its **Universal Child Care IS Possible** campaign! Please check out the coalition's [campaign tool kit here](#). The website also has other resources, including the [Three Ideas to Transform Child Care](#).

5. ISARC – Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition

The Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition ([ISARC](#)) is a provincial network of faith groups working together for greater social justice. ISARC represents the solidarity of the diverse faith communities in Ontario engaged in advocacy efforts for the elimination of poverty in Ontario. As part of their work, ISARC has posted their 2018 Ontario Election Kit for Faith Leaders and the Faith Community, which is called: [Provincial Election 2018: Vote for a Poverty-Free Ontario](#).

6. Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO)

The Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario ([ACTO](#)) is a specialty community legal clinic with a provincial mandate to advance and protect the interests of low-income tenants. It specializes in housing issues related to tenants in Ontario. ACTO is a non-partisan and non-governmental advocacy organization.

On its [current campaigns and take action page](#), it lists three campaigns, including the right to housing, urging the Ontario government to amend the AGI, and making affordable housing a human right.

7. Association of Ontario Health Centres

The Association of Ontario's Health Centres (AOHC) is Ontario's voice for community-governed primary health care. It represents 107 community-governed primary health care organizations. AOHC's membership includes Ontario's Community Health Centres, Aboriginal Health Access Centres, Community Family Health Teams and Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics. Check out AOHC's election toolkit which is called: [Ontario 2018 Election: Health Equity at the Centre](#)

Other Helpful Resources

A. Find your Electoral Riding

In order to find your riding, visit: <https://www.elections.on.ca/en/voting-in-ontario/electoral-districts.html>

B. Find Out Who's Running in Your Riding

Green Party: <https://gpo.ca/find-candidate/>

Liberal Party: <https://ontarioliberal.ca/candidates>

NDP: <https://www.ontariondp.ca/candidates>

Ontario PC Party: https://www.ontariopc.ca/our_team

C. How to Organize an All-Candidates Meeting

An All-Candidates Meeting centred around poverty provides an important forum to discuss both local and provincial issues. Work with community groups and organizations to plan the debate and do outreach to invite people to attend.

The Ontario Nonprofit Network provides some tips on hosting an all-candidates forum or townhall meeting, including the Dos:

- Public meetings with larger audiences mean more opportunities for messaging and increased opportunity for media exposure.
- Opportunity for community members to participate in the electoral process.
- Opportunity for community networks or organizations to work together on a project.

To find out more, please visit:

<http://theonnc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Election-Toolkit-Jan-2018.pdf> and refer to the info on page 20.

D. Write an Op Ed for your Local Newspaper

An “Op Ed” is widely understood as meaning “opinion editorial” and it appears in the newspaper adjacent to the paper’s own editorials. It’s a guest commentary on an important and topical issue that’s written by someone who is not on the newspaper’s staff – someone just like you.

A good op ed is a **concise, timely, well-supported** and **accessible** argument.

- **Concise** - between 700 and 1000 words (depending on the publication);
- **Timely** - it’s important now; it relates to a recent, current or upcoming news item;
- **Supported** - you can back up your claims with convincing evidence;
- **Accessible** - you do so in language that can be broadly understood.

To learn how to write an Op Ed, visit Informed Opinions: Amplifying Women’s Voices: <http://www.informedopinions.org/get-published/our-resources/op-ed-elements/>

E. Organize a Rally, Demonstration or Creative Action

Creative actions can include flash mobs, prayer vigils, getting post cards signed on street corners and more. Choose a location that makes a statement – near a food bank, the business district, your MPP’s office, etc. Bring signs so people know what you are concerned about and invite the media.

For more ideas, check out the Modules in the great book Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution at <http://beautifultrouble.org/all-modules/>.

F. Social Planning Toronto’s Election Fact Sheets

Social Planning Toronto has partnered with Apathy is Boring and Democratic Engagement Exchange to produce its provincial election fact sheet series – a collection of 5 fact sheets on important provincial issues. The fact sheets are short and sweet, providing information and analysis on key topics, questions for candidates and additional resources. Please read them, share them, and don’t forget to vote!

Access the complete list of Fact Sheets at: <http://www.apathyisboring.com/vote>