

# PROVINCIAL ELECTION KIT 2018



**ISARC**

Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition





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# ONTARIO ELECTION 2018

## Your Vote Makes a Difference!

On June 7th, you will help to choose the government that will lead Ontario for the next four years. It is an important decision. Ontario Government actions affect the lives of Ontarians in many ways.



The Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition has prepared this Election Kit to help members of faith communities to discuss issues and deliberate on their electoral choices.

## What's at stake in this election?

The provincial election is an exercise of citizenship and a call to action. We must make sure that the progress that has been made to improve the economy, extend employee rights and social services in our communities continues.

## ABOUT ISARC

The Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) encourages you through your vote to shape the future of our province to ensure that everyone shares in its social and economic well-being so that no one is left behind or pushed to the margins of society.

The faith communities who are members of the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) have the shared hope that together we can promote justice and dignity for everyone, especially for those people marginalized by poverty, as a basis for Ontario public policy.

For more than 30 years, ISARC's central message has been to urge us all, especially our elected representatives at Queen's Park, to Respond to meet the needs our neighbours. ISARC represents the solidarity of the diverse faith communities in Ontario engaged in advocacy efforts for the elimination of poverty in this province.

ISARC represents Christian, Jewish, Muslim and other faith communities across Ontario, including, but not limited to, the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, Anglican Provincial Synod of Ontario, Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, Canadian Unitarian Council, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto, Congregation Darchei Noam, Council of Imams, Council of Canadian Hindus, Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Islamic Humanitarian Service, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Society of St. Vincent De Paul, Toronto Board of Rabbis, Salvation Army, and the United Church Of Canada.

## Advocacy for the Impoverished

ISARC's focus is one of advocacy for the poor. ISARC's non-partisan strategy aims to raise awareness about the issue of poverty and to build helpful relationships with politicians in communities across Ontario. Much of ISARC's work is between elections, working with MPPs and other groups, through religious leaders' forums, prayer vigils, and 'social audits', to promote and affirm the moral and ethical issues related to poverty in Ontario. ISARC also makes regular pre-budget submissions to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, urging the province to invest in programs that will provide economic well-being for Ontarians and create a modern, responsive and effective system for delivery of Income support.

# ONTARIO TODAY: EMPLOYMENT, INCOME, HOUSING

In this Election Kit, we will look at three primary issues which ISARC raised with regard to the tabled 2018 Budget: employment justice, the income security system and the need for affordable housing.

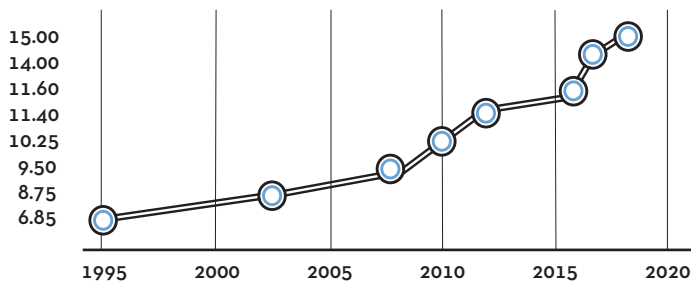
## 1) Employment Justice

While the economy has improved in the last few years as evidenced in the stock market, the benefits haven't flowed from Bay Street to Main Street. Wages remain relatively stagnant in Ontario. The manufacturing sector, for instance, remains under pressure from global trade and the downward spiral in wages. Consequently, There have been plant closures, contracting out to lower wage suppliers, and job losses.

For workers in Ontario, access to regular full-time hours and benefits is a considerable challenge given the increasing incidence of precarious work. The loss of well-paid, full time employment, and the increasing number of Ontarians working in temporary and part-time work, highlights the importance of further strengthening and enforcement of employment standards. If employment is to be a pathway out of poverty and contribute to human dignity and well-being, we must ensure policies are in place to achieve that.

## Just Wages

The general minimum wage was set at \$14 per hour as of January 1st this year. It is scheduled to increase to \$15 per hour on January 1st in 2019. Prior to this year, the minimum wage rate increased from \$11.40/hour to \$11.60/hour in October 2017. In 2003, the minimum wage was set at \$8.75 per hour, and in March 2009 to \$9.50. In March 2010, it was \$10.25 per hour. In 1995, the minimum wage was frozen at \$6.85, where it stayed for the next eight years.



In addition to the increase in the minimum wage, legislation was put in place this year to strengthen the rights of part-time workers, ensure that all workers receive paid sick days, and improve the enforcement of employment laws. Some critics are claiming that the new holiday pay provision is too costly for employers to pay. While it requires Employers to pay a higher proportion of their regular pay to part-timers than the Employer pays to full-timers, nevertheless it should reduce the incentive of Employers to use part-time workers instead of creating more full-time jobs. The extra cost is also minimal in relation to the savings of Employers in not providing benefits to part-time workers.

In this election, we need to question candidates about their commitment to continuing to improve working conditions for Ontario workers. Government must always strive to create economic opportunity for everyone, especially current low income workers. Paying workers a decent minimum wage and improving conditions for temporary workers and contract workers is smart. Higher levels of employment where jobs pay decent wages and include benefits stimulate the economy. It benefits everyone.

Low income workers and their families continue to receive help from many public sector not-for-profit organizations and agencies. Any new government should raise transfer payments to public sector and not for profit agencies to assist them to meet minimum wage, equal pay and other obligations so that they do not have to raise their fees or cut back levels of service.

Whatever party forms the new government, it must 'poverty proof' the minimum wage. That means that if you work full-time hours, full-year at the provincial minimum wage, you will earn enough to rise above the poverty line. There is a need to continue to strengthen labour standards and enforcement by hiring more employment standards officers and adopting a more proactive approach to ensure that employers are following the rules of the Employment Standards Act.

The government itself along with agencies it funds provides many services to the public. Many of those actions are now contracted out to third parties. In many cases employees of those third parties are paid at rates lower than industry standards. This treatment not only hurts those employees but places other third parties bidding for government contracts at a competitive disadvantage. The government has tried to reduce the negative impact and level the playing field by requiring winners of some contracts to adhere to a Fair Wage Policy. The Government tabled Bill 53 to strengthen the policy. The Bill however continues to fail to cover all public contracts with third parties. It fails to cover a sufficient scope of employment conditions and it continues to restrict its coverage to largely male dominated classifications. The new Government must act to eliminate these gaps and bring in a comprehensive replacement to Bill 53.

In addition, the government we elect must continue to develop and enhance an employment and pay equity strategy to close the gap and significantly lower unemployment. We need to ensure that everyone in the province, especially recent immigrants, people of colour, women, especially working mothers, people with disabilities and Indigenous are able to find gainful employment and benefits.



**Two million people (14.3%) in Ontario are living in poverty.**

## 2) Income Security

Two million people (14.3%) in Ontario are living in poverty. A Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) study found that for those on Ontario Works (OW or Social Assistance) or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) "the poverty gap" (the difference between income benefits and the poverty line) has grown dramatically. For a single person, it grew from 20% (1993) to 59% (2014). An additional \$12,000 in income would be required just to meet the poverty line. One in six children (475,000) live in poverty in Ontario. There has been a slight 1.6% reduction since 2014. ISARC, testifying in January 2018 before Ontario's Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, concluded simply, "The poor in Ontario are getting poorer."

Increasing the income available to low-income individuals and families must be a priority if Ontario is to reduce this "poverty gap." One approach is to increase assistance rates. In 2016, ISARC called for \$1 billion to address the poverty gap for OW and ODSP. This represented less than 0.8% of the \$128 billion Provincial budget.

A long-term approach is to provide a Basic Income, possibly through a tax credit system. In 2017, Ontario began a three-year pilot project in three centers to test the idea of basic income. Many faith communities and advocacy organizations have said that a Basic Income must provide an adequate income. For decades, our social assistance system has had built-in disincentives to employment that have never been adequately addressed. If we are to end, or even significantly reduce, poverty, then a newly elected government must look at providing social assistance in a new way. We need to make changes in attitudes, programs, and delivery of benefits. One crucial element of such a strategy is the adoption and implementation of an affordable universal child care program.

### OW / ODSP

Social assistance in Ontario consists of two programs: Ontario Works (OW), for those expected to engage in the labour force, and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), geared to those with substantial health issues expected to last one year or more, which substantially limits their ability to work or carry out normal daily activities.

In November 2017, a provincially mandated review panel released the report, **A Roadmap for Change**. This report offers a vision for the transformation of the income security system, including concrete steps that can be taken to provide adequacy and dignity for those who struggle to survive in our economy.

**ISARC has endorsed the Roadmap for Change report and specifically called for the implementation of the recommendations outlined below.**

ISARC believes that there are social as well as financial benefits to be gained by creating social inclusion and income adequacy. These measures, and the overall approach of the report, recognize that income security is not simply about the allocation of funding for programs and services but rather about people and ensuring that everyone is included and that no one is excluded from full participation in society. When we invest in people, we all benefit.

- An immediate and significant increase to social assistance rates, working toward the achievement of a Minimum Income Standard over the next ten years;
- The immediate creation of a flat rate structure to improve the incomes of those receiving less than the base benefits;
- The establishment of a “made in Ontario” Market Basket Measure, reflecting the real cost of food and shelter and adjusted for all regions in the province;
- The transformation of both OW (Ontario Works) and ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program) to simplify the programs and eliminate coercive rules and policies;
- The creation of a new comprehensive assessment tool and a triage system that would identify people’s needs right away, and connect them with the supports and services that would help them on the road toward greater economic and social inclusion;
- The expansion of access to core health benefits, including prescription drug coverage, dental and vision care, assistive devices and medical transportation benefits, for all social assistance recipients and eventually all low-income Ontarians;
- The introduction of a portable housing benefit to assist all low-income Ontarians;
- The creation of an “assured income” approach for people with disabilities;
- The provision of mandatory professional development and learning opportunities for caseworkers, including anti-racism and anti-oppressive practice training;
- Take steps to ensure that First Nations’ rights of self determination are respected in the design and implementation of income assistance programs for Indigenous people;
- The establishment of an independent body to review progress on income security reform.

### 3) Affordable Housing

As faith leaders, we know that throughout the province of Ontario there is a dire shortage of affordable, rent geared-to-income and social housing. Soaring costs of electricity along with huge increases in the cost of rental housing have further exacerbated the housing crisis that exists for those who are desperate to find shelter for themselves and their families.

We won't make progress in alleviating poverty until we address the huge, and growing, shortage of affordable and supportive housing in Ontario. It's as simple as that. Far too many Ontarians are paying 60, 70 or even 80 percent of their income on rent, leaving little money left for food, clothing, transportation and other basic needs. Many of our faith communities serve people who are experiencing homelessness and those who are precariously housed. Our sacred texts motivate us to be passionate, prophetic voices about loving and serving our neighbours, ensuring that they have decent homes to raise their families.

#### Waiting for Housing

More than 171,360 Ontario households are waiting for a home that they can afford. Waiting lists have grown by more than 45,000 households in 12 years, and applicants face an average wait of nearly four years. In many communities, the wait is much longer.

Every night, there are an estimated 12,000 people who are homeless in Ontario. The CBC reports that there are over 170,000 households on waiting lists for affordable housing with a wait time on average of four years. Municipalities have been scrambling to provide adequate emergency shelters. While these are needed in the short-term, the priority should be on creating permanent housing.

In 2017, according to the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, the province required \$1.3 billion dollars to address the shortfall of new housing projects for the marginalized and poor. We agree. This investment should be made immediately since affordable housing has been so severely underfunded.

One of the challenges that hinders the creation of new affordable housing developments is the scarcity of land. We know that the federal government is designating portions of Crown land towards housing. A newly elected provincial government should find ways to work with the federal government, in consultation with local communities, to ensure that 50% of such lands are designated for rent-geared-to-income housing.

We recognize that Ontario's housing crisis is too big to be fixed by construction and repair alone. There clearly must be initiatives beyond the supply side that assist people directly with the housing costs they face right now. Implementation of a portable housing benefit would provide modest funding support to make up the difference between the actual cost of housing and a minimum contribution given by a household.

Despite years of promises, investment in affordable housing has been severely underfunded. We believe that if fully implemented, these initiatives would go a long way toward assisting people trying to provide a home for themselves and care for family members.



**Every night, there are an estimated 12,000 people who are homeless in Ontario.**

# CANDIDATES' REPORT CARD

Attend All Candidates' meetings, or call your candidates directly and ask these questions:

	Issue Knowledge	Question Response
<p><b>On Income Security</b></p> <p>1 Do you support increasing benefit rates for those on Ontario Works (OW) or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)?</p> <p>2 Do you support pursuing the concept of a Basic Income? How would you determine an adequate level of income?</p> <p>3 Do you support the recommendations included in the Income Security Roadmap for Change Report and transformation of the social assistance system? (see above for specific recommendations) How would your government ensure adequacy and dignity for those in need?</p> <p>4 Since child poverty seems to be unchanged in Ontario over the past decade, what policies would you implement to reduce child poverty? What would you set as a target and by when would you want to accomplish your targets?</p>		
<p><b>On Housing</b></p> <p>1 Would your government invest 1.3 billion dollars for new construction of affordable housing and repair of existing social housing?</p> <p>2 How would your government support the work of municipalities in Ontario to increase the supply of affordable housing?</p> <p>3 How would you work with your Municipal and Federal counterparts to ensure that there are adequate emergency shelters available until permanent housing can be supplied?</p> <p>4 Would you support a portable housing benefit in 2019-20 at a modest 'gap coverage' of 25%, with the gap defined as the difference between the actual cost of housing and a minimum contribution given household income?</p> <p>5 How would you hold your government accountable to the public in terms of reporting the effectiveness of your policies?</p>		
<p><b>On Employment Justice</b></p> <p>1 If elected, will you ensure that the scheduled increase in minimum wage to \$15 an hour be allowed to take effect? If not, do you have an alternative that you will support that will provide at least an equivalent increase in the disposable income of the working poor?</p> <p>2 What other measures will you enact to improve the labour rights of precarious workers?</p> <p>3 Will you enact measures to ensure that all workers employed by companies under contract to a public body in this Province to provide goods and services be covered by either an Ontario or a municipal Fair Wages, Benefits and Standards set of rules?</p> <p>4 Within the first year of the new Legislature will you extend the current scope of the Fair Wage policy to cover female dominated classifications and not just male dominated classifications?</p> <p>5 Will you immediately bring in a revised Bill 53 by extending its scope to cover food vendors who have leases on Government premises?</p> <p>6 Will your government increase funding to not for profit transfer agencies to enable them to meet their new obligations to their employees?</p>		

# MEETING WITH YOUR PROVINCIAL CANDIDATES

## General Tips

ISARC is committed to a non-partisan approach to preparing for an election. This involves meeting with as many of your riding candidates as possible. People often make the mistake of meeting only with the individuals currently holding the office of Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP). The politics of elections is not always as predictable as it may seem and any one of the candidates in your riding could be your next MPP.

ISARC supports a focused conversation with political candidates on the issue of reducing poverty and homelessness and working to create employment justice. Provincial candidates need to be given the opportunity to explain their party's position on these important issues.

**Here are some important documents to consider in having these conversations:**

The Government of Ontario's **Poverty Reduction Strategy** is committed to reducing child poverty, helping transition youth to meaningful employment and putting a focus on housing – in particular, ending homelessness.

Ontario's **Poverty Reduction Strategy 2014-2019** can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/realizing-our-potential-ontarios-poverty-reduction-strategy-2014-2019>. No doubt some candidates may cite this report. It would be good for you to be familiar with it as well if you are to meet with them to discuss poverty reduction and initiatives to end homelessness.

In November, 2017, the Government of Ontario released a report, **Income Security: A Roadmap for Change**, which was produced by an independent group to provide advice to the government on how to reform Ontario's income security system. Again, it is helpful to be familiar with this document in preparing to meet with candidates to discuss income security and poverty reduction. The full report can be found at: [https://files.ontario.ca/income\\_security\\_-\\_a\\_roadmap\\_for\\_change-english-accessible\\_O.pdf](https://files.ontario.ca/income_security_-_a_roadmap_for_change-english-accessible_O.pdf)

The **Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act 2017**, which was passed in November, 2017, made changes to the Employment Standards Act, 2000, the Labour Relations Act, 1995, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act, including raising the minimum wage and better protecting the rights of workers. The legislation can be found at: [http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills\\_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=4963](http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=4963)  
Also see: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/plan-fair-workplaces-and-better-jobs-bill-148>

Questions for candidates are provided in the Candidates Report Card section of this Election Kit.

## Preparing for the Meeting

**Review the candidate's biography.** This helps you get a sense of the person's background and experience in the causes of poverty reduction and employment justice. If they are a current MPP, you can find their background information at [www.ontla.on.ca](http://www.ontla.on.ca). Otherwise, you can check a candidate's campaign website for policy positions.

**Check local media.** Get access to all types of media that cover the riding including local newspaper and news coverage.

**Read Political Communications.** Study any communications that are circulated in the riding by the candidate, and/or their party, e.g. newsletters, their MPP Parliamentary Report.

**Look for a Champion.** Take the time to identify which candidate(s) could act as a champion for poverty reduction in the riding and at Queen's Park.

## Requesting the Meeting

**Send a personalized letter** to each candidate requesting a time to meet and talk with them about poverty reduction in Ontario. (see attached sample) Follow up with a call to the campaign office to arrange the meeting. Be sure to ask for a minimum of 30-45 minutes.

## At the meeting

Be sure to cover the following items:

- A** Provide the MPP/Candidate with a copy of the ISARC Campaign Issues
- B** Give an overview of ISARC and/or the province-wide poverty reduction movement.
- C** Celebrate the work community advocacy has achieved in the area of poverty reduction, e.g. increasing social assistance rates, raising the minimum wage and improving rights of workers (including removing barriers to unionization), funding for programs and services
- D** Share your personal story of poverty – or be the voice of other individuals whose stories you have permission to share. In this way, you can help the MPP/Candidate to understand the issues related to poverty and how important it is to reduce it.
- E** Share some local facts.
- F** Ask the MPP/Candidate to explain in detail their party's position on how the government can help reduce poverty and move the goals of the Roadmap for Change forward.
- G** Make a specific request. Ask the MPP/Candidate to make a commitment to give poverty reduction and employment justice priority with the provincial budget, election platforms, and to raise the issue in Caucus.

## After the meeting

**Contact ISARC after your meeting** letting us know that you have met with your MPP/Candidate and what the outcome of the meeting was. Is there further information your candidate has asked for?

**Follow up with a thank you letter** to the MPP/Candidate summarizing the issues and what you asked him/her to do. In addition, list any commitments they may have made. Include any follow-up information that they may have requested during the course of the meeting. (see attached sample)



## Introductory Letter to Candidate - DRAFT

(Date) May ? 2018

Candidate Campaign Office Address

Dear (name)

As a candidate in the upcoming Provincial Election, you are probably aware of the needs of people with low-incomes in your riding of (insert the name of the riding). As a person deeply concerned about social justice and economic equity, I/we appreciate your support of issues affecting poverty, both locally and across Ontario.

I/we would very much like to schedule a short meeting with you to provide more background about some of challenges facing people living in poverty and tell you about some of our solutions for improving people's lives. Of particular importance to us is the urgent need to make substantial headway in eliminating hunger, homelessness and poverty for all Ontarians. We are also concerned about the need to address injustice in the workplace for all Ontario workers.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time both for reading this letter and for meeting with me/us sometime over the next few weeks. I will follow up with a staff member in your campaign office to set up a meeting. Again, thank you for your time and your interest.

Sincerely,

## Thank-you Letter to Candidate - DRAFT

(Date) May ? 2018

Candidate Campaign Office Address

Dear (name)

I wanted to take the opportunity to thank you for both your time and your interest in learning more about the challenges facing people living in poverty in Ontario. I was very pleased that you agreed that this issue should be ...(reiterate what was agreed) and I am hopeful that our issue will be addressed.

The critical issue of (summarize) reminds us that we need to be sure that every person has the support they need to take themselves out of poverty and plan for the future. It is important that our elected officials partner with families, agencies, religious communities and government to find solutions to the critical issues facing people living in poverty.

(clarify or add any information discussed at the meeting)

I/we hope that you will keep these issues in mind and address them during the campaign.

I sincerely appreciate your time and your consideration of these important issues. If you have any other please do not hesitate to contact me at (your phone number) or by email (your email address)

Again, thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

# ORGANIZING AN ALL CANDIDATES MEETING

One of the best ways for a community to promote an engaged democracy is to organize an all candidates meeting. By doing so, the community is sent a message that public debate matters and that religious communities have an interest in the issues discussed. It is an opportunity for religious communities to take leadership in the public arena.

Many religious groups and communities organize and hold all candidates meetings during election campaigns. These are non-partisan events at which all the candidates in a riding are invited to share their views and answer questions from the audience. This provides helpful information about where the local candidates stand on issues of concern. Here are the steps to organizing an all candidates meeting:

## Getting Organized

**Pick a Date.** Choose a place, date and time for the meeting. Start early to make sure you have the candidates committed to your event. The best time to contact each candidate is at the very beginning of the election before schedules are full.

**Partner with other community organizations.** Co-operating to host all candidates meetings allows you to share costs, access a broader group of voters, and build partnerships. When more groups are involved, this also helps to get media to attend.

**Plan the format of the meeting.** Decide how long each candidate will have for their opening remarks. This is usually three - five minutes. Choose the order in which candidates will speak (e.g. alphabetical order by last name, or straw vote).

**Decide how long the question and answer period will be.** (e.g. one hour), and how long to give for each question and answer, (e.g. 30 seconds for the question and one minute for the answer.)

**Decide if the questions will be asked by the moderator or directly from the audience.** The only caution is that when questions come from the audience in an "open mic" activity, it's harder to control the time and keep presenters on topic.

**Plan how much time the candidates will be given for closing remarks.** This is usually two - three minutes. Choose the order in which the candidates will give their closing remarks, usually in reverse order to the opening remarks.

**Choose an interesting and engaging debate moderator** that is non-partisan, known in the community, and has strong moderation skills. The moderator will introduce the candidates, explain the guidelines and schedule for the meeting, moderate questions from the audience, and make sure the rules are being followed. The moderator must remain neutral and not get involved in the questions or answers

**An alternative to the open mic** is to ask the audience to submit questions to the moderator in advance. Identify a volunteer to assist the moderator in sorting the questions, perhaps even phrasing them better.



Another option is to **work with partner groups to identify questions in advance** that will be forwarded to candidates so they can prepare to speak to the issues your group has identified as being of greatest importance. This option still leaves room for audience questions from the floor.

**Choose a time-keeper.** This person will monitor and notify the candidates and questioners of the time limits. This person will have a stopwatch, gavel or bell. The time-keeper will notify candidates one minute (or 30 seconds) before the end of the time limit for opening and closing remarks.

**Send an invitation to the candidates,** asking them to participate. Send them the guidelines and format for the evening, including the questions if they are being provided in advance. Ask the candidate to provide a short biography to help the moderator introduce them. Let them know there will be tables available for their literature.

**Advertise your meeting.** Use local media, e-mail lists, websites, social networks and partners. Send out the information more than once. Remind the media directly by a media release and a phone call. Give the date, time, and location of the meeting, and the names and party affiliation of the candidates. Inform your religious community of the meeting through a bulletin insert, e-mail and/or announcement. Many local organizations publicize all candidate meetings - be on their lists.

## Setting up for the Meeting

Arrange for tables, chairs, and microphones to be set up at the front of the room for the candidates and moderator with clearly visible signs indicating their name and political party. Provide water for the candidates. Have at least one floor microphone for the audience. Provide space for media to assist them with coverage of your event. Provide tables in the hall or foyer for each candidate's literature.

## After the Meeting

Take some time in the days following the meeting to debrief with the organizing team. In this meeting, review the successes and challenges of organizing an all candidates meeting and assess how your efforts could be improved next time. Prepare a follow-up media release which includes any quotations and a media contact. Send thank-you letters to candidates, organizers, partners, and any other contributors.

# CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO VOTE!

## Using the Media

The media can be a helpful ally in raising public awareness on Issues. A well-written story can gain community support and engage candidates in dialogue. A well-timed story can have a significant impact on a political campaign.

### Radio

Talkback radio attracts the biggest daytime radio audiences. On such shows, you'll only be given a short time to talk, so plan your points and expect to make only a few.



### Editorials

The best read part of any newspaper or media website is the letters section, and politicians use it to gauge support for issues. A letter to the editor is a good way to raise an issue and engage in public debate. Some key points for getting a letter to the editor published include:

1. Keep your letter short and simple (no more than 200 words)
2. Relate it to a previous story, letter, editorial, or feature that the paper publishes (make imaginative links if necessary)
3. Plan your first sentence carefully - if it is dull the editor may read no further; if it's catchy you're in with a chance
4. A simple letter pattern could outline:
  - what you support or disagree with
  - what evidence or examples can offer to support to your view
  - what action can be taken



## Social Media

Use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat and LinkedIn and other social media to advertise upcoming candidates meetings; urge people to get out to vote; let others know about the ISARC Election Kit as they consider their options; discuss election issues.



## Other Internet Resources

1. Elections Ontario: a full list of candidates in all 124 ridings will be available on the Elections Ontario website after the close of nominations on May 17.  
<https://www.elections.on.ca/en.html>
2. QP Briefing: QP (Queen's Park) Briefing is a publication that monitors and analyzes politics in Ontario. It is compiling a list of nominated candidates for the PCs, Liberals, NDP, Green and Trillium parties. There will also be a handy map of all the ridings, with links to the candidates for those areas.  
<http://www.qpbriefing.com/2017/01/05/nominated-candidates-for-the-2018-ontario-provincial-election/>
3. Income Security Advocacy Centre  
<http://incomesecurity.org/>
4. Workers Action Centre  
<http://workersactioncentre.org/>
5. Centre for Public Ethics  
<https://wlu.ca/academics/faculties/waterloo-lutheran-seminary/centres/centre-for-public-ethics.html>



## Additional Resources

Conservative list of candidates [https://www.ontariopc.ca/our\\_candidates](https://www.ontariopc.ca/our_candidates)

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

Liberal list of candidates <https://www.ontarioliberal.ca/candidates?!=EN>

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

To identify riding <https://voterinformationservice.elections.on.ca/en/election/search?mode=electoralDistrict>

# ISARC

Faith Communities in Action Against Poverty

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