



**Elections  
Ontario**

# **Modernizing Ontario's Electoral Process**

Report on Ontario's 42<sup>nd</sup> General Election  
June 7, 2018

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Legislative Assembly of Ontario  
Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer  
Bureau du directeur général des élections

The Honourable Ted Arnott  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Room 180, Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario  
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Dear Mr. Speaker,

It is my pleasure to submit the post-event report about the June 7, 2018 general election under the *Election Act* and *Election Finances Act*.

This report offers a summary of election proceedings, and the feedback received and responded to in the general election. In addition, the report contains my evaluation of the alternative voting methods, processes, equipment, and technology that were used during the event. This report also incorporates the requirements of sections 4.1(5), 4.4(11), 44.1(9), 44.2(5), 67.2, and 89 of the *Election Act*. I have also provided a summary of the reports on accessibility submitted to me by the Returning Officers under section 55.1 of the Act.

Respectfully submitted,

**Greg Essensa**

Chief Electoral Officer



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# Message from the Chief Electoral Officer

Ontario's 42<sup>nd</sup> general election transformed the way elections are conducted in Ontario. Our vision is to build modern services that put the needs of electors first. In 2018, we took unprecedented strides towards that vision by modernizing our processes while maintaining integrity for our largest stakeholder – the province's 10.2 million electors.

Since my appointment as Chief Electoral Officer in 2008, my commitment has been to improve our electoral process. Since then, I have tabled a number of reports and recommendations that sought to remove barriers to voting, introduce initiatives to keep pace with the changing demographics of our province, and address 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges and opportunities. Elections Ontario has worked relentlessly to refine internal processes and advocate for legislative change to modernize the electoral process in a way that meets the needs and expectations of electors. The 42<sup>nd</sup> general election was the first opportunity to realize our achievements.

In the years leading up to this election, we achieved many milestones. We operationalized an unprecedented amount of legislative reform, including the redistribution of electoral districts. We launched a new elector engagement strategy to encourage electors to use our new online application, e-Registration. We regulated the most significant changes to campaign financing rules in over 40 years, changes that increased our oversight and regulation of spending by political entities. Furthermore, we invested in the electoral process in a measured and principled manner to deliver the first Ontario general election with technology in the polls.

These efforts culminated in the delivery of a successful election, in which 51,623 Elections Ontario personnel helped 5,806,286 electors cast their ballots for 823 candidates at 8,295 voting locations. We launched 22,000 electronic poll books and 6,000 vote tabulators across the province while continuing to maintain some of the lowest costs per elector nationally. Over the course of 29 days, electors had the option to vote on election day, during advance voting, or by special ballot, either by mail, at the returning office, during a home visit or through the hospital program. We were successful in our endeavours because we put the needs of electors first.

Elections are complex events. Delivering a successful election requires operationalizing multiple pieces of legislation, reducing barriers to voting and regulating a level playing field for all political parties and candidates. We must do all this while continuing to work towards our mission – to make voting easy for all.

Additionally, our environment adds a level of complexity that we must recognize and respond to. Ontario's population is growing rapidly, and increasingly mobile. It has become harder than ever to engage electors every four years and ensure they have the information they need to know when, where, and how to vote. Tools and reforms are necessary to support our work. Our new online registration application, e-Registration, allows electors to directly confirm, update or add their information on the voters list to help us ensure we have accurate information. However, this alone is not enough. The complexity of Ontario's address system remains an obstacle to the accuracy of the voters list, and needs to be addressed.

Cybersecurity is also top of mind for Elections Ontario and our stakeholders. Throughout this election, there were a number of concerns regarding cybersecurity threats and questions about the protection of elector information, especially with the introduction of technology in the polls. Elections Ontario ensured all technology was rigorously tested, and we worked closely with our security partners to safeguard our systems. We remain vigilant and committed to addressing the areas that are in the public interest.

Looking ahead, we will continue to build and modernize our electoral tools and processes, while removing those barriers that prevent Ontarians from exercising their right to vote. Our continued success depends on maintaining public confidence in our processes and always upholding our fiduciary responsibilities.

In this report, I make a number of recommendations to support Elections Ontario's efforts. These include creating a single address authority to increase the quality of the voters list and improve services to citizens; taking responsibility for the municipal voters lists to improve government efficiency; and advancing a number of revisions to better promote compliance and ensure the integrity of elections. My team is well positioned to manage this level of legislative reform.

In 2019, Elections Ontario received six awards at the 17<sup>th</sup> International Electoral Symposium organized by the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies. The awards recognized our commitment to putting the needs of electors first.

We are eager to take the next step in building on our achievements, and continuing to meet elector and stakeholder needs and expectations. We are ready to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century while maintaining the core principles of a democratic electoral system.



**Greg Essensa**

Chief Electoral Officer



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## **Section 1**

### **The Journey to June 7, 2018**

Elections Ontario has been ready for change. In 2009, we began developing a strategy to modernize the electoral process to address 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges and keep pace with the changing demographics and expectations of electors.

As we travelled down this path, we committed to introducing change in a measured and principled manner. We prioritized our values of integrity and maintaining public trust – values Ontarians rightfully expect from their electoral system.

Throughout the past 10 years, Elections Ontario has advocated for legislative change to advance our electoral process. We conducted robust research studies and piloted new systems to ensure that any recommendations we proposed, or changes we made, were the result of evidence-based decision-making. Tools and processes were tested thoroughly. We strive to achieve our vision to build modern services that put the needs of electors first.

## A. Making the Case for Change

Through a number of reports to the Legislative Assembly over the past decade, we were vocal about the need to address an electoral system that was no longer sustainable.

We saw firsthand during the 2014 general election that we could not ignore the issues presented by our traditional paper-based electoral process. The administration of the 2014 general election was not much different from an election delivered 100 years ago. Our processes were out of step with the public's demands for more accessible, faster services that incorporated technology.

To introduce technology that effectively modernizes processes while still upholding the integrity of the electoral process, Elections Ontario conducted extensive research during the 2014 general election and in two by-elections that followed. This research established key baselines and was the source of information we used to establish a new model.

Pilots were conducted during two by-elections between the 2014 and 2018 general elections. The first was in the 2016 Whitby—Oshawa by-election, where we successfully piloted the use of electronic poll books to strike off electors, and used tabulators to count ballots.

We received positive feedback from the public through the surveys we conducted during the by-election. Ninety-six per cent of electors said they found the voting process easy; 93% believed the technology maintained the integrity of the process; and 91% said they would support the use of technology in future elections.

After the by-election, the Chief Electoral Officer met with Ontario's legislators to discuss recommendations on the introduction of technology into Ontario's electoral process. We recognized that in order to modernize elections to align with our vision, we needed legislative change to increase our capacity to introduce technology solutions into the voting process.

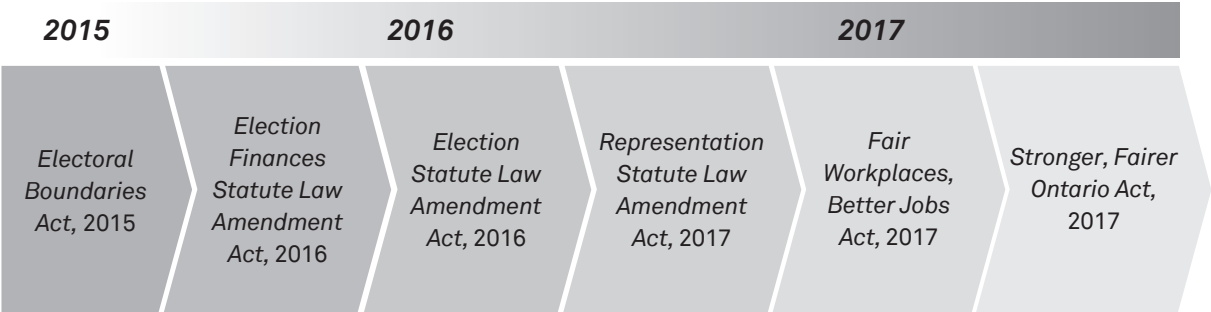
The 2016 Scarborough—Rouge River by-election was our second opportunity to pilot electronic poll books and tabulators, this time during advance voting. This approach ensured we had a comprehensive evaluation of the technology, and allowed for electors and lawmakers to provide valuable input into the proposed systems and processes.

As a result of our efforts Ontario's 42<sup>nd</sup> general election marked unprecedented change.

# B. Implementing Legislative Change

In the three years leading up to the 2018 general election, we implemented five pieces of legislation that related directly to elections in Ontario, and another that significantly impacted our operations.

Figure 1: Key legislation leading up to the 2018 general election



This legislative transformation created opportunities and challenges. The changes were in line with many of the Chief Electoral Officer’s previous recommendations. They allowed us to improve our processes and take significant strides to make voting easier for all electors in Ontario. However, some of the legislative reforms came late in the election cycle. These reforms significantly increased our workload, and in some cases impacted our ability to make timely decisions and communicate them to the field. Operationalizing this level of transformation for the 2018 general election has prepared us to be more responsive to change in the future.

## A New Electoral Map

The Chief Electoral Officer has recommended for some time that the *Representation Act, 2005* be amended to provide a regular, scheduled process for reviewing electoral districts and boundaries to ensure fair representation for Ontarians. The introduction of the *Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015* responded to this recommendation by matching southern Ontario’s boundaries with federal boundaries. The legislation increased the number of provincial electoral districts from 107 to 122.

Provisions included in the *Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016*, called for the establishment of a Far North Electoral Boundaries Commission. The commission’s mandate was to make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario regarding the creation of at least one, and no more than two, new provincial electoral districts from the existing districts of Kenora—Rainy River and Timmins—James Bay. The Chief Electoral Officer sat on the commission and participated in public information meetings throughout these electoral districts.

In October 2017, the *Representation Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017* was introduced and included the recommendations of the commission to create two new electoral districts: Kiiwetinoong in the west and Mushkegowuk—James Bay in the east. As a result, Ontario’s total number of electoral districts increased from 122 to 124.

The redistribution of electoral boundaries had a significant impact on Elections Ontario. All existing Returning Officers were reappointed to align with the new electoral districts. A merit-based recruitment process was implemented to fill the vacancies. In total, 87 Returning Officers were reappointed and 37 were newly appointed. Elections Ontario also updated its election management software, first to support the increase to 122 electoral districts, and later to support the increase to 124 electoral districts.

Redistribution also meant constituency associations in Ontario had to be dissolved, retained, or established. Elections Ontario supported political parties’ dissolution and re-registration of 423 constituency associations. Political parties were provided with guidelines and other materials to help with this transition. Finally, new electoral district and polling division maps, shapefiles and geography products were created to reflect the new electoral district boundaries.

Redistribution allows for effective representation. Elections Ontario recommends a regular, scheduled process for reviewing Ontario’s electoral district boundaries.

## **A New Campaign Finance Regime**

### **Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016**

The passage of the *Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016* on December 5, 2016, was the first significant review of Ontario’s election finance laws in over 40 years. These reforms significantly expanded Elections Ontario’s mandate.

New provisions of Elections Ontario’s regulatory mandate included:

- The implementation of a new financial subsidy program requiring the payment of quarterly allowances to eligible political parties and constituency associations
- Changes to spending and fund-raising limits for political parties and candidates
- The expansion of regulatory oversight over third-party advertisers during elections and in the six months prior to fixed-date general elections.

Other provisions in the new legislation included new contribution rules, changes to loan provisions, new regulatory oversight over nomination contests, and reimbursement thresholds.

The impact of these changes was significant for Elections Ontario. Immediately following the passage of this legislation, we had to update policies and handbooks for political parties, constituency associations, candidates, leadership contestants, third-party advertisers, and fund-raising organizers. We offered training sessions to the financial officers of parties, constituency associations and candidates. We also created new forms and handbooks for nomination contestants. We completed this work within six months.

### **Additional Changes to Campaign Finance Legislation**

Two subsequent pieces of legislation amended provisions included in the *Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016*. The *Representation Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017* refined legislation regarding nomination contest periods and attendance restrictions at fund-raising events. The *Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act, 2017* altered provisions regarding the period for nomination contest spending, excluding spending before the call of the nomination contest.

After the passage of this legislation, all materials were updated within two months.

### **New Electoral Processes**

The *Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016* included many of the Chief Electoral Officer's previous recommendations for legislative change. This legislation focused on amending Ontario's *Election Act*, which governs the administration of a provincial election. These amendments introduced significant changes and increased responsibilities for Elections Ontario.

New provisions in the legislation included:

- Introducing technology into the voting process
- Allowing Elections Ontario to develop a leasing program to share voting technology with municipalities and other electoral management bodies across Canada
- Creating a provisional register for 16- and 17-year-olds
- Establishing a standing nomination process outside the Writ period
- Implementing an administrative penalty regime for landlords who deny candidates and their representatives access to multi-unit dwellings for campaign purposes
- Enhancing requirements for the distribution of data from Ontario's voters list.

The passage of the *Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016* required Elections Ontario to update policies regarding nominations, outreach, and the distribution of voter information. It meant that our processes at the polls changed

with the introduction of technology. All training manuals for field staff required significant updating and amendments. While these changes increased our workload, we are aware of the importance of the introduction of these provisions to make voting easier in Ontario.

### **New Employment Standards**

The *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017*, which included amendments to the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*, received Royal Assent on November 27, 2017. This Act introduced a broad range of legislative change that impacted Elections Ontario's terms and conditions of employment for our staff, particularly those in the field.

Elections Ontario already met or exceeded some of the legislated requirements introduced in the *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017*. We were able to successfully implement the balance of required changes on time, ensuring that our 51,623 field employees were accurately paid. We also gained exemptions to key areas of this legislation, which were in conflict with the *Election Act* and which pertained to hours of work and hours of rest, allowing us to meet the requirements of the *Election Act*.

We are committed to complying with employment standards legislation for all of our workers. However, due to our unique mandate and operations, legislated changes of this size, scope and complexity within months of a general election significantly altered our planning, budgeting, and preparations. The salary and benefit changes arising from this legislation, coupled with operational implementation challenges, had a sizeable impact on our election budget.

Overall, we were pleased that a number of our recommendations to modernize the electoral process were adopted in the aforementioned pieces of legislation. Although it took a significant undertaking to adopt these changes, doing so provided us with the legislative foundation to plan and deliver a transformative election.

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## Section 2

# Planning a Transformative Election

Elections Ontario operates on a four-year planning cycle, which involves broad-based strategic planning and detailed tactical planning of every stage and aspect of an election. Every cycle begins by drawing lessons from past elections and consulting with our stakeholders which, in turn, informs our strategy and objectives. Our team then starts planning for the next by-elections and general election, including engaging and communicating with our stakeholders.

Delivering a transformative election followed the same cycle, but we adjusted our approach to focus on the introduction of new technological tools, adapted our staffing strategy to address future challenges, and developed and maintained strong relationships with many stakeholders.

# A. Building the Tools

## 1. Technology in the Polls

The 2018 general election implemented the model piloted in the Whitby—Oshawa and Scarborough—Rouge River by-elections. Poll officials used electronic poll books and vote tabulators to serve electors. The new model introduced efficiency by using automated tools to allow one person to both strike off an elector and issue a ballot. The new efficiencies introduced by the use of technology enabled us to serve more electors faster at a single polling location, and reduce the overall number of staff required.

### Electronic Poll Books

Electronic poll books (e-Poll books) were introduced to replace the paper voters list. Each book contains an electronic voters list for the entire electoral district. Each name corresponds to a unique identifier that has been printed on an elector's voter information card (VIC), and is used to strike off electors when they arrive at polls. Election officials scan the VICs, allowing for immediate identification and digital strike-off of electors' names from the list. Having a digital list reduces errors, and the time needed to look up voter information and record ballot issuance. This model improves customer service, as electors can be processed by the next available election official.

E-Poll books are connected to a secure, private network. All personal information on an e-Poll book is encrypted twice to harden them in case of attempted

interference. E-Poll books can also be shut down remotely in the event of loss or theft. We procured 22,000 e-Poll books, uploaded the voters list, and tested them multiple times to prepare for the election.

Using this proven and reliable technology, we enabled faster voting and gained new insights on voting patterns that can be used to improve future services to electors.

### Vote Tabulators

Vote tabulators are single-function, purpose-built devices used to scan paper ballots, automatically count marked ballots, and record results. This automatic counting reduces human error and increases process integrity. Automatic counting also reduces the end-of-day reporting time from hours to minutes, giving electors, political participants, and members of the media almost immediate unofficial results. In the event of a recount, the paper ballots, which are fed into the vote tabulator, can be recounted by hand to maintain the integrity of the process.

Vote tabulators are not connected to a network, precluding any type of interference, and have been widely used in other Canadian and international jurisdictions since the 1990s. We have used vote tabulators in our returning offices and satellite offices for general elections since 2011. We procured and tested 6,000 vote tabulators to prepare for the 2018 general election.



## **Technology in the 2018 General Election**

We put this technology-enabled model in place in approximately half of the polling locations across the province. Not all voting locations were equipped with technology due to economic or logistical constraints.

For example, some locations in Northern Ontario would experience too many connectivity challenges to justify the financial cost and logistical challenges of shipping technology to a remote location. Additionally, we did not place technology-enabled polls in condominium buildings in areas such as downtown Toronto due to the small number of electors using these polls. Using voting locations with technology and voting locations without technology allowed us to strike a balance that best served the needs of electors while maintaining our fiduciary responsibilities to the public.

We did, however, ensure that at least one poll in each electoral district offered the new technological services. As a result, more than 90% of electors experienced technology-assisted voting.

We look forward to building on this foundation, and facilitating a process where all electors can easily vote. This election was only the first tangible step in developing our technological capacity as we continuously build modern services.

### **2. New Systems**

Elections Ontario is committed to creating efficiencies and improving stakeholder experiences at all points of the electoral process. This involved the creation of new

systems to provide more user-friendly services for electors and other stakeholders.

### **e-Registration**

In the lead-up to the 2018 general election, Elections Ontario introduced a new online registration tool called e-Registration to simplify the voter registration process. E-Registration was launched on September 15, 2017, the International Day of Democracy. The tool, which is hosted on our website, allows electors to confirm, update, add, or remove their information on the voters list.

### **Voter Information Service**

We developed the Voter Information Service tool to help electors find all of the information they required to vote. The tool provided information on all 124 electoral districts in the province. Electors could enter their postal code to find their voting locations, lists of candidates, and a voter checklist to ensure they were ready to vote before going to the polls.

### **Election Management System**

The Election Management System (EMS) manages all aspects of back-office functions at Elections Ontario. EMS creates a common, secure, web-based platform to store all of the information needed for an election. First used to manage the voters list in 2007, EMS was subsequently optimized, extended with new modules including finance and field management, and tested during by-elections before its broader use in the 2018 general election. The new

integrated system replaced seven aging, stand-alone legacy systems that we used to manage and administer elections in the field. Adopting an integrated system enabled us to more efficiently manage all aspects of election administration, leading to stronger performance and greater accountability at our headquarters and in returning offices.

### **Visualizing Data from the Field**

Ontario's 124 electoral districts have vastly different challenges and opportunities. It was therefore important for Elections Ontario to have increased visibility in the field during the election. In partnership with our vendors, we developed two dashboards to gain deeper insight into the election, and create opportunities to track and resolve issues.

### **Command Centre Dashboard**

The Command Centre Dashboard was a single, collaborative hub developed to provide real-time information to key Elections Ontario staff. We designed the dashboard to quickly access information on recruitment, voting locations and candidate nominations for individual electoral districts or for the whole province. This led to more efficient decision-making and issues management on the ground.

### **VoterView Dashboard**

The VoterView Dashboard was a tool developed for Elections Ontario to gain visibility into polls with technology. The dashboard displayed the number of polls that had functioning internet connectivity and were actively syncing elector strike-off information. It also showed the traffic of each location and across the province, based on the number of electors being served per minute. The dashboard gave us the ability to respond to what was happening in the field immediately, and determine where we would need to reallocate resources based on activity.

### **Party Portal**

In addition to simplifying the process for voters, we created a dedicated portal – the Party Portal – for political parties to allow for real-time, digital access to strike-off data and voter turnout information. The addition of e-Poll books allowed for strike-off data to be made available for political parties to download electronically. As a security precaution, the digitally transmitted strike-off data did not contain any personal information of electors. The digital files contained only unique elector ID data, the poll and electoral district number, and a time stamp. Additionally, only parties with approved privacy policies were able to access this data.

## **B. Building the Team**

Elections Ontario has always functioned in a decentralized model. Our headquarters is based in Toronto, and the election in each of the 124 provincial electoral districts is executed through the returning office. Both headquarters and the returning offices have responsibilities to plan and execute key workloads. Elections Ontario headquarters maintains centralized accountability and is responsible for the development of the program and policies. An important responsibility in this model is recruiting strong leaders and dedicated field staff to support the success of the election. In an election that introduced significant change, both headquarters and field positions, and additionally our vendor partners, were critical to our success.

## **Returning Officers**

The Returning Officer (RO) is one of the most important roles in an election. The RO is responsible for the administration of the election in their electoral district. ROs manage teams at the returning offices and any satellite offices, as well as a large number of poll workers who are integral to the delivery of an election. ROs must always be ready to administer a general election or by-election in their electoral districts. This includes acquiring office space and voting locations, distributing furniture, equipment and supplies, hiring and training staff, and guiding the electoral process in their electoral districts. ROs also assist candidates and electors with general inquiries, registration and voting. Elections Ontario recognizes the importance of engaging and training each RO to be equipped with the knowledge, tools, and support to execute an election in their electoral district. The Chief Electoral Officer makes it a priority each year to meet collectively with ROs for continuous training and communication purposes. In the lead up to the 2018 general election, these meetings were especially critical given the changes to legislation and processes. The redistribution of electoral districts and the introduction of technology and new systems required ongoing engagement and support to ensure the field was prepared to administer our transformative election.

## **Field Staff**

Aside from the ROs, staff that work in returning offices and in voting locations play important roles in managing the

election. They are responsible for setting-up voting locations, assisting electors through the voting process, and managing a number of back-end processes to support the success of the election, including managing poll materials and equipment, training election day staff, and processing payroll.

With a number of new tools and processes, we also added 13 Regional Liaison Officers (RLOs) to assist ROs in each geographic region to ensure our field staff had the support and assistance they needed to do their jobs. Given Ontario's vast geography, it is difficult for headquarters to provide on-the-ground support to ROs and their staff. RLOs played an advisory role, providing one-on-one assistance in the field.

To recruit enough poll officials, we designed and implemented a new hiring strategy. In the months leading up to the general election, in addition to our usual recruitment, we conducted outreach to colleges and universities across the province. This approach enhanced our other efforts to engage youth in the electoral process. Further, it provides a foundation for future staffing, which is particularly important given Canada's shifting labour market.

## **Vendors**

In previous elections, the administration of the election was primarily a relationship between ROs and staff at Elections Ontario's headquarters. In 2018, we forged a partnership among ROs, staff at headquarters, and those vendors that provided and supported technology in

the field. The participation of vendors was critical for the implementation of technology, given the scale. They brought their expertise, products, and tools to the table, and helped develop and implement our new process.

We developed four primary vendor partnerships. Dominion Voting Systems provided the vote tabulators; CompuCom provisioned the e-Poll books; DataFix was responsible for designing the VoterView application; and Rogers provided connectivity services for voting locations.

Throughout the planning phase, we worked closely with our vendors to establish accurate requirements, conduct necessary testing, determine support, and ensure the integrity of the election was never compromised. We were able to integrate vendors into the design and administration of the election, and we look forward to a strong working relationship with our vendors into the future.

## C. Maintaining Integrity

### **Principled and Measured Approach to Change**

Elections Ontario follows a principled and measured approach to innovation. We understand how important it is to balance effectively responding to electors' expectations with thoughtfully designing, testing and implementing innovation in order to maintain electoral integrity.

To ensure we were prepared to deliver a transformative election, we conducted several internal simulations at Elections Ontario's headquarters, as well as one with ROs and field staff. The lessons we learned from these simulations allowed us to review and refine our processes, and better understand the relationship between the field, Elections Ontario headquarters, and vendors.

### **Privacy and Security**

As information and public processes increasingly move online, digital tools to steal, manipulate and disrupt computer systems are becoming more sophisticated. Consequently, organizations need to design cybersecurity strategies to ensure their computer systems are protected.

Cybersecurity is especially important for electoral management bodies. Electors need to trust the outcome of an election. Electoral agencies must therefore introduce technology thoughtfully and ensure that appropriate controls are in place to safeguard the computer systems used in elections. That is why we took a measured and principled approach to the introduction and use of technology, and why we continue to rely on the paper ballot to provide the utmost assurance

that the integrity of the electoral process had been maintained. We must also protect the privacy of electors, since we are responsible for managing the personal information of registered electors, including their names, birthdates and addresses.

Elections Ontario fully complies with the cybersecurity policies and standards set by the Government of Ontario. Our systems are audited and security tested, and key systems are hosted at the government's data centre, which is protected by state-of-the-art detection and prevention technology. Information technology services delivered by vendors also comply with provincial security standards and are fully tested for security.

Possible cybersecurity threats to elections were top of mind, which is why we took extra precautions to ensure that our systems were secure for the 2018 general election. We partnered with the Provincial Security Advisor for Ontario and an independent consultant to rigorously test our systems with crisis simulations. Our senior leadership team undertook a tabletop exercise to develop contingency plans for different potential cyber threats. We also engaged our whole team prior to the start of the election period to remind them about our privacy commitments and security practices. During the election, all key technology service providers were on heightened states of readiness.

We are confident that our security and privacy measures protected Ontarians' personal information and the integrity of the election. However, these successes do not mean that we can be complacent. We look forward to continuing our work with our partners to protect our election and elector information.

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## **Section 3**

# **Connecting with Electors – Shifting the Paradigm**

In an increasingly mobile society, one of our greatest challenges is ensuring we have the most up-to-date information about electors. The accuracy of our voters list is at 91%. That means that for approximately 1 million electors (9% of the 10.2 million eligible electors), we do not have wholly accurate information on where they live. This makes it difficult to send these electors the important information they need to cast their ballots during an election.

## A. New Engagement Strategy

The problem with addressing in Ontario is one of complexity. Elections Ontario's voters list is updated with information provided by other government bodies, many of which have their own naming conventions for addressing. There is also significant variation in how an individual may communicate their address with different government bodies. The result is that it is difficult for us to determine which addressing convention is correct to ensure electors receive their VIC, and to ensure we send electors to the closest voting location. Without a set standard, the naming convention variability poses a significant challenge to providing timely and accurate information to electors.

In an effort to improve the quality of our voters list, we introduced a strategy to shift the paradigm. We moved from exclusively providing information to electors to actively engaging Ontarians to confirm, update or add their information on the voters list outside the election period. Our communications team used the months preceding the election to connect with Ontarians. Electors took action to check, update, or add their information. This ensured we had the most up-to-date information possible.

To drive this initiative, we focused on promoting our e-Registration tool. Once the election period began, we shifted

our focus to our traditional strategies for informing electors about when, where and how to vote.

## B. Elector Engagement Ahead of the Election

### Democracy Week

We launched e-Registration to mark the International Day of Democracy during Democracy Week on September 15, 2017. Democracy Week events included a strong presence on university and college campuses to reach students – people who historically do not vote in large numbers. Elections Ontario was at 52 college and university campuses, including Indigenous and French-language schools, to distribute educational materials and encourage students to register.

Overall, the campaign was successful, with 9,952 electors checking their information during the first month e-Registration was available.



## **Provincial Voter Registration Month**

In March 2018, we launched Provincial Voter Registration Month (PVRM). To encourage electors to use e-Registration, our campaign engaged electors to confirm, update or add their information on the voters list. Doing so ensured we had the right information to send electors their VICs.

To launch PVRM, the Chief Electoral Officer visited Queen's Park where he and all parties within the legislature unanimously recognized March as Provincial Voter Registration Month. The Chief Electoral Officer then participated in a media tour across Ontario to promote e-Registration and the changes for the upcoming election.

Promotional efforts for PVRM included registration drives at 66 community events and on 52 college campuses. Elections Ontario also visited communities across Ontario to host street registrations and engage a wider audience. We also issued province-wide advertising in both traditional media and out-of-home channels. We introduced Owen the Chatbot to leverage artificial intelligence and natural language processing technology. Owen answered basic questions to help students navigate the electoral process. Owen was so successful we extended its tenure into the election period. More than 4,000 separate sessions were initiated with Owen between March and election day on June 7.

## **Media**

We experienced overwhelmingly positive coverage about PVRM and e-Registration in conventional media, with 230 mentions across print and broadcast outlets. Our outreach activities generated more than 7 million media impressions.

For the month of March, we increased our presence on social media and partnered with a number of social media influencers to encourage the use of e-Registration. We generated more than 60 million impressions on social media thanks to influencer outreach and the Chief Electoral Officer's visit to Twitter headquarters to live-tweet a Q&A on e-Registration.

## **Other Engagement Activities Before the Election Period**

In addition to our mandate to maintain the voters list, we are also required to conduct public education. We distributed over 3,600 educational toolkits to school boards and outreach contacts across Ontario with information on the new tools and the Ontario Register of Future Voters (ORFV).

We maintain the ORFV for 16- and 17-year-old Canadian citizens who reside in Ontario. Information from the ORFV is automatically transferred to the voters list when an individual turns 18.

To engage new Canadians with e-Registration and voting, we conducted targeted presentations and information sessions at newcomer settlement organizations and ethno-cultural associations. We also promoted e-Registration at Toronto Newcomers Day.

### **Engaging Ontario's Accessibility Representatives**

In an effort to deliver on our mandate to reduce barriers to voting and make voting accessible for all, we held consultations with community agencies and people with disabilities to better understand, and respond to, the needs of persons with disabilities.

In response to the feedback received, we created a targeted handout on accessible voting options for support organizations to distribute to their clients. We conducted outreach campaigns and delivered presentations about accessible voting options, and encouraged the use of e-Registration. We also partnered with accessibility influencers and bloggers to promote PVRM and e-Registration.

This shift in how we engage electors was a success. It allowed us to communicate with electors in a new way. Tools such as e-Registration and an increased presence across the province supported our ability to ensure people received correct information in time to exercise their right to vote.

### **Engaging Political Entities**

To foster strong working relationships with Ontario's political parties, their candidates and constituency associations, Elections Ontario builds partnerships through our Political Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings.

Following the passage of the *Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016*, we held three PAC meetings in December 2016, June 2017 and October 2017 to inform political parties of the legislative changes and to gather their feedback and insights on the introduction and use of technology in the polls. These meetings culminated with a workshop for political parties in February 2018, where the technology was available for parties to experience.

Political parties and candidates play important roles in our democratic system. As the needs of political entities change, we must adapt so that we can continue to provide accurate information in a timely manner and a consistent format.

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## **Section 4**

# **Delivering a Transformative Election**

Delivering a transformative election requires not only long-term, detailed planning, but also the capacity to meet tight timelines and deliver on a wide range of activities during the 29-day election period. From getting ready for Writ day to successfully managing election day, the election calendar requires an immense undertaking in a fast-paced environment. More than 51,000 field personnel and 380 staff at headquarters led, supported and managed voting locations, voters lists, deployment activities, the nomination process, communications and outreach, and much more.

## A. Deployment

In the weeks before the Writs are issued for a general election, Returning Officers (ROs) are required to identify, and lease 124 accessible returning offices and 33 satellite offices for a two-month period. The diversity of Ontario creates unique challenges and requirements across electoral districts. The needs and challenges of downtown Toronto, for example, differ markedly from the challenges in Sioux Lookout. To address these varied challenges, we rely on our ROs and their knowledge of their electoral districts to find office spaces that meet all requirements and serve the needs of local electors.

To equip ROs and voting locations, Elections Ontario dispatched a significant amount of furniture, equipment and supplies to the field. Due to the introduction of technology, we modified our deployment approach to streamline activities and create efficiencies. In the past, our deployment process was decentralized. Different units handled the dispatch of technology, furniture and materials. For this election, we centralized to one delivery vendor for all equipment. Over the course of only 10 days, we had 2,530 skids of material successfully delivered across the province to 157 locations.

## B. Writ Day

On May 9, 2018, the Chief Electoral Officer met with the Lieutenant Governor to sign the Writs of Election, marking the official start of Ontario's 42<sup>nd</sup> general election. A Writ is the formal, legal document that starts an election in an Ontario electoral district and sets the date for the close of nominations. On Writ day, registered candidates can begin spending money and advertising their platforms.

Writ day is a busy day in the field. ROs are required to open accessible offices to the public, begin processing candidate nominations, confirm voting locations, recruit poll officials, and conduct target revision for the voters list. They must also prepare their offices to administer voting by special ballot the next day. Even in a fixed-date general election, Writ day marks the start of an intense 29-day period.

After the issue of the Writs, the Chief Electoral Officer held a press conference about the election, including the introduction of e-Registration and technology in the polls, and the changes to the electoral districts.

## C. Voting Locations

One of the key tasks ROs must complete during the Writ period is to select and finalize accessible voting locations. This task must be completed within the first few days of the Writ period in order to add the locations to the voter information cards before they are mailed out to registered electors. ROs arrange for the rental of approximately 80 to 130 voting locations in their electoral districts for advance voting and election day. Across the province, 8,295 voting locations are secured within 10 days.

When a voting location is selected, many considerations come into play. Elections Ontario is committed to ensuring that every eligible elector is able to exercise their right to vote. This includes ensuring voting locations are accessible, and easy to get to. We use our Site Accessibility Standards to ensure voting locations are compliant with the accessibility standards outlined in the *Election Act* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. With technology in the polls, there were additional considerations for voting locations, such as internet connectivity and electrical outlets for vote tabulators and e-Poll books. ROs faced a large volume of work during the first week of the election.

Elections Ontario looks to schools as a primary option for voting locations. However, the use of schools as voting locations has raised concerns over the safety and security of students, particularly as schools and school boards have worked to implement tighter security requirements. We recognize and support the imperative of schools and school

boards to protect student safety, and are committed to ensuring that voting activities are safe and as unobtrusive as possible to the regular course of the school day. We are prepared to work with school boards that want additional security arrangements to mitigate concerns. We have also recommended that election day be a non-school day. This would address the concerns for school boards and ensure we continue to have access to these important voting locations.

On top of finalizing hundreds of voting locations in their electoral districts, ROs receive materials and open their offices, assist candidates with their nomination papers, and issue ballots to electors. Ontario's election calendar, which is one of the shortest in the country, creates additional risks for the election. Delays or inaccuracies can adversely affect ROs' ability to effectively administer the election in their electoral district. Securing voting locations was met with some difficulty in the 2018 general election. New requirements to support the technology as well as meeting Site Accessibility Standards created additional pressures for ROs. Addressing this issue will be top of mind in planning for the next general election.

## D. Candidate Nominations

As a result of changes to the *Election Act*, candidates were able to submit their nomination packages to Elections Ontario headquarters before the Writ period as standing nominations. Once the Writs were issued, these candidates became officially nominated and could begin spending money on their campaigns. Those seeking nomination after the Writs were issued were required to file their nomination papers with their local RO before the close of nominations.

In total, 828 nomination papers were processed by the close of nominations. This represented an increase of 26% in the number of nominations from the 2014 general election. Four hundred eighty-four nomination packages were submitted before Writ day.

Candidates are able to withdraw their candidacies at any time during the Writ period. In total, five candidates withdrew, leaving 823 candidates contesting 124 offices on election day.

Once nominations close, we post the list of candidates on our website, and we begin the process of preparing, printing and shipping ballots.

The new nomination process was a success. Our election survey determined that 87% of political entities found the new nomination process clear and 89% found that the information provided by Elections Ontario was straightforward. This is up from the 65% satisfaction rate with the nomination rules in 2014.

## E. Ballots

The ballot is the most important aspect of any election. The marking of a ballot and placing it into a ballot box is a foundation of our democracy.

The timelines for producing ballots and shipping them to ROs are extremely tight. The ballot quality control process at Elections Ontario's headquarters begins following the close of nominations. The team consists of full-time staff from all divisions at Elections Ontario headquarters. Together, they review 124 ballot faces to ensure accuracy.

The process for the 2018 general election was an unprecedented success. The centralization of ballot printing and the ability for candidates to complete early nominations greatly reduced the time to complete quality control by eliminating almost all errors at the very start of the process.

## **F. Special Ballots**

Special ballot voting is an option for electors who cannot vote during the advance poll period or on election day. Special ballot voting enables electors to vote in person at their returning office, by mail, or through home or hospital visit programs. ROs take great care to facilitate these opportunities for electors in their districts.

Our special ballot team provides information about voting by special ballot to post-secondary students, members of the Canadian Forces, Ontarians living abroad, homeless shelters, and electors in correctional facilities.

Electors can vote by special ballot the day after the Writs are issued until 6:00 P.M. the day before election day. Special ballots are counted on election night.

In total, 150,036 electors voted by special ballot in the 2018 general election. This was an increase from 78,836 in 2014 and 55,226 in 2011, the year special ballot voting was introduced. The total in 2018 represents an increase of 90.31% from 2014.

### **Vote by mail**

Voting by mail allows voters who cannot make it to a voting location to still have the opportunity to vote. Elections Ontario sends a special ballot kit to an elector who requests a mail-in ballot. The kit includes a write-in ballot, a secrecy envelope, an elector confirmation envelope, a pre-addressed return envelope, and voting instructions. In 2018, we sent a total of 15,202 ballot kits from our headquarters compared to 10,609 kits in 2014.

### **Hospital visit**

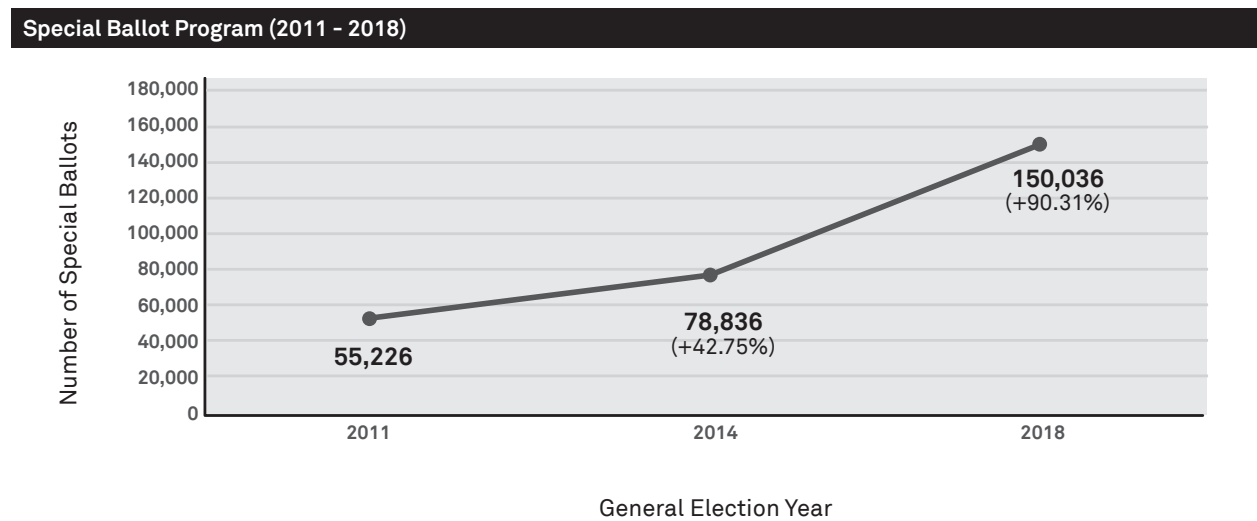
If an elector is hospitalized during a general election, they can vote through the special ballot process as part of our three-day hospital program. In 2018, 4,949 electors voted through the hospital program. Election officials visited participating hospitals and provided write-in ballots to electors. ROs engage hospitals in their electoral district to offer this program. For the 2018 general election, 218 hospitals across Ontario participated in the program.

## Home visit

The special ballot home visit program facilitates the vote for electors for whom it is unreasonably difficult to go to a voting location or because they require assistance to vote. During a special ballot home visit, two election officials bring a special ballot kit to the electors home to

assist with voting. The completed ballot is placed into a sealed envelope by the elector and taken back to the returning office to be counted on election night. In 2018, a total of 4,243 electors voted through the home visit program. This is compared to 4,054 in 2014.

Figure 2: Special ballot voting count in the 2011, 2014 and 2018 general elections



Statistics from our special ballot program show that more electors use this option to cast their ballot with every election. We expect to see an increase in the future as awareness about this voting option continues to grow.



## **G. Informing Electors**

During the Writ period, Elections Ontario focused its campaign on informing electors about when, where and how to vote. This campaign included issuing general communications as well as targeted communications to specific groups of electors.

Elections Ontario aims to reach a broad audience. We work closely with a number of local, regional, provincial and national organizations within a broad cross-section of communities to provide support to further the objectives of our engagement strategy.

## **Outreach and Engagement**

Between May 9 and June 7, we received a high number of outreach requests. The members of our outreach team attended speaking engagements, meetings, workshops, and other events. Through these events, Elections Ontario was able to reach to approximately 15,000 electors.

The team also worked with the Democratic Engagement Exchange at Ryerson University to host vote simulations called Vote Pop-ups. This brought simulations of the voting process to various community groups and newcomer settlement agencies.

## **Engaging Youth**

Elections Ontario partnered with CIVIX, a non-partisan charity dedicated to building engaged citizenship among young Canadians, to conduct Student Vote, a classroom election simulation program. A total of 280,691 elementary and high-school students across the province cast ballots through Student Vote. Participation increased by more than 60% compared to the 2014 general election. In partnership with CIVIX, we also promoted the Ontario Register of Future Voters, and provided targeted outreach materials to educators and schools.

## **Indigenous Outreach**

Ontario's Indigenous electors are culturally diverse and geographically dispersed across the province. As a result, each of Ontario's 133 First Nations communities have different patterns of historical interactions with Ontario and Canada that have shaped their perceptions of elections.

For the 2018 general election, Elections Ontario worked with Maawandoon, an Indigenous-owned firm that specializes in Indigenous community engagement, to conduct outreach with 130 Indigenous communities between April 3 and June 6, 2018. Maawandoon met with Indigenous organizations, chiefs, band councils, band administrators and electors to educate communities on elections and encourage their use of the e-Registration tool.

Working with Maawandoon, we created a proof-of-residency letter specific to electors living on reserves. The letter was then used at voting locations to prove residency on a reserve, where addressing departs from the Canada Post rural addressing convention and residents may receive their mail in neighbouring communities or even in another province.

While we experienced many successes in engaging Indigenous electors for the 2018 general election, there is still work to be done. Our engagement with Indigenous communities must continue.

## **Advertising**

From Writ day on May 9 through to election day on June 7, our advertising efforts targeted newspapers, television, radio and websites. Posters were displayed on transit vehicles and shelters. We created more than 860 print advertisements in English, French and 22 other languages. Web banners and boxes in English and French were created for digital platforms, and animated advertisements were created for Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

## Media

The media play an important role in supporting elections, and communicating accurate and timely information to electors. Elections Ontario recognizes the shared responsibility it has with the media to inform and provide accurate information to the public. The positive news coverage generated during Provincial Voter Registration Month gave our media efforts greater visibility during the election period. Between Writ day and election day, Elections Ontario was mentioned 291 times across 81 print and broadcast outlets. The phrase “Elections Ontario” was used over 2,000 times on Twitter during

the Writ period, and generated 24,649,173 social media impressions. Conversations on social media involving Elections Ontario generated more than 90 million impressions during the Writ period.

Overall, our efforts were focused on reaching every group of electors and reinforcing the importance of a modernized approach to engagement.

## H. Provincial Voters List and Voter Information Cards

The voters list is an essential tool for any election administration body. Elections Ontario is mandated to maintain the voters list for Ontario, a list of names and addresses of all electors registered in the province. Anyone who wants to vote in a provincial election must be registered on the voters list.

With the introduction of e-Registration, 1,188,003 electors checked, confirmed or updated their information. This tool supports our efforts to maintain an accurate voters list.

The voters list is vital for mailing out VICs to electors. VICs help bridge the gap between Elections Ontario and electors. Ontarians rely on VICs to tell them when, where and how to vote. The VIC also helps facilitate a fast and easy process at the polls. The VIC was especially important this election. The e-Poll book scanned the barcode on the VIC to make the voting experience fast and easy.

VIC distribution occurs twice. The first distribution is scheduled to begin less than 10 days after the Writs are issued; the second happens a few days before election day to capture new or revised voter information.

To deliver VICs, Elections Ontario completes a quality control check to ensure the names and addresses of voting locations are accurately printed on the VIC, and copies are sent to our printer. This enables the printing of millions of VICs that are then provided to Canada Post to deliver in time for advance voting. By the time VICs are given to Canada Post, less than a week of the official election period has passed.

In 2018, Elections Ontario faced challenges with the timely delivery of VICs. Registered electors were expected to receive VICs no later than May 25, in time for advance voting starting on May 26. However, many electors did not receive their VICs within the scheduled timeframe.

Elections Ontario relies on Canada Post to deliver essential elector information on time. Our staff went to great lengths to ensure we met all of our deadlines; however, Canada Post confirmed that they encountered operational issues that delayed the delivery of a sizable number of VICs. Many electors expressed disappointment with this level of service. Moving forward, we will work more closely with Canada Post to ensure electors receive this essential piece of information on time.

## I. Advance Voting

The start of advance voting is an exciting milestone for electoral management bodies. This is in many ways the first opportunity for a large number of electors to cast their ballot.

Beginning in 2011, Elections Ontario was required to provide a 10-day period of rotating advance polls. In 2018, new legislation prescribed that all advance voting locations, with the exception of the returning and satellite office advance polls, must operate within the entire five-day advance voting period. Advance voting was available at all returning and satellite offices for seven days.

Assistive voting technology was available at all returning and satellite offices to allow for greater elector choice when casting a ballot.

Advance voting was the first opportunity to see the e-Poll books and tabulators in action. Before advance polls open, Tabulator Deputy Returning Officers complete logic and accuracy tests on the vote tabulators. The same test is conducted before election day. These tests confirm that the vote tabulator is processing ballots accurately and the assistive voting devices function properly. The test is completed again after the election to ensure there were no tabulator malfunctions during voting.

On May 26, 2018, advance voting started. Any issues that were identified during the day were quickly reported and resolved. In total, there were 647 area advance polls, and all of them, with the exception of seven located in northern electoral

districts, used the new technology-enabled model.

More Ontarians voted during advance voting in the 2018 general election than ever before. In total, 698,609 electors chose advance voting, a 22.64% increase from the 569,632 recorded in 2014. Almost all of these electors experienced the new technology, with 698,371 electors voting at technology-enabled locations. This general election demonstrated that more and more electors are looking to vote earlier. Moving the advance voting period back to 10 days would give more electors the opportunity to take advantage of advance voting.

Advance voting was critical in helping headquarters and ROs prepare for election day. The success of the technology during this period gave us invaluable insight as to what to expect on June 7, 2018 and allowed us to better prepare field staff and other key stakeholders.

## J. Election Day

Election day marks the culmination of years of hard work and planning. On June 7, Ontarians had the opportunity to exercise their right to vote using an efficient and modernized process that maintained the fairness of the election, the secrecy of the ballot, and the integrity of the results. 5,806,286 Ontarians cast their ballots in the province's 42<sup>nd</sup> general election (approximately 57% of the province's electors).

### Ready for Election Day

Election day on June 7 was unlike any other election day in Ontario's history. Ninety per cent of electors experienced

an easier and more efficient process at the polls due to the introduction of e-Poll books and vote tabulators. New tools were available to ROs, who were able to view activities in their electoral districts using the VoterView Dashboard and to quickly identify and respond to issues in the field. At Elections Ontario headquarters, we triaged issues using information from our new VoterView and Command Centre dashboards, as well as data from our support networks for the public, returning offices, political parties, and technical support. These tools gave us increased insight into the events in real-time, and allowed us to respond quickly to emerging issues, based on risk and priority.

The night before election day, field staff were at voting locations to set-up the technology. Elections Ontario's technology support call centre was on stand-by during the setup to ensure that all polls were connected, and to resolve any technology issues. Once the setup and connectivity testing was complete, the election officials secured the equipment until the next morning at 9:00 A.M.

### **Polls Open**

Out of 7,648 election day voting locations, only three polls opened late and required extended hours.

There was high turnout in the morning. An average of 9,332 electors were processed per minute in the first hour. After 10:00 A.M., the voting rate dropped sharply and a steady decline continued through the lunch hour, reaching a low of 3,909 electors per minute at 12:50 P.M. The arrival of electors held steady throughout the afternoon, until the expected sharp

increase in the evening, which lasted until the close of polls.

During the day, an additional six polls – for a total of nine – experienced temporary interruptions. Electors could not access the affected polling stations due to school lockdowns, fire alarms or elevator service disruptions. These polls required extended hours to ensure all electors had a full 12 hours to cast their ballots, as required by the *Election Act*.

There was an increase in public engagement with Elections Ontario on election day. Our public call centre averaged approximately 975 calls per hour, with 9,587 calls on June 7 alone. Our support networks for field operations also managed high volumes of requests. The Returning Officer Support Network responded to approximately 800 calls and emails from the field, and our technology support call centre received almost 5,000 calls.

On election day, broadcast news encouraged Ontarians to vote and provided information about where to vote. We were active on social media with 3.9 million impressions and 21,000 engagements.

The voting technology performed exceptionally well, with 99% of technology performing flawlessly. The technology allowed electors who arrived with their VICs and identification to be served in under a minute.

Additionally, the introduction of technology allowed Elections Ontario to create efficiencies and streamline positions. We reduced the number of required election officials by 32%, from approximately 76,000 in 2014 to 51,000 in 2018 – even with the increase in the number of electoral districts.

Nevertheless, 18 electoral districts faced challenges in finding sufficient numbers of staff for the election. To alleviate concerns, we identified rapid response teams made up of staff at Elections Ontario's headquarters who were deployed to areas that required more staff, or who encountered higher-than-anticipated voter turnout.

Once polls closed at 9:00 P.M., the use of tabulators allowed unofficial results to come in at an unprecedented speed. Ontarians knew who would form the new government faster than ever before, with media calling the results of the election just 14 minutes after polls closed.

### **What was the result?**

In the 2018 general election, more Ontarians voted for more candidates and political parties than in previous elections.

The e-Poll books have given us invaluable information about voting patterns, which will allow us to plan more efficiently and precisely.

Out of a total of 5,806,286 electors, 5,744,860 valid ballots were cast, with 15,832 ballots rejected and 22,910 ballots not marked. An additional 22,684 ballots were formally declined by electors, a decrease from the 29,937 declined ballots in 2014.

## K. Post-Election Activities

For Elections Ontario and ROs, the election does not end once the ballots are counted. ROs are responsible for compiling results for each candidate from each poll, conducting post-election logic and accuracy tests on the tabulators, and returning all materials to Elections Ontario's headquarters in Toronto. For some staff at Elections Ontario, the closing of the polls marks the busiest period in the election cycle, as 51,000 election workers must receive their final payments. Staff must also review all materials returned from the field, and review audited financial statements from candidates.

While our management system greatly streamlined our processes and improved our line of sight between Elections Ontario's headquarters and the field, some functions did not operate in the manner we expected. Utilizing the system in a general election for the first time allowed us to understand areas for improvement, such as greater training for field and headquarters staff in key areas, and better alignment with management system functions and field procedures.

### **Election Delivery Costs**

Elections Ontario takes our role as financial stewards seriously. We have a history of demonstrating fiduciary responsibility through our annual and election budgets over the years. Between the 2011 and 2014 general elections, our total election cost decreased by 1.5%. It

was one of the reasons why we felt the time was right to make an investment in the future of Ontario's elections through the introduction of technology in the polls.

This investment meant we needed to procure equipment and incur related costs to support a successful technology-based election not seen in previous general election delivery costs. The investment allows us to meet the immediate needs of the electoral process, use fewer staff more efficiently, and improve the elector experience while enhancing the integrity of the process. Additional benefits included facilitating the reporting of timely election results and gathering unprecedented amounts of data. Both will help inform future improvements and efficiencies.

One of the most notable impacts to the delivery cost of this election was the increase to 124 electoral districts. Each new electoral district required staff, office space, voting locations and supplies. Moreover, the addition of two northern electoral districts posed challenges due to large remote geographical areas. The introduction of new electoral districts also meant paying more subsidies to constituency associations and candidates.

As one of the largest single employers in the province on election day, we were directly impacted by amendments to the *Employment Standards Act, 2000* and the increase to minimum wage. Significant changes to the *Election Finances Act* also increased costs for this election. More political parties were eligible for subsidies because of the drop in the popular vote threshold from 15% to 5%.



Elections Ontario put new processes and systems in place to meet the principles of accessibility and integrity, while also exercising fiduciary restraint. New processes and systems, developed to be as cost effective as possible, have improved our operations. Our new tools will significantly improve the voting experience, reduce errors, and make voting faster and more convenient. Going forward, we anticipate that the introduction of technology in the polls will continue to streamline our processes and staffing requirements. Despite the fact that 40% of Canada's overall population lives in Ontario, we are still able to maintain a comparatively low cost of \$12.35 per elector (see Appendix D for full details).

We continue to track post-event activities and all costs that are attributed to Ontario's 42<sup>nd</sup> general election. We estimate that, once complete, the 2018 general election will have cost \$123,483,728. The final, actual costs of the election and the full report on the financial aspects of the 2018 general election under the *Election Finances Act* will be published in Elections Ontario's 2018–19 annual report.

Table 1: 2018 General Election Costs

<b>Category</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
<b>Headquarters</b>		
Salaries and benefits	\$12,368,915	\$11,454,073
<b>Transportation &amp; Communication</b>		
Employee travel	\$1,510,017	\$1,334,790
Mail, courier, telecom	\$11,090,316	\$9,752,249
<b>Services</b>		
Consulting	\$15,837,044	\$16,683,774
Facilities	\$1,852,564	\$813,918
<b>Supplies &amp; Equipment</b>		
Furniture and equipment	\$1,617,494	\$3,823,284
Supplies and sundry	\$6,556,824	\$7,101,814
Rentals	\$5,062,431	\$4,936,403
Advertising and communications	\$4,522,428	\$4,144,796
Other services	\$82,500	\$83,610
Subtotal – headquarters	\$60,500,533	\$60,128,711
<b>Electoral District Field Budget</b>		
Administration of returning offices	\$24,552,329	\$24,774,449
Advance polls	\$7,707,524	\$7,368,860
Election Day	\$20,087,352	\$19,480,601
Printing	\$576,000	\$674,970
Revision personnel	\$1,413,130	\$1,623,817
Special ballot	\$2,573,916	\$2,095,528
Preliminary duties	\$480,810	\$550,295
Subtotal – electoral district field	\$57,391,061	\$56,568,520
<b>Election Finances</b>		
Audit and campaign expense subsidies	\$8,404,000	\$6,786,497
Subtotal – election finances	\$8,404,000	\$6,786,497
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$126,295,594</b>	<b>\$123,483,728</b>

## L. What We Heard

In the months following the election, Elections Ontario conducted an extensive election evaluation program to understand our successes and challenges, and plan for the future. The program included the completion of internal lessons learned, and an analysis of the data collected during the election. A summary of the results from our public opinion polling can be found in Appendix A. The Chief Electoral Officer personally conducted a number of debriefs with stakeholders to gain insight into a variety of experiences during the election. Through a province-wide road tour, we heard from our staff in the field. A Political Advisory Committee meeting was held with Ontario's political parties, and the Chief Electoral Officer attended meetings with approximately one-third of elected Members of Provincial Parliament. We also held a series of roundtables with some groups, including our technology vendors, community agencies and people with disabilities.

Overall, our stakeholders were pleased with the 2018 general election. They felt that modernization initiatives improved processes and services. Both electors and political entities had high confidence in the new technology with 91% of electors and 82% of political entities stating they felt comfortable with the new technology. Generally, a large majority of electors surveyed at the polls were confident in the voting process with regard to technology, secrecy and privacy. There were no major differences between demographic groups regarding technology at the polls.

Additionally, ROs acknowledged that technology in the polls was considered to have a very high and very positive impact on the election.

During the election, we heard a range of concerns regarding the accessibility of some voting locations, particularly about the distance between transit stops and voting locations, and, on occasion, the service electors received from staff. We must widen our communication efforts as a number of electors were not aware of alternate voting options such as home visits, special ballots, the use of personal devices, or the fact that Elections Ontario will reimburse intervener and interpreter costs. Moving forward, we are committed to working with all communities encountering barriers.

The introduction of technology has not only allowed us to better serve our stakeholders, but also introduced new challenges and opportunities. We look forward to collaborating with our stakeholders in the future.

“

*As a job seeker with a disability, I have had to become very vocal with my needs concerning accessibility. For example, I had requested longer break times to accommodate my hygiene needs throughout the long work day, my polling station was equipped with extra staff so that I would not stress about my absence and they wouldn't struggle with coverage while I was gone. Elections Ontario was very accommodating and responsive to those needs so that I could comfortably and successfully fulfill my role as Information Assistant on election day.*

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**Katie, Information Assistant**

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## **Section 5**

# **Compliance Activities**

Elections Ontario provides ongoing support for registered parties, constituency associations, nomination contestants, candidates and third parties during the election. In the months leading up to the election, Elections Ontario staff attended workshops and annual general meetings to help political entities navigate the new rules. In addition to the general election activities, we managed the 2017 annual filings for registered parties and constituency associations that were due on May 1, 2018.

## **Compliance Activities During the General Election**

### ***Election Finances Act Expenditures and Costs***

The Chief Electoral Officer oversees the registration of Ontario's political parties, constituency associations, candidates, nomination contestants, leadership contestants and third-party advertisers. After each election, we review all financial statements to ensure that they are in compliance with the *Election Finances Act*. In addition, we distribute audit and campaign expense reimbursements, as well as quarterly allowances to qualifying political parties and constituency associations.

Since the deadline for financial reporting for campaign expenses was December 7, 2018, we were not able to include a summary of financial data for all political entities in this report. Our full report on the financial summaries of the 2018 general election will be included in our 2018-19 annual report.

### **Access for Canvassers**

Changes to the *Election Act* prohibited owners or those in control of multiple-residence buildings from refusing access to candidates and authorized canvassers during the Writ period, with certain exceptions. Elections Ontario was tasked with creating an administrative penalty scheme for building owners and condominium boards that refuse entry to candidates and authorized canvassers. If a candidate or canvasser is refused access 24 hours after their first attempt at entry, the candidate or canvasser must

submit a Report of Denied Access to the Returning Officer, who may then issue an Order of Administrative Penalty form. Violators could be fined up to \$2,000 for refusing entry to qualified candidates or canvassers.

Elections Ontario did not receive any formal complaints regarding candidates or canvassers not being permitted entry into buildings. As such, we issued no penalties for violations. In some cases, the RO contacted the owner of a multiple-residence building to clarify the rules, but none of these instances were escalated.

### **Registration and Deregistration Activities**

Elections Ontario managed the registration and deregistration activities of nomination and leadership contests, political parties and third-party advertisers leading up to the 2018 general election.

- > From July 18, 2017 to May 14, 2018, Elections Ontario processed 216 nomination contests with 310 registered contestants. Elections Ontario also processed one leadership contest.
- > During the campaign period, Elections Ontario registered eight new political parties. One political party was deregistered during the campaign period, and 20 other political parties maintained their registrations. In total, 28 political parties were registered as of election day.
- > We also registered 59 third party advertisers during the six-month period before the election and the election period.

## Campaign Finance

The passage of the *Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016* introduced significant changes to the ways political entities spend and raise money. Changes included lower contribution limits, new spending limits in the six-month period before the Writ period, and the elimination of corporate and union donations.

Under the *Election Finances Act*, all entities regulated by the Act are obligated to file financial statements to Elections Ontario three months after the campaign period has ended. For the 2018 general election, the campaign period ended on September 7, 2018. Audited financial statements were due to Elections Ontario on December 7, 2018.

At the time of publishing this report, we have been able to conduct an analysis of the impact of the changes to campaign finance laws for third-party spending and fund-raising on the four political parties with representation in the legislature and third parties. Information on all political parties, candidates and constituency associations will be included in Elections Ontario's 2018–19 annual report.

Overall, the fund-raising and spending patterns show the following outcomes of the changes made to the *Election Finances Act*:

- Third parties spent significantly less on advertising in the 2018 general election compared to the 2014 general election.
- Most political parties were able to accumulate more funds in 2018 than in 2014 despite lower contribution limits and the elimination of corporate and

union donations.

- Quarterly allowances paid out in 2018 amounted to more than what the parties were able to raise in contributions.

## Fund-raising

Individual contribution limits to parties have been lowered and political contributions from corporations and trade unions were eliminated.

Table 2: Summary of contribution limits in 2018 vs 2014

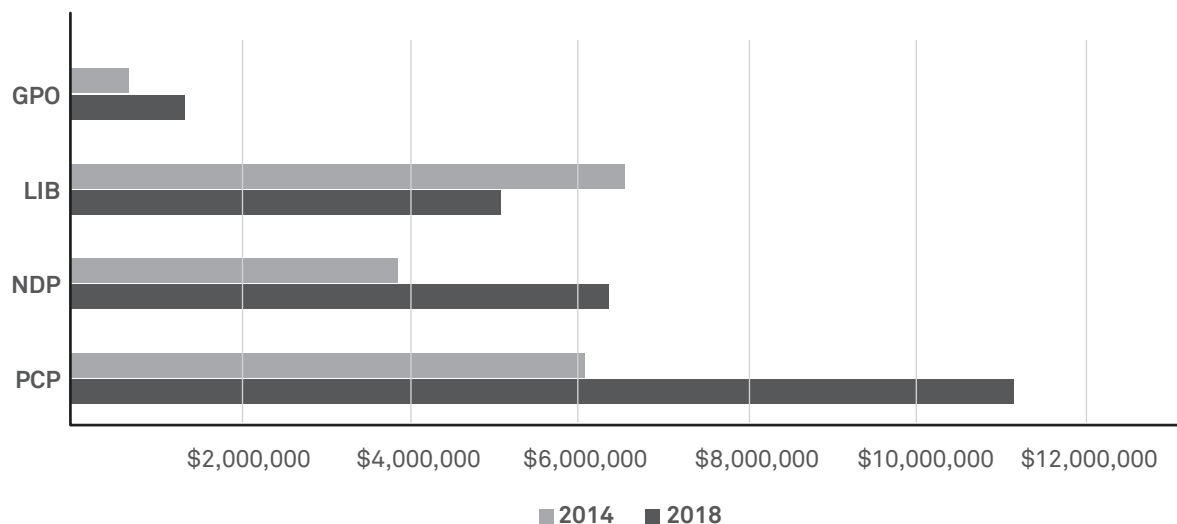
General Information	2014	2018
Contribution Limits	\$19,950	\$1,222
Eligible Contributors	Individuals Corporations Trade Unions	Individuals

Another change to campaign finance legislation included the introduction of a quarterly allowance to qualifying political parties, with the amount to be paid out based on a prescribed rate multiplied by the number of votes received.<sup>1</sup> Following the 2018 general election, the only qualifying parties for the quarterly allowance are the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, the New Democratic Party of Ontario, the Ontario Liberal Party, and the Green Party of Ontario.

After comparing the contribution and quarterly allowance data for 2014 and 2018 for the four qualifying parties, all parties, with the exception of the Ontario Liberal Party, had more funds in 2018 than in 2014. Overall, quarterly allowances paid out in 2018 amounted to 11% more than what the parties were able to raise in contributions.

<sup>1</sup> The Government of Ontario has introduced new legislation to increase contributions starting in 2019 and phase out the quarterly allowance in 2022.

Figure 3: 2014 Contributions vs 2018 Contributions And Quarterly Allowances - Political Parties



### Spending

As a result of changes to the *Election Finances Act*, Elections Ontario now has regulatory oversight over third-party advertisers six months prior to a fixed-date general election. Third parties are required to register with Elections Ontario once they spend \$500 on political advertising, and restrictions are placed on the amounts that third parties may spend.

During the 2018 general election, 59 third parties were registered with Elections Ontario. This is an increase from the 37 registered during the 2014 general election. This increase can be attributed to a broadened definition of political advertising to include issue-based advertising as well as restrictions on spending in the six-month period before the election.

As expected, the introduction of spending limits significantly decreased the amount that was spent on political advertising during the election period, from \$8.7 million in 2014 to \$5.4 million in 2018. It is not possible to compare spending in the six-month period before the 2014 and 2018 general elections, as third parties were not required to report on this spending in 2014.

Table 3: Summary of advertising expenses in 2014 vs 2018

Advertising Expenses	2014	2018
Non-election period (6 months)	Not Regulated	\$3,772,278
Election period	\$8,675,600	\$1,602,956
<b>Total Advertising Expenses</b>	<b>\$8,675,600</b>	<b>\$5,375,234</b>



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## **Section 6**

# **Recommendations for Legislative Change**

The 2018 general election was the result of a decade-long journey to modernize the electoral process, remove barriers to voting, introduce initiatives that keep pace with the changing demographics of our province, and address 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges. To achieve this mandate, Elections Ontario advocated for legislative change to modernize the electoral process in a way that put the needs of electors first. While recent legislation reflected many of our previous recommendations and helped us successfully deliver the 42<sup>nd</sup> general election, we continue to provide recommendations that will improve the electoral process through a measured and principled approach to modernization.

## A. Key Recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer

The following three recommendations are key proposals for change to address areas where current legislation presents significant challenges to delivering an election. The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that these critical areas for improvement should be addressed in priority to maintain and improve Elections Ontario's capacity to deliver on its mandate.

### **Establish a single address authority**

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*The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that a single address authority be established in Ontario. The address authority could be established by Elections Ontario or another government body.*

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Ontario's addressing system is extremely complex because of the lack of a central address authority. Ontario is one of only four provinces and territories without a central authority.

As a result, municipalities may have their own naming conventions for addressing. Naming conventions may also vary within municipalities that have not set their own standards. The municipalities feed their data to primary service providers such as Canada Post, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), telecom providers, utilities and emergency services. Several of those service providers make adjustments to the addresses for their

own purposes. The end user (i.e., the individual providing their address) applies these variables inconsistently according to their own personal understanding of addressing. The overall effect is a system that produces somewhat unreliable results.

As the administrator of the voters list, Elections Ontario receives address information for electors from a variety of service providers and sources. Other entities in Ontario – including Canada Post, telecom providers and emergency service providers – also deal with addressing challenges.

Elections Ontario recommends that Ontario centralize the decision-making for addressing standards in a single address authority. This address authority would set the standards and be responsible for ensuring the consistent application of these standards across the province. The address authority would also act as the sole address provider for any agency that requires address information. Most importantly, individual citizens would be able to receive consistent and clear information from the address authority.

An address authority functions as quality assurance for addressing across the province. Harmonizing one address per location, resolving duplicate addressing within the same municipality, and assigning geo-codes to addresses would help all organizations that deal with addressing in the province.

A strong quality-assurance process has many benefits beyond improved electoral administration.

- › **An address authority means a better list and a better election.** If an address authority is established and a standard is adopted across the province, the number of addresses that cannot be accurately located on a map will decrease.
- › **Addressing will be easier to manage in Ontario.** Elections Ontario is not the only organization struggling with the variability in addressing. Ministries and government services, primary service providers, and private-sector businesses are all affected. As our economy globalizes, discrepancies in local addressing impede business.
- › **Reduce government spending on address-data management.** Currently several bodies within the government have separate processes for collecting, maintaining, updating and analyzing addressing data. A single address authority could eliminate the duplication of costs across several government ministries and agencies.

## **Appoint Elections Ontario as the authority responsible for municipal voters list**

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*The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the Government of Ontario assign responsibility to Elections Ontario for creating and managing a single register of electors for Ontario and for the production of both the provincial and municipal voters lists.*

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Currently, voters lists are managed by two different bodies: Elections Ontario at the provincial level and the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) at the municipal level. Elections Ontario manages the provincial voters list. We receive updates from a variety of sources, including Elections Canada as well as other government agencies and private-sector entities. The introduction of an online voter registration tool in 2018 added another reliable source. MPAC provides municipalities with a preliminary voters list. Municipalities then revise and correct the data they receive from MPAC, whose core business is not voters list management.

Dissatisfaction with the accuracy of municipal voters lists has been voiced by municipalities and the Association for Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario. The inaccuracy of municipal voters lists creates inefficiencies, and incurs additional costs to municipalities to revise and correct MPAC data. According to a 2015 survey by the Association for Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario, Elections Ontario is seen as the best alternative to manage the municipal voters lists.

Additionally, as elections are modernized, having a current and accurate voters list leads to efficient technology implementation. Given that more municipalities are adopting electronic voting (i.e., from 97 in 2014 to 144 in 2018) the need for an accurate and current voters list to maintain integrity is increasing.

Consolidation of voters lists within Elections Ontario would achieve consistency in election delivery, increase operational efficiency, improve accessibility for all eligible electors, and achieve a higher level of electoral integrity.

## **Extend the election calendar**

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*The Chief Electoral Officer recommends an extended election calendar to ensure a well-functioning electoral process.*

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The Chief Electoral Officer considers a 29-day election calendar to be insufficient to ensure a successful election that serves Ontarians.

Most Canadian provinces have longer election calendars than Ontario. The average ranges between 29 and 36 days. At the federal level, the election calendar is at least 36 days.

In 2018, Elections Ontario experienced significant logistical challenges in providing more days and more ways for Ontarians to vote due to the length of the election calendar. With an increased number of electoral districts for the 2018 general election, this meant even more materials needed to be prepared and distributed. From the need to deploy materials to the field to the increased number of nominated candidates, the already tight turnaround times have become increasingly difficult to manage in such a short amount of time.

Even in a fixed-date general election, Returning Officers (ROs) face challenges administering the election in the allotted time. An extended election calendar would provide ROs with the time they need once an election is called to ensure a smooth and seamless voting experience for all electors.

## **B. Additional Recommendations for Legislative Change from the Chief Electoral Officer**

### **Allow the levying of administrative penalties**

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*The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the Election Act and Election Finances Act be amended so that the Chief Electoral Officer has the power to levy administrative penalties.*

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When it comes to the Chief Electoral Officer's attention that an individual or group appears to have willfully violated the *Election Act* or *Election Finances Act*, the only sanction is for the Chief Electoral Officer to report the activity to the Attorney General for prosecution as an offence under the *Provincial Offences Act, 1990*. Apart from deregistration, the only penalties that can be imposed require conviction in court. Other regulatory agencies, including Elections Canada, are entrusted with a greater range of administrative penalties they can apply to uphold compliance.

For example, in the 2014 general election Elections Ontario received several complaints alleging that political advertising was missing the proper authorization and that candidate campaign materials contained incorrect

information. The Chief Electoral Officer believes these sorts of minor transgressions are important to penalize but that a full-blown prosecution and conviction in court may not necessarily be a proportionate outcome. Broader powers for the Chief Electoral Officer, equivalent to those exercised by other regulators, including the authority to levy administrative fines, impose temporary suspensions, or issue public reprimands, would help promote compliance and instill public confidence in the electoral process.

### **Scheduling the redistribution of Ontario's electoral district boundaries**

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*The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015 be amended to provide a regularly scheduled process for reviewing the electoral districts and boundaries.*

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Ontario is the only province in Canada that does not have a regularly scheduled process for reviewing electoral districts and boundaries. Regular updating and a scheduled process for conducting such reviews and adjustments to the electoral map to reflect population growth and demographic changes are essential to our democratic process. The right to effective representation is protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. As Ontario is the only province in Canada without a regularly scheduled process, Ontarians face a greater risk of ineffective representation in our democratic process.

Ontario's population is projected to grow by 30.2%, or almost 4.3 million people, over the next 24 years, with significant regional differences.

Creating a regular, scheduled process for reviewing and adjusting electoral boundaries will result in an improved, predictable, transparent process that aligns with standard practices across election management bodies in Canada.

With a regularly scheduled review process for electoral district boundaries, effective representation for Ontarians will be better maintained in the future. The Chief Electoral Officer believes that the redistribution of electoral district boundaries should be a regularly scheduled process so that Ontario's electoral districts can reflect the changing demographics of Ontario beyond 2018 and into the future.

## **Establish common evaluative standards and a certification process for election technology**

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*The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that Ontario establish common evaluative standards and a certification process for technology used in the electoral process in Ontario.*

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Technology holds a lot of promise for the elections of the future. Increasingly, Ontarians expect that technology will be used to make voting easier, offer more choice to electors for when, where and how to vote, and find efficiencies in the electoral process. Electoral management bodies, including Elections Ontario, are increasingly turning to technology to solve logistical challenges.

In Ontario, the adoption of technology into the electoral process has been done in an ad-hoc way since the late 1980s, and has been led by municipalities. This approach made sense when voting technologies were new and there were no best practices from which to draw. It also allowed municipalities to pioneer technology and discover fit-for-purpose solutions to address their local needs.

With more than 20 years of practical experience at hand, we are at a point where we are actively learning from our past so that we can create best practices and develop future guidelines. Standards can provide consistent guidance for municipalities and the province as we adopt proven technologies using a principled and measured approach.

It is critical that our approach to technology be intentional and evidence-based. Even as the public expects electoral management bodies to find efficiencies through technology, they are also increasingly aware of the possible failures of technology. While there are many benefits to using technology, there are risks involved, as illustrated by recent failures of systems at large organizations. As the public becomes more informed about software, malware and manipulation of technology data systems, they are increasingly interested in knowing exactly how election technology preserves the integrity of our electoral process and the confidentiality of their personal information. For the public to trust the integrity of the electoral process they must be assured that:

- › Technology used to cast a vote will accurately count the vote as intended.
- › Technology used to cast a vote will uphold the secrecy of the vote.
- › Technology used to tabulate votes will be verifiable and protected from tampering.
- › Technology used to transmit election results will be verifiable and protected from tampering.
- › Technology will not result in the breach of their confidential and personal information.

To ensure we maintain public trust in our electoral system as we adopt technology, the Chief Electoral Officer recommends that Ontario establish a set of common evaluative standards and guidelines. These will advise election administrators as

they consider which technology to adopt, how to evaluate the technology, and the specific technical standards to consider for adopted technology.

### **Establish a voting day that is not a school day**

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*The Chief Electoral Officer recommends amending the Election Act to change election day to a day when schools are not in session (e.g., a weekend day or school holiday).*

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Schools are foundational to the running of elections. They are among the most familiar and convenient locations for voting, partly because they can be found in virtually every residential neighbourhood in Ontario, and because they tend to meet accessibility standards. Setting an election day that is not a school day would provide for easier access to schools for electors and would help keep children safe. Although Elections Ontario pays for security at schools, the safety and security of school children would be enhanced by moving election day to a day when schools are not in session.

Having election day on the weekend or a school holiday would also provide an opportunity to engage youth to work and participate in the election.

## Threshold for audit

*The Chief Electoral Officer recommends the Election Finances Act identify a minimum threshold for contributions before audits are required in order to ensure cost-effectiveness in the administration of audit subsidies.*

Many political entities in Ontario are required to file audited financial statements with Elections Ontario. Political parties and constituency associations are required to file these statements annually and for campaign periods. Candidates are required to file audited financial statements only for campaign periods, leadership contestants are required to file for contest periods. In accordance with subsection 40(7) of the *Election Finances Act*, Elections Ontario subsidizes the cost of auditors' services to these entities. During the 2016–17 fiscal year, Elections Ontario paid out \$411,728 in audit subsidies.

With the passage of the *Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016*, legislation was introduced that expanded Elections Ontario's role in the regulation of the financial activities of nomination contestants. With these amendments, nomination contestants differ from other political entities in that they are required to file audited financial statements only once the contestant either received \$10,000 in contributions or incurred expenses of at least \$10,000 with respect to their nomination contest. For other political entities, there is no such threshold.

Due to the absence of such a threshold, Elections Ontario receives hundreds of financial statements each year from political entities where there has been little to no financial activity and for which subsidies are paid to the auditors of these statements. Our Political Advisory Committee has, over the past few years, suggested that cost-savings could be achieved with the establishment of a minimum threshold for audit similar to nomination contestants. To ensure cost-effectiveness in the administration of the *Election Finances Act*, we recommend that, like nomination contestants, spending and contribution thresholds be set for the audited financial statements of political parties, constituency associations, candidates and leadership contestants.



## Subject political parties to Ontario's privacy laws

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*The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that political parties should be subject to privacy laws.*

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Political parties are building sophisticated databases of elector information, increasing privacy concerns. Canadian privacy commissioners and ombudsmen are increasingly calling for political parties to be subject to privacy laws to provide oversight of such practices.

In its 2017 annual report, the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario called for privacy regulation and oversight of the province's political parties. This report highlighted the privacy, ethical and security concerns of big data practices and digital tools used by political parties.

The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that Ontario follow the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario's recommendations to expand the Commissioner's oversight to political parties.

## Establish 10 days of rotating advance polls

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*The Chief Electoral Officer recommends changing advance voting to 10 days of rotating polls.*

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Current legislation requires five days of advance voting at fixed voting locations during the period that begins on the 12<sup>th</sup> day and ends on the 8<sup>th</sup> day before election day. The 2018 general election was the first held under these requirements for advance voting, and the process did not meet public expectations.

Public polling conducted on behalf of Elections Ontario found that Ontarians are looking for more options to cast their ballot ahead of election day, including a growing desire to vote during advance voting.

To remove barriers to voting and put the needs of electors first, the Chief Electoral Officer recommends extending advance voting at non-returning office voting locations to 10 days, as well as more flexibility to rotate voting locations to facilitate the needs and behaviours of electors. This conclusion is based on data collected during the 2018 general election. This approach would align with previous legislation and the 2011 and 2014 general elections.

## C. Recommendations for Administrative and Technical Adjustments to the *Election Act* and the *Election Finances Act*

The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that legislation be changed to facilitate specific processes and requirements related to election management.

As a result of stakeholders' expectations and Elections Ontario's modernization approach, several areas of election management require administrative and technical adjustments to election-related legislation to ensure that processes, requirements and provisions align with the needs of stakeholders and Elections Ontario.

- **Enable a practical approach to communications.** Current communications requirements do not align with the digital media landscape. The legislation should be amended so that the Chief Electoral Officer has greater discretion to select the appropriate communication channels for reaching electors.
- **Simplify election calendar timing.** The legislation should be amended to provide the Chief Electoral Officer with greater latitude for making decisions regarding the election calendar.
- **A clear outline of the process for parties to withdraw candidates during the election period.** Under previous legislation there was a process for the leader to withdraw endorsement. The current situation seems to be the result of a gap in legislation after the nomination process was streamlined.

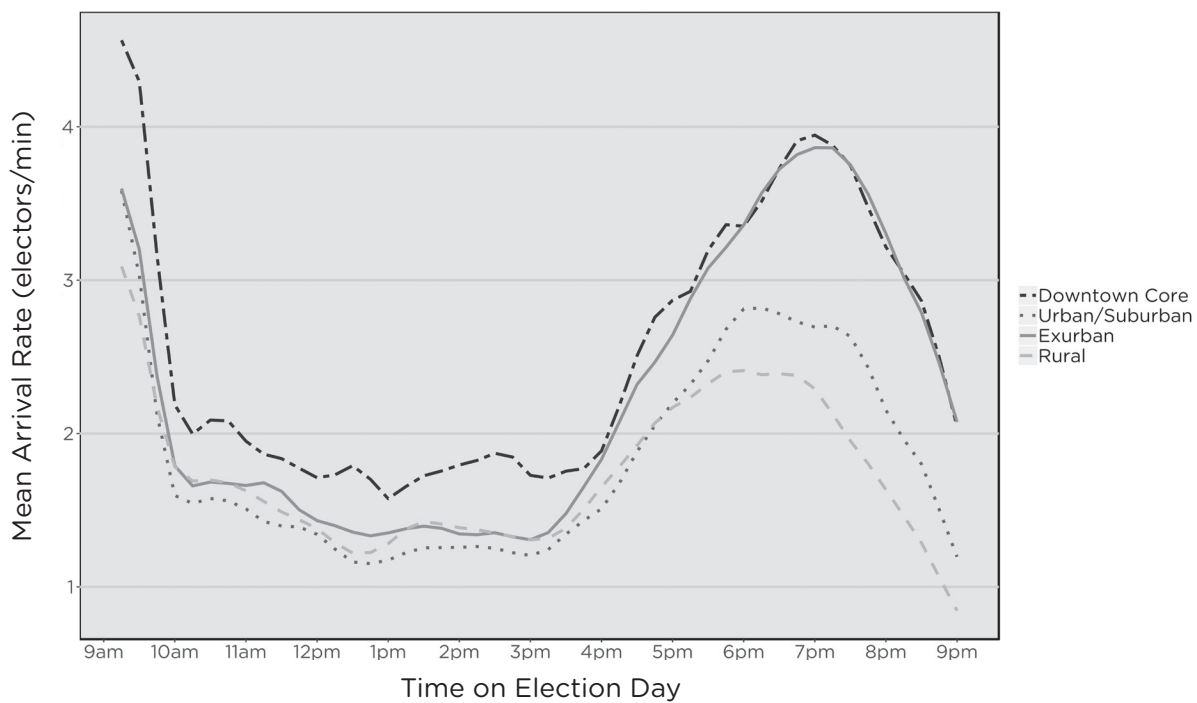
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## Section 7

# Looking Ahead

The 2018 general election took a significant step towards modernization. Delivering a markedly different election with such a positive response from our stakeholders illustrated that this was the right time for change. It is, however, only the first step.

Figure 4: Elector Arrival Rates on Election Day



The introduction of technology in the polls for the 2018 general election has provided us with fresh insights.

We now have an unprecedented amount of data. The use of electronic tools to support our processes gives us the ability to see trends in voting across different demographic groups. The aggregation of data allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the election, such as areas of success, the barriers experienced by stakeholders, and the opportunities for growth and change. This data enables us to make evidence-based decisions and provides valuable insights for planning the next election.

For example, the use of e-Poll book data has identified elector traffic patterns across the province and in individual electoral districts through strike-off data and arrival times. This data does not include electors' personal information, nor how they voted. With this data, we will be able to better understand the needs of each individual electoral district. The data also allows us to evaluate the success or efficiency of our staffing model at the polls and its impact on the time it takes for an elector to cast a ballot. Key findings indicated that there are different voting traffic patterns between urban, suburban, and rural electoral districts: voters in different places vote at different times.

Technology also provides us with the means to find efficiencies through a measured approach. In this election, 90% of electors experienced technology through the use of e-Poll books and tabulators. Our survey results tell us that electors trust the technology.

Our journey does not start and stop at technology. Electors want to participate in an electoral process that meets their 21<sup>st</sup> century needs. They are looking for flexibility, and we want to be able to provide this to them.

Through the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations, we continue to look at ways to improve the electoral process for our stakeholders, reduce barriers to voting and be responsible and accountable for public funds.

We continue to balance making voting easier for Ontarians with the need to preserve the integrity of the electoral process. We want to provide modernized, flexible, and convenient ways to vote, but cannot compromise the core covenants of our democracy: accessibility, one vote per elector, secrecy, integrity and security. As we continue on this modernization journey, these values will continue to be at the centre of the work we do.

There is more work to be done. We are well positioned to implement more change and look forward to delivering on our commitment to build modern services that put the needs of electors first.

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# Appendix A

## Summary of Elector Surveys

Elections Ontario procured Forum Research to conduct a multi-survey public opinion polling project to determine how electors and other stakeholders felt about their experiences with electoral processes, initiatives, and services during the 2018 general election. This appendix summarizes some of the key highlights from the surveys.

Five research objectives were identified for this project:

1. Understand the level of trust in Elections Ontario and the electoral process
2. Assess the impact of changes to the electoral process
3. Identify barriers to participation in the electoral process
4. Measure the effectiveness of Elections Ontario's communications
5. Capture public expectations for the electoral process in the future.

Forum Research surveyed three separate elector groups to complete this public opinion polling. These included:

- General electors
- Elector groups facing barriers:
  - electors with disabilities
  - French-speaking electors
  - youth aged 18-24
  - Indigenous electors
  - electors living in shelters
- Political entities:
  - candidates
  - campaign finance officers
  - party officials

General electors and elector groups facing barriers were surveyed at two different times: before the Writs were issued and after election day. Overall, 1,553 general electors participated in the pre-election survey; 1,722 participated in the post-election survey. For electors in shelters, Forum Research conducted in-person interview surveys with homeless Ontarians from June 18 to July 15, 2018. The participants were recruited from shelters throughout Ontario. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Table 1: Methodology for quantitative electors surveys

Audience	Methodology	Base size (n)	Margin of Error (95% of the time)
<b>Pre-election</b>			
General electors	50% CATI/50% Online	1,553	+/- 2.49%
<b>Elector groups</b>			
Indigenous		145	
Youth aged 18–24	50% CATI/50% Online	153	+/- 2.49%
Non-English/French		128	
Electors with disabilities		358	
<b>Post-election</b>			
General electors	50% CATI/50% Online	1,722	+/- 2.49%
<b>Elector groups</b>			
Indigenous		144	
Youth aged 18–24	50% CATI/50% Online	146	+/- 2.49%
Non-English/French		154	
Electors with disabilities		431	
Electors living in shelters	In-person interviews	50	+/- 13.86%

\*Note: CATI indicates surveying conducted via telephone

For political entities, Forum Research emailed an invitation to participate in the survey. Political entities for this survey included candidates, campaign finance officers and party officials. In total, there were 179 respondents to the survey. Political entities were surveyed from June 8 to June 30, 2018.

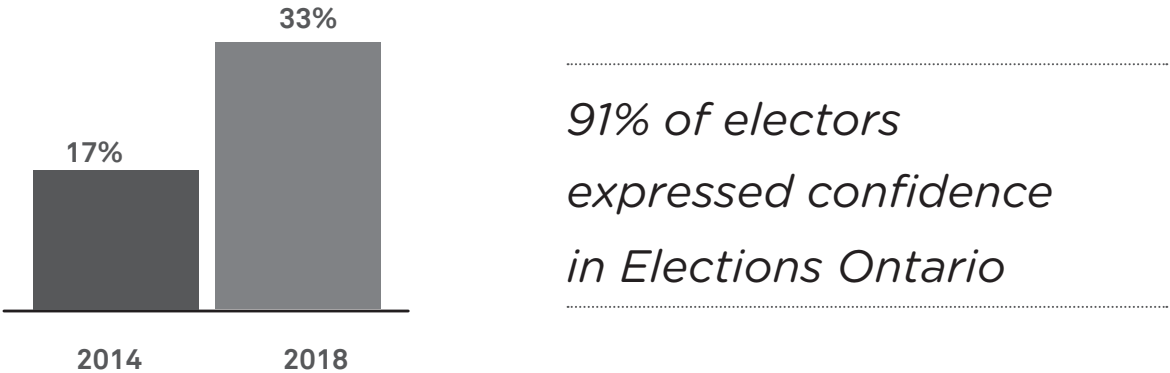
# Results from General Elector Surveys

## Ease of voting

Survey results indicate that Elections Ontario made strides towards its strategic goal of making voting easy. There seems to be a strong indication that the introduction of technology in the polls facilitated voting for electors while maintaining trust and confidence in the integrity of the voting process.

Ninety-three per cent of electors found that the voting process was easy: 60% indicated that the ease of voting in the 2018 general election was about the same as in 2014, while 33% indicated that voting was easier than before.

Figure 1: Ease of Voting - 2014 and 2018 General Elections - Percentage of electors who said that voting was easier than before

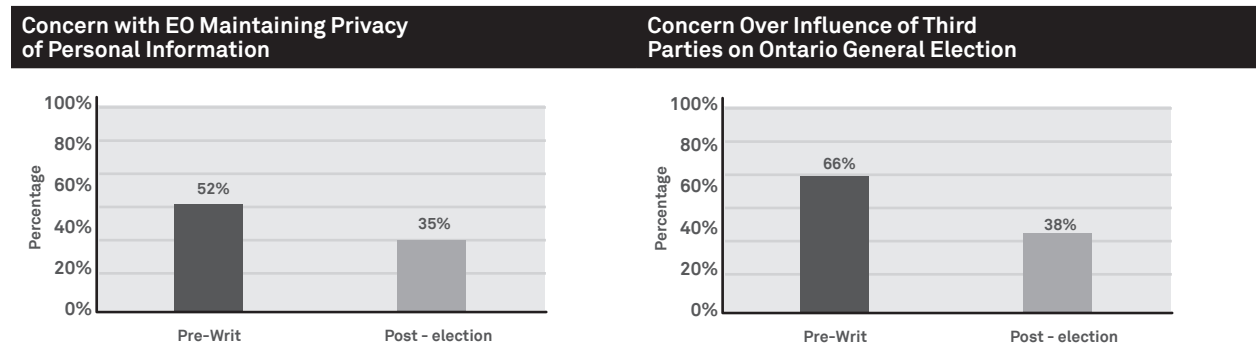


## Levels of trust and privacy concerns

The majority of electors (86%) believe elections in Ontario are conducted fairly. Elections Ontario continues to enjoy extremely high levels of public trust with the impartiality of the election viewed favorably among all elector groups. Overall, 91% of electors expressed confidence in Elections Ontario. Additionally, 88% of electors were confident that the new technology (i.e. e-Poll books and tabulators) maintained the secrecy and privacy of their votes.

Areas of concern regarding trust and privacy include the ability of Elections Ontario to maintain the privacy of electors' personal information. A majority of general electors in the pre-election survey (52%) indicated concern with the ability of Elections Ontario to maintain the privacy of electors' personal information. However, after the election, general electors were less concerned with the ability of Elections Ontario to maintain the privacy of electors' personal information (35%). The highest levels of concern came from the influence of third parties over the Ontario election. In the pre-election survey, 66% of electors expressed concern; again however, this number decreased to 38% in the post-election survey.

Figure 2: General elector survey results concerning privacy and third party influence in 2018



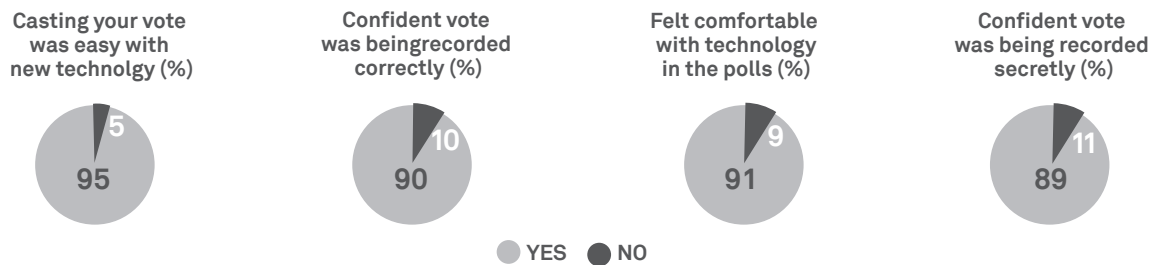
*More than 90% of general electors viewed the voting process with electronic poll books and tabulators as efficient (93%) and easy (95%).*

### Technology in the polls

There was an overall positive response to the implementation of technology in the polls with high rates of satisfaction.

Electors were confident in their vote being recorded correctly (90%) and secretly (89%). This confidence in the new technology was experienced across different demographic groups, with all groups indicating relatively similar levels of comfort.

Figure 3: General elector survey results regarding use of technology in the polls in 2018





## **Knowledge of the voting process**

Knowledge of the voting process was high: 96% of electors knew when to vote, 94% knew where to vote, and 93% knew what they needed to bring to vote. Additionally, the vast majority of electors (95%) indicated that they were aware of the necessary identification required to vote, with Indigenous electors indicating the highest level of awareness (97%).

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*More than 90% of electors knew when, where and how to vote.*

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However, there were low levels of knowledge across all elector groups on alternative voting methods. The majority of electors surveyed (52%) were aware of their option to complete a mail-in ballot, but less than half of electors were aware of the options to vote in-person at the returning office (45%), by home visit (23%) or by hospital visit (35%).

## **Barriers to participation in the electoral process**

There was no significant change in the number of general electors who indicated they experienced a problem or barrier when voting compared to the 2014 general election. Seven per cent of electors in 2018 indicated they experienced a barrier, compared to 10% in 2014 and 6% in 2011.

The top problem or barrier identified by general electors in the 2018 general election was inefficient or poorly trained staff (29%), a 22% increase from 2014. The next most commonly identified barrier was not receiving a voter information card (VIC), with 20% of electors identifying this as the top barrier.

**Elections Ontario’s communications**

The vast majority (88%) of general electors received VICs. Almost all (96%) cards contained correct information. The vast majority (89%) of electors that received a VIC and voted brought the card with them to their voting location.

As in prior elections, the most common method of finding information about the election was through Elections Ontario’s website (40%). Most electors used the site to find information on where to vote (44%). The majority of electors (81%) indicated that the website was easy to use.

There was a slight increase in the proportion of electors contacting Elections Ontario in 2018 (11%) compared to 2014 (5%). As in prior elections, the most common methods used to contact Elections Ontario included visiting the Elections Ontario website, calling a local number, and calling a toll-free number. The main reasons for contacting Elections Ontario were to ask a question or get information (88%), to make a complaint (8%) and to make a positive comment (4%).

**Results from Surveys with Elector Groups Facing Barriers to Voting**

**Technology in the polls**

All elector groups indicated relatively similar levels of comfort with the new technology. The highest levels of comfort were experienced by youth (94%) and French-speaking electors (95%). While electors with disabilities indicated the lowest level of comfort, the vast majority (89%) were still comfortable with the new technology.

Table 2: Survey question: How comfortable were you with the new technology?

	Youth		Senior		Electors with disabilities		Indigenous		French	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	66	94%	377	92%	211	89%	63	90%	75	95%
No	4	6%	33	8%	27	11%	7	10%	4	5%

**Knowledge of the voting process**

The vast majority of electors (95%) indicated that they were aware of the necessary identification required to vote, with Indigenous electors indicating the highest level of awareness. The majority of electors in shelters were also aware of what identification they had to provide to vote (67%). Twenty-four per cent were aware of the Certificate of Identity and Residence program through shelters and food banks, an increase from previous elections (16% in 2014, 22% in 2011).

### **Barriers to participation in the electoral process**

For electors in shelters, 22% agreed that Elections Ontario has made the voting process easier than before, and 61% indicated the overall voting experience of the 2018 general election was good or very good.

Youth had the highest rate of reporting barriers to voting: 11% indicated they experienced a barrier to voting. Youth identified problems with identification and finding information on where to vote as their top barriers to voting. Indigenous electors identified not receiving a VIC and ballot issues as the top barriers to voting.

## **Results from Political Entities Survey**

According to the surveys for political entities, the 2018 general election was run better than prior elections. The majority of political entities had a very good or excellent impression of how the 2018 general election was run, with 41% reporting that 2018 was run better than previous elections, an increase of 20 percentage points from 2014.

### **Trust in Elections Ontario**

Political entities continue to have high levels of trust in Elections Ontario, with 85% indicating that Elections Ontario is unbiased. This is similar to responses provided in 2014 (85%) and 2011 (83%).

Over two-thirds (68%) of political entities agree that provincial elections in Ontario are conducted fairly. However, 44% are concerned with external third parties unfairly influencing elections in Ontario.

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*More than three quarters (79%) of candidates, campaign finance officers and party officials were confident that the new technology maintained the secrecy and privacy of the vote.*

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### **Technology**

There was a high level of comfort with the introduction of the technology in the polls. The majority of political entities (87%) reported that they trust the vote tabulators to record the results correctly.

There were high approval ratings for the efficiency and ease of using the new technology, with 86% describing the new voting process as efficient and 95% indicating that casting their vote was easy with the new technology.

### Communications

The overall rating of communication from Elections Ontario was strong, with 77% of political entities rating Elections Ontario's overall communications at 7 or more out of 10. Just under a quarter (23%) rated it at 6 or less out of 10.

There were high levels of awareness regarding attendance restrictions at fund-raising events (65%), and the limits on contribution amounts at fund-raising events (60%).

### Candidate nominations

One of the biggest changes impacting political entities for this election were changes to the candidate nomination process. Levels of satisfaction with the implementation of this initiative were high, with 69% indicating the Candidate Nomination Form was clear.

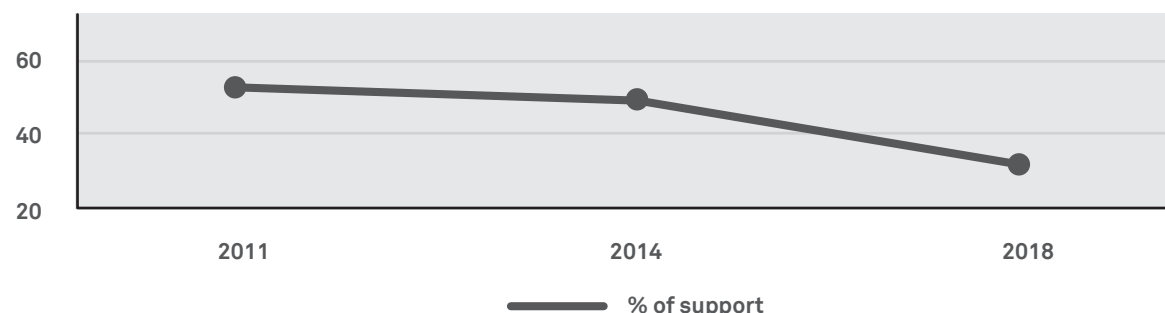
## Elector Expectations for the Future

There was a significant decline in support for online voting following this general election. When asked about alternative voting methods, only 33% of electors indicated support for online voting, a significant change from 2014 (49% support) and 2011 (52% support).

Despite the decline in support for online voting, there is an increased interest in alternative voting methods. Sixteen per cent of electors indicated that extending advance voting and longer hours on election day would encourage more people to vote in future elections. Additionally, 66% of electors agreed that allowing them to choose where to vote is more convenient than being assigned a location.

When asked about preferred methods of communications, electors indicated email as their preferred method of contacting Elections Ontario (31%), followed by telephone (21%), and a secure online portal (19%).

Figure 4: Support for online voting over the previous three general elections



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## **Appendix B**

# **Accessibility Measures for the 2018 General Election**

Elections Ontario is committed to preventing and removing barriers to voting. The administration of the electoral process must be accessible to all Ontarians, so that electors with disabilities can exercise their right to vote privately and independently. Our commitment to accessibility is part of our goal to make voting easy. This starts with removing barriers.

After the 2014 general election, Elections Ontario worked with community agencies and people with disabilities to increase service levels for electors with disabilities. We believe we have made significant progress to make elections more accessible. Our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2017-2021 shows our continuing commitment to identifying and removing barriers and improving accessibility.

Elections Ontario has adopted the four principles outlined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) as part of our continued vision for setting benchmarks in electoral process excellence. Those principles are:

- Respect for the dignity of persons with disabilities
- Respect for the independence of persons with disabilities
- Goods and services that are integrated for persons with disabilities
- Equality in the ability to obtain, use and benefit from goods and services given to others.

For the 2018 general election, our goal was to increase levels of service, reduce barriers to voting, and make voting easy for electors with disabilities.

To achieve this, we improved processes, enhanced training for staff at headquarters and in the field, developed our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and consulted with our partners. Through these partnerships, we introduced new methods to make voting easy, such as allowing electors to use their smartphones as assistive devices at the polls. As a result, we increased the level of satisfaction with the voting process among electors with disabilities.

We are always looking for new ways to improve the accessibility of the services we offer to Ontarians, while ensuring we maintain the integrity of the electoral process. We look forward to building on these successes and leveraging our strengthened relationships with community agencies and individuals representing people with disabilities to continue with our goal of making voting easy for all Ontarians.

# Legislative and Policy Framework

The *Ontario Human Rights Code* together with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* protects and guarantees the rights of all Ontarians to access goods, services, facilities and employment.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* ensures that organizations follow specific standards and rules to identify and prevent barriers, so that persons with disabilities can access the same goods and services as everyone else.

Elections Ontario is committed to delivering elections that are accessible, transparent, and fairly and efficiently administered. Our Accessible Customer Service Policy, Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy Directive, and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan communicate our commitment to deliver high-quality service to all Ontarians engaged in the electoral process as electors, administrators, candidates and other stakeholders.

We are committed to remaining compliant with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and reinforce its core principles with the *Election Act*. For example, the *Election Act* includes a requirement that assistive voting technology be available for advance voting at returning offices and from the start of advance polls to the day before election day. It also sets out the parameters of the special ballot program, which increases accessibility for all electors. Elections Ontario carries out its obligations to delivering elections and day-to-day operations that are free from discrimination, and we remove and prevent barriers by promoting processes that are inclusive.

## Overview of Accessibility Feedback

The *Election Act* requires that the Chief Electoral Officer submit a report that includes a summary of all actions, services, feedback and responses related to accessibility. The *Election Act* also requires that, “after every election, the [Chief Electoral Officer] shall prepare a report on accessibility issues. The report is to be included in the election report or the next annual report.” (Sections 67.2(1) and 67.2 (2))

The remainder of Appendix B fulfills our legislative requirement to report on accessibility following each general election. It summarizes the:

- › Measures and initiatives that have been integrated to provide greater access and services to electors with disabilities [Section 67.2(1) (d)]
- › Customer service feedback collected during the electoral event, and our response to that feedback [Section 67.2(1) (a) (i)]
- › Summary of Returning Officers’ reports on accessibility measures [Section 67.2(1) (a) (ii)]

- › Results of public opinion research as it relates to accessibility or service to persons with disabilities [Section 67.2(1) (c)]
- › Recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer respecting barriers to accessibility and other accessibility issues [Section 67.2(1) (e)].

## **Measures and Initiatives that have been Integrated to Provide Greater Access and Services to Electors with Disabilities**

In an effort to reduce barriers to voting and make voting accessible for all, Elections Ontario has focused on voting for persons with disabilities. The AODA sets out accessibility requirements in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation, and design of public spaces.

To meet our mandate and legislative requirements, we released a new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in the lead up to the 2018 general election that serves as our strategy to remove and prevent accessibility barriers. In keeping with best practice and legislative requirements, we met with agencies and individuals representing people with disabilities to better understand and respond to the needs of persons with disabilities. For these consultations, we invited representatives from a broad range of services providers and individuals representing people with disabilities. The outcomes of these meetings helped us refine policies and practices for our field operations to ensure we met the needs of electors with disabilities. We were able to refine online web applications, such as e-Registration and the Voter Information Service, to ensure they met accessibility standards.

As a response to the feedback we received, we created a targeted handout on accessible voting options for support organizations to distribute to their clients. We also conducted outreach campaigns and delivered presentations at municipalities in Ontario about accessible voting options offered by Elections Ontario.

At voting locations, we ensured that the location met the accessibility requirements of the *Ontario Building Code* and the AODA. Service animals were allowed, and electors could bring family members, friends or support people, or ask election officials to help them vote. Election officials at the polls were trained to provide accessible customer service, and could even bring the ballot outside the poll to an elector. Electors were also able to apply at the returning office to transfer to another voting location that better met their accessibility needs.



Tools and services available at polling locations include magnifiers, a Braille template for the ballot, and assistive voting technology at returning offices. Electors could also arrange for registered sign language interpreters or intervenors at Elections Ontario's expense. For this election, electors were allowed to use their mobile phones as assistive devices to better align with their expectations and daily use of technology.

Below is a list that summarizes the devices, tools, services, training and employment measures implemented by Elections Ontario for the 2018 general election.

### **Communications and public education leading to election day included:**

- › **Alternative formats**—Elections Ontario provided general information on the election and voting process in a range of formats to ensure that all Ontarians could understand when, where and how to vote.
- › **TTY**—This audio service enables people with hearing loss to access information by telephone. During regular business hours, TTY is available at Elections Ontario headquarters. TTY was also available through Elections Ontario's public call centre during the election period.
- › **Plain language communications**—All communication materials, such as advertising and public education materials, were drafted in plain language to be accessible to all Ontarians.
- › **Voter information card (VIC)**—A VIC was sent to each elector on the voters list and provided information about when and where to vote.
- › **Radio advertising**—Election information was advertised on radio.
- › **Accessible Voting in Ontario handout**—This document was widely distributed during our meetings for the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Community partners in turn forwarded it to their users. The document provided information about when and where to vote, and the different voting options to ensure voting is an inclusive experience for all electors.
- › **Website**—Elections Ontario launched a new website in April 2015. The new website makes it simpler for our stakeholders to find the information they need. The redesign was conducted in collaboration with our stakeholders to ensure it is more user-friendly and compliant with AODA requirements. The website is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, and achieved an AA rating.
- › **E-Registration**—In the lead-up to the 2018 general election, Elections Ontario introduced the e-Registration tool to simplify voter registration. The new application allowed electors to confirm, update, add or remove their information on the voters list.

### **Training and staffing in support of accessibility included:**

- › **Customer service training**—A key challenge for Elections Ontario in the 2018 general election was the delivery of effective training to the 51,623 field employees who joined Elections Ontario to deliver the election. Elections Ontario trained front-line personnel, including poll officials, to ensure responsiveness to electors with disabilities. In addition to in-person training, we used our award-winning training video to inform poll officials and returning office staff on ways to better serve electors with disabilities. Each individual who was trained signed a certificate confirming that they completed their training and were prepared to deliver excellent customer service.
- › **Manuals for poll officials and in poll kits**—These materials included instructions on how to assist electors with disabilities and emphasized how to provide assistance to an elector with a disability at the voting location. There was also a section in each poll official manual called “Electors Who Require Assistance”. This section addressed how to assist individuals with voting, the use of interpreter or intervenor services, how to support electors with a variety of disabilities and how to use assistive devices.
- › **Employment**—Accommodations were provided to employees with disabilities throughout the employment cycle, including during the selection process, in compliance with the *Employment Standard Act* under AODA requirements.

### **Specialized voting services included:**

- › **Special ballot**—An elector can apply to vote by mail and then vote using a write-in special ballot. Electors can submit their application to vote by mail, email, courier or fax.
- › **Home visits**—An elector can request the assistance of a Special Ballot Officer to complete an application form and to cast a write-in special ballot at any place in the electoral district that the elector requests, provided that the elector:
  - would find it impossible or unreasonably difficult to personally go to the returning office
  - needs assistance because of a disability or an inability to read or write
- › **Hospital visits**—An eligible elector who is temporarily in an Ontario hospital during the three-day hospital program available during a general election may be visited by a special ballot team that can approve the elector’s application for a special ballot and accept their write-in special ballot.
- › **Certificate to Vote**—Electors with restricted mobility or other disabilities who can vote more conveniently at another voting location can apply for a transfer to another voting location at a returning office up to and including the day before election day. The elector is provided with a Certificate to Vote to present to the Deputy Returning Officer at the alternative voting location, together with their proof of identity.

- › **Homeless elector process**—To enable those electors without permanent addresses to vote, Elections Ontario provides a Certificate of Identity and Residence form. The form serves as proof of identity and residence for Ontarians who are homeless and wish to vote in an election. Use of this certificate has increased more than 500% from the 2014 general election.

### **Services, tools and technology at the polls:**

- › **Voting location accessibility standards**—Prior to the 2011 general election, Elections Ontario created the Site Accessibility Standards to help Returning Officers assess the accessibility of voting locations. The standards ensure that the requirements under the *Election Act* for an accessible voting location are consistently understood and uniformly defined across all electoral districts. These standards define core requirements for the selection of voting locations across the province. We conducted a full review of these standards before the 2018 general election to ensure they comply with existing legislation.
- › **Voting location online consultation**—To ensure voting locations serve electors properly, proposed voting locations were posted online for public consultation and feedback six months prior to the general election. We received feedback on 98 locations throughout the province, with 84% of the feedback approving of the proposed voting locations.
- › **Assistive devices at voting locations**—Assistive devices were provided at voting locations to help electors with disabilities vote independently and in secrecy. Devices include magnifiers, ballot templates that have raised numbers and cut-outs to assist electors with vision loss, pads for communicating with electors with hearing loss, and easy-grip pencils for individuals who have manual dexterity disabilities. Electors could also use their mobile phones at the polls for assistance purposes.
- › **Assistive voting technology**—This equipment was available in every returning office and satellite office before election day so that electors with disabilities were able to vote independently and verify their ballot. The equipment can process hand-marked paper ballots in addition to ballots marked by electors via integrated ballot-marking controls.
- › **Ballot font size**—The candidate's given name appeared on the ballot in 18-point font, the candidate's surname appeared in 24-point font, and the political party name or candidate's status as independent appeared in 14-point font.
- › **Feedback process**—If an elector wanted to provide either general feedback to Elections Ontario or specific feedback on a particular situation, each voting location, returning office and satellite office offered feedback forms that the elector could complete and put in the feedback box.

- › **Interpreters and intervenors**—Elections Ontario partnered with community agencies to book the services of sign language interpreters or intervenors when required. Elections Ontario covered the cost of the service when used at a returning office, satellite office or voting location.
- › **Moving the ballot box**—The ballot box could be moved by poll officials to facilitate voting.
- › **Notices of disruption**—Temporary disruptions to services at voting locations may interfere with the ability of electors to cast their ballots. Disruptions could include unscheduled or scheduled maintenance, repairs, construction, etc. When a temporary disruption occurs, Elections Ontario provides notice to the public. Notices were posted online and signage was posted at the affected location.
- › **Service animals**—Elections Ontario welcomes service animals that provide assistance to electors with disabilities. Electors with disabilities were permitted to keep their service animals with them while in Elections Ontario premises, including voting locations, and while accessing election services.
- › **Voting assistance from a friend or support person**—An elector who required the assistance of another individual to vote may be accompanied by a friend or support person to the voting screen. This person could mark the ballot for the elector who requires assistance after fulfilling various requirements under the *Election Act*, such as making a declaration to maintain the secrecy of the vote.

## Customer Service Feedback

During the 2018 election period, Elections Ontario received 31,008 customer service feedback forms, 707 of which were related to accessibility issues or service.

Customer service feedback forms were available to electors at voting locations, satellite offices and returning offices across the province. These forms provided electors with the opportunity to communicate their views or sentiments on customer service and voting experiences. Returning Officers and dedicated staff at headquarters responded to all electors who asked for follow-ups on their comments or complaints. This represented 3,595 responses, including 280 on accessibility issues.

Elections Ontario is committed to providing high-quality customer service. Enabling the public to provide feedback on the services they received from Elections Ontario is valuable as the feedback is a measurement of the quality of services provided. Overall, electors were satisfied with customer service levels with 78% agreeing that ‘customer service needs were met and responded to appropriately’.

As it pertains to accessibility issues, the most common categories of feedback were voting locations and physical barriers at the polls (64%) and materials/tools available (11%). This feedback will inform discussions about improving policies and processes. Below are some examples of feedback received through customer feedback forms:

“I’m confined to a wheelchair and they were very helpful and cordial. I loved the space - it was very accessible - and I was impressed by the technology.”

“My mother is old and has limited mobility. Voting staff allowed her to sit at the entrance and brought her a voting screen. Very helpful!”

“No automatic door, not enough accessible parking, no clipboard to mark ballots on.”

“Not an accessible location for people with disability and mobility issues. No automatic door and the lay out required too much walking for receiving ballot and voting.”

# Summary of Returning Officers' Reports on Accessibility Measures

The *Election Act* requires that the Chief Electoral Officer submit a report after each election that includes a summary of every report made by Returning Officers in respect to the accessibility measures that were deployed for persons with disabilities in their electoral districts:

55.1 (1) Within three months after election day in the election, every Returning Officer for an electoral district shall prepare a report on the measures that the officer has taken to provide accessibility for electors with disabilities in the district and shall submit the report to the Chief Electoral Officer. 2001, c. 32, s. 24 (2); 2007, c. 15, s. 40 (1).

## **Availability to the public**

(2) The Chief Electoral Officer shall make the report available to the public. 2001, c. 32, s. 24 (2); 2007, c. 15, s. 40 (1).

## **Returning Officers were asked to report on 10 aspects of election accessibility:**

- > Accessibility training
- > Accessible materials
- > Voting by special ballot
- > Other accessible voting options
- > Employment of persons with disabilities
- > Route of travel at each voting location
- > Accessible voting locations
- > Notices of disruption
- > Other accessibility measures
- > Customer service feedback.

## **Election official accessibility training**

Election officials include approximately 3,500 returning office staff, including Special Ballot Officers, who work for the entire election calendar, and 51,000 election officials who worked at advance polls and on election day. All staff were trained and certified to deliver services in an accessible manner, and to support electors with disabilities, depending on their needs and specific requests for assistance.

## **Accessible materials**

All returning offices were provided with materials to facilitate voting by persons with disabilities, including:

- Braille versions of general information brochures that were mailed to homes across Ontario
- Documents in various formats, available on request from Elections Ontario
- Assistive voting devices such as magnifier sheets, easy-grip pencils and ballot templates
- High-contrast directional arrows to direct electors to accessible pathways and entrances at the voting locations
- Customer service feedback kits
- Notice of Disruption forms.

## **Voting by special ballot**

During this election, 150,036 ballots were cast through the special ballot program. Of those, 9,192 were cast using the special ballot home and hospital visit programs.

### ***Services provided by Special Ballot Officers***

Special Ballot Officers provided a range of services, as directed by the elector, including helping fill out forms and ballots in full, finding and retrieving identification documents, reading instructions or candidate names aloud, providing assistive voting devices such as magnifiers or ballot templates, or setting up stable writing areas. Returning officers also built on grassroots promotion of the special ballot options. Feedback provided by Returning Officers on these services includes:

“The configuration of the returning office was adjusted to ensure those with disabilities were able to access the voting area for special ballots.”

“Worked with community groups and set appointment time for electors to come to returning office to vote by special ballot.”

“At returning office advance poll, we encouraged the electors who had difficulty walking to utilize special ballot services to accommodate their needs.”

“I hired extra information assistants to ensure all locations were accessible. Our special ballot team posted posters in buildings with electors with disabilities advertising special ballot home visits. Our recruitment team actively recruited poll officials who were conversant in American Sign Language.”

## **Other accessible voting options**

### ***Assistive voting technology (AVT)***

Assistive voting technology uses audio cues and three controller options to enable electors with disabilities who had difficulties marking ballots by hand to vote independently and privately. A total of 80 votes were cast using AVT, compared to 95 votes during the 2014 general election. This is a decrease in use of 16% from 2014.

### ***Transfer to a more accessible voting location***

Ten electors requested and were transferred to alternate voting locations within their electoral districts to accommodate restricted mobility and familiarity with a particular facility.

### ***Reimbursement of sign language interpreters or intervenors for electors***

Elections Ontario worked with the Canadian Hearing Society and the DeafBlind Community Services to make interpreters and intervenors available to electors. If an elector required a sign language interpreter or an intervenor during the election, Elections Ontario reimbursed the costs associated with these services. Eighteen electors used this service.

## **Employment of persons with disabilities**

More than 90% of all ROs employed persons with disabilities to work as poll officials; more than half reported employing persons with disabilities within their key office staff. Employees with disabilities were accommodated in a variety of ways to ensure they could contribute and have a meaningful work experience:

“Some poll officials that needed the assistance of walkers were hired.”

“Over 50% of returning office staff have a visible or invisible disability.”

## **Accessible voting locations**

The *Election Act* requires that all voting locations be accessible to persons with disabilities. Elections Ontario accomplishes this goal by applying its Site Accessibility Standards. These standards are used to assess the accessibility of a given location based on quantitative and qualitative criteria. Locations that did not already meet the standards were remediated using various tools. Remediation included the employment of additional information assistants to direct electors to accessible pathways, or to help electors on ramps or in elevators. There were 2,497 information assistants for accessibility in 2018. Directional signage was used to show an alternate or accessible pathways (2,359 directional signs were posted), and parking cones were used to define accessible parking spaces (7,580 cones were used throughout Ontario). Mats and beveled threshold spacers were used to smooth out thresholds (149 ramps and 555 beveled thresholds).



Of the 8,295 voting locations used, all were measured against our Site Accessibility Standards. Those sites that required remediated were identified. In total 40% were remediated to ensure they were accessible. This is a significant improvement over the 2014 general election. This improvement is due in part to our staff's greater familiarity with accessibility standards. It also reflects the efforts of all Ontario communities to renovate and build infrastructure to meet advancing accessibility standards.

### **Notices of disruption**

Returning Officers posted 20 notices of disruption throughout the election calendar, 13 of which were posted on election day. Of the 13 disruptions, nine required voting hour extensions as they impacted the ability of electors to vote.

The majority of disruptions in service were related to malfunctioning elevators, intermittent power outages or fire alarms. Here are some examples of feedback provided by Returning Officers in various locations:

“School had a fire alarm go off 25 minutes into the morning. The school was evacuated by poll officials. A Notice of Disruption was issued and the poll remained open late.”

“The elevator broke down. In order to transition everything to the ground level, the poll was closed for 20 minutes.”

“A number of schools in Orillia were placed in a “Lock and Hold” by the Ontario Provincial Police during the afternoon of election day. Two of the locations locked down, were polling stations. Poll officials working in the schools immediately posted Notices of Disruption.”

### **Other accessibility measures**

Poll officials and returning office staff ensured the accessibility of voting services through other measures. These included providing documents or information in accessible formats, reading aloud the candidates' names on ballots, promoting special ballot home or hospital visits to eligible community members, hiring and training additional staff to accommodate electors' needs, and working with stakeholder groups. Here are some examples of feedback provided:

“In a few sites, additional information assistants were placed to provide additional help in accessing lifts.”

“We added extra information assistants in some locations, especially schools to assist electors to find the voting room easier. Some locations such as the recreation centres had wheelchairs available if needed, which were used at the campus ice centre as the route from the parking area to voting poll was too long for some electors.”

“At the returning office, we rented a ramp that could be located near the front door, as the concrete ramp already in place was further away from the building. We also purchased reflective tape to string between the cones to delineate parking. The cones were easily seen by someone driving a large vehicle. The tape made the cones somewhat more visible. Information assistants were stationed at all locations that did not have automatic door openers.”

“A couple of the polls were able to serve electors from their cars, take their VIC cards, find them on the lists, issue them ballots and bring to the cars.”

## **Results of Public Opinion Research as it Relates to Accessibility or Service to Persons with Disabilities**

Following each general election, Elections Ontario commissions research to measure the opinions and experiences of electors. Elections Ontario procured Forum Research to conduct a public opinion polling project to determine how electors and other stakeholders felt about their experiences with electoral processes, initiatives and services during the 2018 general election.

### **Overall impressions of the voting experience**

The majority of electors indicated good experiences with the overall voting process, and the percentage of electors that indicated the election was easier than in 2014 increased by 16 percentage points. There were positive results in terms of the implementation of technology in the polls, with 95% of electors indicated that the voting process with the new technology was easy. Eighty-nine per cent of electors with disabilities indicated they felt comfortable with the new technology.

### **Barriers to voting**

There was no significant change in the number of electors who indicated they experienced a problem or barrier between the 2014 and 2018 general elections, with only 7% of electors indicating they experienced a barrier. The top problem or barrier identified by electors in the 2018 general election was inefficient or poorly trained staff (29%), an increase of 22 percentage points from 2014. The next most commonly identified barrier was not receiving a voter information card, with 20% of electors identifying this as the top barrier. Electors with disabilities rated poorly-trained staff as the top barrier to voting.

A majority of electors that identified as having a visual impairment (66%) and a majority of electors that identified as having a physical impairment (63%) indicated that the assistance Elections Ontario provided at the poll could present a barrier to voting in future elections.

## **Awareness of services**

In our ongoing commitment to remove voting barriers, we provide several alternative voting methods to make the electoral process more accessible. Alternative voting methods can be leveraged by all Ontarians, and they play a critical role in enfranchising electors who have difficulty going to the polls on election day.

As part of our commitment to ensuring all Ontarians have the right to vote, we offer multiple options for a ballot throughout the election calendar. This includes the special ballot program which enables electors to vote in person at their returning office, by mail, or through home or hospital visit programs.

- A majority of electors indicated they were not familiar with hospital visits and home visits. This includes electors with disabilities, older electors, Indigenous electors and electors in shelters.
- Fifty-eight per cent of Indigenous electors were aware of the special ballot options.
- Electors in shelters were twice as likely to have little or no knowledge that electors can vote throughout the Writ period (22%) compared to general electors (45%)
- A majority of electors with disabilities had little or no knowledge of home (73.1%) or hospital visits (62.8%) as alternative voting methods.

In our efforts to reduce barriers to voting, we will continue to work with our stakeholders to improve awareness, augment elector experience and publicize the different methods Ontarians can use to cast their ballots.

# Chief Electoral Officer's Recommendations

We are confident that we improved accessibility services for the 2018 general election and built on the measures taken following the 2014 general election. We will continue to build on our past successes and strengths to improve Ontario's provincial electoral process to make voting easier.

While these initiatives were a success due to our partnerships with community agencies and individuals representing people with disabilities, there are still areas for improvement. There were low levels of awareness regarding our programs and tools. Our communication tactics will need to be enhanced to ensure those electors who face barriers to voting get the appropriate information in a timely fashion. We also heard concerns during the election regarding the service electors received from staff when they arrived at voting locations. We will need to review our training tools to ensure staff are adequately trained to help electors with disabilities in a respectful manner.

Moving forward, we are committed to ensuring electors are aware of the resources available to them to cast their ballot and that tools, devices and services meet electors' expectations and allow them to vote independently and privately based on the core principles and guidelines we established. We will use our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and our Strategic Plan as road maps to further remove barriers as we serve electors with disabilities.

# Appendix C

## Candidates and Parties in the 2018 General Election

Table 1: Summary of the number of candidates in the 2014 and 2018 general elections.

Political Party	2014	2018
Canadian Economic Party	N/A	2
Canadians' Choice Party	4	5
Communist Party of Canada (Ontario)	11	12
Consensus Ontario	N/A	10
Cultural Action Party	N/A	3
Equal Parenting Party	2	0
Family Coalition Party	6	0
Freedom Party of Ontario	42	14
Go Vegan	5	2
Green Party of Ontario	107	124
Independent	14	27
Multicultural Party of Ontario	N/A	2
New Democratic Party of Ontario	107	124
None of the Above Direct Democracy Party	8	42
Northern Ontario Party	3	10
Ontario Alliance	N/A	3
Ontario Liberal Party	107	124
Ontario Libertarian Party	73	117
Ontario Moderate Party	2	16
Ontario Party	N/A	5
Ontario Provincial Confederation of Regions Party	2	2
Ontario Social Reform Party	N/A	2
Other candidates without party affiliation on the ballot	N/A	5
Party for People with Special Needs	3	5
Party of Objective Truth	N/A	2
Pauper Party of Ontario	3	2
Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario	107	124
Socialist Party of Ontario	2	0
Stop Climate Change	N/A	2
Stop the New Sex-Ed Agenda	N/A	3
The New People's Choice Party of Ontario	N/A	3
The Peoples Political Party	5	6
Trillium Party of Ontario	2	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>823</b>

# Appendix D

## Cost Per Elector

Figure 1: Summary of the cost-per-elector for general elections in Canada

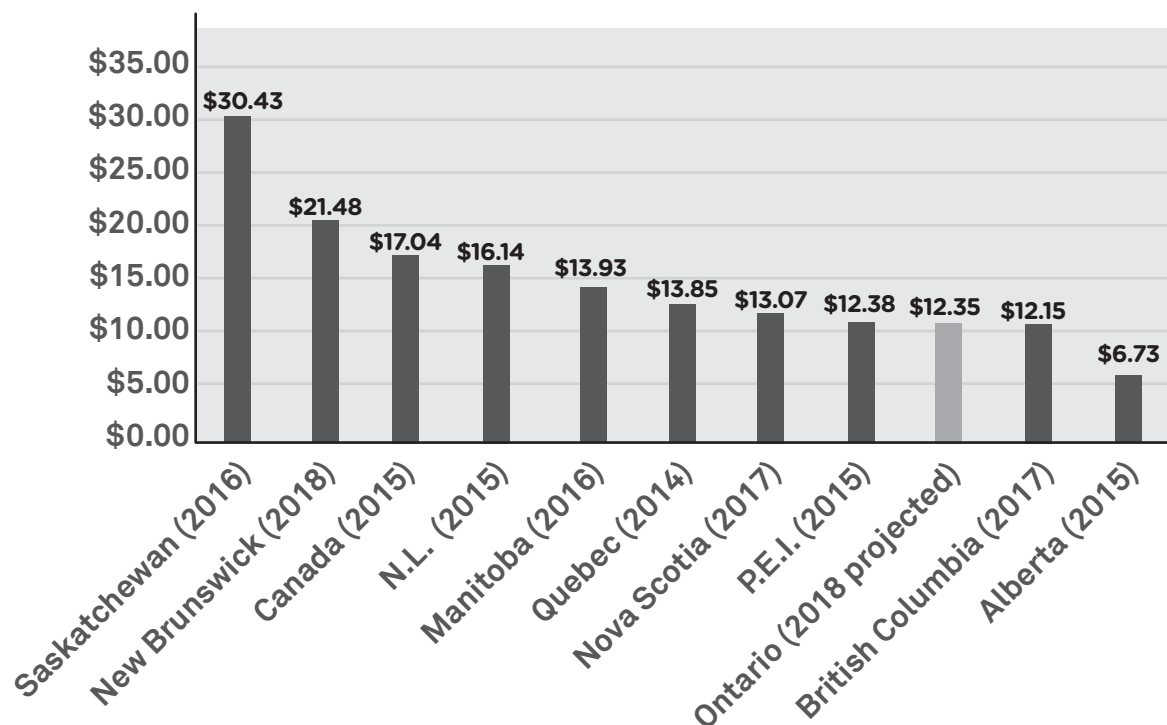


Table 1: Summary of the number of electors per jurisdiction in Canada

Number of Electors Per Jurisdiction	
Canada	25,939,742
<b>Ontario</b>	<b>10,219,736</b>
Quebec	6,012,440
British Columbia	3,156,991
Alberta	2,821,518
Manitoba	772,877
Saskatchewan	764,264
Nova Scotia	756,113
New Brunswick	574,997
Newfoundland and Labrador	363,207
Prince Edward Island	100,392

# Appendix E

## Special Ballot Program

Table 1: Summary of the special ballot program for the 2018 general election

<b>Special Ballot Kits</b>		
The Chief Electoral Officer (Elections Ontario headquarters)	Mailed	15,202
	Returned	12,616
Returning offices	Mailed	358
	Returned	151
<b>Special Ballot Counts</b>		
Number of electors who voted by special ballot		148,253
Declined special ballots		385
Unmarked special ballots		340
Total rejected special ballots		1,058
Total special ballot votes		150,036
<b>Special Ballot Counts</b>		
Report Under the <i>Election Act</i> , Subsection 45.11		
Paragraph (a) Elector information on envelope does not correspond to application		10
Paragraph (b) Declaration not signed by elector		5
Paragraph (c) Electoral district cannot be determined		3
Paragraph (d) Special ballots received after 6:00 P.M. on polling day		852
Paragraph (e) Election postponed (deceased candidate)		0



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TTY 1.888.292.2312

[info@elections.on.ca](mailto:info@elections.on.ca)

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