



2018 Provincial Election

Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Priorities Guide

The provincial election will take place on June 7, 2018. The next elected provincial government will have a direct impact on the health and well-being of seniors and persons with disabilities in Ontario. You have an important role to help shape the debate on the issues that matter to seniors and persons with disabilities.

The Council on Aging of Ottawa (COA) has identified three key priorities to help you get involved in this election:

1. Health
2. Housing
3. Transportation

These priorities are based on a survey sent to seniors and persons with disabilities through our networks between April 16 and May 7.

396 individuals completed the survey.

- 53% are between 65 and 74 years of age; 26% are 75 – 84; 17% are under 65; and 4% are over 85
- 57% live with their spouse / partner; 32% live alone; 6% with other family members
- 55% live in the urban centre; 39% in suburban communities; 5% in rural areas
- 72% felt it is important / very important to have a provincial Minister for Seniors Affairs

We also shared and confirmed the priorities with COA Action Committees. For more information, go to: <https://coaottawa.ca/committees/>.

What are the priorities?

Based on the survey results, the top five provincial priorities for seniors in Ottawa are:

1. Health and Wellness
2. Housing
3. Programs and Services
Financial Assistance
4. Families and Caregivers
5. Transportation and Driving

How to use this Guide

This guide provides you with background information for easy reference and sample questions you may wish to ask political candidates during the election. While it is not a full list of the priority issues of seniors and persons with disabilities, it will allow you to speak with confidence about the issues that matter to you during this election.

You know best! You know and can talk about the issues that matters to seniors and persons with disabilities in your community.



Key Statistics: Ottawa's Growing, Changing, and Aging Population^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9}

- Seniors (65 years and older) are the fastest growing age group in Canada. In 2016, there were 144,000 seniors in Ottawa making Ottawa slightly younger than the rest of Ontario (15% of the Ottawa's total population compared to 16% in Ontario and 17% in Canada)
- In the next 20 years, the senior population is projected to increase by 80% and will account for 21% of Ottawa's total population. In comparison, 25% of Ontario's population will be 65 years or older, almost doubling from 3 million seniors in 2016 to 4.6 million seniors in the next 20 years
- Ottawa's older population is becoming increasingly diverse. Close to one third of Ottawa's older population are immigrants with most having been in Canada for over 35 years. In 2016, 14% of Ottawa seniors identified as a member of a visible minority group including Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab, and Southeast Asian
- The number of visible minority seniors (65+) in Ontario increased by 44% between 2011 and 2016, compared to a 16% increase among non-visible minority seniors
- In the next 20 years, 28% of Ottawa's seniors will be members of one of the ten largest visible minority groups, up from 16% in 2016
- As well, 17% of seniors had French as a first language, compared to 15% of the rest of the population in Ottawa
- Almost 50% of seniors in Ottawa are living with a disability; 85% of women and 77% of men over 65 have at least one chronic condition
- In terms of living arrangements for older Ontarians, 93% are living in private households. Most (63%) of these live with a partner or spouse, 24% live alone, 11% live with other relatives, and 2% live with non-relatives
- 9% of seniors (12,455) in Ottawa live in a low-income household (5% of couples and 22% of seniors living alone) and are more likely to report fair or poor health
- In 2011, 18% of seniors in Ottawa had after-tax income between \$20,000 and \$29,999, what some experts say is "one unexpected expense away from falling into poverty"
- Voters aged 65 to 74 are more likely to vote than all age groups with a 79% turnout rate in the 2015 federal election

¹ Statistics Canada, 2017, *Census 2016*. www12.statcan.gc.ca/census

² City of Ottawa, 2016, *Growth Projections for Ottawa: Prospects for Population, Housing, Employment and Land, 2014-2036*, <http://app05.ottawa.ca/2014-2036-growth-projections-ottawa>

³ Government of Ontario, 2017, *Aging with Confidence: Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors*, www.ontario.ca/aging-confidence-ontario-action-plan-seniors

⁴ Government of Ontario, 2017, *Ontario Population Projections Update 2016–2041*, www.fin.gov.on.ca/demographics/projections/

⁵ The Council on Aging of Ottawa (COA), 2017, *How Age Friendly is Ottawa? An Evaluation Framework to Measure the Age-Friendliness of Ottawa*, <http://coaottawa.ca/Age-Friendly-Ottawa-Evaluation-Framework-PUBLIC-FINAL-2017-03.pdf>

⁶ Ottawa Public Health. (2014). *State of Ottawa's Health, 2014*, http://documents.ottawa.ca/StateOfHealth2014_en.pdf

⁷ Government of Ontario, 2017, *Income Security: A Roadmap for Change*, www.ontario.ca/page/income-security-roadmap-change

⁸ United Way Ottawa, 2017, *A Profile of Vulnerable Seniors in the Ottawa Region*, <https://www.unitedwayottawa.ca/seniors/>

⁹ Elections Canada, 2016, *Voter Turnout by Age Group*, www.elections.ca/voter-turnout-age

Issue #1:

Health and Well-being of Seniors^{10,11,12}



- Most seniors (91%) felt they could access health care, other than home care services, when they needed it. Access to community support and health services can help seniors age at home
- Seniors with more than one health condition are more likely to see their doctor and take more medication
- Family caregivers also step in to care for aging and ailing family members and friends. As many as 60% of seniors care for family members and friends. Home care and community support services can play a key role in meeting the growing care needs of seniors living in the community
- In Canada, 20% of seniors fall each year, with seniors 80+ falling more often (27%); many injured enough to make it hard to do things they normally do
- For seniors, falls most often happen in the home. Seniors slip, trip, stumble or fall from beds, stairs, chairs, or other furniture. Snow and ice can lead to many weather-related falls among seniors, too. Many seniors do not recover from falls. Falls can affect a senior's health, independence, and sense of safety
- Respect for and inclusion of seniors is key to an age-friendly community. A strong sense of belonging is linked to better health and well-being in seniors
- Most seniors (69%) have a very strong or strong sense of belonging to their community
- About 8% of seniors experience mistreatment in Canada. Mistreatment can include abuse and neglect; actions and/or behaviours, or lack of actions and/or behaviours that cause harm or risk of harm within a trusting relationship. Emotional abuse is the most common (3% of seniors experiencing it daily). Seniors are more likely to be abused by family members and are less likely to report it to police than other age groups
- There are long wait times (average 400 days) and no minimum hours of care in Ontario's long-term care homes. In 2016, Ottawa's long-term care homes provide fewer than the provincial average of 3.5 hours of care per resident. In March 2018, the COA advocated for four hours of daily nursing and personal support services for each resident

¹⁰ COA, 2017, *How Age Friendly is Ottawa? An Evaluation Framework to Measure the Age-Friendliness of Ottawa*

¹¹ Payne, Elizabeth, December 2017, The biggest problem in long-term care may point to low staff levels, <http://ottawacitizen.com/the-biggest-problem-in-ltc-many-point-to-low-staff-levels>

¹² Canadian Institute of Health Information, 2011, *Health Care in Canada, 2011: A Focus on Seniors and Aging*, https://secure.cihi.ca/HCIC_2011_seniors_report_en.pdf

Election Survey Results: Top 5 Health Priorities

The top health priorities ranked by survey respondents were:

1. Reduced wait times
2. Home and community care
3. Staying active
and... Long term care
4. Exercises and falls
and... Pharmacare

The top five barriers to access health and wellness services included:

1. Financial limitations
2. Services not accessible or available
3. Lack of knowledge of the health care system
4. Access to transportation
5. Lack of family support

Sample Questions to Ask Candidates

- If elected, is your Party committed to ensuring the health and well-being of seniors and persons with disabilities are priorities?
- Falls and abuse are a major public health issue for seniors. What will you do to protect seniors and reduce the negative outcomes related to these issues?
- How will your Party ensure that right amount of funding is given to home and community care to enable older adults and those living with disabilities and other health conditions to remain in the community?
- How will your party overcome the challenges to recruit, train, and keep people (doctors, nurses, personal support workers, social workers, etc.) working in the health care system?
- How will your party support caregivers to provide flexible respite options and reduce the out-of-pocket expenses?
- How will your party strengthen the quality and availability of long term care for those seniors who need it? When will you achieve this? How much will this cost?
- As the province builds new capacity, what can be done to ensure it is building the long-term care homes that will meet the social and medical needs not just for today, but for tomorrow's long-term care residents? What can be done to ensure more beds for people who need specialized care; for example, residents with dementia or who need daily dialysis?
- Currently there are no minimum hours of care in long-term care. What is your party's position on minimum hours of care? What will your party do increase the number of hours of direct, hands on care by nurses and personal support workers in long-term care?
- What can be done to ensure affordability for long-term care homes to remain and expand in place where land costs are high?
- How will your party improve access to end-of-life care for Ontarians across the province?
- Ontario and Ottawa are culturally diverse. How will you ensure more culturally-appropriate care?

Issue #2:

Affordable & Accessible Housing^{13,14,15,16,17,18,19}

- In 2011, 92% of seniors lived in their own homes in Ottawa; of which 26% were renters
- There were 156,000 households with a maintainer aged 55 and over. This accounted for 42% of all Ottawa households
- While most seniors want to live in their own homes, sometimes their housing does not meet their needs. Suitable housing for seniors is affordable, in good repair, and able to meet changing needs
- Affordable housing is less than 30% of your income. Housing costs include mortgage/rent, hydro, heating, water, property taxes, and fees. In Ottawa, 20% of seniors spent more than 30% of their income on housing; higher than the national average (14%). Senior renters are more likely to spend 30% or more of their income on housing
- Ontario continues to face a critical shortage in affordable housing affected by aging social infrastructure that is expensive to retrofit, current housing stock, fewer affordable housing units being built than in earlier decades, and barriers for some not-for-profit



organizations to access capital to buy land to build affordable housing units

- According to the Ontario Auditor General approximately 54,000 senior households (or 37% of wait list) were waiting for social housing in Ontario in 2016
- In Ottawa, approximately 4,368 senior households are on the wait list for social housing²⁰ and an additional 2,700 seniors are waiting for long term care (up from 2,000 five years ago).²¹ This accounts for 5% of the senior population in Ottawa waiting for alternate housing options
- In 2016, the average monthly cost of a private one bedroom or bachelor unit in a seniors' residence that includes at least one meal per day was \$2,210 across Canada. Ontario has the highest average rent at \$2,924. For a unit offering heavy care services the rent was \$3,806; in Ontario it is \$4,847

¹³ Statistics Canada, 2017, *Census 2016*, www.statcan.gc.ca/census

¹⁴ COA, 2017, *How Age Friendly is Ottawa? An Evaluation Framework to Measure the Age-Friendliness of Ottawa*

¹⁵ The Council on Aging of Ottawa, 2016, *Seniors Housing Report*, <https://coaottawa.ca/committees/housing/>

¹⁶ Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017, *2017 Annual Report*, www.auditor.on.ca/annualreports/ar2017.html

¹⁷ United Way Ottawa, 2017, *A Profile of Vulnerable Seniors in the Ottawa Region*, www.unitedwayottawa.ca/seniors/

¹⁸ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), 2017, *Seniors' Housing Report: Canada Highlights*, www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/seniors-housing-canada-2016

¹⁹ CMHC, 2016, *Let's Talk Housing – Improving Housing Options for an Aging Population*, www.letstalkhousing.ca/nhs-improving-housing-aging-population.pdf

²⁰ The Age-Friendly Housing Committee continues to monitor this wait list for social housing. Seniors make up the largest group on the wait list in Ottawa at 43% in comparison to singles/couples (34%) and families (23%)

²¹ The Long-Term Care Sub-Committee was recently formed to address the growing needs for long-term care in Ottawa

Election Survey Results: Housing Priorities, now and in the future

When asked, 56% survey respondents reported they can age where they want to live. Another 30% reported they were not sure. When asked what they were thinking about their housing plans over the next two years:

- 38% have not thought about this
- Another 19% were thinking about accessing community services to allow them to stay in their own homes
- 16% plan to move to a smaller home
- 11% were planning to sell their home to buy a condo

- 15% were thinking of moving to an adult lifestyle community
- 15% were thinking about renovating their own home so they could stay longer

While most commented it did not apply to them, the top three reported barriers to meeting their housing needs, now and into the future were:

- financial limitations
- lack of knowledge of housing options
- lack of knowledge of community services available to help them to live independently

Sample Questions to Ask Candidates

- What is your Party's position on affordable and accessible housing for seniors and persons with disabilities?
- How will your Party work with other levels of government (local and federal) to implement and build on the [National Housing Strategy](#) to ensure the housing needs of seniors and persons with disabilities are considered?
- Many older people live on a fixed income and housing costs are increasing for them. With more than 4,300 senior households on the wait list for social housing, how will you make seniors' housing more affordable and accessible?
- If elected, how many new housing units will your party commit to build in the next five years? What is the amount your party is willing to invest in housing in Ottawa?
- There are existing programs, such as [Ontario Renovates](#), [Ontario Senior Homeowners' Property Tax Grant](#), [Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit](#), and [Ontario Electricity Support Program](#) that many seniors use. If elected, what changes are you proposing to these programs?
- Many seniors are not thinking about their future housing options. How will your party support seniors in planning for their future housing needs, whether that be programs to renovate their homes, find other housing options, or reduce financial barriers?
- There are some exciting housing projects in Ottawa including the [Carlington Community Hub](#) with 40 new seniors' units being built that are accessible and affordable. What will your party do to encourage the development of more of these types of accessible and affordable housing units for seniors?

Issue #3:

Transportation and Mobility^{22,23}

- Since 2014, drivers 80+ must renew their license through the Ministry of Transportation. To receive your renewed license, drivers must take a vision test, do a driver record review, attend a group education session, and complete two screening assignments. If necessary, they may also have to take a road test
- While most seniors use their own cars, they are also passengers in other people's cars, such as family, taxis/accompaniment services, or volunteer rides for medical appointments through community support agencies
- To support transit choices for seniors, some municipalities, like Ottawa, offer a seniors' discounted bus pass and/or free bus service for seniors on certain days. Yet, less than a quarter of seniors (23%) used public transit despite living close to a bus stop
- In 2012, 11% of people involved in a car crash in Ottawa were senior pedestrians. Senior pedestrians are at greater risk for injuries and death when involved in car crashes. Most pedestrians killed at intersections were 65 or older in Canada (63%). Senior walkers were more likely to go to hospitals, stay longer and/or die in hospital after being injured



Election Survey Results: Transportation

Top 5 transportation issues were:

- Senior' License Renewal at 80 Program
- Access to public and accessible transportation
- Funding for community transportation services
- Accessible parking permits
- Older driver training

While many answered not applicable, the main barriers to transportation were:

- lack of knowledge of available services
- financial limitations
- lack of family support
- no available or accessible services
- lack of driver confidence

Sample Questions to Ask Candidates

- When driving is not longer an option, what will you do to ensure seniors have access other forms of transportation to stay active and socially engaged?
- How will your Party invest in the community support sector to provide more volunteer transportation for non-urgent medical appointments to a growing number of seniors and persons with disabilities?
- What will your Party do to encourage more older adults to use public transportation?
- What will your party do to support the Vision Zero goal to reach zero fatalities and injuries to pedestrians and cyclists by 2020?

²² Statistics Canada, 2017, *Census 2016*, www.statcan.gc.ca/census

²³ COA, 2017, *How Age Friendly is Ottawa? An Evaluation Framework to Measure the Age-Friendliness of Ottawa*

Get Involved!

As an older adult and/or person with a disability, getting involved in the 2018 Provincial Election has never been easier! Your voice matters! A simple way to take part is to **VOTE!**

Elections Ontario wants you to register to vote! Check out www.elections.on.ca for more information on how and where to vote.

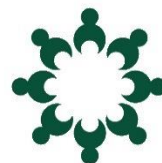
Before the election you may wish to:

- Review the political platforms of registered parties in Ontario. A list of the parties with links can be found at Elections Ontario.
- Get familiar with the candidates in your electoral district. A list of candidates in each district is available on the Elections Ontario website through their Candidate Search tool starting May 9, 2018
- Request a meeting with local candidates to discuss your issues of concern
- Write a formal letter or email to each of your local candidates and ask for their position on one or two issues of concern
- Submit a letter to the editor. Brief reactions to recent news items will have a better chance of being published
- Attend an All Candidates meeting in your electoral district. Watch your local media for information or ask your local candidate for the schedule of events
- While at an All Candidates meeting, ask candidates questions from the **COA's 2018 Provincial Election Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Priorities Guide**
- Make sure you **VOTE** on **June 7, 2018!**



For more information

The Council
on Aging
of Ottawa



Le Conseil sur
le vieillissement
d'Ottawa

www.coaottawa.ca

OUR VISION: Respected, informed and engaged seniors living in an age-friendly city

OUR MISSION: The Council on Aging of Ottawa serves as a leading community voice in both official languages for Ottawa's seniors.

Our aim is to help Ottawa become more age-friendly by identifying and addressing issues and services that impact the lives of seniors.