



2021 Federal Election Guide

Priorities for Older Adults

September 20 will be the day Canadians go to the polls in the next federal election. For older adults, voting is a way to show support for what matters to them. In fact, voters aged **65 to 74 are more likely to vote** than other age groups, with a 79% turnout rate in the 2019 federal election.

The Council on Aging of Ottawa has identified four key election priorities for older adults in Canada:

1. **Improve** the Health of and Access to Care for Older Adults and their Caregivers
2. **Provide** More Affordable, Accessible and Appropriate Housing for Older Adults
3. **Protect** the Financial Well-Being of Older Adults
4. **Develop** Federal Leadership with Older Adults

How to use this Guide

This guide provides you with background information as well as sample questions to ask political candidates leading up to the election. While it is not all the priority issues of older adults, it will help you to think about the issues that matter in your life and of other older adults.

Before the election:

1. **Review** the [political platforms of registered parties](#). **Get familiar** with the [candidates](#) in your electoral district (riding) by use your postal code to search.
2. **Attend a Virtual Information Sessions with Candidates** hosted by The Council on Aging of Ottawa, the National Association of Federal Retirees Ottawa Branch, and Ottawa Chapter of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) with registered candidates who are participating in the upcoming federal election between **September 9 and 15**. Click on riding below to register.

[Carleton](#)

[Orléans](#)

[Ottawa West–Nepean](#)

[Kanata–Carleton](#)

[Ottawa Centre](#)

[Ottawa–Vanier](#)

[Nepean](#)

[Ottawa South](#)

3. **Vote!** Your voice matters. Go to www.elections.ca for more information on [ways to vote](#) and the [COVID-19 health and safety measures](#).

1. Improving Health of and Access to Care for Older Adults

Equity and Diversity	Questions to ask candidates
<p>Canada’s aging population is diverse. Many older adults have unique healthcare needs due to language, culture, gender, geography (rural and remote), income, health status, and disability.</p>	<p>How will your party commit to equitable access to health promotion, health protection, and health care for older adults and their caregivers in diverse communities?</p>
Long-Term Care	Questions to ask candidates
<p>In the first four months of 2020, COVID-19 was a leading cause of death, the majority were residents in long-term care homes.</p> <p>Pre-existing and systemic vulnerabilities in long-term care homes as well as ageist values and attitudes towards seniors’ care have been exposed by this pandemic. This has happened despite extensive recommendations by experts, over many decades, for improvements in LTC, such the 2021 Ontario’s LTC COVID-19 Commission Report.</p>	<p>Will you implement national standards of care in long-term care?</p> <p>Will you provide increased funding to the provinces and territories for long-term care that is tied to national standards and proven models of care and to the building of small home-like long-term care homes in the community?</p>
Access to Home and Community Care	Questions to ask candidates
<p>Home care and community support services play a key role in meeting the growing care needs of older adults and in helping older adults remain in the community and avoid moving into long-term care homes. While home and community care are managed by the Provinces and Territories, the federal government can help to improve and expand home and community care services through funding, monitoring and regulation mechanisms.</p>	<p>If elected, how will you improve and expand home and community care services that allow older people to remain in the community and out of long-term care?</p>
Families and Caregivers	Questions to ask candidates
<p>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.</p>	<p>How will your party support caregivers and families who support older adults in their homes and community?</p>

2. Provide More Affordable, Accessible and Appropriate Housing for Older Adults

Available Housing for Older Adults	Questions to ask candidates
<p>42% of all households in Ottawa are maintained by someone aged 55 and over.</p> <p>Age-friendly housing is affordable, accessible, appropriate, and available. The availability of age-friendly housing units has not kept pace with the growth of our aging population. To correct this in Ottawa, means targeting 17% of new units right now and moving to 25% by 2036. Age-friendly housing benefits all ages, not just older adults.</p>	<p>How will you increase the availability of housing for older adults that is affordable, accessible, and appropriate?</p> <p>If elected, what will you do to address the use of federal lands, buildings, and properties, (such as LeBreton Flats and Tunney’s Pasture) to meet the housing needs of older adults and other vulnerable populations in Ottawa?</p>
Housing Affordability Crisis	Questions to ask candidates
<p>Canada faces a critical shortage in affordable housing (costing less than 30% of your income). Current senior housing options are financially difficult for, and out-of-reach of many older adults. Twenty-five percent (25%) of older Ottawans (65+) are renters, with 54% of those spending 50% of their income on housing.</p> <p>The average rent in Ottawa has increased by 8% and 13.5% in the last two years. The waiting list for social housing is over 12,000, with seniors making up over 40% on this list.</p>	<p>If elected, what will you do to increase the availability of affordable housing for older adults, especially for renters and those that live alone?</p> <p>Will you eliminate the barriers and provide funding for not-for-profit organizations to access capital to buy land and to build affordable housing units?</p>
Housing Accessibility Crisis	Questions to ask candidates
<p>Accessibility is a key factor to being able to live safely. Some 38% of Canadians, aged 65 plus, are living with one or more disabilities; as are 20% of working-age Canadians, aged 25 to 64 years. Most of these people have little or no access to age-friendly housing that is both affordable and accessible in the city/neighbourhood of their choice.</p>	<p>If elected, how will you increase access to accessible age-friendly housing?</p>
Innovative Housing Options	Questions to ask candidates
<p>The shortage of affordable, accessible, and appropriate housing for older people has led to an increased interest in innovative aging-in-community models such as home sharing, co-housing, naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs), intergenerational living, cooperative housing, and age-specific, integrated low-income housing.</p>	<p>Will you fund and support pilot projects and permanent developments of innovative housing models that support aging in community (e.g. co-housing, naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs), intergenerational living, cooperative housing)?</p>

3. Protect the Financial Well-Being of Older Adults

Income Gap Among Older Adults	Questions to Ask Candidates
<p>The median household income for seniors in Ottawa is \$39,500, the highest among all other cities (\$27,400 national median).</p> <p>While only 9% of seniors in Ottawa live in a low-income household, some groups are more at risk including older women (over 85 years) those who are living alone, Indigenous seniors, and recent older immigrants.</p>	<p>Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Old Age Security (OAS), and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) are the key pillars of federal income support to seniors. What is your party's plan to further support and enhance these programs for seniors today and tomorrow?</p>
Retiring on a Low-Income	Questions to ask candidates
<p>While the average age at retirement is 63.8, almost half of workers 60+ do so out of necessity to pay bills, support other family members, and/or because they are not eligible for a pension.</p> <p>One in five seniors aged 65-74 are still employed, with many working part-time, part-year, or self-employed.</p>	<p>How will your party support older adults who are living on a low income and/or work out of necessity?</p> <p>How will your party protect older workers?</p>
Financial Abuse and Fraud	Questions to ask candidates
<p>Fraud is the number one crime against older Canadians. Though people of all ages can be victims of fraud, older people get targeted more than others.</p>	<p>How will your party protect older consumers?</p>

4. Develop Strong Federal Leadership with Older Adults

Leadership by Older Adults	Questions to ask candidates
<p>Older adults continue to play an active role in their community. In fact, volunteers aged 55+ contributed most of the volunteer hours (90%+) and donate \$715 per year compared to \$512 for all Canadians. Older adults are also unpaid caregivers, providing endless hours caring for others and saving the healthcare system millions of dollars. They are also caregivers with children, allowing parents in young families to work outside the home.</p>	<p>How will your party encourage and support older adults to be active and engaged in the community?</p>
<p>Since 2004, the New Horizons for Seniors Program has invested over \$480 million in community-based projects "designed by and for seniors who make a difference in the lives of others and their communities."</p>	<p>How will your party funded initiatives lead by older adults?</p>

Leadership for Older Adults

Since 2011, there has been a **federal Minister for Seniors** supported by a **National Seniors Council**.

Since 2010, the federal government invested in the **Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging** as a strategic initiative of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). CIHR committed \$82.6 million in 2015 and \$61.5 million in 2021 to this initiative.

In March 2018, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA) recommended a **national seniors' strategy**.

Canada is a signatory to the United Nations conventions on the rights of children and persons with disabilities. Currently, there is no international **convention on the rights of older persons**. The aging of the population and the experience of older adults during COVID-19 clearly shows the need for a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

Reference available on request.

Questions to ask candidates

How will your party ensure that the rights and needs of older adults are considered in policies and actions of the federal government?

How will your party support research that is relevant for older adults?

How will your party address the need for a national seniors' strategy?

If elected, will your party support and sign on to an international Convention on the Rights of Older Persons?



**The Council
on Aging
of Ottawa**



**Le Conseil sur
le vieillissement
d'Ottawa**

For more information, go to www.coaottawa.ca

OUR VISION: Respected, informed and engaged older adults 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 older adults.

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