

Ontario Election 2014: Where Do the Parties Stand on ODSP?



Question We Asked	Green Party	Liberal Party	NDP	Progressive Conservative Party
<p><i>Will your party commit to making sure that the incomes people get when they're on ODSP are enough to afford all the regular costs of living, in addition to long-term needs and the costs of having a disability?</i></p> <p><i>What specific steps will you take to make ODSP incomes adequate?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the review of the province's social assistance programs. • Fully fund the recommendations from the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario. • Explore the best options to move to a Guaranteed Annual Income. • Remove barriers to meaningful employment. • End the clawback penalties on benefits that slow or prevent reintegration into the workforce. • Reduce bureaucracy by moving to a simpler, more integrated system focused on the needs of recipients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major commitment to reform guided by four objectives: motivate and support people to be successful in the workforce; provide adequate assistance; deliver modern, responsive services; ensure confidence in the system. • Lift the lowest rates and increase support for individuals with disabilities. • Simplify employment benefits (see below). • Replace Northern Allowance with Remote Communities Allowance and increase by \$50 / month for first person and \$25 / month for each additional family member. • Committed to develop a fair definition of adequacy and a way of calculating it so that increases to rates are more predictable and based on evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement 1% increase to ODSP and OW. • Implement recommendations from the Review of Social Assistance that Ontarians agree are the right way forward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No response - referral to party platform. Backgrounder indicates: Conduct an income maintenance program review to save \$200 million in 2015-16, \$600 million in 2016-17, and \$700 million in 2017-18 (total \$1.5 billion over three years). Note: The document is not specific about what an "income maintenance program review" is and what impact it would have on incomes.

Question We Asked	Green Party	Liberal Party	NDP	Progressive Conservative Party
<p><i>Will your party end the freeze on rate increases for family members of people with disabilities on ODSP?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to following the path of transformation which includes targeting rate increases to those in greatest need, supporting success in the workplace, and working toward adequacy for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review this decision. • Introduce a Caregiver Tax Credit of \$1,275 for each person cared for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No response - referral to party platform, which is silent on this issue
<p><i>Will your party commit to maintaining a separate income support program designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake further studies on the ODSP and OW programs. • Only modify the programs after consultation with all stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, will maintain a separate support program to meet the needs of people with disabilities. • Focus instead on making both programs work better at supporting people and helping them find jobs. • Work with clients, staff, municipal partners, employers, and others regarding ways to provide a seamless and effective service experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a separate income support program for Ontarians with disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No response - referral to party platform. Backgrounder indicates: Merge OW and ODSP into one program to save \$100 million in 2015-16, \$160 million in 2016-17, \$160 million in 2017-18 (total \$420 million over 3 years).

Question We Asked	Green Party	Liberal Party	NDP	Progressive Conservative Party
<p><i>What will your party do to support the employment goals of people with disabilities?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the barriers that people with disabilities face when trying to access meaningful employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove barriers and simplify access to employment. Collaborate with business and community employers to correct myths and misconceptions, address stereotyping and foster partnerships to establish inclusive workplaces. Talent development initiatives that focus on educational attainment, skills training and early experiences with the labour market, particularly through experiential learning. \$30 million over two years to help more people with disabilities achieve maximum employment potential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double the province's investment in retraining programs for workers over the age of 55. All employment benefits should be accessible to Ontarians with disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No response - referral to party platform. Backgrounder on disability issues says: Connect employers to people with disabilities to develop more opportunities and to reduce barriers that exist in the workplace Expand post-secondary education for people with disabilities so they can develop job-ready skills
<p><i>Will your party make eligibility for income supports conditional on whether or not a person works or takes training?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. We want to make it easier for people with disabilities to find meaningful employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. Our approach is to support people with disabilities to achieve the success they desire in the workplace to the extent they are able. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontarians with disabilities should be able to receive support regardless of their situation. Ensure that Ontarians with disabilities who want to work are fully supported by their government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No response - referral to party platform, which is silent on this issue

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<p><i>Will your party create a Social Inclusion Allowance within ODSP and make it available to every ODSP recipient in the province?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Social Inclusion Allowance or another similar program with the same goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate employment benefits (see above) to make it easier for clients to access needed supports to participate in community. • Projects that promote innovation and support inclusion and employment for people with a developmental disability included in proposed \$810 million in developmental services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholders to find the best solutions to support Ontarians with disabilities who wish to be more involved in their communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No response - referral to party platform, which is silent on this issue
<p><i>What will your party do to improve access to ODSP?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce bureaucracy by moving to a simpler, more integrated system focused on the needs of recipients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two of four objectives for reform are: deliver modern, responsive services; ensure confidence in the system. • Range of technological changes underway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholders and members of the community to make access to ODSP transparent and fast. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No response - referral to party platform, which is silent on this issue