

Making **Poverty**

an **election Issue**



Your guide to **centring poverty** in the June 2018  
provincial election in your communities

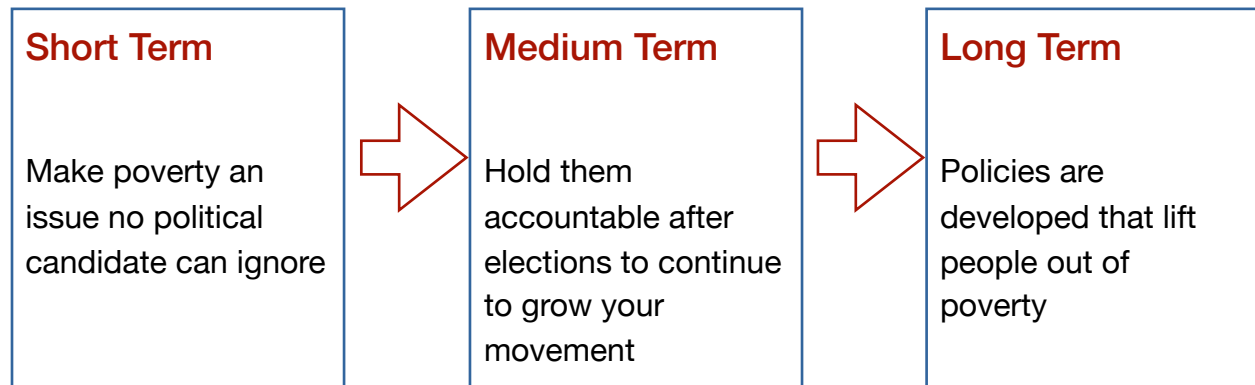
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# June 7th is election day!

An election period is an exciting time. It provides opportunities for the political candidates to hear from you, and for the general public who are not normally engaged in politics to hear about the issues and join your cause. This is key!

Political parties have decided their party platforms long before an election. But getting enough of their MPPs elected to form government is the only way for them to turn those positions into government policy. So election time is a good time to put pressure on the candidates and the parties to make our issues their issues, and our positions their positions.

Getting involved in election work is about;



That's why growing the anti-poverty movement in your community, showing political parties the strength of your movement, and shifting public conversation - both during election period and outside of one - are so **important**.

June 7th is election day in Ontario. The parties are already campaigning, but the official four week election period starts on May 9th when the "writ is dropped".

This toolkit will help you:

- Build an anti-poverty election plan that works for you
- Choose the right tactic for your local organizing
- Refine your messaging for social and traditional media

Remember, it really only takes a couple of dedicated people to make issues of poverty front and centre in their communities.

# Who is ISAC?

The Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC) is a specialty legal clinic in Ontario's community legal clinic system.

We have a mandate to improve the income security of people living in Ontario through community organizing, policy development and advocacy, and test case litigation.

We focus on systemic problems in provincial and federal income security programs and in employment law for low-waged workers. We also tackle broader income security and poverty-related issues as they affect our mandate.

We do our work in partnership with low-income people in Ontario as well as other legal clinics and anti-poverty groups.

We are non-partisan organization.

We use four strategies in our work:

- ✓ Conducting test case litigation, usually through appeals or administrative law proceedings.
- ✓ Advocating on policy change and law reform directly with government.
- ✓ Amplifying the voices of low-income Ontarians through community organizing.
- ✓ Creating and distributing public education materials and conducting trainings.

During elections, we work with local community legal clinics and other organizations to help them raise the issue of poverty in their communities and with their local political candidates.

# The demands

To eliminate poverty in Ontario we need grassroots organizing. Community organizing can push government to make ending poverty a priority.

Political candidates need to know that people live in poverty in their local riding and that ending poverty is the will of the voters and constituents. Local action and engagement around issues of poverty is key.

The following 5 changes are what we have heard from low-income Ontarians about what they would need to live with dignity and fairness.

- 1** Raise the rates now and ensure everyone gets the same basic OW or ODSP rate
- 2** Work with people with disabilities to strengthen ODSP and make OW responsive to their unique needs
- 3** Provide health benefits to all low-income Ontarians
- 4** Transform social assistance to put people and their needs and rights at the centre of the system
- 5** Change social assistance to better serve Indigenous peoples and recognize First Nations sovereignty to design and deliver income support programs

# Talking points

Here is a summary of the 5 questions ISAC has prepared for political candidates on issues of income security. The boxes below give some facts for each question.

## **Income Adequacy**

**How much will your party increase basic OW and ODSP rates? Will your party ensure that everyone on OW and ODSP gets at least the full basic needs and shelter amounts by implementing a standard flat rate in both programs?**

- A single person on OW receives a **maximum** basic benefit amount of \$721.
- A single person on ODSP receives a **maximum** basic benefit of \$1151.
- 1997 OW rates were cut by 22%, and then rates frozen for 8 years.
- People are living in poverty. If they can pay the rent, they have little left to put food on the table.

## **Improving Disability Supports**

**What will your party do to work with people with disabilities to strengthen ODSP and make OW responsive to their unique needs?**

- People with disabilities are living in poverty.
- Just under half a million people with disabilities are in receipt of ODSP.
- For many, they get to ODSP through OW, which is not set up to help people with disabilities. After lengthy bureaucratic appeals, they land on an inadequate ODSP.

## **Health Benefits for All**

**How will your party ensure that all low-income Ontarians have accessible, high quality health benefits for themselves and their families?**

- 1 in every 5 Ontarians does not visit the dentist because they cannot afford it.
- Dentists are known to deny services to recipients as the government fees are so low.
- The disappearance of full-time jobs with benefits has led to 1.6 million Ontarians not filling prescriptions or skipping doses.

## **Transforming Social Assistance**

**Will your party commit to transforming social assistance from a system of punishment to a system that puts people, their needs and rights first?**

- Social assistance in its current state is neither helping people when they are in crisis, nor is providing a stable foundation for people to build themselves up and go after the better future. What the system looks like now is humiliating and punishing. It pushes people into further crisis and deeper into debt.
- OW and ODSP were designed to be hard to access, punitive, and coercive. These programs result in worsening health, exclusion from community, and difficulty finding and keeping work. They also cost the government more in health care and other social programs.
- Transforming social assistance would be based on understanding the trauma people have endured before they arrived on the program and investing in people and their quest to thrive as community members who contribute in many ways to Ontario.

## **Reconciliation**

**How will your party change social assistance to better serve Indigenous peoples and recognize First Nations sovereignty to design and deliver income support programs?**

- The UNDRIP affirms that Indigenous peoples “have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions” (Article 23).
- The Roadmap not only recommends recognition of First Nations sovereignty over income support programs, it also recommends that these programs be overhauled to support both social inclusion and economic development in Indigenous communities, and that they adopt an approach to both service provision and supports and services that are rooted in Indigenous traditions and values.

# Make local candidates answer to you

## The goal during an election campaign:

Raise the poverty-related issues that you care about forcefully - enough that all candidates will have to tell you where they and their parties stand.

## The objective:

To get commitments from all the candidates on how they will resolve your local poverty-related issues and/or how they will respond to the questions we've prepared in our **"Questions for the Parties"**.

Maximum Influence	Minimum Influence
Potential voters - who live in their ridings	People outside of their riding
Large groups of constituents taking action (mass emailing, mass phone-calls, in-person group meetings, event invitations)	Random tweets, no effort letters, Facebook post with no focus
Local press, op-eds on targeted issues that are their responsibility	Federal or municipal issues (which are not their responsibility)
Endorsements from interest groups (e.g. faith groups, professionals, community groups, and organizations, in their community)	Endorsements from interest groups <b>outside</b> of their community
Concrete action-oriented demands	Unfocused ideas or complaints

## Seizing the moment

During an election campaign your local candidates are in full-on election-mode, which means:

- ▶ They do not want **bad press**
- ▶ They do not want to make **public promises** that can be used against them in the future
- ▶ They want to show you they care so they can **be elected**



### Your focus from now until election day should be to:

- ▶ **Draw** attention to the urgent need to reform social assistance.
- ▶ **Pressure** political candidates to commit to increasing rates and building a supportive, responsive social assistance system.
- ▶ **Build** a strong core of people focused on holding your political candidates accountable.

### Your role at election time:

- ✓ Ask all the political candidates in your area where they stand on your issue.
- ✓ Hold the candidates accountable for their party's positions or for policies or laws that they supported.
- ✓ Focus on the goal of making poverty an election issue and getting your local political candidates to make promises that you want them to keep.
- ✓ Choose the right tactics for each opportunity.

## All candidates meetings

All candidate meetings are where local candidates from political parties share their views with the community and tell people what their party is promising to do.

This is a great chance for you to bring up the issues that affect low-income Ontarians and ask for a commitment from all of the candidates. This is also a great opportunity for people to hear about your issues and collect contact information from sympathizers.

Most all-candidates meetings follow a similar agenda:

1. Each candidate talks about their issues.
2. A moderator asks the candidates prepared questions.
3. Community members get a chance to ask the candidates some questions.
4. The candidates have a final chance to speak.

## How do you get your issue out there?

- Plan to attend with a group of people to divide the work and maximize your impact. Select someone who will record what is being said.
- Prepare questions for the candidates on the issues facing your local community. Or read ISAC's prepared questions and decide which ones to ask. Assign a different question to different people in your group.
- Have your group spread out across the room. It will make it seem as though there is a deep concern about poverty from more than one individual.
- Try to speak from your experience, but keep it brief.
- Take pictures and record candidates responses - If you're using Twitter tag the candidates answers or non-answers. Post the info to your facebook group, be sure to email your candidates' answers to [walkere@lao.on.ca](mailto:walkere@lao.on.ca)
- After the question period, stick around to further discuss your issues with candidates.

## How to find your all candidates meetings

- Check with community groups and organizations.
- Political parties websites, social media, local media, google it.
- Information boards at the library.

# One on One visits

## What is it?

One on one visits with your political candidates can have a big impact. They can be an opportunity to show the power of your group and highlight a specific issue or demand that you want them to address.



## Time of Activity

<b>Preparation</b>	2 hours
<b>During</b>	30 minutes
<b>After</b>	20 minutes

## Why do it?

- Easy to organize.
- Profile your group.
- Spotlight the issues.
- Learn where your candidate stands on the issues.
- Part of a bigger strategy.

## Why not do it?

- If you do not have people directly affected by the issue with you.
- Its not a public conversation, however there is nothing stopping you from making it public.

## How to organize a visit?

1. Find out where your candidates office is (see **“How to find my local candidates”**) and phone to set up a meeting, this might take multiple attempts.
2. Phone the office just before the scheduled meeting date to confirm time, place, and who will be joining you.
3. Arrange a meeting with your team before the scheduled meeting:
  - a. Prepare and print the list of questions to ask your candidate.
  - b. Decide who will speak - Make sure you are all on the same page.

- c. Assign a note taker during the meeting. They will also summarize what was said at the meeting and follow-up actions.
  - d. Decide who will follow-up with the thank you's and materials that you may have promised to send.
4. Bring a phone/camera for the meeting so you all can take a picture of your group visit with your candidate. Arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled meeting.
5. Report back to your membership:
  - a. A summary of what was said at the visit.
  - b. Next steps and actions your group will take.
6. Send liz walker ([walkere@lao.on.ca](mailto:walkere@lao.on.ca)) from ISAC your picture and summary of visit.

## Tips on maximizing the visit

- Choose a diverse group of 3-5 people from your riding who have an understanding and experiences of poverty issues to attend the meeting. Try not to attend meetings alone.
- Plan for 30-45 minutes
- Stay on message: What do you want from the meeting?
  - Remember this is your meeting. Make sure they are listening to you.
  - To have them on record saying something about poverty.
  - Hear the talking points of their party on issues of poverty.
  - To present your group to the candidates for future consultations.
  - Have a specific demand with supporting stories and references.
- Bring the following material:
  - *Income Security - A roadmap for change backgrounder.*
  - *ISAC's Fast Facts on Poverty and Social Assistance.*
  - The questions you want to ask the candidates.
  - *ISAC's questions for the parties.*
  - *A placard that you make saying "I am committed to \_\_\_\_\_" with the commitment that you want the candidate to make.*

## What might happen at your visit

This page was specifically prepared after hearing from multiple groups over the years about their experiences with visits with their politicians. We put this together to give you an idea of what to expect and possible responses.

### Sympathetic candidate

They appear to be listening to your concerns and you feel very heard. This is not uncommon and for the most part they want you to feel that way in the meeting.

- Understand that this is a tactic.
- Continue with your presentation.
- **Move their sympathy into action.**

### Rushed visit

They appear to not have enough time for this visit and try to rush you through the visit.

- Understand that this is a tactic.
- Continue with your presentation
- Ask them if there is something else that is more pressing than dealing with poverty.
- **Take your space.**

### Naive candidate

Not every candidate will have expertise in your issue, so they may not be able to answer specific questions.

- Understand that this is a tactic
- Continue with your presentation aimed to educate.
- Give them your materials, you are there to help.
- Follow-up at a later date, answer questions they have find out if they have moved on your issue.

### Gotcha questions

They are testing the depths of your knowledge. They might ask you questions like “how do you propose we pay for this?” or specific policies. They may also pivot from the issue entirely and question you about other things.

- Understand that this is a tactic.
- Continue with your presentation.
- Take notes. Its ok not to know.
- Get back to them with answers later.

# Coordinated Calls

## What is it

Coordinated calls bring attention to an issue that is of great concern to members of your group. The coordination of calls requires a small amount of constituents flooding their political candidates with calls on a particular day, requiring their response.

## Why use this activity?



**To make your case forcefully** about why your local candidates need to respond to your poverty-related issue. Or If **an opportune** moment has come up locally, which you can use to highlight your issue.

## Time of Activity

<b>Preparation</b>	1 hour
<b>During</b>	20 minutes
<b>After</b>	10 minutes

## Tips on maximizing your impact

- Ensure there are at least 15 people available for that day to call your local candidates office.
- Find out the office hours for each of the candidates and prepare a phone sheet of time slots and script to ensure that every 20 minutes throughout the day they will be receiving a call.
- Prepare a single question for each call.
- Be persistent. If you are directed to voicemail, leave a message. Follow-up with an email and let them know that you will be sharing with your group and the local media about their answer - or no answer - to your questions.

## Sample Coordinated Call Dialogue

### Staffer

Hello *[candidates]* office \_\_\_\_\_ office how may we help you?

### You

I live in the riding that your candidate is running in. I would like to know what your party plans to do about poverty in our community.

### Staffer

Can I have your name and address to verify that you are in our riding

### You

Sure, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and my address is \_\_\_\_\_ can I ask who I am speaking with?

### Staffer

Of course, my name is \_\_\_\_\_

### You

Thank you. I would like to speak to *[candidate]* to find out what they think about the fact that *[X-use our "Fast Facts" to get this information]* people in our community live in poverty. Many of those are on OW and ODSP, and many are unable to put food on their table and pay the rent. What is she/he going to do about poverty?

### Staffer

I hear your concerns and we are grateful to you for sharing your concerns with us. Unfortunately I cannot speak for *[the candidate]* but will pass on your concerns

### You

Thank you \_\_\_\_\_ for passing on my concerns, but I am looking for more. I want to know what the *[candidate]* and your party are planning on doing about poverty in our community.

### Staffer

Our party platform says *[they provide you with some information]*

### You

Thank you for the information. I will be sharing it with members of the community. Many people in our community find it unacceptable that there is so much poverty in our community. We support raising social assistance rates and a number of other changes to OW and ODSP. *[Here is where you decide if what they have told you is good enough, if not, tell them your demands. You do not have to be confrontational, but be firm that you want them to understand your concerns and solutions. If you think the local candidates or party's position will make things worse, tell them that]*

### Staffer

I hear you, I will be passing on the information on to the candidate.

### You

My contact information is \_\_\_\_\_. Please have *[the candidate]* call me back. Thank you for your time today.

## Sample Coordinated Calls Time Log

#	Name of person calling	Time	Comments made by office	Follow-up with an email & tweet
1	Masai Urji	9:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidate was unavailable</li> <li>Staff spoke of their voting record</li> <li>Staff pointed to election platform</li> <li>Candidate will return my call X date</li> </ul>	Tweeted and emailed
2	OJ Ananobe	9:20am		
3	Dwayne Casey	9:40am		
4	Demar DeRozan	10:00am		
5	Kyle Lowry	10:20am		
6	Jonas Valancunais	10:40am		
7	Pascal Siakam	11:00am		
8	Fred VanVleet	11:20am		
9	C.J. Miles	11:40am		
10	Serge Ibaka	1:00pm		
11	Delon Wright	1:20pm		
12	Jakob Poehl	1:40pm		
14	Lucas Nuigerra	2:00pm		
15	Malcolm Miller	2:20pm		
16	Lorenzo Brown	2:40pm		
17	Vincent Carter	3:00pm		
18	Chris Bosh	3:20pm		



# Bringing it to the Public

During the campaign period there are going to be many opportunities for you to bring it to the public. You can attend public events, host events, do presentations, do street corner education, or some good old-fashioned door knocking. Whatever you choose to do make sure you are prepared, have leaflets and take pictures of your actions. Below are some examples of actions people have done in their communities.

## Community Town Halls

These are different from all candidate meetings in that:

- Not all candidates need to be there.
- Can be issue-based.
- Often organized by an organization, union, faith-groups, sitting MPPs etc.

This is a good space to hear a more in-depth analysis about a specific issue and a good space to find allies or sympathizers on your issues.

## Street Corner - Leafletting

This action is on your terms and can be very fun. Choose a busy street corner to hand out information about your issues and what you want the political candidates and parties to do about it. This increases public knowledge and gets your community energized. If you have a petition, have people sign and collect their contact information to get them involved.

## Presentations

Public presentations to community organizations, unions, faith groups, tenant associations, etc. is a way of bringing people up to speed about the work you are doing to make the issues “live” during the election and beyond. Try to keep your presentation short and to the point. Start with the **Why** this is important to you and the broader community and invite people to join in actions you will be taking to bring about the change you want.

## Tips on public engagement

- ✓ **Prepare:** The personal connection to your issue and why you joined the cause are very important to start off your presentation. Unfortunately, people often start with facts for their presentations - while this is good, it does not move people to a behavioural change. Once you answer the why you got involved, then you can move to the facts. End with what they can do about it. It is so important to leave them with information about how people can get involved with the change they want to see.
  
- ✓ **Know your audience** - Do a little research about the audience that you are going to present to. What are their interests, what is their connection to the issue, how have they supported causes in the past? A little research goes a long way in helping to build a relationship with your audience.
  
- ✓ **Leave them with an action they can do** - We cannot stress how important this is. You could do the best presentation in the world, but without something for them to do, it goes nowhere. For example; do you want an endorsement letter from them, do you want them to visit the candidates, do you want them to ask the candidates questions when they come to their doors?
  
- ✓ **Take pictures** - This is a good way to get more people involved and raises the profile and energy of your group. If there are pictures that can be shared publicly, tagging the local candidates on social media will help to bring attention to the issue and puts pressure on them to commit.
  
- ✓ **Follow up** - This is the number one thing that campaigns often forget to do. They do all of this work to raise awareness, bring attention to the issues but forget to follow-up with people who want to join. Keep people involved and get their contact information. You will need this after the elections. Try to follow-up with interested contacts within a week.

# The Media is the Message

Contacting local media during an election campaign is a good way to raise public awareness of poverty issues. The media will spend a lot of time covering the campaign, but they might not cover the issues you care about.

Here are some ideas for ways you can engage the media on the issues:

- \* Collect a little information (*backgrounder*) about poverty issues in your community and the steps you want the local candidates to take to address it, and have it on hand to give it to the media. Use our “**Fast Facts**” and “**Questions for the Parties**” to help you prepare.
- \* **Invite local media** to events you are hosting and organizing. Share your backgrounder with journalists who attend. Be prepared to talk with them about the issues.
- \* In whatever media work you do **centre lived experience** about the issues. Make sure to prepare for talking with the media.
- \* **Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.** Lots of people read the letters to the editor. Even if they are short, letters are a good way of reaching the public with our issues. They help encourage people to discuss issues and respond to them. See our tips below.
- \* **Call in to a local radio or TV show** during call-in segments. Calling in to one of these shows can be a good way to make sure that people in your local area know about issues that affect low-income people. See below for some tips.

## Tips for writing letters to the editor

- \* Keep it short – check your local newspaper for their word length.
- \* Use words and language that people easily understand. Talk about your emotions and your personal connections to the issue.
- \* Sign your name and give your address and a contact telephone number.
- \* Letters should be in your own words, targeted to the newspaper you are submitting to. Where possible write it in response to an article (cite the date) they have published.

## Tips for radio and TV call-in shows

If you want to raise a poverty-related issue on a local radio or TV call-in show, here are a couple of tips and ideas:

- \* **Decide on your message:** Before you call, decide on which issue you're going to raise and the one or two points that you want to make. Write down your points and the key messages that you want to convey.
- \* **Know who you're calling:** The person who answers the phone will be the producer, not be the show's host. They will ask you what you're calling about. Give them a very brief version of the couple of points that you want to make.
- \* **Educate don't fight:** Remember your role is to educate the community, not fight with the host. If the host is combative, stay calm.
- \* **Enlist support.** Tell your friends or members of your group in advance that you're going to call in and recruit them to also call-in. If you have several points to make on the issue, divide them among members of your group so each one can raise a different point on the same issue.

## Tips for making the most of social media

Social media is a tool to help with your organizing (it can't replace face-to-face, but can boost it). Here's some tips to help make your support visible:

- \* Encourage your supporters to like and follow your social media accounts: Facebook page & Twitter accounts.
- \* Take photos at every action you participate in & share it online by tagging relevant campaigns and politicians (you can tag up to 10 people with Twitter photos) and using the hashtag #onpoli and any campaign hashtag.
- \* Comment on posts by politicians – can bring more engagement if you start a conversation. Keep your comments brief and respectful.
- \* To increase your followers on twitter, tweet early, tweet often, and use hashtags.

# Your group election planning meeting

Strategy meetings are powerful. They bring people together for a common purpose ready to take action. People are often drawn to strategy meetings through regular outreach; for example actions such as petition signing, education around new policies, know your rights workshops, etc. Strategies meetings are necessary for grassroots organizing especially for election organizing. Some tips and a sample agenda are below

## Things to watch out for during a strategy meeting

- Meetings led by one person with no built in mechanism for others to bring their skills to the meetings.
- Meetings that have not been planned in advance.
- Meetings with no food.
- Meetings with very little representation from diverse folks.

## Tips to maximize the strategy meeting

- ✓ Stay focused.
- ✓ Kept it short, not longer than 2 hours.
- ✓ Plan the agenda for the meeting in advance.
- ✓ Make sure that there are regular meetings afterwards to stay on point.
- ✓ All meetings should ensure that there are leadership building opportunities built-in.
- ✓ Ensure that follow-up meetings have mechanisms for people to report-back on their activities.
- ✓ There should be actions for people to take up after meetings.
- ✓ Someone is collecting data about the activities that have taken place, what people are saying about your actions, and a pulse on the candidates.
- ✓ Share photos of your activities and actions.
- ✓ Sign in sheet for all participants gathering names, emails, and contact info.

## Sample strategy meeting agenda

Time	Activity	Description	Roles
5:45pm - 6:00pm		<b>Snacks and mingling</b> <i>It is important to start on time, so that future meetings will be respected  plan for late arrivals have one of your team members integrate them</i>	
6:00pm - 6:20pm	Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Land acknowledgements</b></li> <li>• <b>Agenda for the day</b> (Ensure there are actions for people to do at the end)</li> <li>• <b>Objectives of the meeting</b></li> <li>• <b>Paired introductions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have everyone pair themselves off</li> <li>• Each pair has a minute to introduce themselves, and to answer the question, <b><i>“What do you see as your role in winning positive changes to social assistance”</i></b></li> <li>• Bring everyone back together and the pairs introduce each other.</li> <li>• Facilitator captures notes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitator</li> <li>- Ask for a note taker</li> <li>- Ask for a time keeper</li> </ul>
6:20pm - 6:35pm	Group Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are some agreements we can come up with as a group to ensure that our time with each is comfortable?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group can generate a list of agreements themselves</li> <li>• Have them define what; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect looks like.</li> <li>• Listening looks like.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How do we as a group live with disagreement - knowing that there will be differences in opinion and experiences</li> <li>• How do we give people the benefit of the doubt</li> <li>• Make sure to have these agreements below posted.</li> <li>• Let’s have fun! Organizing and winning change is hard but more than possible, in order to sustain our energy we need to have fun.</li> <li>• It’s ok not to know.</li> <li>• Listen to ourselves.</li> <li>• Listen to each other.</li> <li>• Participate to your fullest.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>How do we hold ourselves accountable if an agreement is not working</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This could be something that is worked on later</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitator</li> <li>- Note Taker</li> <li>- Someone to integrate late arrivals</li> </ul>

Time	Activity	Description	Roles
6:35pm - 6:55pm	Small group discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have a group of 10 people or more divide into smaller groups</li> <li>• Pose the question- What is your on social assistance               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adjectives:</b> Hard, Isolating, frustrating, etc...</li> <li>• <b>Issues:</b> experiences with clawbacks, over payments, not enough money, etc</li> </ul> </li> <li>• After the group shares their experiences with large group</li> <li>• Facilitator summarizes by reframing what solving their issues would look like, for example;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If social assistance rates were raised, you would be able to put food on the table.</li> <li>• If there was more social housing.</li> <li>• If social assistance programs were more inclusive and worked with you instead of against you.</li> <li>• If caseworkers understood the trauma of poverty</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ok, so we have heard about some of the issues and what would make it better. On your break, I invite you to think about what commitment do we want from political candidates? Think about what activities we can do in our community to force this commitment.</li> </ul>	
<b>5 minute break</b>			
7:00pm - 7:30pm	Elections Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An election present a great opportunity for our groups voices to be heard and is a time when more of the public is listening.</li> <li>• Community statement:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If we had a opportunity to have the ear of our local politician, what would we want them to hear from us?</li> <li>• If we had an opportunity to have the ear of the public what would we want them to hear from us?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Have a discussion about which actions/tactics are we going to use to get our messages out there?</li> <li>• Give them a few guidelines:</li> </ul>	

Time	Activity	Description	Roles
7:30pm - 7:45pm	Next steps (roles and responsibilities )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What should be the agenda of the next meeting?</li> <li>• When should our next meeting be?</li> <li>• Who can reach out to the group to remind people of the next meeting?</li> <li>• Who can do a bit of digging to find out information about our local candidates?</li> <li>• Who can find out a little more information about what community events are happening that the local politicians might attend?</li> <li>• Who can start thinking about possible things our group can do to bring attention to the issue?</li> <li>• Who will type up the minutes and send it out to the group?</li> <li>• Would everyone be willing to bring 1 extra person to our next group meeting?</li> </ul>	
7:45pm - 7:50pm	Agency responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think about what you are able to do as an agency rep and be upfront about it.</li> <li>• Provide meeting space</li> <li>• Provide snacks</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Place to for people to email the group and call</li> <li>• Photocopying and printing</li> </ul>	
7:50pm - 7:55pm	Profile of groups getting it done in their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show a quick video or slideshow on groups that have forced politicians to respond to their issues</li> </ul>	
7:55pm - 8:00pm	Evaluation		



## Who is running in my riding? How to find your local candidates

Major parties running in Ontario's June 2018 election are:

- \* **Ontario Liberal Party** <https://www.ontarioliberal.ca/>
- \* **Ontario New Democratic Party (NDP)** <https://www.ontariondp.ca/>
- \* **Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario (PC)** <https://www.ontariopc.ca/>
- \* **Green Party of Ontario** <https://gpo.ca/>

The first three are considered "major" parties because all of them have elected Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) at Queen's Park.

There are 124 electoral districts (or "ridings") in the province. Some ridings have more candidates and more parties running than others.

Candidates who want to run have to be nominated by the local members of their party. Their names and other information have to be reported to Elections Ontario before they can run in the election. They must follow the rules in the Election Act and the Election Finances Act.

You may want to focus your pre-election work (all-candidates meetings, group meetings, community events) on the major party candidates or you may want to include candidates from other parties. This could depend on which parties have the best chance of winning in your local riding or in the general election. There are three ways to find out who all the candidates are:

### **1) Elections Ontario**

A full list of candidates in all 124 ridings will be available on the Elections Ontario website after the close of nominations on May 17. <https://www.elections.on.ca/en.html>

### **2) Party Websites**

As the parties nominate their candidates for election, they will be posting information online. Check the websites above

### **3) QP Briefings**

Queen's Park Briefing is a publication that monitors and analyzes politics in Ontario. They are compiling a list of nominated candidates for the PCs, Liberals, NDP, Green and Trillium parties. They also have a handy map of all the ridings, with links to the candidates for those areas.

<http://www.qpbriefing.com/2017/01/05/nominated-candidates-for-the-2018-ontario-provincial-election/>