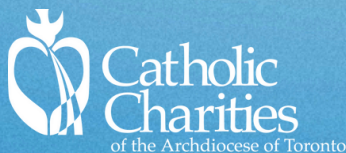


ONTARIO ELECTION GUIDE 2025

Make **your vote** count
for a better future!



Why Your Vote Matters

Catholic Social Teaching* calls us to uphold human dignity, seek the common good, and advocate for the most vulnerable in our society. As faithful citizens, we have a moral responsibility to participate in the democratic process and elect leaders who will promote justice, peace, and care for those in need. Pope Francis reminds us, "The dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies." (Evangelii Gaudium, #203).

Your vote helps shape Ontario's future, ensuring economic and social balance while advocating for equity, dignity, and justice. In past elections, nearly half of Ontarians didn't vote—let's change that! Stand up for the vulnerable and demand policies that support everyone.

Key Issues at Stake

1. Respect for Life and Human Dignity

- Seniors in Ontario face increasing economic insecurity, with rising costs in housing, healthcare, and daily essentials impacting their quality of life.
- Many seniors experience social isolation, leading to mental health challenges that require greater community support and outreach services.
- Affordable housing options for seniors remain limited, forcing many into inadequate or unstable living conditions.

CONSIDER THIS: Will your candidate advocate for policies that ensure financial stability, accessible healthcare, and social support programs for aging Ontarians?

- Ontarians with disabilities, including the Deaf community and individuals with intellectual disabilities, continue to face barriers in access to information, communication, services, education, employment, housing, and training.
- The AODA's goal of full accessibility by 2025 has not been met, and many essential services remain inaccessible.

CONSIDER THIS: How will your candidate intensify efforts to fully implement the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) to remove systemic barriers affecting the most vulnerable?

- One in three women in Ontario experiences some form of sexual assault in her lifetime, with three-quarters of cases perpetrated by someone known to the victim.
- Women represent 83% of domestic violence victims, and children involved often require long-term care and counselling.
- Gender-based violence includes domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, reproductive coercion, stalking, and child abuse based on gender.

CONSIDER THIS: Ask your candidate if they are ready to allocate necessary funding to support community-based agencies providing critical programs, including counselling and accessible housing for abused women and children.

- Support for families, palliative care, and rehabilitation services must be a priority.
- Vulnerable groups, including Indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, immigrants & refugees, and seniors, need better support.

CONSIDER THIS: Is your candidate advocating for dignity at every stage of life?

Key Issues at Stake

2. Poverty and Income Security

- Nearly 1 in 5 children in Ontario (550,080) live in poverty ([Ontario Campaign 2000](#)).
- Precarious work is rising—30% of workers lack stable income and benefits.
- Based on data collected in 2023 through Statistics Canada’s Canadian Income Survey, 1 in 4 people in Ontario (24.5%), amounting to 3.65 million Ontarians, lived in a food-insecure household, exceeding the record 19.2% from the previous year.
 - Food insecurity is worsening, with Toronto's mayor recently declaring it a crisis due to the rising demand for food banks and inadequate support for struggling families ([City of Toronto](#)).
 - Between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024, over 1 million individuals accessed food banks in Ontario, marking a 25% increase from the previous year. In the same period, food banks were visited 7,689,580 times, a 31% rise from 2022-2023 and a 134% increase compared to five years ago ([Hunger Report 2024: Unravelling at the Seams - Feed Ontario](#)).
 - In Toronto, the situation is particularly dire, with 3.5 million client visits to food banks between April 2023 and March 2024—the highest in the city's history ([DB-Whos-Hungry-Report-2024-Digital.pdf](#)). A more accurate assessment of older adults' needs is essential, utilizing tools like the National Institute on Aging’s "material deprivation index" to ensure targeted support.

CONSIDER THIS: How will your candidate address poverty and ensure fair wages for all workers?

3. Social Services and Healthcare

- Social services are underfunded, leaving non-profits struggling to meet growing needs.
 - Shifting just 1% of healthcare spending to social services could increase life expectancy and reduce preventable deaths ([Ontario Campaign 2000](#)).
- Increased funding is needed to support organizations addressing loneliness among seniors living at home, as isolation is a major contributor to mental health decline.
- Long-Term Care facilities should receive additional funding to implement programs like the “Butterfly Program” that improve seniors' quality of life and help delay cognitive decline.

CONSIDER THIS: How will your candidate invest in community support programs and mental health services?

4. Affordable Housing and Homelessness

- In Toronto alone, over 100,361 households are on the waitlist for affordable housing as of 2024 ([City of Toronto](#)).
- Homelessness is on the rise, with over 80,000 Ontarians experiencing homelessness in 2024, marking a 25% increase from two years prior ([Reports on Ontario’s Homelessness Crisis, Water and Wastewater Utility Feasibility | AMO](#)).
- Rental costs continue to skyrocket, with the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto reaching \$2,187 in August 2024 ([MI Property Portal](#)).
- Housing costs force families to choose between rent and food.

CONSIDER THIS: Ask your candidate how they propose to address the housing crisis and support affordable living.

Key Issues at Stake

5. Workers' Rights and Employment Justice

- The fight for fair wages continues—\$17.20/hour is the current minimum wage, but more is needed.
- Precarious work and temporary jobs leave many in financial instability.

CONSIDER THIS: Does your candidate support stronger labour laws and employment protections for everyone?

6. Support for Refugees

- Ontario must allocate additional funding and establish partnerships to develop refugee reception centres similar to the new Peel Reception Centre in Mississauga.
- These facilities should provide shelter and access to essential services that help refugees transition to independence and stability.

CONSIDER THIS: Ask your candidate how they intend to engage in partnerships that create comprehensive support systems for refugees, ensuring their successful integration into communities.

7. Ecological Stewardship and Climate Change

Protecting Ontario's Environment and Biodiversity

- 60% of Ontario's rivers and streams are in poor health, and wetland loss continues despite past commitments. ([Audit by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario May 2023](#)).
- The number of hectares lost to deforestation each year is almost 4 times greater on average than the number of hectares established as new forests. Deforestation in southern Ontario more than doubled from 2009 to 2018, primarily due to agricultural development.

Respecting Indigenous Leadership in Conservation

- Indigenous-led conservation efforts and Protected Areas must be supported and respected.
- Implement Article 26 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in environmental decision-making.

CONSIDER THIS: Ask your candidate how they will ensure strong environmental protections and respect Indigenous leadership in conservation.

8. Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation

- Ontario has yet to implement key Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, including reforms in child welfare and justice. ([Indigenous Watchdog](#)).
- Advocate for an annual provincial strategy and progress reports on reconciliation efforts.

CONSIDER THIS: Ask your candidate what commitments they will make to advance Truth and Reconciliation?

*What is Catholic Social Teaching?

Catholic Social Teaching is an essential part of the Catholic faith, rooted in the words of Jesus and further clarified in Church documents. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII wrote *Rerum Novarum*, a reminder to Catholics that people—and not money—are the focus of God’s creation. Since then, Popes, ecumenical Church councils such as Vatican II, the world’s Catholic Bishops, and the Tradition of the Church have reinforced the need to strive toward justice. The values espoused in *Rerum Novarum* and reinforced by the Catholic Church since then can be summarized as follows:

- To strive for social justice and human dignity
- To be committed to community and the common good
- To protect human rights
- To be aware that we must put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first
- To recognize our responsibility in the stewardship of creation
- To assure that everyone participates in civic life
- To respect the basic rights of workers
- To help citizens carry out their societal responsibilities
- To promote peace through mutual respect of peoples and nations.

Take Action! Your Vote Matters!

Get Informed – Research candidate positions on poverty, housing, social services, and fair wages.

Spread the Word – Talk to friends and family about these critical issues.

Vote on Election Day – Make your voice heard and advocate for a just and compassionate Ontario.

For more details, visit **Elections Ontario** to find your polling station and voter registration information.

Make a Difference. Vote for a Stronger, Fairer Ontario!