

**Questions of Importance to Small Town and Rural Ontario
for Ontario Provincial Parties and Candidates (2014)**

The ten questions below were developed based on rural stakeholder priorities in response to an on-line survey by the Rural Ontario Institute May 3-7, 2014. A full list of priorities can be viewed at www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca

1. The recent performance of the rural Ontario economy in terms of job growth has been poorer than in urban places. What is your proposed approach to support the development of **job opportunities in rural Ontario and small towns**?
2. What is your party's platform with respect to the **accessibility of health care and quality medical services** near to rural and small town residents? Is the current situation satisfactory? What would you improve?
3. Rural Ontario stakeholders are concerned about **youth employment/underemployment** in their communities. How does your party's platform respond to these concerns?
4. Rural and small town Ontario has an older demographic than urban places making **services for aging population, aging in place/home care/housing** a priority for many rural stakeholders. Does your party have a strategy or set of programs or policies that it would implement specific to a rural/small town context?
5. If you were to win the election how would your government's strategy affect **the cost of electric power**? What steps would your government take to deal with the generation and distribution of energy in the province?
6. Does your party think the current policy regime surrounding **farmland loss and farmland protection** is adequate? What policy changes or initiatives would your government take to respond to this concern?
7. What actions would your government take to support the **development of local food systems**?
8. What would your party do to protect the **quality of water in Ontario lakes, streams and rivers**?
9. **Fiscal stability at the municipal level** concerns many rural citizens. How would your government deal with cost-sharing between levels of government? What transfers/investment programs do you believe require change or continued support in the coming years?
10. **Skills training and access to post-secondary programs** affects both the future incomes of young people as well as the ability of employers to find the talent they need. What would your government do to ensure rural youth have appropriate skills and that they can access relevant programs locally and affordably?

Finally, we welcome you to generally articulate your party's plan or strategy for rural and small town Ontario. What do you see as the key rural and small town issues/opportunities that will inform your approach to governing?

