

Questions of Importance to Rural and Northern Ontario for Provincial Parties and Candidates (2018)

The ten questions below were developed based on rural and northern responses to an online survey by the Rural Ontario Institute conducted between January and February 2018. There were over 600 respondents from all walks of life and regions of the province.

1. Access to quality medical services nearby has emerged again as a priority concern for rural and small town Ontarians who typically live some distance from urban facilities and services. What is your party's platform with respect to the **accessibility of health care and quality medical services** near to rural and northern residents? Is the current situation satisfactory? How would your party's approach to health care improve the lives of rural and northern Ontarians?
2. Much of rural and northern Ontario has an older demographic than urban places making **services for an aging population** a priority for many. Does your party have a proposed policy agenda that it would implement relevant to these specific geographies?
3. What would your party do to protect the **quality of water in Ontario lakes, streams and rivers**?
4. The **cost of energy** is a concern. How does your party's platform respond to this?
5. What actions would your government take to increase the **availability of beds in long-term care facilities** in rural and northern Ontario?
6. A **broadband internet connection** is now an essential service. Many parts of rural and northern Ontario lag far behind urban counterparts in both **access** and **speed** of connections. What plans does your party have to close this gap? Will the relatively small amount of funding the federal budget recently included hamper your party's intention to act on this?
7. What initiatives do you think a provincial government should take to respond to **farmland loss** concerns and protect farmland? Do you have any specific proposals in your campaign?
8. What actions would your government take to ensure **food security** across the province?
9. What is your party's proposed approach to **financing for local municipal infrastructure**?
10. **Municipal financial stability** for rural and northern communities is part of the focus of AMO/ROMA and FCM advocacy. Our survey suggests it is likewise a priority for rural and small town Ontario residents. 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? Are taxation powers appropriately balanced?

Finally, we welcome you to articulate your party's plan or strategy in terms of the [Ontario Federation of Agriculture's Producing Prosperity](#) campaign, which has the support of the Eastern and Western Warden's Caucuses among others. One of the elements of the campaign is distributed development or place-based rural development as advocated in the Rural Ontario Foresight Paper, [Growth Beyond Cities: Place-based Rural Development Policy in Ontario](#), by Dr. David Freshwater. What do you see as the key rural and small town development opportunities that will inform your approach to governing?

Rural Priorities - Provincial Election 2018

Ranked Concerns (economic, environmental and social matters) based on priority

1	Access to quality medical services nearby
2	Services for an aging population: home care/aging in place/ caregiver support
3	Water quality in lakes, streams, rivers
4	Cost of energy
5	Long term care facilities – availability of beds in the region
6	Improved broadband services – higher speed, wider access
7	Farmland loss/protection
8	Food security
9	Financing of infrastructure (local sewer/water and roads)
10	Municipal financial stability (level of intergovernmental transfer and/or capacity of local tax base)
11	Developing local food systems
12	Water quantity/support for drinking, irrigations
13	Land use planning – growth and settlement policies, containing sprawl
14	Support for primary industries, e.g., mining, farming, forestry
15	Addictions and/or mental illness
16	Youth employment/underemployment
17	Labour force development – addressing workforce skills shortage
18	Poverty and/or income disparity
19	School closures – provincial funding formulas and Pupil Accommodation Review Process policies
20	Protection of ag. Supply management in NAFTA trade negotiations.