

Community Living Ontario  
Election 2014  
Toolkit



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## Introduction

**The purpose of the #EndTheWait campaign is to ensure that securing supports and ending the wait for people who have an intellectual disability, and their families is a priority issue for the next government. This election, Community Living Ontario is asking you to help us end the wait.**

**We have developed this campaign in cooperation with our partners in the Provincial Network on Developmental Services in order to ensure that we are all asking for the same outcome.**

## Our Ask:

In this election, we are asking party candidates:



**If your party is elected, would you commit to ending the wait for funding and supports for people who have an intellectual disability and their families and stabilizing services by committing to the \$810 million over three years promised in the proposed 2014 provincial budget? ”**

## Why Advocate for People who have an Intellectual Disability, and their Families? :

There are more than 90,000 children and adults in Ontario who have an intellectual disability. Like everyone, these people seek to live and work and play in their community with their neighbours, friends and family. Many require support to participate effectively. Currently, the government of Ontario spends \$1.7 billion to provide various funding and support to 61,000 children and adults who have an intellectual disability.

Still, many individuals and families are in dire need of support. Of those who currently receive support there are many who are not having all of their needs met. Many others are receiving no support at all. At present, there are 17,000 children and adults waiting for daily living supports and more than 7,300 hundred waiting for support to live in a home of their own.

The government provides assistance through the Ontario Disability Support Plan for more than 61,000 adults to cover their living expenses. This support represents up to about \$12,000 per year for a single person, an amount that is more than 40% below the Statistics Canada low income cutoff which is typically used to measure the poverty line. It is estimated that 75% of people who have an intellectual disability live in poverty.

While many people who have an intellectual disability are able and want to work, according to Statistics Canada, only 26.1% of working age people who have an intellectual disability are employed and 40% have never worked. Even when people find employment, the average income of a person who has an intellectual disability is less than half of that of a person who does not have a disability. Meanwhile, employment services for people who have an intellectual disability are uncoordinated and often ineffective in providing people the type of ongoing support they need to succeed in employment.

People who have an intellectual disability and their families are in critical need of support from their government. Significant investment is needed to provide the supports required to help people live a decent life in the community without the risk of isolation and poverty. The need for change has been widely recognized, including by the **Select Committee on Developmental Services**, which in its recent Interim Report outlined the drastic need for change. The Provincial Ombudsman is also currently investigating these issues and has heard complaints from more than 1,000 people about the problems that exist.

The Minister of Community and Social Services recently announced a commitment by government to invest \$810 million over the next three years to begin to address these critical issues. Unfortunately, that commitment died with the call of the election and, as a result, almost 25,000 children and adults who have an intellectual disability continue to wait for the help they need.

# What is the Objective of the Toolkit?

This toolkit provides information on how to engage with local candidates during the election campaign and how to share practical recommendations about crucial issues. This toolkit also serves as a quick reference guide that supplies you with information and facts that you can share with people you speak to, whether it be a current MPP, an election candidate, or someone close to you. It is the starting point of change!

This election toolkit also provides helpful information on simple ways that you can take action in your riding and in your community. Party leaders and local candidates need to hear loud and clear that voters are concerned about **securing supports and ending the wait for people who have an intellectual disability, and their families**, and that they will heavily weigh party platforms when they vote.

Community Living Ontario has identified three priority areas for action at the provincial level, which will enhance the future for people with an intellectual disability, and their families:

- That the \$810 million over three years promised in the recent 2014 provincial budget be implemented by whichever party forms the next government.
- That the next government commit to a long-term plan for investment in the developmental services sector aimed at ensuring that adequate supports and services exist to eliminate waitlists in the sector and stabilize agencies, by providing the operating infrastructure needed to sustain the system and help to create innovative solutions.
- That funding be available in the next 12 months to address the needs of all who are waiting for services and supports and are deemed to be in crisis or facing crisis in the near future.

Within your community and based on your personal experience, there may be other specific changes that you want to advocate for. In this election kit, we have provided you with information on ways to effectively convey these key messages to the candidates and to other influencers such as the media.

We hope you find the contents of this election kit useful. If you have any questions, please visit our website at <http://www.communitylivingontario.ca> or contact us at [info@endthewait.ca](mailto:info@endthewait.ca)

# 1 Meet Your Local Candidates

**The provincial election will be held on Thursday June 12, 2014. It is important to go out and meet your candidates, get to know their positions, and educate them about the need to commit to ending the wait for funding and supports for people who have an intellectual disability and their families and stabilizing services by committing to the \$810 million over three years promised in the proposed 2014 provincial budget.**

**Community Living Ontario encourages everyone who wants to put this issue on the election agenda to meet with your local candidates. The broader the group the greater the impact, so try to include: people with intellectual disabilities, and their families, as well as organizations such as service and support agencies, housing providers and community health centres.**

## Why meet with your candidates?

- Intellectual disabilities affect so many people. Meeting with a candidate face-to-face is an opportunity to hear more about their background.
- A face-to-face meeting gives you a chance to learn more about what your local candidates know about the issues affecting people with intellectual disabilities, and their families, and provides an opportunity for you to educate them about what is needed.
- Meeting with candidates is an opportunity to get into more detail about local issues and to reinforce the key messages being delivered to the party leaders:
- Individuals who have an intellectual disability and their families are in crisis. The developmental services system is broken and community support agencies are struggling to respond to this crisis. Investment will:
  - End the wait for daily living supports for children and adults which is almost 20,000 people long;
  - Begin to address the wait list of over 7,000 people who are waiting for support to live in a home of their own;
  - Deliver stability to agencies who provide frontline supports;
  - Develop new community-based services that support key life transitions.

## Meeting with candidates – STEP BY STEP

### Scheduling the meeting:

- Find out who your local candidates are. This information can be found at the Elections Ontario website [www.elections.on.ca](http://www.elections.on.ca) or by visiting the individual party websites.
- Send your request for a meeting in writing, stating who you are and why you are requesting the meeting.
- Confirm how long the meeting will be, and plan an agenda for this amount of time.
- Call the day before to confirm the meeting.

### In advance of the meeting:

- Research the candidate. Find out about their background, and look for experience or connection with our sector.
- Think about what your “key messages” are – these are the points that you want to make sure to get across. Write them down and bring them with you to the meeting so you can be reminded to repeat them often. For example:  
**Individuals who have an intellectual disability and their families are in crisis. The developmental services system is broken and community support agencies are struggling to respond to this crisis. Investment will:**
  - End the wait for daily living supports for children and adults which is almost 20,000 people long
  - Begin to address the wait list of over 7,000 people who are waiting for support to live in a home of their own
  - Deliver stability to agencies who provide frontline supports
  - Develop new community-based services that support key life transitions
- Gather information on local data and statistics, particularly information that demonstrates there are challenges for people accessing services in your community.
- Develop a few “asks” – these are things that the local candidate could have as campaign commitments related to developmental services sector. For ideas, you can refer to the One-Page Summary document in this tool kit. Some suggestions include:

- That the \$810 million over three years promised in the recent 2014 provincial budget be implemented by whichever party forms the next government.
- That the next government commit to a long-term plan for investment in the developmental services sector aimed at ensuring that adequate supports and services exist to eliminate waitlists in the sector and stabilize agencies by providing the operating infrastructure needed to sustain the system and help create innovative solutions.
- That funding be available in the next 12 months to address the needs of all who are waiting for services and supports and are deemed to be in crisis or facing crisis in the near future.

### At the meeting:

- Arrive on time.
- Focus on discussion, not debate. Present your issues in a clear way, referring back to your key messages as much as possible.
- Be sure to discuss how **ending the wait for funding and supports for people who have an intellectual disability** directly affects you, your friends and your family. Personal stories have an impact.
- Engage in active listening to determine the candidate's views, beliefs, and values. Present your asks – tell the candidate what you think they should commit to in this election campaign, and how this would help address **ending the wait** in your community.
- Offer your assistance – ask: **“What can we do to help you to work towards securing supports and ending the wait for people who have an intellectual disability, and their families?”**
- Leave enough time for discussion and questions.

### What to leave behind:

- Prepare a package that includes various **#EndTheWait** documents including the **2014 Provincial Election Campaign #EndTheWait Summary One-Sheet**, and your contact information.

### After the meeting:

- Send a letter (or email) to the candidate, thanking them for meeting with you. (We have provided a sample thank you letter at the end of this document [Sample Letter](#)). Offer your expertise or assistance on these issues in the future.

# 2 Contact Your Local Media

**Media can be an important tool when trying to raise an issue at election time. The information below will help you to bring the issue of **securing supports and ending the wait for people who have an intellectual disability, and their families, a priority issue for the next government to your local media in an effective manner. We have outlined three simple things you can do to raise the profile of mental health and addictions as an election issue through your local media:****

## Write a letter to the editor

A letter to the editor can be an effective way for individuals and/or organizations to deliver important information to the public. The “letters” section in newspapers provides a forum for public comment or debate. You can use a letter to the editor to:

- 1 Correct or clarify information or perceptions:** If there is an article that you think carried the wrong message about securing supports and ending the wait for people who have an intellectual disability, or had incorrect information, write a letter to the editor. Share your expertise on this topic and talk about how important it is that the next government make securing supports and ending the wait a priority.
- 2 Introduce or reinforce a message:** If there is an article in your local newspaper that somehow relates back to **securing supports and ending the wait**, you can respond to that article and either introduce or reinforce the message about the need for **securing supports and ending the wait for people with an intellectual disability, and their families**. Use a newspaper article – whether positive or negative – as an opportunity to raise your issues.
- 3 Express an opinion or point of view:** You can also write a letter to the editor even if your topic has not been covered lately in the news. In your letter, state that **securing supports and ending the wait for people who have an intellectual disability, and their families needs to be a priority for the next government**, and that the community needs to come together to raise this issue with local candidates at the upcoming provincial election.

## Contact a local journalist

Journalists from local newspapers, radio, and television stations are interested in hearing from local residents like you about the issues that matter. Here are some tips for contacting local media outlets:

- 1** Gather a list of media outlets that cover events and activities in your community. Try to find specific contact information for journalists that would be interested in a story related to people with intellectual disabilities, and their families and the election.
- 2** Before contacting media outlets, take some time to think about what you want to ask the reporter to do. Journalists get a lot of emails and calls, and may not have a lot of time to chat. The more organized and focused you are, the more likely they will listen to what you have to say and decide to cover your story.
- 3** Remember that when you are talking to journalists anything you say could appear in print, on the radio or on TV. Before doing an interview with a reporter, always take time to write down two or three points you want to make – and stick to those points! There is no such thing as “off the record.”
- 4** Speak from personal experience whenever possible. Help them by offering insight based on your personal experience.

## Put out a media release

A media release is an announcement to the media about a newsworthy issue. It is a fairly short document that states the key issues and provides quotes that a journalist can use when writing his or her own story. Please refer to the [Working with the Media document](#).

# 3 Attend an All-Candidates Meeting

**All-candidates meetings and debates are events where political candidates come together to discuss election issues before a public audience. These meetings offer the local candidates and parties the opportunity to reinforce key messages and share positions on different issues. As a voter or member of an organization concerned about securing supports and ending the wait for people who have an intellectual disability, and their families, an all-candidates meeting offers an opportunity to ask questions to your local candidates, and have them make a public commitment to your issues.**

## How to find your local events

You can try finding information about local all-candidates events through:

- Local candidate headquarters or offices
- Your MPP's constituency office
- Political party websites or riding association offices
- Local media
- Some community organizations

## Framing the question:

Our aim is to have the following question asked of every candidate at every debate or town hall meeting:

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**“If your party is elected, would you commit to ending the wait for funding and supports for people who have an intellectual disability and their families and stabilizing services by committing to the \$810 million over three years promised in the proposed 2014 provincial budget?”**

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**Provide context.** Your local candidates may not be fully aware of the issues impacting people with intellectual disabilities, and their families in your riding. Before posing the questions, provide one or two sentences that explain the situation, so that the candidates understand the problem that they have to address. For example:

- The developmental services sector, which supports over 60,000 children and adults who have an intellectual disability has been in crisis for some time now; this has been validated by the government's all party Select Committee on Developmental Services. Their final report and recommendations were due in June.
- An Ombudsman's investigation into waiting lists for people who have an intellectual disability brought in over 1,000 complaints; the results of this in-depth investigation are expected this summer.
- Delivery of supports and services have been eroding for years.
- Over 100 agencies are currently engaged in labour negotiations with no commitment of future funding with which to bargain.

**State the facts.** Facts and figures are a powerful way of demonstrating the severity of a problem. It's one thing to say that something is an issue, but it's another to show the evidence. If you have a specific concern in your area, try to find some facts that will back it up. (Ensure that the facts you are using come from a credible source.) For example:

Approximately 25,000 children and adults who have an intellectual disability are on waitlists for support.

- Agencies have not had budget increases in over 4 years and cannot be expected to continue to provide quality supports without resources.
- The proposed 2014 provincial budget promised the developmental services sector \$810 in funding to eliminate waitlists for the Passport and Special Services at home programs, reduce wait list for residential supports, stabilize agencies and provide opportunity to develop supports for people who have an intellectual disability.
- Many people who have an intellectual disability need support to be included fully in their community. The support they need is often not available under these circumstances. Also refer to the [Questions & Answers](#) document.

# 4 How to Take Action

**Some of us have a passion for policy reform and want to be active and fully engaged in order to improve the lives of people in our communities. We may feel a sense of responsibility to take action. There are many different ways you can take action depending on how involved you wish to get. Here are steps to help guide you on advocating the issues with your local candidates.**

## Step 1: Know Your Electoral Riding

It is good to start by knowing the name of your electoral district or constituency. There are 107 electoral districts in Ontario. You can find yours by entering your postal code at the Elections Ontario website [http://fyed.elections.on.ca/fyed/en/form\\_page\\_en.jsp](http://fyed.elections.on.ca/fyed/en/form_page_en.jsp)

The province of Ontario is divided into 107 constituencies. Each constituency will have one elected official that will have a seat at the Legislative Assembly.

## Step 2: Know Your Candidates

Political parties may nominate a candidate within your constituency. Get a list of the candidates running and their parties of representation from the Elections Ontario website: <http://www.wemakevotingeasy.ca/en/find-your-candidate.aspx>.

Each party will also have a listing and a biography of the candidates they are nominating. Here are the links to the Party listing of candidates:

**Green:** <http://www.gpo.ca/candidates>

**Liberal:** <http://www.ontarioliberal.ca/OurTeam/WhoWeAre/Candidates.aspx>

**NDP:** <http://ontariondp.com/en/candidates>

**PC:** <http://www.ontariopc.com/our-team/>

In addition, each candidate will have their own website. The links to these pages can also be found through the Party website.

### Step 3: Know the Issues

You can download, print and share the **2014 Provincial Election Campaign Summary One-Sheet**. Speak to your friends and families and share your knowledge on the issues affecting people who have an intellectual disability, and their families.

### Step 4: Know Your Candidate's View on the Issues

Understand the level of knowledge and interest each of the candidates has on issues related to people who have an intellectual disability, and their families. There are several ways you can solicit their responses:

- Write letters ([Sample Letter to Candidate](#)), emails and ask questions. The best method of communication is through email or other social media tools since it is received quickly by the candidate and allows them an easy way to respond to your queries.
- You can follow candidates through Twitter or Facebook. Tweet or write on a candidate's Facebook wall!

**1 Green Party:** Mike Schreineer  
**Twitter:** @MikeSchreiner  
**Facebook:** Mike Schreiner

**2 Liberal:** Kathleen Wynne  
**Twitter:** @kathleen\_wynne  
**Facebook:** Kathleen Wynne

**3 NDP:** Andrea Horwath  
**Twitter:** @AndreaHorwath  
**Facebook:** Andrea Horwath

**4 PC:** Tim Hudak  
**Twitter:** @timhudak  
**Facebook:** Tim Hudak

Don't forget to follow **Community Living Ontario** on Twitter as well: @**CLOntario**.

Speak to electoral candidates when they come knocking on your door. Remember to be familiar with the issues prior to that visit. Use the **2014 Provincial Election Campaign #EndTheWait Summary One-Sheet** as a guide.

Attend an all-candidates debate or town hall meetings.

## Step 5: Know Each Party's View on the Issues

All major parties have now released campaign platforms. You can read the platforms by visiting the following websites:

**Green Party of Ontario:** <http://www.gpo.ca/>

**Ontario Liberal Party:** <http://www.ontarioliberal.ca/>

**Ontario New Democratic Party:** <http://ontariondp.com/en/>

**Ontario Progressive Conservative:** <http://www.ontariopc.com>

**Connect with each of the party leaders and ask our #EndTheWait question:**

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**“If your party is elected, would you commit to ending the wait for funding and supports for people who have an intellectual disability and their families and stabilizing services by committing to the \$810 million over three years promised in the proposed 2014 provincial budget?”**

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In addition, Community Living Ontario has sent out a question to each party seeking a response. Check the website [www.communitylivingontario.ca](http://www.communitylivingontario.ca) to view the published responses.

## Step 6: Meet Your Candidates

You can consider hosting an event that will bring together all candidates in your local constituency. Ideally, it should be a community event that can be hosted by an association or a local organization. The larger the number of voters attending, the more appealing it would be for candidates to attend. Organizing an event will not guarantee that all candidates will show up. Since Community Living remains non-partisan, it is important to ensure a balance when inviting all candidates attending the event.

The event will need to be original, appealing, savvy and fun. It should draw media attention and provide photo opportunities for the candidates to come out.

# 5 Engage Others

One of the most significant things you can do to help put **securing supports and ending the wait on the election agenda** is organize your community around this issue. The more people you can rally around this movement, and the more diverse your group, the greater your chances of getting the attention of your local candidates and party leaders.

Community Living Ontario needs your help to ask candidates this question:

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**“If your party is elected, would you commit to ending the wait for funding and supports for people who have an intellectual disability and their families and stabilizing services by committing to the \$810 million over three years promised in the proposed 2014 provincial budget?”**

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Here are some simple things you can do to get the word out about this campaign and help make a difference in your community and across your networks in this election:

## Social media

Use social media to expand your reach and build audience support for the **#EndTheWait** campaign. You may have Facebook friends and Twitter followers that would like to get involved in the conversation and **help put the issue of securing supports and ending the wait for people with an intellectual disability, and their families on the election agenda**. Here are some simple things you can do:

**Facebook:** Share information about the **#EndTheWait** campaign through your status. Tell your Facebook friends that **securing supports and ending the wait for people who have an intellectual disability, and their families, needs to be a priority issue for the next government, and that each party must take a stance on how they will address this issue**. Ask people to visit [www.communitylivingontario.ca](http://www.communitylivingontario.ca) to learn more and **help make securing supports and ending the wait** an election issue.

Go to the [Community Living Ontario Facebook page](#) and on the bottom of the lefthand side, click “share”. This will post information about the Community Living Ontario page on your Facebook page, and allow others to view the page and ‘LIKE’ it, as well!

**Twitter:** Tell your twitter followers that **securing supports and ending the wait needs to be a priority for the next government**. Use the hashtags: **#EndTheWait**, **#voteON** and **#ONpoli** to get others involved in the conversation about putting the issue of **securing supports and ending the wait for people with an intellectual disability, and their families on the election agenda**. Do this regularly to keep the momentum going!

Don't forget to follow Community Living Ontario [@CLOntario](#) on Twitter.

Retweet our tweets during the build up to Election Day 2014 to your followers to help spread the word.

## E-mail

Is a quick and easy way to spread the word about this campaign to your networks is by e-mail. This option allows you to send information in a personalized manner to anyone who you think would be interested in **helping make securing supports and ending the wait for people who have an intellectual disability, and their families a priority election issue**. You can include your friends, family members, neighbours, and even co-workers.

### **Personalized message about the #EndTheWait campaign:**

Send out a mass e-mail letting people know that there is a movement building to make securing supports and ending the wait for people who have an intellectual disability, and their families a priority issue for the next government. Ask people to visit the [www.communitylivingontario.ca](http://www.communitylivingontario.ca) website to learn more about this campaign.

Be sure to let them know that it only takes 2-minutes to send an e-mail to the party leaders and local riding candidates about this important issue.

## Using public spaces

There may be many people in your community who want to see action from government, but are not aware of this campaign. Use the poster provided in this election kit to get the word out about ways people can help make securing supports and ending the wait an election issue.

### **Download the Community Living Election 2014 Poster in .PDF format.**

- Organizations/Partners/Agencies – put this poster up in your staff room, waiting room, and anywhere else in your office where people can see it. Send it to your members and partner agencies and ask them to post it publicly as well.
- Individuals – think of creative places to put up this poster e.g. – your office lunchroom, your local library, coffee shops, community centres, and anywhere that has a bulletin board for public use.

## Establishing connections and partnerships

There is power in numbers and in partnerships. Individual voters and developmental services sector agencies are encouraged to work together and coordinate their efforts. You may already have your own networks – if so, contact those individuals and agencies to help you to raise the profile of people who have an intellectual disability, and their families in this election. Think about organizing joint meetings or events, or setting up an informal committee to plan your efforts.

### Where to find more information and resources?

#### **Key websites:**

**Elections Ontario:** <http://www.elections.on.ca/>

**Find Your MPP:** [http://fyed.elections.on.ca/fyed/en/form\\_page\\_en.jsp](http://fyed.elections.on.ca/fyed/en/form_page_en.jsp)

**Find your candidates:** <http://wemakevotingeasy.ca/en/find-your-candidate.aspx>

**Government of Ontario:** <http://www.ontario.ca/>

**Legislative Assembly of Ontario:** <http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/home.do>

**Community Living Ontario homepage:** <http://www.communitylivingontario.ca/>

#### **Party websites and links to election platforms:**

**Green Party of Ontario:** <http://www.gpo.ca/>

**Ontario Liberal Party:** <http://www.ontarioliberal.ca/>

**Ontario New Democratic Party:** <http://ontariondp.com/en/>

**Ontario Progressive Conservative:** <http://www.ontariopc.com/>

**\*You may also want to watch these short videos related to Charities and their participation in political activities which was recently produced by the Canada Revenue Association:**

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/vdglly/chrts-gvng/srs-pitclctvts-eng.html>

# Sample Letter to Candidates

Date:

I am writing to you today to request an opportunity to speak with you before the June 12th election. There are matters of great urgency that affect the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, and their families, and I want you to know about them. In particular, I wish to know:

***If your party is elected, would you commit to ending the wait for funding and supports for people who have an intellectual disability, and their families and stabilizing services by committing to the \$810 million over three years promised in the proposed 2014 provincial budget?***

Let me explain why this is needed.

There are more than 90,000 children and adults in Ontario who have an intellectual disability. Like everyone, these people seek to live and work and play in their community with their neighbours, friends and family. Many require support to participate effectively. At present the government of Ontario spends \$1.7 billion to provide various funding and support to 61,000 children and adults who have an intellectual disability.

Still, many individuals and families are in dire need of support. Of those who currently receive support there are many who are not having all of their needs met. Many others are receiving no support at all. At present there are 17,000 children and adults waiting for daily living supports and more than 7,300 hundred waiting for support to live in a home of their own.

The government provides assistance through the Ontario Disability Support Plan for more than 61,000 adults to cover their living expenses. This support represents up to about \$12,000 per year for a single person, an amount that is more than 40% below the Statistics Canada low income cutoff which is typically used to measure the poverty line. It is estimated that 75% of people who have an intellectual disability live in poverty.

While many people who have an intellectual disability are able and want to work, according to Statistics Canada, only 26.1% of working age people who have an intellectual disability are employed and 40% have never worked. Even when people find employment, the average income of a person who has an intellectual disability is less than half of that of a person who does not

have a disability. Meanwhile, employment services for people who have an intellectual disability are uncoordinated and often ineffective in providing people the type of ongoing support they need to succeed in employment.

People who have an intellectual disability and their families are in critical need of support from their government. Significant investment is needed to provide the supports required to help people live a decent life in the community without the risk of isolation and poverty. The need for change has been widely recognized including by the Select Committee on Developmental Services which in its recent Interim Report outlined the drastic need for change. The Provincial Ombudsman is also currently investigating these issues and has heard complaints from more than 1,000 people about the problems that exist.

The Minister of Community and Social Services recently announced a commitment by government to invest \$810 million over the next three years to begin to address these critical issues. Unfortunately, that commitment died with the call of the election and, as a result, almost 25,000 children and adults who have an intellectual disability continue to wait for the help they need.

I look forward to your response as I weigh my voting options for the upcoming election. If you would like more information on any of these issues, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

# Questions & Answers

## **Q: What do people who have an intellectual disability want?**

**A.** Like all of us, people who have an intellectual disability and their families simply want to live, learn, work, and participate in the life of the community. They want to be part of things and contribute to community life. Some require support to do so.

## **Q: Doesn't the government already spend a lot of money on services for people who have an intellectual disability?**

**A.** The Government of Ontario spends about \$1.7 Billion a year on community services and supports for people who have an intellectual disability and their families through a branch of government called “developmental services”. The current funding for developmental services is far less than what is actually needed. At present there are more than 20 thousand people on waiting lists for support from the developmental services sector.

## **Q: Are people who have an intellectual disability now fully included into our communities?**

**A.** We've come a long way from the days when people who have an intellectual disability were routinely institutionalized and kept totally separate from the community. Many people now live and work as part of the community, learn in the same schools and classrooms as other children from their neighbourhoods, and volunteer in our community organizations. At the same time, there are many barriers that prevent others from being fully part of the community – segregated education programs that keep kids apart, inadequate community supports that reduce opportunities for community involvement and attitudes that create distance between people who have an intellectual disability and other community members.

## **Q: Don't many people who have an intellectual disability live with their families?**

**A.** Yes, thousands of parents support their sons and daughters to live in their family home. Where this is the choice of the family and the individual it can provide for an excellent quality of life for all concerned. Families however require various funded supports to address some of the unique needs of their sons and daughters, supports that too often are not available. As parents age, the range and cost of these supports typically increase and failure of the government to provide adequate funding for supports can lead to family breakdown and crisis.

## **Q: What can I do to help?**

**A.** You can tell party leaders that the community is the appropriate place for people who have an intellectual disability to live. Tell them that our communities need the resources to support people who have an intellectual disability adequately. A commitment equal to or greater than the \$810 million over three years described in the proposed 2014 provincial budget is needed to address the needs of people who have an intellectual disability and their families.

# 2014 Provincial Election Campaign – #EndTheWait

## The Question for Candidates:

**If your party is elected, would you commit to ending the wait for funding and supports for people who have an intellectual disability and their families and stabilizing services by committing to the \$810 million over three years promised in the proposed 2014 provincial budget?**

## Why:

- Individuals who have an intellectual disability and their families are in crisis. The developmental services system requires imminent investment and planning. Community support agencies are struggling to respond to this crisis. Investment will:
  - End the wait for daily living supports for children and adults which is almost 20,000 people long
  - Begin to address the wait list of over 7,000 people who are waiting for support to live in a home of their own
  - Deliver stability to agencies who provide frontline supports
  - Develop new community-based services that support community inclusion.

## The Background:

- The developmental services sector, which supports over 60,000 children and adults who have an intellectual disability has been in crisis for some time now; this has been validated by the government's all party Select Committee on Developmental Services. Their final report and recommendations were due in June.
- An Ombudsman's investigation into waiting lists for people who have an intellectual disability brought in over 1,000 complaints; the results of this in-depth investigation are expected this summer.
- Delivery of supports and services have been eroding for years.
- Over 100 agencies are currently engaged in labour negotiations with no commitment of future funding with which to bargain.

## The Facts:

- Approximately 25,000 children and adults who have an intellectual disability are on waitlists for support
- Agencies have not had budget increases in over 4 years and cannot be expected to continue to provide quality supports without resources
- The proposed 2014 provincial budget promised the developmental services sector \$810 in funding to eliminate waitlists for the Passport and Special Services at home programs, reduce wait list for residential supports, stabilize agencies and provide opportunity to develop supports for people who have an intellectual disability
- Social inclusion and transformation is not realistic under these circumstances.

## The Solution:

- The \$810 million over three years promised in the recent 2014 provincial budget be implemented by whichever party forms the next government
- The next government commit to a long-term plan for investment in the developmental services sector aimed at ensuring that adequate supports and services exist to eliminate waitlists in the sector and stabilize agencies by providing the operating infrastructure needed to sustain the system and help create innovative solutions.
- That funding be available in the next 12 months to address the needs of all who are waiting for services and supports and are deemed to be in crisis or facing crisis in the near future.

# Working With the Media – Campaign 2014

## Overview

**News coverage is one of the very best ways to have your message reach a large number of people. Although you have less control over the content of a news story, compared to an advertisement or public service announcement, your message has more impact when carried as part of a news story. The public, in general, views news stories as more objective and more important.**

**The news media will be interested in your message if it is “newsworthy.” The newsworthiness of a story is measured in many ways, but reporters look for stories that involve conflict, controversy or that hold some emotional appeal.**

**A number of things will influence the media in their decision on whether to do a story on Community Living issues, including:**

- How serious is the problem?
- How many people are affected?
- When did they last do a story on this, and what is new since then?
- How many other organizations/individuals have similar stories?
- What else is happening in the news today/this week?

## Making Your Message Newsworthy

News coverage is one of the very best ways to have your message reach a large number of people. Although you have less control over the content of a news story, compared to an advertisement or public service announcement, your message has more impact when carried as part of a news story. The public, in general, views news stories as more objective and more important.

- Keep the message short and simple.
- Make sure your message is strong and conveys the seriousness of the problems currently facing Community Living Associations.
- Make sure that wherever possible, you back your statements with facts and numbers.

# Writing a Media Release

- Put your key message in your headline and in the first sentence of the media release. Make it brief and easy to understand. Often, journalists will decide in the first sentence or paragraph whether this is a story they will cover.
- Your release should answer the questions, who, what, where, when and why?
- Avoid covering more than one or two issues in your media release. Choose the topic/issue that most directly affects people with disabilities, rather than your organization. If possible, your media release should fit onto one page.
- Make it look neat and easy to read. Each media release you send should have a similar look to it. Your logo and name should be large.
- Include the name, phone number and email address of an Association contact person at the bottom of your media release. That person should be comfortable answering the media's questions and be able to speak credibly on behalf of your association. Make sure that the designated spokesperson is accessible by phone and/or email to the media.
- It can be helpful to email a media release to an individual reporter, rather than to the publication or broadcast outlet newsroom. Your organization should have an up-to-date media contact list (including email addresses). To establish a list, call each media outlet and ask for the name of the Assignment Editor (daily newspapers), the Editor (weekly newspapers) or the News Director or Assignment Editor at radio and television stations. Don't forget local magazines.
- In cases where there are only a few media outlets receiving your media release, you may wish to deliver them yourself in-person to give you the opportunity to meet a reporter. Establishing a personal relationship with a reporter can often lead to better coverage. If you are unable to personally deliver the media release, email it, or fax it to members of the media. Faxing implies urgency and ensures that most media outlets receive it at approximately the same time.
- When you know the media release has been received, follow-up with a phone call to ensure it has been received by the most appropriate person. Ask if there is any further information they require and use this opportunity to "sell" them on the importance of this story - not to you, but to the public.

# Preparing to be Interviewed

**Whether you have solicited news coverage or are unexpectedly approached by the news media, it always pays to take the time to plan for each media interview.**

- If a reporter calls you unexpectedly and wants to interview you immediately, explain that you have some business to attend to, but say you will call them back within a specified amount of time.
- Ask what the reporter's deadline is. Call them back as quickly as you can - always before their deadline.
- Make sure you have their name, phone number, email address, and publication/station/program.
- If the interview is for broadcast, ask how the interview will be used. It may be used in its entirety as a feature, or be cut into short "clips" or "sound bites" to be used as part of newscasts. You can then judge the length of your answers accordingly.
- Ask if they will be interviewing anyone else for this particular story and if they know when this story is expected to run.
- Tell them when you will call back.
- Plan what you wish to say - your message, the facts and examples to back it up and answers to questions you think the reporter may ask.

[\(See attached "Media Interview Request Form"\)](#)

# The Interview

- Assume the reporter you talk to knows very little about developmental services issues. Keep the information you provide very simple, unless the reporter requests more complex information. Avoid using jargon or short forms they may not understand.
- Be message driven, rather than question driven. While you do not want to avoid answering a reporter's questions, try to use the questions as an opportunity to convey the information you think is important. Use bridging to move back to your main message. Bridging is a way to answer a question in a manner that allows you to steer the interview in the direction you would like to take it. For example:

**Question:**

**“Hasn't the government recently increased funding?”**

**Answer:**

**That is true, but because demand for services has increased we are left with is a critical shortage of community-based resources for people who have an intellectual disability. Many families are now in crisis. Let me give you some examples.”**

**Other bridging phrases -**

**“That is not true...here's what you should know.”**

**“That is worth considering and may be true, but have you considered...?”**

**“I think there's a more important point to be made here...”**

- Do not ask to speak “off the record”. Assume everything you say, even in offhand remarks, could be tomorrow's headline!
- Try to make the interview as relaxed for you and the reporter as possible. In all but very exceptional cases, the media is not out to “get” anyone. They have a job to do – find out what the story is and tell it. Help them do their job in any way you can.
- If you don't know – say so. Then tell them you can help them to find the information they require.
- Be pleasant. Never appear angry or defensive.

## Tips for Working With Television and Radio Reporters

- Be prepared. Time passes very quickly when you are being interviewed for a “longer” radio or television segment. What may seem like a long time - ten or fifteen minutes - never seems like enough time when it’s done. Make sure your strongest points are made at the beginning and try to repeat them again in the middle and at the end of your interview. People often remember the first and last things they hear.
- Television reporters (and newspaper photographers) look for highly visual stories. The more action/color/crowds you provide, the more likely you are to get coverage.
- Watch out for the dreaded, “Ums.” Speak clearly and slowly.
- On TV, appearance does count. A pleasant, confident demeanor and a neat, professional look will ensure that your message is carried without distraction.

## Organizing A News Conference

- Depending on the importance of your announcement, you may consider holding a news conference. In many cases, if the announcement is not a major one and if there is nothing visual to offer photographers, a simple news release sent to the media is enough to achieve your goals.
- If you hold a news conference, time it to suit the deadline of the media outlet most important to convey your message. If you want same day television coverage on the evening news, aim for early afternoon. If a morning newspaper is most important, avoid morning news conferences. Newspapers dislike running “old” news on the front page, so if a story has already run for a full day on radio and television, you will not likely get as good coverage in the paper the following morning.
- If you are holding a news conference, choose a room that will look full according to the number of people you are inviting. Encourage as many of your employees and clients to attend as is possible.

## Follow-Up

- If a reporter has done a good job, take the time to pick up the phone and tell them that you appreciate their work. Reporters don't like to think that they are advocates for organizations, but they do like to know that they have told the story in a fair and accurate manner. If you have received positive response as a result of their story, let them know.
- Save newspaper clippings, as well as video and audio tapes of interviews. They can sometimes be used to forward to other reporters who are considering doing a similar story.

## Other Opportunities for Media Coverage

**Radio Talk Shows** - Call your community radio stations to determine if they have interview or phone-in programs. If they do, ask to speak to the producer. Tell her/him that you would like to forward some information that may be of interest for a future program. If he/she is agreeable, arrange to call back after the producer has had time to review it to see if an interview might be arranged. Offer to provide other guests, such as self-advocates, and family members.

**Local Television or Cable Shows** - Many local television stations have interview programs that focus on news or feature stories. All community cable stations also carry programs that feature stories of local interest in the cities/towns they serve. Again, call stations for the names of the programs and speak directly to the producers to "make your pitch."

**Editorial Boards of Newspapers** - For major issues, a meeting with a local newspaper's editorial board can be very productive. While these discussions vary, they are often more for increasing the newspaper's awareness of an issue, rather than to produce a story. Your Association may wish to partner with other organizations with similar goals to discuss the broader issue of the impact of government cuts on social services. Save these opportunities for very important issues and go prepared to answer some tough and penetrating questions. Be sure to include self-advocates and family members.

**Op-Ed Pieces** - These articles are called "op-ed" because they run on the page opposite the editorial page. Often, newspapers are looking for opinion/information pieces that are written by prominent or outspoken members of the communities they serve. Put together a strong idea and outline, call the newspaper's editor or managing editor and "make your pitch." The key to a strong op-ed article is to focus on human issues, tell stories with emotional impact and make your issues easy to understand.

**Letters to the Editor** - This is a simple way to show your local newspaper the importance of disability issues to their readers. Whenever coverage is given to issues relating to people who have an intellectual disability, encourage members to send response letters to the editor. In those letters, members can express their own views, their thanks to the newspaper for recognizing the importance of these issues or their gratitude or displeasure at the actions/statements of others. Letters must be brief (two paragraphs maximum) and must be signed.

# Media Interview Request Form

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of reporter: \_\_\_\_\_

Publication/Station: \_\_\_\_\_

How will this be used? \_\_\_\_\_

Others being interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter's deadline: \_\_\_\_\_ (call back as soon as possible)

When is this story expected to run? \_\_\_\_\_ (do not ask for a copy of the story)

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**The main message I want to convey:** \_\_\_\_\_

Facts/Statistics to support my main message: \_\_\_\_\_

Examples (such as stories about people affected): \_\_\_\_\_

Other messages (if time allows): \_\_\_\_\_

How Did It Go/ Follow-up? \_\_\_\_\_



PROVINCIAL ELECTION 2014

*Dear candidates,*

**If you want  
OUR SUPPORT!  
We need  
YOUR SUPPORT!**

*If your party is elected, would you commit to **ending the wait** for funding and support for people, who have an intellectual disability, and their families and stabilizing services by committing to the \$810 million over three years as promised in the proposed 2014 provincial budget?*

Let's **end the wait!**

**SPREAD THE WORD!**

Visit [communitylivingontario.ca](http://communitylivingontario.ca) to learn how you can make a difference.

#EndTheWait



@CLOntario



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