



Ontario Election 2018 Candidate Survey Results

Immigration is important to community and economic development. Ahead of the June 2018 Ontario Election, the Immigration Partnership asked all election candidates in Waterloo Region to share their responses to three questions of importance on immigration. The follow responses were received from candidates.

If you have any questions about the survey contact:
ImmigrationPartnership@regionofwaterloo.ca.

Candidate questions

1. Successful immigrant and refugee settlement involves commitment and partnership from all levels of government, and sustainable investment in settlement services, legal aid programs, and more. If elected, will you use your role to ensure refugee claimants, refugees and recent immigrants have access to sustainably funded legal aid and settlement programs?
2. Employers seeking to hire immigrants and refugees to address labour market needs face challenges. There is a mismatch between the skills prioritized in the immigration system and workforce needs in Waterloo Region which negatively impacts immigrant hiring. If elected, are you committed to working with the Immigration Partnership and the business community to address this workforce gap?
3. In a recent Immigration Partnership survey of over 200 immigrants, refugees and international students living in Waterloo Region, 59% reported feeling isolated in the past 12 months; 18% very much so. If elected, will use your role to reduce social isolation among immigrants and refugees in Waterloo Region?

Waterloo Riding

Catherine Fife (New Democratic Party of Ontario)

1. Immigration is pivotal to the economic, cultural, and social fabric of Ontario. With the rise of anti-immigration sentiment in several of the world's largest economies, Ontario can become the best place for immigrants to build a future. Further, the continued tragic global refugee crisis means it is even more important that Ontario takes our humanitarian responsibilities seriously. Now more than ever, we must get immigration right.

Our priority is ensuring that new immigrants have the opportunity to succeed and build a life here. Language and cultural barriers can make it difficult to find meaningful employment, and many employers undervalue international experience. Andrea Horwath and the NDP will work to provide the best environment in the country for immigrants to settle, contribute, and prosper. We will partner with non-profit organizations, settlement service providers, employers, and municipalities to create job opportunities and settlement services.

2. A New Democrat government will make sure that the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program is responsive to the labour market. We will also work with professional associations and the federal government to streamline the process for foreign credential recognition so that highly-educated immigrants can find meaningful employment in their areas of expertise. Overall, we will work collaboratively to identify and remove systemic and structural bias, working to promote equity and inclusion.
3. Every Ontarian should have the opportunity to succeed and make a safe, happy, and comfortable life – no matter who they are. However, too many people feel unsafe, excluded and see opportunities taken away because of race, religion, abilities, gender, or sexual orientation. We need to stop this. We must minimize social isolation among immigrants and refugees, including in Waterloo Region.

A New Democrat government will be committed to the principles of inclusion, equity, and protecting human rights – celebrating diversity and actively working for greater inclusion. Our school curriculum will teach equity, so students can see the diversity of Ontario reflected in their classrooms and curriculum.

We will ensure that the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate has the funds and staff it needs to do its job. The Directorate will administer a new four-year \$20 million Ontario Anti-Racism Fund, supporting community organizations fighting racism and fostering equity and inclusion. Further, we will apply an intersectional gender lens — an understanding of how issues like gender and race can interact to dramatically change the way people's lives are affected — to government budgeting, policy, and programming.

We will keep working until every Ontarian enjoys truly equal rights and opportunities and is able to live freely with a strong sense of community belonging – without harassment, intimidation, or discrimination. Andrea Horwath and the NDP is committed to working collaboratively with partners to identify and remove systemic as well as structural bias, working to promote equity and inclusion.

Zdravko Gunjevic (Green Party of Ontario)

1. I and the Green Party want to help more newcomers access services they need by doubling the funding for immigrant settlement programs and economic bridging programs. We want to increase recognition and accessibility of culturally competent and diverse mental health and addictions services, and improve continuity of support as individuals move between public and private settings, such as postsecondary and newcomers programs.
2. Short answer is yes. My parents moved to Canada in 1978. My partner arrived in Canada as a landed immigrant in 1994. Ensuring that new comers to our province and our region is something that I hold dear to me. I'm committed to working with all levels of government as well as various immigrant and refugee groups to ensure new comers to our region are able to find employment.
3. There are a number of factors that affect international students, immigrants and refugees. In order to help reduce social isolation I would work with the various groups in the region and province, and ensure they have funding for: language training, including conversational English training, Settlement Programs have the funds they need to do their work and new comers know where to find these services, emotional and mental health support via an expanded OHIP+ program that includes extra funding for mental health services and work with various groups to ensure new comers have access to facilitated volunteer activities where to can meet other new comers and Ontarians.

Dan Weber (Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario)

1. I believe that non profit organizations and religious institutions are some of thebest organizations for sponsoring immigrants and refugees and assisting them in adsp ting into their new life. I think the government does a worse job in these areas and should only involve itself if and when a substantial need is identified which is not or cannot be filled by non state actors.
2. I think the the problem identified here is an important one. Local communities need more input into what skills are being selected in the immigration process. The solution to this problem is to find immigrants better suited to the needs of the community rather than taking in immigrants with skills that don't fit the local economy and then trying to find ways to help them adapt.
3. Again I think this is a task better left to non profit organizations than it is placed in the hands of government. The role of the government in this area is to help connect new Canadians with these organizations and to assist them when those organization prove unable or unwilling to help them which is seldom the case.

Cambridge Riding

Michele Braniff (Green Party of Ontario)

1. Provincial policy and regulations can be streamlined and improved to ensure an improved integration of new Canadians becoming engaged and connected in our community. The GPO is in favour of cutting red tape to improve accessibility to service and also to ensure that health care needs are addressed at a preventative level (OHIP plus and including care for mental health). In addition, the Green Party is in favour of a guaranteed living wage and housing first programs to ensure that the most vulnerable are able to satisfy basic needs. All of these supports are especially important for new Canadians (immigrants and refugees).
2. The GPO is in favour of collaboration and relies upon evidence-based research and looks at successful pilot projects to figure out practical and accessible programming to ensure that we remove barriers to labour participation. Further work / expansion on supporting accreditation of foreign-trained professionals is one approach; also, we will implement improvements to improve accessibility for post-secondary education, apprenticeships and lifelong learning. The Green Party is in favour of local solutions and would negotiate and support Regional government and organizations.
3. The Green Party of Ontario is in favour of maximizing well-being and implementing programming that supports and improves social indicators of health. Loneliness is an indicator of potential health problems and addressing this issue is part of the GPO vision to invest in prevention in order to transform the Ontario health care system from one that is mostly about crises management to a system founded on prevention. The GPO is in favour of implementing an Ontario Wellbeing Measurement Act in order to support social innovation to improve well-being of Ontario residents (especially the most vulnerable)

Kathryn McGarry (Ontario Liberal Party)

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. Yes.

Kitchener – Centre Riding

Stacey Danckert (Green Party of Ontario)

1. The Green Party's Vision is to put people first. We make it a high priority to give minority and marginalized groups (including immigrants and refugees) an increased voice and access to equal opportunities. We believe that together we should fight against the barriers that prevent equal access to services, legal aid, and fair wages. Our vision for equality includes fighting against systemic discrimination that immigrants, refugees, and other minority groups experience. If elected, we would double the funding for immigrant settlement programs and economic bridging programs.
2. Yes. We are committed to building up resources that promote more opportunities for immigrants and refugees, and those employers seeking to provide opportunities to these people. We are committed to working with businesses to align training with the particular needs required. On that front, we will enhance funding for adult education and online digital learning tools by providing additional financial support so that ability to pay is not an impediment to people building their skills. For small businesses we will raise the exemption level for the Employer Health Tax, giving small businesses more room to expand their workforce. Further, we are committed to ensuring that all workers, including and especially those from vulnerable groups such as immigrants and refugees, experience more supportive workplaces and fair wages.
3. We are committed to improving the experience and opportunities of vulnerable groups, such as immigrants and refugees. This includes social programs to provide counselling, mentorship, and social support networks for new arrivals to help them to adjust to their new home. These goals also serve the purpose of the Green Party's commitment to physical and mental health through health planning, preventative measures through personal health practices and coping skills. We understand the role of social determinants to health; thus we are committed to building more supportive systems that reduces the negative impact immigrants and refugees may experience as a consequence of social isolation.

Laura Mae Lindo (New Democratic Party of Ontario)

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Kitchener – Conestoga Riding

Kelly Dick (New Democratic Party of Ontario)

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Kitchener – South-Hespeler Riding

Nathan Lajeunesse (Ontario Libertarian Party)

1. I think governments do a terrible job at settlement services. Hespeler Baptist Church put the money together and privately sponsored a family and waited over a year longer than they were originally told because of government oversight. Government's involvement in immigration should be used for checking new residents for any violent or criminal history and health issues. New residents should either be self sufficient or sponsored by any individual Canadian or group of Canadians.
2. If an employer can not find employees they can always raise wages until the market value finds a price that Canadians are willing to do the job for. I would be supportive of an employer privately sponsoring and taking responsibility for the immigrants they choose to bring in and employ.
3. This is exactly what happens when governments confiscate wealth and use it on a service that individuals are not passionate about or invested in. If our taxes were lowered this would free up more money for individuals to invest financially and emotionally in immigration. I would be curious to see how many privately sponsored immigrants feel isolated compared to the government sponsored immigrants. Politicians love to take photos with new immigrants but then never see them again.

Narin Sookram (Independent)

1. Yes! I will because apart from the frustration in getting settled into a new country, I think that the smoother the transition is the better it is for the well being of immigrants & refugees. If elected, I'll advocate to make sure the transition for immigrants/refugees go as smoothly as possible.
2. Most definitely! I currently work as a Job Developer at Lutherwood Employment Services and I have a passion to service the immigrant/refugee community, particularly when it comes to helping them find meaningful work. In fact, I have helped hundreds of migrants find their first job here in Canada and I will continue to utilize my skills and passion to advocate for this population. My work towards the immigrant community led me to receive RBC's Top 25 Canadian Award.
3. Yes! As an immigrant myself. I totally get it. That's one of the reasons I have initiated a Community Ethic Radio, Caribbean Spice. This radio show allows immigrants to tune in and feel a sense of home, because they can listen to music in their own language for example. I will also implement and support more ethic community events like the one I have founded, the Caribbean Dreams Concert. These kinds of events are great, because it gives immigrants the opportunity to come out from home and be part of something that they can feel connected to, but also others get to learn what we have in the Region as well.

Fitzroy Vanderpool (New Democratic Party of Ontario)

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