



Projected Election Cost Estimates 2011 General Provincial Election

Information Submission to the Board of Internal Economy

Submitted by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer
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Overview of the Electoral Process

On October 6th, 2011, Ontario will hold its 40th general election. Over 8.5 million people will be eligible to cast a ballot. Elections Ontario is responsible for organizing a process that will allow each of these electors, wherever they may be, to vote as conveniently as possible.

Conducting a provincial election in a province as large and diverse as Ontario presents a number of logistical challenges and requires an incredible amount of planning, building, testing and retesting of processes and systems.

To make that happen, Elections Ontario and the province's 107 returning officers will need to establish approximately 24,000 polling places. This means that to accommodate them, we will need to find nearly 7,800 accessible locations, inspect them to ensure they meet our standards, negotiate and agree on the rental for each of the spaces. We also need to secure 107 returning offices and approximately 30 satellite returning offices to administer the election process across Ontario.

On election day, Elections Ontario will become one of the largest single employers in the province, when we hire over 75,000 workers for a one day job. Each of those workers needs to be recruited, trained, supervised, evaluated and paid.

Our staff across the province will also need to distribute all of the ballot paper, furniture, computers, voting screens, and other supplies that make an election possible. Each returning office will be sent 12 skids of supplies, totaling 60 full tractor trailer loads to equip the entire province. When the election is over, what remains of those supplies is packaged and returned to Elections Ontario. Here the process unfolds in reverse as we take custody of the election material.

While all of this work is taking place in the field, staff at Elections Ontario headquarters will answer approximately 300,000 phone calls in the 30 days leading up to and including election day in a call centre staffed nearly 80 hours a week.

Elections Ontario headquarters will launch a province-wide media campaign to ensure that every Ontarian is aware that an election is taking place and what part

they can play in the process. We will ensure that each of the more than 8.5 million electors know where they can vote and their options for casting a ballot.

Elections Ontario is also responsible for monitoring the financial activities of political parties, constituency associations, candidates, third party advertisers and leadership contestants to ensure that they comply with the election finance legislation.

During an election, Elections Ontario will ensure that approximately 600 candidates have their names on the ballot and meet all the legislative requirements of the nomination, registration and endorsement processes.

Elections Ontario will ensure that all stakeholders in the election process know their rights and responsibilities and have the tools they need to exercise them.

Focus on Governance and Accountability

For the 2011 general election, Elections Ontario has focused on laying the foundation for future events.

In 2008, Elections Ontario adopted a formal project management framework and a more formalized approach to governance and accountability. Since that time, we have benefited from this approach as we adapted our election readiness plans to respond to recent legislative changes and finalized our preparations for the 2011 general election.

The enhanced focus on a formalized approach to governance and accountability has required the organization to conduct internal reviews of its activities, products and services within all divisions and cross-divisionally in parallel with the organization's strategic goals. The results of this review identified efficiencies as well as opportunities for:

- making our products and services easier to access;
- enhancing our controllership to better support fairness and transparency; and,
- streamlining processes and materials that have a direct impact on our stakeholders.

As part of this new approach, Elections Ontario staff divided the various elements of the election into over 60 different project proposals. The proposals that received approval became business cases that turned the initial project proposals into more detailed plans.

The business cases were documents that offered a structured and formalized explanation of all the components of the proposal. This included:

- Background to the plan, and a discussion of why it is necessary
- An overview of a number of different options for accomplishing the plan
- Information on budgets, resource requirements, and risks associated with each of these plans

In the summer of 2009, the Elections Ontario Strategic Leadership Team reviewed 46 business cases and made decisions on which business cases would be approved, and which options within each business case would be implemented for the 2011 election leading to the launch of over 40 formal projects. These projects covered all aspects of the process, from providing ballots to customer service training for elections workers, and together, make up the plan for the overall administration of the election.

Description of the 2011 General Election

Elections in Ontario are undergoing a major transformation. After the 2007 general election, the Legislative Assembly began a process of updating the electoral process and making it more responsive to modern needs. A Select Committee on Elections was established to study all aspects of our election laws and make recommendations for change. The review process culminated in May 2010 when the Legislative Assembly passed Bill 231 – *The Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010*. Bill 231 was the first comprehensive overhaul of Ontario’s election laws in nearly 40 years.

In addition to the changes introduced by the *Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010*, Elections Ontario has a number of new responsibilities arising from the standards that have been introduced as part of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). Elections Ontario recognizes the importance of this significant legislation and the impact that it has on our mandate to provide accessible services for all Ontarians. Between the AODA and the *Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010*, Elections Ontario has a number of new tools and methods to enhance the accessibility of the voting process and meet our key strategic priority to put the needs of the elector first.

For the 2011 general election, there are four new initiatives that Elections Ontario is proud to introduce to Ontario’s electors that will provide them with an unprecedented choice in how they cast their ballot in a provincial election. As a result of these changes, this October’s election will have 29 potential voting days. We will be offering more days and more ways to vote for all electors. The four initiatives that allow for this greater flexibility are:

- Special Ballots
- Home Visits
- Assistive Technology
- Accessible Voting Locations

In addition to these new initiatives, throughout the business case review process, Elections Ontario identified a number of enhancements and refinements that we will be making to our existing processes and services. For example, after consultation with our stakeholders, we will be introducing an improved magnification tool for every polling place on election day and we will be offering pencils that are easier to hold and use. In addition, we have increased the number of alternative formats in which we will make our information available and we will be launching a new web site for the event with enhanced accessibility features.

Special Ballot Process

For the first time in a provincial election in Ontario, voters can apply in advance of election day and vote anytime over the election period. The special ballot, which is also referred to as a “mail in ballot”, allows an elector to write in the name of the candidate of their choice. The special ballot protects the secrecy of an individual’s vote and provides certainty that their vote was cast as they intended (unlike the proxy voting process formerly in place). It will also be possible to apply to vote by special ballot at the returning office from the day after the writ is issued to the day before election day. Special ballots can also be mailed to electors who are away from home (e.g. military personnel serving overseas and students) and those who may face mobility challenges in attending a voting location.

Home Visits

The amendments contained in the *Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010* also recognized that there may be some individuals who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to leave their home to vote and introduced a process for home visits.

This October, for the first time, Elections Ontario will be offering home visits to electors who find it impossible or unreasonably difficult to personally go to the returning office and who need assistance in making an application to vote by special ballot because of a disability or inability to read or write.

Assistive Voting Technology

Assistive voting technology will be available in every returning office and satellite office for the 15 days before election day, so that electors with disabilities may independently verify and cast their ballot.

The equipment that will be used in October is hardware that can process hand-marked paper ballots in addition to ballots marked by electors with disabilities via an integrated ballot marking device that has both an audio and a tactile interface.

Accessible Voting Locations

The amendments to the *Election Act* require returning officers to ensure that all voting locations on election day are accessible. In addition, the amendments require Elections Ontario to post the proposed voting locations online, six months in advance of election day, along with any proposed strategies to make the locations accessible. The public has an opportunity of one month to provide comments on whether the proposed locations are sufficiently accessible.

In order to meet this new requirement, Elections Ontario devised comprehensive standards and processes for selecting voting locations. The standards are based on a combination of the London Design Standard, the current Ontario Building Code requirements and some elements of the proposed Built Environment Standard under the AODA.

Between July and September, 2010, Elections Ontario undertook a public consultation process on the proposed Site Accessibility Standard. We held focus groups in Owen Sound, Ottawa, and Toronto and had on-line consultations for a 30-day period from August 3rd to September 1st. In general, the standard was seen as a step forward in ensuring access to polling sites for people with disabilities.

In the fall, returning officers conducted inspections of approximately 11,000 potential voting locations. On April 6, 2011, for a 30 day period, Elections Ontario will undergo a public consultation process by posting the list of the nearly 8,000 proposed voting locations and any changes that are required to ensure the accessibility of the site for the 2011 general election. Members of the public will be invited to provide feedback on the accessibility of the proposed locations.

Establishing the Projected Election Cost Estimates

The numbers contained in this report represent the best possible estimates. The estimates are built on comparisons to the 2007 general election costs, detailed market research and business case analysis.

There are a number of factors that have the potential to impact the estimated cost numbers presented in this report including market forces and outstanding procurement processes.

Market Forces

As mentioned earlier, Elections Ontario will need to rent approximately 8,000 voting locations, 107 returning offices and 30 satellite returning offices. All of these buildings will need to meet Elections Ontario's site accessibility standard. The arrangements for these facilities will be secured in the summer after the public consultation on the proposed voting locations ends (May 6th, 2011). While Elections Ontario will attempt to use the most economical space possible, ultimately the amount that it will cost to rent the facilities and the steps taken to ensure their accessibility will be subject to market forces that are outside of the control of Elections Ontario.

Outstanding Procurement

While many supplies have been ordered, there are still a number of procurement processes that have not yet been finalized. In some cases, it is possible that the actual cost may vary from what has been predicted in this report (e.g. printing of the more than 8.5 million notice of registration cards).

Legislative Background

Bill 231, *The Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010* added Section 112.1 to the *Election Act* to require the Chief Electoral Officer to present in detail the total estimated election costs to the Board of Internal Economy (BOIE) for its information.

Projected 2011 General Election Cost Estimates

Elections Ontario estimates that the October 6th election will cost approximately \$91.5 million. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the projected election costs.

Table 1 – Total Projected Cost Estimates 2011 General Election	
	2011 Cost Estimates
HEADQUARTERS	
Salaries and Benefits	
Salaries and Benefits	\$6,292,743
Transportation and Communication	
Employee Travel	\$1,985,940
Mail, Courier, Telecom (<i>includes Notice of Registration Card postage</i>)	\$7,140,122
Services	
Consulting (<i>included Stakeholder Engagement and Public Contact Centre</i>)	\$3,113,675
Facilities	\$938,443
Supplies and Equipment	
Furniture and Equipment	\$2,423,599
Supplies and Sundry (<i>includes Notice of Registration Card production</i>)	\$3,783,181
Rentals (<i>includes Assistive Technology</i>)	\$2,751,106
Advertising and Communication	\$7,088,208
Other Services	\$864,037
SUBTOTAL HEADQUARTERS	\$36,381,054
ELECTORAL DISTRICT FIELD BUDGET	
Returning Office and Satellite Office Expenses	
Office Space – Rent	\$2,872,105
Furniture	\$796,177
Janitorial (<i>includes waste removal</i>)	\$188,678
Security	\$99,154
Postage / Courier	\$70,994
Supplies and Shredding of Documents	\$231,362
Subtotal	\$4,258,470
Returning Office and Satellite Office Administration	
Fees for Service (Returning Officers)	\$2,106,339
Fees for Service (Election Clerks)	\$1,588,185
Fees for Service (Clerks, Officers, Resource Staff)	\$7,122,206
Statutory Benefits for Election Workers	\$1,984,603
Travel Expenses	\$215,000
Subtotal	\$13,016,333
Target Revision (Voters List)	
Fees for Service (Revising Agents, Leads and Revision Assistants)	\$3,827,323

Travel Expenses	\$187,000
Subtotal	\$4,014,323
Printing	
Ballots	\$500,000
Statutory Notices	\$266,667
Voters List / Street Index Guide / etc	\$133,333
Subtotal	\$900,000
Special Ballot	
Fees for Service (Special Ballot Officer – 28 days of voting)	\$1,651,468
Fees for Service (Home and Hospital Visits)	\$439,439
Travel Expenses	\$43,651
Subtotal	\$2,134,558
Voting Locations	
Rental – Advance Polls	\$629,621
Rental – Election Day	\$1,833,373
Remediation	\$1,646,000
Furniture	\$247,853
Janitorial / Custodial Overtime and Security	\$115,397
Subtotal	\$4,472,244
Poll Officials for Advance Polls	
Fees for Service (Area Managers, DROs, Poll Clerk, Information Assistants)	\$4,921,144
Travel Expenses	\$29,070
Cellular Phone Expenses	\$10,350
Subtotal	\$4,960,564
Poll Officials for Election Day	
Fees for Service (Area Managers, SDROs, DROs, Poll Clerk, Information Assistants)	\$15,780,720
Travel Expenses	\$12,515
Cellular Phone Expenses	\$94,703
Subtotal	\$15,887,938
SUBTOTAL ELECTORAL DISTRICT FIELD BUDGET	\$49,644,430
ELECTION FINANCES	
Election Finances (Election Subsidies)	\$5,517,427
SUBTOTAL ELECTION FINANCES	\$5,517,427
TOTAL PROJECTED ELECTION COST ESTIMATES	\$91,542,911

In 2007, Elections Ontario spent \$94,503,000 on the election and referendum as published in the 2007 post election report.

Conclusion

This October's election will be the first to take place under Ontario's updated election laws. The legislative amendments modernized Ontario's electoral process and allowed the Chief Electoral Officer and Elections Ontario to prepare, administer, and deliver elections in ways that are more responsive to the needs of citizens and their local communities.

For the upcoming event, electors will have an unprecedented number of days and ways in which they may chose to exercise their democratic right to vote. The new processes and systems that Elections Ontario has put into place have been developed to be as cost-effective as possible. Elections Ontario has balanced the principles of accessibility and integrity to ensure that taxpayer money is used efficiently and effectively.

Elections Ontario believes in continuous improvement. During the 2011 general election, we will be collecting information and metrics that we will be able to use to evaluate the success of our planning activities. After the event, we will conduct a thorough evaluation of our processes, policies and procedures to document our achievements and shortfalls. The evaluation will be comprised of a "lessons learned" analysis of our activities, a post-event survey; a field audit review; and financial expenditure reports. We will report on this evaluation in our 2011 post-event report.