

June 12, 2014

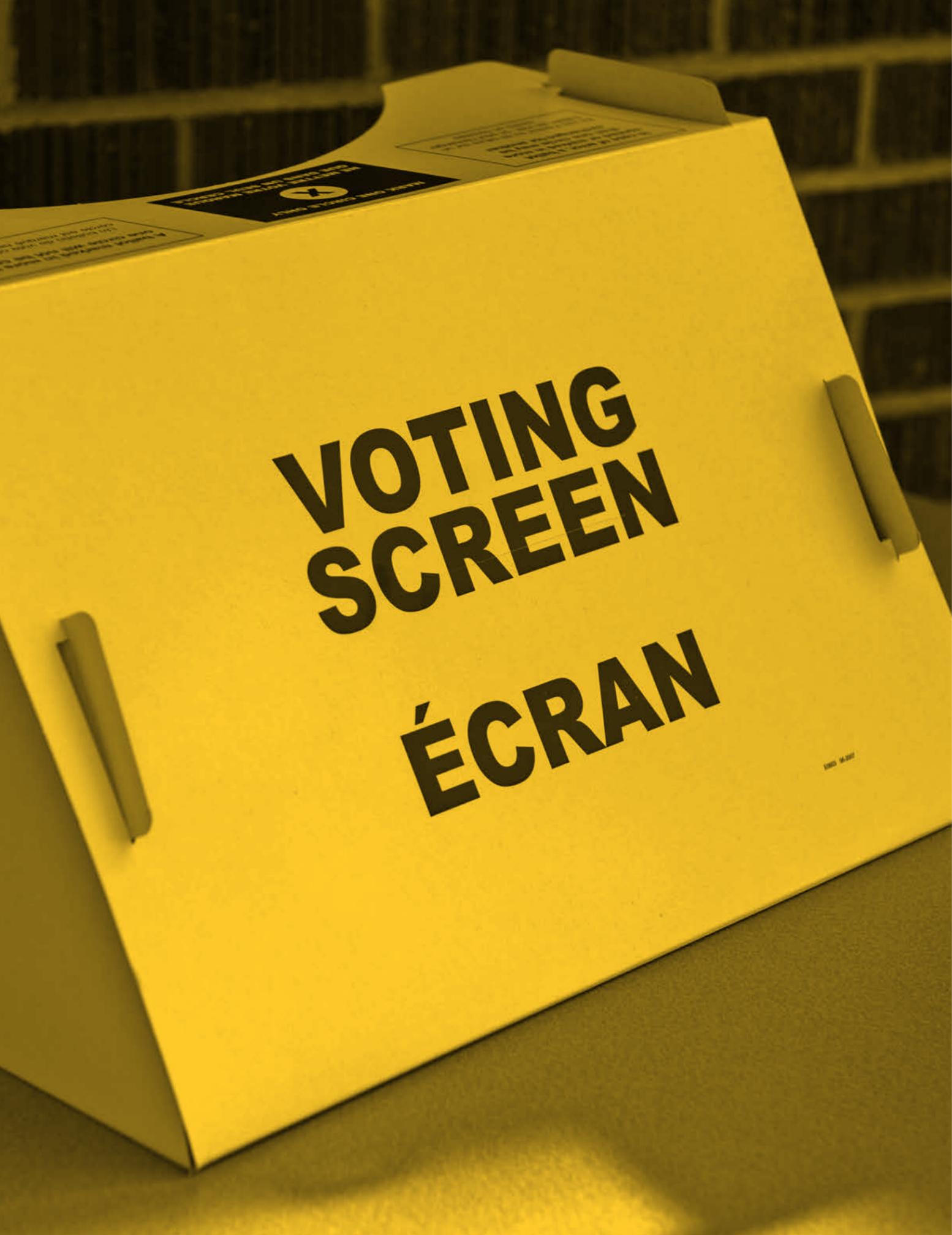
POST EVENT REPORT

Ready, Set, Go!

Managing Ontario's 41st General Election



Elections
Ontario



Office of the
Chief Electoral Officer
of Ontario



Bureau du directeur
général des élections
de l'Ontario

The Honourable Dave Levac
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Room 180, Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A2

Dear Mr. Speaker.

It is my pleasure to submit the post event report covering the June 12, 2014 general election under the *Election Act* and *Election Finances Act*.

This report offers a summary of election proceedings, and the feedback received and responded to in the general election. In addition, the report contains my evaluation of the alternative voting methods, processes, equipment and technology that were used during the event. This report also incorporates the content required by sections 4.1(5), 4.4(11), 44.1(9), 44.2(5), 44.3, 67.2, and 89 of the *Election Act*. I have also provided a summary of the Accessibility Reports submitted to me by the returning officers under section 55.1 of the Act.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Essensa".

Greg Essensa

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Message from the Chief Electoral Officer

When I judge the success of an election event, I ask myself, “Did we make it easy to participate in the electoral process?” By that measure, the 2014 general election was decidedly a success. From May 7—when the Lieutenant Governor issued the writs that officially signified the start of the election—until the polls closed at 9:00 p.m. on June 12, the individuals responsible for running the election did an exceptional job providing eligible electors with an opportunity to exercise their democratic right to vote.

Since I was appointed Chief Electoral Officer in 2008, my staff and I have worked to put Ontario electors at the centre of the process. Due to the legislative amendments introduced in 2010, we are able to offer electors more days and more ways to vote. For the 2014 general election, there were 29 days of voting with seven days of advance voting at approximately 660 locations across Ontario. On Election Day, we established more than 24,000 polls at approximately 8,000 locations. We provided a special ballot program for those who were unable either to use the advance poll or vote at their designated polling station on Election Day. We used assistive voting technology in each returning office to provide electors who have physical disabilities with an option to vote independently and in secret. For those who needed additional assistance, we visited electors in hospitals and in their homes.

What makes me exceptionally proud of our performance in 2014 is that we accomplished these tasks under extraordinary circumstances.

For the first time since 1987, we prepared for an Ontario election in a minority government environment. That meant that my staff—indeed, all the people of Ontario—had no firm idea when an election might be called. Being in a constant state of readiness had major implications for our business processes. Ultimately, we learned a great deal from the experience about how to be more efficient—in ways that we will continue in the new, fixed-date environment.

Our constant state of readiness also had major ramifications for the people who prepared for and then ran the general election. Many of our 107 returning officers had to put personal plans on hold for more than two and half years, not wanting to risk being on vacation or otherwise unable to serve should an election be called unexpectedly. Staff working alongside me at Elections Ontario headquarters were similarly challenged, and showed a similar level of dedication. I am deeply grateful for all my staff’s commitment to provide exceptional service in extraordinary circumstances. Each one of them has my thanks.

Despite our success in running the election, I recognize that there is plenty of room to improve. Barriers remain for some electors and we will continue our work to address those. Looking at the bigger picture, we must also acknowledge that as society continues to change, so must the voting process.

Our legislation, our logistical practices, our use of technology and commitment to security and

integrity—all must keep pace with modern business, media and customer service models so that the fundamental right to vote is as easy and convenient as possible for Ontario’s electorate. Our electoral system is tried and true; it is trusted and delivers accurate, high-quality electoral results. But the system is not yet where I would like it to be. Worse, we have begun to see some fissure cracks in the bedrock of a great electoral tradition. A large part of my job is to make sure those cracks do not open any further.

I have recommended in the past—and will continue to recommend here—that several key changes be made to the *Election Act* and the *Election Finances Act*. Throughout this report, we point to legislative change that would create a more efficient and more equitable electoral process for electors, candidates and political parties. Ultimately, such changes would improve the voter experience.

One sweeping change that I continue to recommend (you will see several mentions of it in this report) is that the *Election Act* and *Election Finances Act* be amended to clarify and streamline processes in a manner that is responsive to technological and societal changes. Great efforts were made in 2010 to improve Ontario’s election laws but those efforts did not go far enough. The result is that the two acts, which are used by a wide variety of election stakeholders, in many respects no longer address the realities of modern society and can cause outright confusion.

I call for many other changes—ones that will produce a more accurate list of electors, place limits on the spending of third party advertisers, create a more appropriate set of advertising rules for the Internet era, and redraw electoral boundaries to keep pace with changing demographics, to name just a few. I call for such changes because the current ways are less effective with every passing election. The acts

that govern our work are not keeping pace with what voters need and expect.

Another issue that concerns me is the viability of Ontario’s workforce to support future elections. Election workers are typically older individuals who have worked previous elections; we expect that our workforce will be older and fewer in numbers when the next general election occurs in 2018. In addition, returning officers face more of a challenge with every passing election recruiting new workers of all ages. If general elections are to continue to function effectively and to produce the best possible experience for voters, we will have to explore, with great caution and prudence, new technologies that will enable us to administer elections with fewer workers. The 2014 general election brought this challenge into sharp relief as the difficulties of finding 76,000 individuals to work on Election Day were exacerbated by the lack of a fixed date around which to plan.

As I continue to recommend legislative change, and as I and my staff manage the process changes that will make elections more accessible to Ontarians, we will follow a principled, measured approach, never proceeding without complete certainty that the integrity of the system is being preserved and that election results are accurate and secure.

The individuals who framed our system of electoral administration did a magnificent job of managing the realities of that time. I consider it a tremendous honour and responsibility to bring Ontario’s electoral system in line with what Ontarians expect for today and the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Essensa".

Greg Essensa

CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

An overnight deployment

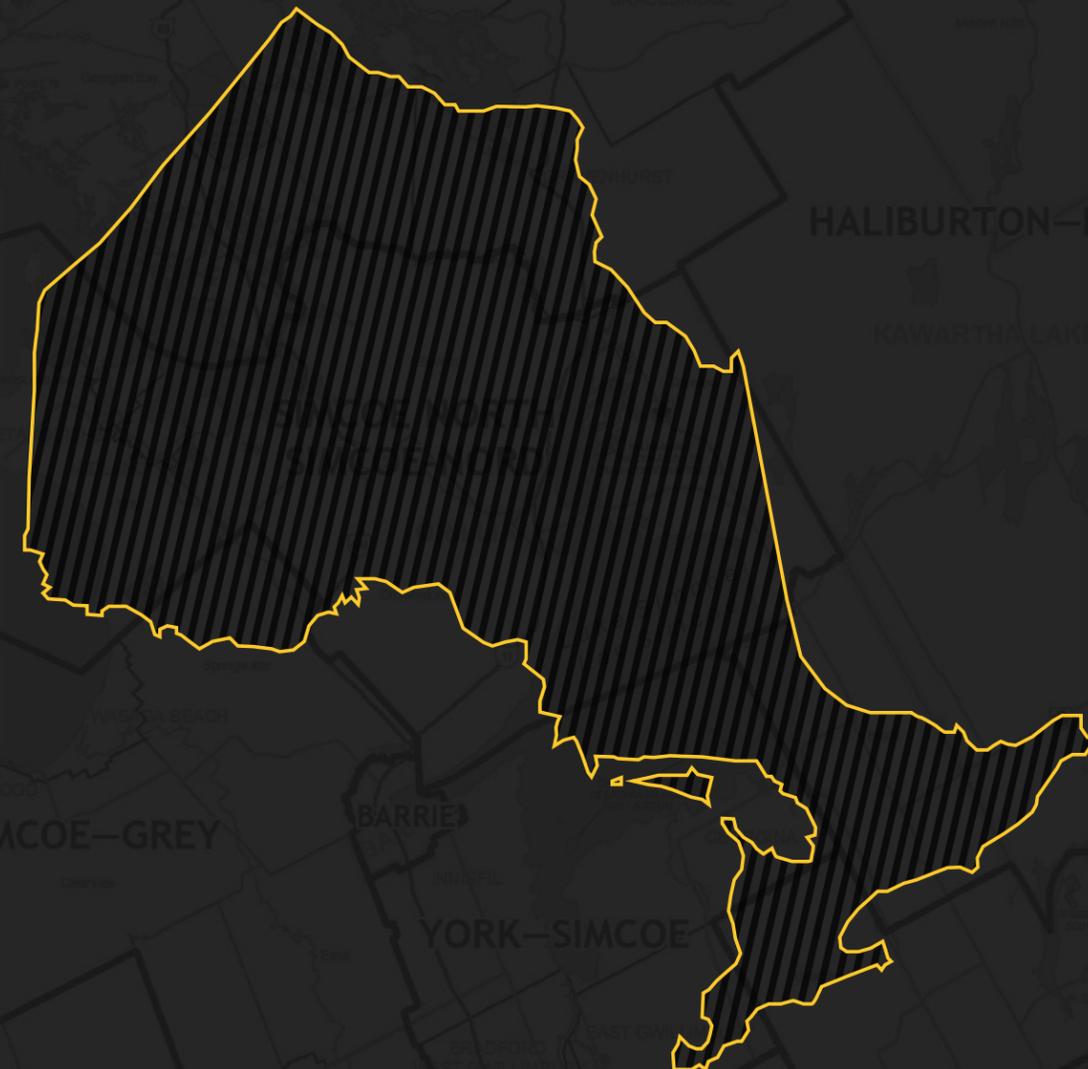
An Ontario general election is a remarkable undertaking. Every four years (or sooner in a “non-fixed-date” environment) millions of Ontarians vote by visiting one of 8,000 voting locations in electoral districts that span the province.

When the election call comes, the staff employed at Elections Ontario headquarters work with our returning officers to activate 144 field offices and deploy the thousands of workers who will enable Ontarians to exercise their franchise on or before Election Day. The deployment happens almost overnight. We finalize leases for our field office locations, install thousands of phone lines and computers, and build our core field team. More than 76,000 individuals will work on Election Day to deliver the election experience that Ontarians expect and deserve.

From our field offices and from headquarters, we manage the often unique logistical realities associated with serving all communities, from dense, diverse urban areas to remote rural locations. We provide voting locations that are

accessible to all Ontarians, technology for electors with disabilities so that they can vote privately and securely, and special ballots and advance polling opportunities for electors who cannot or do not wish to vote on Election Day.

In all our activities, we are committed to providing the easiest, most convenient and most accessible voting experience possible. Throughout the election process, our single most important goal is to put the needs of the elector first. This report demonstrates how we worked toward that goal leading up to and during Ontario’s 41st General Election.



144
FIELD OFFICES
ACTIVE, DEPLOYING
THOUSANDS OF WORKERS

8,000
VOTING LOCATIONS
SPANNING THE PROVINCE

76,000+
INDIVIDUALS WILL WORK
ON ELECTION DAY

The Pre-writ Period

Getting Ready...

Before May 7

The pre-writ period includes the months and years leading up to an election call. Elections Ontario works year-round to fine-tune the infrastructure and logistics necessary for providing Ontarians with a secure, accessible and smoothly functioning election event.

In 2011, Ontarians elected a minority government. With the possibility of an election call at any time, Elections Ontario had to be ready.



Business *not* as usual

In Ontario, the *Election Act* provides fixed dates so that elections occur on a regular cycle. However, in a minority government situation, the possibility of a non-confidence vote in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario means that while there is an official fixed date for the election, the likelihood of reaching it is low and the possibility of an election call at a time before the fixed date is high.

The 2014 general election was one such non-fixed-date event. This reality created a pre-writ period (from the 2011 general election until the 2014 general election) in which Elections Ontario faced uncertainty and a number of unusual challenges. Ultimately, the experience was a rare opportunity to refine our business processes and operations. We made changes that not only served us well during the 2014 general election, but also will allow us to reap the benefits of efficiency improvements in the years to come.

Engaging Ontario's returning officers

In the years following the 2011 general election, the Chief Electoral Officer determined that a closer relationship between his office and Ontario's 107 returning officers—the individuals responsible for running elections in each electoral district—would benefit our goal of improving overall readiness for an election in a non-fixed-date environment. In the past, the returning officers had gathered at Elections Ontario's headquarters in Toronto for training and preparedness activities in the months leading up to an election. Following the 2011 election, the Chief Electoral Officer decided to visit the returning officers in their own electoral districts on a

regular basis for continuous training and communication purposes.

Dubbed the “Road Tour”, these excursions occurred twice a year in the lead up to the 2014 general election. The Road Tour resulted in a higher level of engagement among returning officers and greater efficiency during the 2014 general election as headquarters was able to see firsthand the unique challenges faced by individual electoral districts in administering elections. It also enabled the Chief Electoral Officer to personally engage each returning officer, and made for a more efficient and less costly training process by eliminating the need for returning officer staff to travel to Toronto for training.

The Road Tour makes good business sense as it increases the effectiveness of training, reduces costs and fortifies the relationship between returning officers, Elections Ontario and the communities we serve. Elections Ontario will continue the practice of visiting the returning officers between elections to build a more lasting and fruitful rapport with these key individuals.

It's all in the detail

One area of focus during the Road Tour was to prepare returning officers for the first chaotic five to seven days after an election has been called. In a fixed-date environment, returning officers know precisely how and when a host of logistics will fall into place, including where they will locate their returning offices and when they will be signing the leases, and when they will receive their furniture shipments, phone and computer network installation and alternative

voting technology. In a non-fixed-date environment, returning officers and their teams of key office staff must have a plan for how they will do all of this preparation and office set up with little to no notice while at the same time being ready from the first day of the election calendar to provide legislated services.

During the pre-writ period we ensure that all Elections Ontario staff—headquarters and field staff alike—have learned the tactical elements of delivering an election. When the Writs are issued, the pieces must come together swiftly.

To add to the inherent complexities of the non-fixed-date environment, 20 returning officers were new to their positions for the 2014 general election (the 10-year appointment period for returning officers had recently come to an end). To prepare them for the rigours of an election call, Elections Ontario provided returning officers with extensive training, including a checklist of essential activities for the first five to seven days of the election calendar. Returning officers were required to hold planning sessions with their staff and assign tasks in advance as well as engage in a series of pre-writ assignments, all aimed at ensuring a high level of readiness.

Support for returning officers

To support the returning officers and provide extra guidance in the challenging non-fixed-date election environment, we deployed 11 process experts, called returning officer supports, to act as mentors or coaches in the field. Each of the 11 was assigned a region of roughly 10 returning offices and remained ready to deploy and provide assistance (and report back to headquarters)

should a returning officer experience difficulties in the field. All of our support workers were individuals experienced in administering elections.

A survey of returning officers following the election indicated that 76 per cent were satisfied with the pre-election training they received, compared with 46 per cent following the 2011 general election. Elections Ontario will retain the effective practice of conducting ongoing Road Tours and providing returning officer supports in fixed-date election environments.

Pre-election ramp ups

Elections Ontario learned a great deal following the 2011 general election from counterparts at Elections Canada and Elections Quebec who have also experienced pre-writ periods in minority government environments. We made a careful study of how these organizations had refocused their operations to be ready at all times.

One key change that we made was to establish two readiness dates per year to prepare for the possibility of a non-confidence vote in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. We established biannual readiness deadlines of—September 1

› By-elections enable readiness testing

In the year preceding the 2014 general election, Ontario saw seven provincial by-elections, five of which—Etobicoke–Lakeshore, London West, Ottawa South, Scarborough–Guildwood and Windsor–Tecumseh—ran concurrently in July 2013, with an August 1 by-election date. This unusual situation provided Elections Ontario with an opportunity confirm our readiness in advance of a general election.

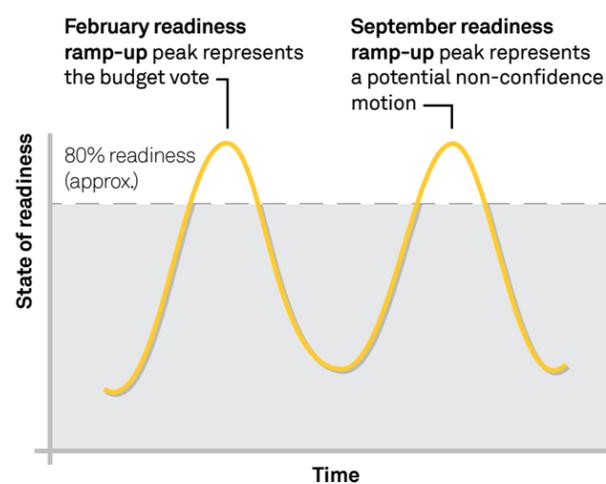
“ The pre-writ assignments were extremely valuable in maintaining a state of readiness for a snap election. ”

- Quote from returning officer Ipsos Reid post-event survey

and February 1. In the lead up to each readiness date, we kept in close touch with our field teams and returning officers, providing ongoing training, ensuring that field offices had sufficient materials to operate in the first few days of an election call before supply shipments arrived, and ensuring that our staff at headquarters had the training needed to manage workflow immediately following an election call. Staying in regular contact with returning officers was a key feature of our ramp-up periods. As indicated in our election delivery costs section (see page 55), these ramp ups cost \$810,669.

Preparing the field—Identifying voting locations

In the pre-writ period, returning officers are required to identify at least three potential returning office locations so that when the writs are issued, they can quickly secure a returning office space. Another pre-writ assignment involves identifying voting locations and printing the documents required to lease each space. These assignments are critical so that returning officers can, upon the call of an election, immediately begin to obtain signed leases for the several hundred voting locations required in each electoral district. This helps ensure that all locations are accessible and electors do not have to travel too far to vote.



Securing voting locations has become increasingly challenging over time. One major issue is that many school boards resist returning officers' requests for access on Election Day because of security and safety concerns. Current legislation mandates that Election Day take place on a weekday. This presents challenges as this is when students are usually in attendance at school. School boards understandably have concerns about student safety when the public has access to their facilities.

To ease the process of finding sufficient voting locations, Elections Ontario contacted every school board and provincially funded building in the province to inform them that an election could be called with little notice—and that any provincially funded location is legally obligated to comply with Elections Ontario's request for access. To ensure safety on Election Day, Elections Ontario posted security guards, on request, at school-based voting locations. Another means of easing school officials' concerns was to work with them to identify and promote a specific route for electors to directly access the space in the school used for voting.

Preparing at headquarters—A good list begets a good election

While the Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario (PREO) is just one element in a smoothly functioning general election, it is undeniably a key to success. The list indicates who the electors are and where they live. From it, Elections Ontario can determine where each elector should go to vote and can mail each elector information about how and where to vote. PREO is constantly changing as people reach voting age, change addresses or pass away.

Elections Ontario updates the list from many sources, including Elections Canada's National Register of Electors, the provincial land registry, property assessment records, municipal governments, Canada Post mailing addresses and

Improving accessibility

Ontario continues to make progress in its understanding of accessibility and its approach to ensuring that the voting process is open to all electors. Our understanding of accessibility has moved far beyond a responsibility to accommodate exceptions or individual cases. Today, we understand accessibility as an inclusive approach to administering elections in which all electors with disabilities, whether visible or invisible, are automatically accommodated. One in seven Ontarians have some form of disability and, with an aging population, this proportion is expected to increase.

Prior to the 2011 general election, the *Election Act* was amended to require that all voting locations be accessible. In response, Elections Ontario drafted Site Accessibility Standards that returning officers used as criteria to evaluate the suitability of voting locations. These broad new accessibility mandates required returning officers to view traditional voting locations—many of which they had used for years—through a new lens. Did the locations provide level access? Were the doorways wide enough to be considered accessible? In 2014, we continued to use our Site Accessibility Standards when identifying and determining potential voting locations.



records of the deceased. In the non-fixed-date environment prior to the 2014 general election, we updated the list quarterly to ensure that it was ready for an event at any time. In addition, we made updates to polling division boundaries on an ongoing basis (marking such physical impediments as creeks and highways) in more than 80 per cent of electoral districts to ensure maximum accessibility for voters and election workers. This extra work resulted in overall improvement in the quality of the list and is an improved business practice that Elections Ontario will continue to apply.

We also undertook a pilot registration drive that targeted populations whose mailing addresses we had but whose specific physical location was not clear to us, and populations living in high-growth areas. Those electors who responded to the registration drive helped us to immediately improve the quality of PREO and the accuracy of the information we had for their record.

The preliminary list of electors for Ontario's 107 electoral districts included 9,248,764 names. This was an increase of 619,182 electors compared to the 2011 general election.

In a survey conducted by Ipsos-Reid after the 2014 General Election, 77 per cent of electors indicated that they received a correct Notice of Registration Card from Elections Ontario. Accordingly, Elections Ontario regards the 2014 list of electors as among the most comprehensive and thorough in its history, although there are still significant challenges reconciling conflicting address information in rural areas and northern Ontario.

While the list of electors is relatively accurate in urban areas, its quality continues to be a challenge in rural areas, where addressing conventions can create confusion. Read on page 17 about the Chief Electoral Officer's preferred solution for improving the overall quality of PREO.



A call for legislative change

› Establish a voting day that is not a school day

The Chief Electoral Officer recommends amending subsection 9.1(5) of the *Election Act* to change the voting day to a time when schools are not in session (weekend or school holiday). Schools are among the most familiar and convenient locations for voting, as they are located in most residential neighbourhoods and tend to meet accessibility standards. Changing the voting day to a time when schools are not in session would facilitate access to schools for voting—and help Ontario’s provincial school boards keep children safe. Other democracies (such as Australia) hold elections on weekends and their experience suggests that, should Ontario follow suit, voter turnout may increase.

› Move from a fall to spring fixed-date election

The Chief Electoral Officer recommends amending the legislation, which at present specifies a fixed date for general elections as the first Thursday in October every four years, to a fixed date in the spring such as a date in early June.

A June voting day is preferable for a host of reasons:

- Municipal elections in Ontario are held in the fall under a fixed-date system that in 2018 would put the current fixed-date provincial election two weeks ahead of them;. Closely placed elections can lead to voter fatigue and a drop in participation at the polls.
- A June Election Day affords more hours of sunlight and warmer weather, which enables candidates and canvassers to interact with the public more easily.
- In rural areas, a June election date (just after planting) provides greater convenience to hunting and farming communities.

- Fewer important cultural days and days of religious significance occur in the June than in the fall.

- June provides for a more convenient filing period for candidates and parties, who under the current system have to file in the following calendar year.

› Establish a single address authority

The Chief Electoral Officer has called for changes to legislation that would establish a single address authority in Ontario—in other words, a single organization responsible for address information—to ensure greater consistency in address information. At present, Elections Ontario relies on 444 municipalities to supply Ontarians’ addresses, each with its own addressing convention. This reality can create great difficulties for locating eligible electors and ensuring that they are provided with information about how, where and when to vote.

For example, Ontarians are permitted to use multiple forms of their address for various purposes—their 911 number for completing their taxes, their rural route number for their driver’s license and their Canada Post mailing address for their health card. This can result in a poor understanding on the part of Elections Ontario about which address to use to correctly assign the closest voting location—and, in turn, can make it difficult for an individual to exercise his or her franchise. Elections Ontario also faces challenges with duplicate street names in amalgamated municipalities. If we see multiple King Streets, for example, which is the one where the elector in question resides?

This is not just a theoretical problem. To name just a few examples, an elector in eastern Ontario was frustrated when he was sent back and forth between voting locations in Waynesburg and Morrisburg. Elections Ontario had multiple addresses for his residence and had challenges placing him in the

correct polling division. Voters in Halton Hills and another in Perth were unable to use Elections Ontario’s online tool to find their voting location due to multiple forms of their address. A man in Kawartha Lakes had challenges finding his voting location because there are two different streets with the same name and address ranges in his electoral district.

A single addressing authority would benefit the public, political entities and other government bodies by providing consistent, up-to-date address information. Without an address authority, we will continue to experience the challenges described above.

› Making it easier for young people to vote

One driver of whether an elector votes is whether they know when, where and how to vote. An Ipsos-Reid survey conducted following the 2014 General Election indicated that Elections Ontario should continue to explore ways to engage electors, especially younger electors, with information about the election so they are well informed.

Scores on being well informed about the election are significantly lower among youth electors than general electors. One reason why youth electors may not be as informed is that they have the lowest voter registration rate. Since they are not included on the Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario, they do not receive a Notice of Registration Card (NRC). One of the most effective means of registering youth voters may be to add them to the register before they graduate from high school. Currently, voter registration is restricted to those at least 18 years of age—an age when many youth have left high school.

Other jurisdictions have taken steps to address this issue by allowing the provisional registration

of otherwise eligible individuals under the age of 18. Nova Scotia legislation permits the Chief Electoral Officer to collect the registration information of 16 and 17 year olds who may become eligible to vote. Quebec also has a provisional register of potential voters who, unless they decline, are automatically added to the voters list when they turn 18. Alberta has passed legislation enabling the Chief Electoral Officer to request directly from school boards the registration information of 16 and 17 year olds for the purpose of provisionally registering them to vote. In their October 2014 report, Elections BC also recommended amending legislation to allow for the provisional registration of individuals when they are 16 years of age.

Internationally, nine American states have provisional registration for 16 or 17 year olds, and Australia has addressed this issue by allowing provisional voter registration of 17 year olds. The UK Electoral Commission registered 16 and 17 year olds in Scotland to facilitate their participation in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum.

The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that legislators consider allowing the provisional registration of individuals when they are 16. The voting age would remain at 18, with provisional registration becoming active registration on an individual’s 18th birthday. Permitting early registration age 16 would enable Elections Ontario to work with schools and the driver licensing program to ensure maximum exposure to the registration process for young voters. Many high school teachers have expressed support for this concept, as it would enable meaningful action by their students in the context of civics education.

The provisional registration of young people will allow for greater opportunities to engage youth electors before they turn 18, which may lead to greater voter turnout among youth electors.

Writ Day

Set...

May 7

Writ Day is the official start of a general election, when years of planning go into full swing. This is the day when Elections Ontario launches the services that will enable Ontarians to vote with ease, and to formally begin to recruit the thousands of workers who will run the election from every corner of the province. On Writ Day, we are officially out in the field, transforming from an organization that has one office in Toronto to a democratic administration machine with 144 offices throughout the province.



Writs are issued

Writ day is an opportunity for Elections Ontario to explain the electoral process, including voting options, to all Ontarians. Following the announcement from the leader of the New Democratic Party of Ontario that her party would not support the government's budget, the Premier of Ontario visited the Lieutenant Governor to request the dissolution of the legislation. The Lieutenant Governor granted the Premier's request and issued the Proclamation that initiated the process of an election call.



On Wednesday May 7, 2014, the Chief Electoral Officer drew up writs for each of Ontario's 107 electoral districts and the Lieutenant Governor, then formally issued each writ, which led to the official start of Ontario's 41st General Election. Later that day, Elections Ontario informed electors that they had 29 days to vote—from May 15 until the polls closed at 9:00 p.m. on Election Day, June 12.

A chance to connect with Ontarians

Writ Day was a key opportunity for the Chief Electoral Officer to explain in detail to Ontarians how elections are administered. On May 7, Elections Ontario held a news conference during which the

Chief Electoral Officer explained the fundamental processes for the administration of the election such as the many options available for how, when and where to vote. In 2014, the election calendar was extended to 36 days to accommodate a day of cultural and religious significance. Specifically, the extended calendar accommodated the overlap of the Jewish holy days of Shavuot (the Feast Weeks) with what would otherwise have been polling day.

The Chief Electoral Officer also used the opportunity to clarify the advertising blackout rules in an extended election calendar and promote compliance among candidates, political parties and third-party advertisers. The 36-day calendar resulted in the longest ever blackout period in Ontario electoral history, from May 7 at 1:00 p.m. to May 20 at 11:59 p.m. A second blackout period began at midnight on June 10 and ended at 11:59 p.m. June 12.

Returning offices open for business

On Writ Day, Elections Ontario finalized the signing of leases for our 107 returning offices and 37 satellite locations. Returning offices were required to open as of May 8 at which time skids of election materials would be delivered and technology installed at each location.

Signing all office leases is problematic in a non-fixed-date environment because it cannot be done in advance and the process can take up to seven days. This is because the returning officers, unaware of when an election will be called, cannot depend on the assurances they receive from landlords that a specific property will be available. For example, a returning officer might receive a positive notification from a landlord in March about the availability of a suitable property; but by May, the property may no longer be available.

Installing telephone and information technology across the province presented Elections Ontario

A call for legislative change

› Eliminate the first advertising blackout period

During the 2014 general election, much confusion arose among the political parties and others about the types of advertising permitted during the first of two mandated advertising blackout periods. On Writ Day and throughout the blackout period, Elections Ontario received a high number of queries about the acceptability, for example, of using social media such as Facebook during the blackout period. The Chief Electoral Officer believes that the legislation must be updated to eliminate the first advertising blackout period, since it no longer fulfills its original purpose.

The first blackout period was put in place to prevent the political party that formed the government from purchasing all of the available radio and broadcast advertising in advance of an election call, thereby receiving an unfair advantage since they were operating with information not available

with a considerable challenge. The non-fixed-date environment preceding Writ Day had made it impossible for us to tell our telephone and information technology vendors when their services would be required. Nevertheless, once the returning officers had rented their offices, Elections Ontario deployed more than 1,700 computers and more than 2,000 phone lines to support them (roughly 12 computers and 15 phone lines for each of 144 locations).

Once the returning officers obtain their returning office and, if applicable, satellite offices, they begin the process of setting up their office and commence administering the election for their electoral district.

to the other parties. With the expansion of communication channels and methods, it does not appear likely that one party would be able to purchase all of the available advertising space.

› Simplify election calendar timing

Key dates in the election calendar are outlined in the *Election Act* and the *Election Finances Act*. Some of these dates count forward from writ day, others count backward from Election Day and some count by Thursdays. As a result, the entire election calendar is impacted in an inconsistent manner when the writ period deviates from the standard. The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the legislation be amended to provide him with more discretion to determine when key dates fall should the writ period duration change because of a day of cultural or religious significance.

Dispatching tonnes of supplies

Because of the non-fixed-date environment, all returning officers received the supplies that they needed to open their offices in advance. They stored the supplies either in their homes or in storage facilities in their electoral districts.

On May 7, 40 tractor-trailers rolled out of the Elections Ontario warehouse in Toronto and delivered approximately 1,500 skids of supplies to 107 returning offices and 37 satellite offices. This included all the remaining supplies for opening the returning offices as well as polling supplies—polling kits, accessibility tools, communication materials and much more—for 24,000 polling stations.



› Returning Officer profile

Opening up a returning office in Etobicoke–Lakeshore

Wendy Gibbs is an experienced returning officer working in the urban electoral district of Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Having spent much her career as a senior fundraiser in the health charity sector, Gibbs is well suited to coordinating large events.



In particular, she is accustomed to organizing large groups of people in efficient ways and gets results when it's important. As she puts it, the job of returning officer is largely about hiring the right people, mobilizing them to get huge quantities of materials to multiple locations—and then getting it all back, efficiently and with utmost attention to security. “There’s no magic to it,” says Gibbs. “Success depends on a combination of careful organization and common sense.” Another challenge is the requirement to be operational within 24 hours of an election being called. As Gibbs says, “There’s not enough time for a catastrophe like the printer breaking down.”

For the 2014 general election, Gibbs employed 30 individuals as office staff for the returning office and an additional 12 to help revise the voters list. Her total workforce swelled to 775 for Election Day. Gibbs admits that Ontario’s aging population is making the task of staffing the returning office more of a challenge with every passing election. “With age comes inevitable challenges of finding individuals willing and capable to complete the work, and also of managing people with various physical abilities.”

Despite not knowing when the election would be called, we were able to open all offices the day after the writs were issued.

Beginning to recruit staff

One of a returning officer’s key jobs is to identify, hire, train, evaluate and pay the staff required to work both in the field office and in the voting locations.

Elections Ontario swelled from a team of 97 full-time permanent employees working at

headquarters in Toronto to more than 80,000 at headquarters and in the field on Election Day. More than 76,000 workers were hired for Election Day alone and thousands more worked in the lead-up to Election Day.

While most returning officers were able to recruit staff via their local networks, in instances where returning officers could not find sufficient staff, headquarters assisted by using social media in creative ways to support recruitment efforts. Despite additional recruitment efforts, four

returning officers turned to staffing agencies to secure employees throughout the election calendar and especially for Election Day. A post-event poll of returning officers indicated that one quarter encountered difficulties in recruiting a sufficient number of workers on Election Day.



Nomination Day

Set...

May 22

On nomination day, all candidates must file their nomination papers with Elections Ontario by 2:00 p.m. All political party leaders must file their endorsement of candidates by the same deadline. Once the nominations and endorsements are in, Elections Ontario must move swiftly (within a span of just 44 hours during a 29 day non-fixed-date election calendar) to produce and deliver three types of accurate and secure ballots—regular ballot, the vote tabulator ballot and the audio ballot—for each of 107 electoral districts.





A focus on security and integrity

Beginning on May 15, candidates were permitted to file nominations with their local returning officers. As nominations flowed in throughout the week we posted the candidate's names to the Elections Ontario website.

By the close of nominations at 2:00 p.m. on May 22, 616 candidates representing 21 political parties had filed nomination papers for Ontario's 41st General Election. Fourteen of these candidates filed their nomination paper without party affiliation.

Following nomination day, one party was deregistered, which left 20 parties registered for Election Day. In addition, one candidate withdrew, leaving a total of 615 candidates on Election Day. Four new parties fielded candidates in 2014: the None of the Above Party, the Ontario Moderate Party, the Trillium Party of Ontario, and the Equal Parenting Party.

Ballot printing and proofing—Meticulous and secure

Once the names of all candidates and parties were established, the process began to produce and deliver all ballots for 107 electoral districts before the advance polls opened.

Elections Ontario ensures a high level of integrity for the ballot. After following our strict protocol for proofing each ballot, we supplied our printers (pre-selected by the returning officers) with unique, watermarked paper, which we store at our headquarters. When the printers had completed their work, they delivered the final printed ballots for the electoral district directly to the specific returning officer. To ensure utmost security, printers were required to return all unused ballot paper to Elections Ontario—even “spoils”, which are versions that did not print correctly.

All ballot types go through this rigorous quality control process, including regular paper ballots (the ones most voters use on Election Day), special ballots (a write-in ballot) and vote tabulator printed and audio ballots, which work in conjunction with the 144 automated vote tabulator machines in place at our returning offices and satellite offices.

Preparing assistive voting technology

Elections Ontario uses assistive voting technology (AVT) in its returning offices and satellite offices, which enables voters with diverse accessibility needs to mark and verify their ballots without assistance (see page 38). To prepare our AVT systems, we produced audio versions of each ballot. Elections Ontario is committed to ensuring a fair process for each candidate and party and, where AVT is concerned, the quality of the audio ballots is key.

Our AVT technology works in conjunction with vote tabulator machines, transferring AVT votes onto vote tabulator ballots. Returning offices and satellite offices use the vote tabulator ballot for all electors who cast votes in those locations (not just those using AVT) to protect the anonymity of individuals who do use AVT and to facilitate the counting of results.

A call for legislative change

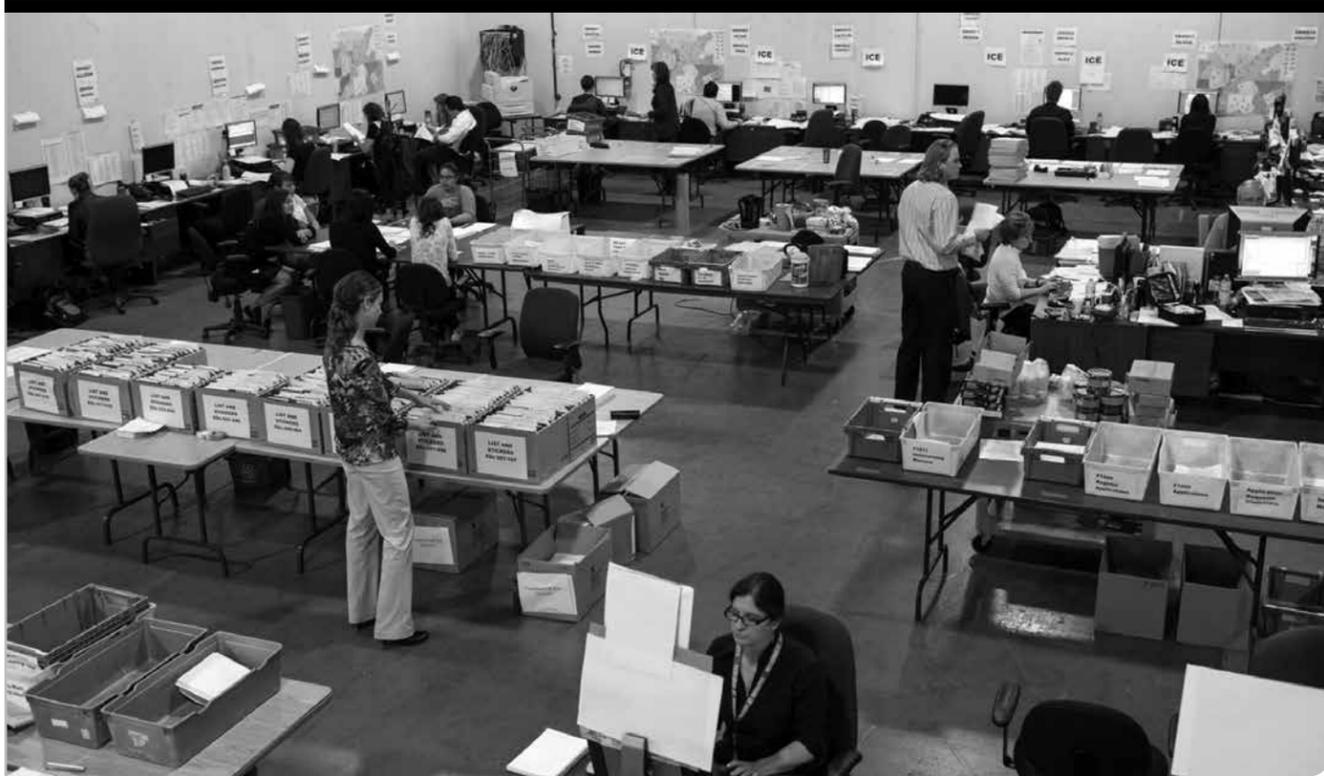
› Simplifying the nomination, endorsement and registration process

The *Election Act* and *Election Finances Act* require candidates to complete a complex and convoluted process that involves the completion of up to three key tasks before they can become official candidates. In the 2014 general election, all candidates were required under the *Election Act* to file their nomination papers with their local Returning Officer by 2:00 p.m. on May 22. Completion of that process ensured that each candidate's name would appear on the ballot. The *Election Act* also required that any candidates who wanted a party affiliation to appear beside

their name on the ballot were required to seek the party's official endorsement; and party leaders, in turn, were required to file endorsement forms with the Chief Electoral Officer by 2:00 on May 22.

Under the *Election Finances Act*, candidates must also register to be eligible to incur campaign expenses and accept contributions and they have until the day before Election Day to file their registration with the Election Finances division.

The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the nomination, registration and endorsement process be integrated and simplified.



A typical day

› A special ballot experience for Ontarians the world over

Changes to the *Election Act* prior to the 2011 general election introduced the special ballot, which replaced the proxy voting process in Ontario and made voting more accessible to more electors. The special ballot is a write-in ballot that is typically sent to an elector via mail. In 2014, Elections Ontario administered special ballot voting for the second time in a general election, enabling a larger group of electors to participate in the democratic process.

The special ballot program is integral to our commitment to provide Ontarians with more days and more ways to vote. Although open to all electors, it is designed to enable specific groups

to mark and cast their ballots in private; namely, students living away from home, electors in hospitals, Ontarians living in correctional facilities, members of the Canadian Forces and others stationed overseas, vacationers or those otherwise unable to vote in their electoral district during advance polls or on Election Day.

In 2014, 74,000 Ontarians voted by special ballot, up from roughly 54,000 in the 2011 general election. As Elections Ontario continues to inform Ontarians about this new method of voting, we expect more electors will take advantage of it.

“ Would you please...take the time to thank those who oversee the special ballot program on my behalf. I am physically disabled...and I want those who put the time and effort into offering this to know how much I appreciate being able to live my life as normal as possible.

- Special ballot voter ”

Special ballot voting is a two-step process. Electors first need to register. Once their application is approved, they are provided with their ballot. Some voted by special ballot using regular mail—typically students living away from home, Ontarians living overseas and members of the Canadian Forces. Some electors required home visits—those who were housebound or otherwise not able to vote in person at the returning office.



The Returning Officer for Guelph, Susan Dickert, placed this billboard (above) outside her returning office advertising Elections Ontario's relatively new special ballot program. The exposure appears to have been positive, as 1,598 people voted by special ballot in Guelph in 2014—nearly double the 841 electors who voted that way in the 2011 general election.

🐦 Good on [@ElectionsON!](#) Emailed my app yesterday & rec'v'd my Special Ballot Kit in the mail today! [#ONPoli](#)

› Working with the Canadian Forces

Working in collaboration with the Department of National Defense (DND), Elections Ontario was able to contact Ontarians serving across Canada and internationally to offer the special ballot program. We sent information brochures and special ballot applications to 652 addresses supplied to us by DND, each of which represented a larger group of potential voters. These efforts enabled more than 450 Canadian Forces members to vote.

The Meaford experience

Elections Ontario worked closely with a Canadian Forces training facility in Meaford, Ontario, where 250 individuals were stationed. We sent election officials to run the special ballot program from June 1 to June 3, the same days that we ran a special ballot program for patients in 223 Ontario hospitals (see page 30). Our staff set up a commissary, asked electors which electoral district they resided in and checked identification. Voter turnout at the base was an impressive 84 per cent with 210 troops casting their ballots.

The three dates designated for the Meaford Canadian Forces vote were not legislated for providing the special ballot. Instead, the Chief Electoral Officer issued a special directive for staff to undertake this work to help ensure that as many eligible electors as possible had the opportunity to vote.

The Wainright experience

In collaboration with a Canadian Forces training facility in Wainright, Alberta, Elections Ontario delivered the special ballot program using telephones, email and fax. Our staff sent 400 hard-copy information applications to the commanding officer. The commanding officer supplied Elections Ontario with the required documents, including verification of the voters' identities, via courier.

Supporting electors on jury duty

In Hamilton, Ontario, at the request of a judge of the Superior Court of Justice presiding over a jury trial, Elections Ontario provided special ballots to a sequestered jury on Election Day. Since the jurors could not return to their homes, the special ballot was the only option for them to vote. In this process, the court contacted the Chief Electoral Officer who directed election officials to visit the courthouse and issue and collect special ballots from the jurors.

Bringing the vote to electors in hospital

Providing the special ballot in Ontario hospitals is allowed for under a directive from the Chief Electoral Officer. It is part of an effort to provide more days and more ways to vote. In many hospitals election officials offer special ballots at patients' bedsides.

In 2014, 223 hospitals took part in the initiative (up from 210 in the 2011 general election). We also provided special ballot assistance at palliative care hospitals. However, some hospital administrations choose not to participate in the program.

Up close and personal

Elections Ontario visited a woman in hospital who had been living in isolation for more than a month to offer her service under the special ballot program. The woman, who has voted in every federal and provincial election since she became eligible at age 18, had no means of traveling to the polls to cast her vote. So we came to her. The woman commented that the visit made her feel valued as a citizen.

The special ballot program also provided home visits for electors with disabilities.

Individuals in correctional facilities

Incarcerated electors have the right to vote. Elections Ontario facilitated that process by providing the special ballot to inmates in correctional institutions. The participation rate for these voters rose in 2014 to 1,400 (roughly 10 per cent of inmates) from just 1,000 in 2011.

“ Having your team here at the base was a huge incentive, especially for some of the younger members who perhaps would not have voted if it wasn't for the convenience you provided. ”

- Commanding Officer, Meaford



FRANCESCA ROMANO MANAGED THE SPECIAL BALLOTS PROGRAM FROM ELECTIONS ONTARIO HQ

Start of Advance Polls

Set...

May 31

The advance poll period enables Ontarians to fit voting into their busy lives. Using an advance poll, any elector can cast his or her ballot in advance of Election Day. Returning officers in each electoral district designate specific voting locations for advance polls, and each returning office and satellite office has assistive voting technology available to make voting more accessible to electors. Since new legislation was passed in 2007 adding several days to the advance poll calendar, this method of voting has become key to Elections Ontario's efforts to provide electors with as many ways as possible to vote.



Securing voting places on short notice

Elections Ontario's returning officers are responsible for securing advance voting locations once an election is called. This task proved challenging in the 2014 election due to the non-fixed-date environment and the tight timeframe between the election call and the first day of the advance poll.



In 2014, more than 566,000 electors cast their ballot this way between May 31 and June 6 at 663 advance poll locations across the province. The number of electors who voted in advance declined slightly from the 2011 general election when 603,339 electors voted at 904 advance poll locations over a period of 10 days.

 **@ElectionON** I voted yesterday. Thanks for making it convenient with advance poll.

Handling emergencies in the field

Some electoral districts in the north of the province experienced serious flooding during the election period. Several stories emerged about returning officers and Elections Ontario officials' efforts to ensure that electors could exercise their franchise.



In one major event that occurred prior to Election Day, the Kashechewan First Nation experienced extreme flooding, which triggered an official declaration of emergency and led to the evacuation of electors. The Chief Electoral Officer used his emergency powers to issue a direction that allowed returning officers for the Electoral Districts of Algoma Manitoulin, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Timmins–James Bay and Thunder Bay–Atikokan to allow the displaced electors who were temporarily living in those electoral districts to vote.

Communications, advertising and outreach— A priority on serving the elector

Elections Ontario is committed to communicating as widely as possible about how, where and when Ontarians can vote, and how they can find information that answers their questions.

In advance of the 2014 general election, we reached out to electors with a particular focus on groups and communities that have historically been

difficult to reach, or who have faced uncommon barriers to voting. These include new Canadians, electors with disabilities, Aboriginal communities, homeless individuals (via homeless shelters and food banks), young Ontarians, and students.

A post-election survey conducted by Ipsos Reid showed that 92 per cent of general electors are satisfied with the overall voting process. Less than 5 per cent experienced barriers to voting. This level is consistent with the 2011 election.

We sent information packages and tools to more than 2,500 groups, who shared the contents within their communities. Our list included all Ontario libraries and Aboriginal Friendship Centres.



› Returning officer profile

An idea that's catching on in Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington

Caroline McMillan, the returning officer for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, says that in her rural riding people are beginning to make great use of the advance poll. More than 7,500 electors turned up at one of 15 advance polling locations in the electoral district during the 2014 general election.



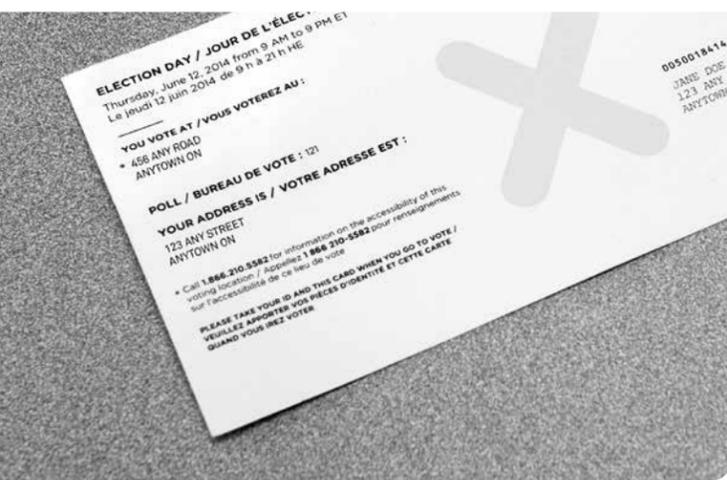
McMillan and her team work hard to make it as easy as possible for electors to cast a ballot, either via the advance poll or on other voting days. She admits that accessibility can be a challenge in many of the old halls Elections Ontario has traditionally relied on as voting places in her electoral district. "We work to retrofit them with

ramps and other equipment so that everyone can use them." For voters who were unable to leave their homes to vote, McMillan's staff completed almost 50 home visits as part of the special ballot program—an increase from the 34 they completed in 2011 (see page 28).

More than 13,000 voting information brochures were requested by our outreach contacts.

Personalized communication to electors

Notice of Registration Cards (NRCs) are among the most visible and most important items that Elections Ontario produces. These cards detail electors' names and polling information, providing them with the essential information about where and when to vote.



In the 2014 general election, Elections Ontario's program for producing, printing and mailing 9.2 million NRCs to electors across Ontario built upon the successful model we used during the 2011 general election. The NRCs were mailed a few days before advance polls opened, which meant that most electors had the key information they needed in ample time to vote early, and with ease. In 2014, fewer than one per cent of NRCs mailed out were returned as undeliverable, a significant improvement over the 2011 performance.

Connecting with students

To reach as many eligible students as possible from May 28 to June 12, Elections Ontario worked with Campus Intercept, a national agency that marketed directly to 50 university and college campuses across Canada. Using a campaign

called Pledge2vote, Campus Intercept engaged with student unions on 50 campuses via posters and cardboard stand-ups placed in highly visible areas.

With the reality of a June election date, our outreach efforts had the added challenge of reaching students off campus, as most had returned to their home communities for the summer. Campus Intercept engaged with students by attending festivals, setting up in malls across Ontario and running 30 live events between May 23 and June 11 (the day before the election), answering questions and staging live support forums.

Pledge2vote was supported by a microsite where student electors could find more information. QR codes (machine-readable optical labels that contained additional information about the subject) and URLs directed these Ontarians to frequently asked questions about the voting process. The Pledge2Vote site received more than 30,000 impressions.

Helping the homeless to vote

Homeless electors face significant barriers to voting, in particular because they have no permanent place of residence and thus face many challenges in obtaining the identification required to cast a ballot. As in 2011, Elections Ontario worked with shelter administrators under a program called the Homeless Elector Identification Program to help break down that barrier. Under the program, a Certificate of Identity and Residence can be used as temporary identification for the purposes of voting in the election. The form must be witnessed and signed by the elector and an authorized administrator of a shelter or food bank where the elector has most frequently used their services in the five weeks before polling day.

Elections Ontario reached out to the more than 500 shelters and food banks across Ontario well

A call for legislative change

► A practical approach to communications

The Chief Electoral Officer recommends the *Election Act* and *Election Finances Act* allow for a more practical and discretionary approach to communications. The acts were written at a time when print was the predominant medium for advertising and communication and they continue to require print advertising in a number of contexts. As one example, according to the current legislation Elections Ontario must publish the locations of advanced polls in newspapers that reach the

electoral district three days before the opening of the advance polls. This is not only prohibitively expensive, but also inefficient as newspaper readership has been declining over the last decade, and many local newspapers have reduced their publishing schedule or have ceased to publish entirely. There is a growing acceptance of other communication channels, such as online and social media. The legislation should be amended to provide greater discretion to the Chief Electoral Officer to select the communication channels used to reach electors.

in advance of the election to ensure that they had the information they needed to participate in the program.

Reaching out to Aboriginal electors

To engage with as many Aboriginal electors as possible, Elections Ontario again engaged National Public Relations, a firm that has helped us to build strong relationships within the First Nations and Métis communities in past elections. In order to ensure that all Aboriginal electors had full access to the voting process, we worked with National to provide support to returning officers in 25 electoral districts that have First Nations communities or a significant Aboriginal population.

We also recruited 35 Aboriginal liaison officers to make connections in advance of the election with Aboriginal band representatives. Our officers were equipped with tools such as multilingual poll guides, clear instructions about acceptable identification and links to the *Householder* (a brochure that outlines election dates and details including when and how to vote), available in 30 languages including Ojibwe and Cree. We

sent outreach kits that contained information and promotional items to 29 friendship centres as well as the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres.

In a post-election survey, Ipsos Reid found that voter turnout amongst the Aboriginal community had increased 11 points from 49 per cent in 2011 to 58 per cent in 2014. Advanced polls were also increasingly used by the Aboriginal community; 14 per cent voted in advanced polls in 2014 as compared to 3 per cent in the 2011 election.

Communicating with a wide audience

Although we placed an emphasis in 2014 on communicating with electors who have traditionally been difficult to reach, Elections Ontario has a responsibility to inform electors about how they may participate in elections. In advance of the 2014 general election, we placed print ads in 294 English publications across the province and French ads in 24 publications. We placed 1,730 15-second and 901 30-second television spots and 124 radio spots.

Meanwhile, the wemakevotingeasy.ca website received more than 2.3 million page views, including more than 435,000 on Election Day. Most visitors were looking for information about candidates or about where or how to vote. Our advertising videos, available for viewing on YouTube, received 845,789 views for English content and 279,200 views for French content.

From May 26 to May 28, the *Householder*—a brochure that outlines election dates and details, including where and how to vote—was delivered to more than 5.22 million households in Ontario. The *Householder* was delivered in bilingual format and was translated into 14 other languages. It was also made available in Braille and Voiceprint, which electors accessed through cable, satellite or the Internet.

Elections Ontario also sponsored TVO's *The Agenda* during Your Vote 2014, a campaign to provide Ontarians with the information they needed to make an informed decision in the 2014 general election. The *Agenda* featured in-depth analysis of the campaign, information about the issues, and results information on Election Night. Our sponsorship yielded significant exposure for Elections Ontario during the broadcast and on *The Agenda's* Web page. A follow-up analysis showed that the audience for *The Agenda* on Election Night increased markedly from 2011 to 2014.

👉 Realized today that I'll be away for the election. Went to [@ElectionsON](https://twitter.com/ElectionsON) website and it was so clear what I had to do. [#MakingVotingEasy](https://twitter.com/ElectionsON)

Making elections easy for parties, candidates, CFOs, the media and others

In the weeks leading up to a general election, Elections Ontario provides significant support to political parties and candidates, and to the chief financial officers (CFOs) of political parties, who record, report and keep financial information in accordance with the *Election Finances Act*. We supply parties and candidates with information about the election process to guide them through the days and weeks leading up to Election Day and that they can use to help inform their campaign workers and volunteers. We also provide information to third parties about their roles and obligations. (A third party is a person or entity other than a political party, candidate or constituency association that engages in election advertising.)

In the lead-up to the 2014 general election, we provided dedicated support lines where parties, candidates and CFOs could call with questions. We also offered support via guides about the electoral process as well as detailed FAQs and newsletters. In addition, Elections Ontario provided candidates and registered political parties that have filed privacy policies with copies of voters lists and electoral maps.

An Ipsos Reid survey conducted following the general election showed political entities reported a marked improvement in the services and tools we provided.



A typical day

› A more accessible election via assistive voting technology

The 2011 general election was the first election where assistive voting technology was available in every returning office and satellite office for 15 days before Election Day and until the day before the election.

In 2014, as required by the *Election Act*, we made this technology available once again and voters with diverse accessibility needs used it to mark and verify their ballots independently. The step-by-step audio commands built into the technology enabled voters with limited (or no) vision to mark and generate a ballot. “Sip and puff” technology and paddles enabled voters with physical disabilities to mark their ballots. A printed ballot was produced once the voter had made his or her selection, and a vote tabulator counted the votes on Election Night.

Elections Ontario welcomes feedback from electors, especially those using a new process or technology that requires refinement. We heard from some voters (in 2011 and again in 2014) that our assistive voting technology could use some refinements—in particular, clearer wording in the audio prompts. We did not make substantial changes to the technologies because of the possibility of an election being called at any time. Within the current fixed-date environment, Elections Ontario will use the feedback it received from voters to guide changes to assistive voting technology and address other accessibility concerns.

We also heard that our services for the visually impaired could be better—specifically a request for bolder signage and more legible Notice of Registration cards. Elections Ontario takes all such feedback seriously. It is among the most important information we receive about how we can improve our services for Ontarians.

A call for legislative change

› Centralize campaign administration

Elections Ontario provides elector information to candidates and, as a service, provides some of the same information to registered political parties. As the management of political campaigns becomes more centralized (and the *Election Act* meanwhile remains structured for a decentralized model), it becomes increasingly challenging to fulfill such information requests. As one example, during the 2014 general election, Elections Ontario provided products such as the preliminary list of electors and the list of voting locations to the candidates, and to representatives at the parties' central campaign offices. What we provided centrally was not always identical to what was provided to candidates in the field, due to limitations in our software and systems. The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the *Election Act* be amended so that registered political parties have access to all products and services provided to candidates.

› Strengthen third-party advertising rules

Third parties are groups and organizations other than political candidates and parties who advertise during an election to support or oppose particular candidates or parties. The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that an independent body be established to investigate options for strengthening third party advertising rules in Ontario, including third party spending and contribution limits, reporting requirements for third parties, and registration and anti-collusion provisions.

Since regulations regarding third party advertisers were introduced in 2007, the number of third parties has more than tripled—from 11 in 2007 to 19 in 2011 to 35 in 2014.

In recent elections, certain third parties have increased significantly what they spend on advertising. Meanwhile, of the jurisdictions in Canada that regulate third party advertising, Ontario is the only one where third parties do not face advertising spending or contribution limits. The Chief Electoral Officer believes that this reality could very well produce a situation in which parties and candidates campaign on an uneven playing field.

All other political entities in the electoral process are subject to spending and contribution limits as well as greater reporting and disclosure requirements. The rules related to third parties are not consistent with how all other political entities are treated and should be strengthened to promote greater transparency.

A detailed report on the finances of political entities, including third parties, will be provided in the *Elections Ontario 2014–2015 Annual Report*.



› Easier access for campaigning

Sometimes candidates and political parties have challenges accessing shared residences such as apartment buildings, condominiums, co-operatives and student housing. Under the existing legislation, access to shared residences is governed by statutes that are beyond the mandate of Elections Ontario.

The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the *Election Act* be amended to provide that barring candidate access to these properties is an offence under the *Election Act* in a manner similar to how the matter is addressed federally via the *Canada Election Act*.

› Greater compliance provisions

The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the *Election Act* and *Election Finances Act* be amended so that the Chief Electoral Officer has the power to levy administrative penalties.

The law needs to include a greater range of administrative measures to encourage and obtain compliance through means other than prosecution. At present, no such tools exist. Elections Ontario's only option is to report those who appear to have willfully violated the law to the Attorney General for prosecution. Apart from deregistration, penalties can now be imposed only upon conviction. Broader powers could be put to good use to encourage compliance and to instill public confidence in the election process.

For example, in the 2014 general election, Elections Ontario received several complaints alleging that political advertising was missing the proper authorization or that candidate campaign materials contained incorrect information. Administrative penalties would also assist in promoting compliance with the timely filing of financial reports. Elections Ontario should have greater tools to discourage negligent behavior such as the ability to levy small administrative fines or penalties, to impose temporary suspensions on election finance activities, or to issue public reprimands.

Election Day

Go!

June 12

On Election Day, 9.2 million Ontarians had the opportunity to exercise their democratic right to vote. In more than 8,000 locations across the province, electors went to one of 24,000 assigned polls to cast their ballot in a manner that was efficient, fair and certain to be reflected accurately in the official election results. Elections Ontario staffed the province's voting locations with more than 76,000 election workers and, in accordance with legislation, kept them open for 12 hours. Results showed that 52.1 per cent of eligible voters in Ontario cast their ballot in Ontario's 41st General Election.



Solid voter turnout

The voter turnout figure includes those who voted by special ballot, at advance polls or in person on June 12. Voter turnout increased from the 48.2 per cent who cast their ballot during Ontario’s 40th General Election on October 6, 2011.

Of the more than 24,000 polls in operation, only 10 reported minor delays in opening. As a result, the Chief Electoral Officer extended the polling hours in three electoral districts: Dufferin Caledon, Trinity–Spadina and Kenora–Rainy River. Election results in those electoral districts were not released until all the extended hour polls closed.

👉 Props to [@ElectionsON](#) for making voting insanely easy. There is a voting station literally inside my condo building.

When the polls closed at 9:00 p.m., the returning officers sent results information to Elections Ontario and the news media simultaneously via the media consortium. Immediately we began to post unofficial results to our website and by midnight we had posted all unofficial results information. The process of reporting results went smoothly, with no outages or technical difficulties.



Election Day is also the day that Elections Ontario counts special ballots. Since May 15, when special ballot voting had commenced, between 400 to 600 ballots per day had been arriving at Elections Ontario headquarters. At 6:30 p.m. on Election Night, 60 staff members were assigned to count the special ballots for all of Ontario’s 107 electoral districts in the presence of the political parties’ scrutineers. Once counted, the ballot numbers were sent to the appropriate returning officers to be added to their results tallies.

Ensuring reliable reporting

At no time is our technology more important than on Election Night when the unofficial results are entered into our systems and provided for convenience to the media. To guarantee a dependable Election Night experience for all Ontarians, our IT department spent months testing our unofficial results applications, including two extensive simulations with our Data Centre partners where

› Returning Officer profile

Managing the polls in Kenora–Rainy River



Had voter turnout been lower than normal in the electoral district of Kenora–Rainy River in 2014, most people would have understood. The riding, which has a landmass larger than Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia combined, was beset by torrential rain and storms in several areas on Election Day.

But **Ian Simpson**, the electoral district’s Returning Officer, had a mission to open all polls—and open them he did, with only minor delays at two polls where the roads were nearly impassable. In one effort that earned Simpson the light-hearted title of “the Indiana Jones of

returning officers,” he enlisted the support of his his son-in-law and son-in-law’s 4x4 vehicle to deliver poll workers to their stations. And he accomplished all of this on a day rife with personal weather woes given that the roof of his house blew off on the same day.

“It’s a different set of issues up here. Problems in more urban electoral districts are caused by the density of the population. Our challenges are geography and weather.”
- Ian Simpson

we mimicked the data load expected on Election Night. Throughout the election calendar our technology worked flawlessly, with zero website or application outages.

A surge in declined ballots

More electors declined their ballots in the 2014 general election than in any Ontario election since 1975. More than 31,000 voters officially forfeited their right to vote.

Under the *Election Act*, an elector may decline a ballot by informing the deputy returning officer at the poll that they are choosing to decline the vote or by simply handing the ballot back to them. The elector must do so publicly (i.e., under legislation, there is no secrecy associated with the action.) Once a ballot has been declined, the deputy returning officer writes “declined” on the ballot and the poll clerk records it in the poll record that a ballot was officially declined.



A declined ballot is not the same as a rejected ballot, a process by which the deputy returning officer rejects the ballot for not being clearly marked. And it is not the same as failing to mark a ballot. The declined ballot declares an intention not to vote and thus cannot be misconstrued as a failure to adhere to ballot marking rules. Only Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta have legislation allowing for a formally declined ballot. The declined ballot does not exist at the federal level in Canada.

Election Day research to improve the voter experience

Key to Elections Ontario's vision of building modern services that put the needs of electors first is to make evidence-informed decisions about the kind of innovations and modern services we can introduce that will ease the process of voting, making it more convenient and more accessible for all electors. On Election Day, we conducted a research project in 243 randomly selected voting locations located throughout Ontario in order to establish a baseline for our current process and to measure

elector behaviour while in the voting location for the purposes of optimizing the voting process.

The research involved tracking the time that it took for an elector to move through the voting process, whether an elector arrived at the voting location with an NRC, and whether they brought acceptable ID. This information will be critical for Elections Ontario to learn how to improve the voting experience.

The research was conducted by two-person research teams. No personal data was collected and the research did not interfere with the voting process. The research teams did not have access to who voted or how they voted.

What we found

- As expected, a sizeable group of voters arrive first thing in the morning and fewer arrive in the middle of the day. At the end of the workday and over the traditional dinner hour, there was a significant increase in the number of voters. The number tapered off before the polls closed.

- Nearly all voters (97 per cent) brought identification and four out of five brought both their NRC and their identification.
- Across the province it took an average of three minutes to process a voter, but longer if they had not brought their NRC and identification or if they required other kinds of assistance, such as being added to the voters list.
- It took slightly longer to vote later in the day, as more voters were casting a ballot and they were less likely to have their NRC and identification than those who arrived earlier.
- Most electors reported that voter processing times were not a concern for them. A separate Ipsos Reid research survey conducted on our behalf following the election found that voters said we did an excellent job of dealing with wait times and line ups.

The double-edged sword of social media

Elections Ontario's goal for using social media is to provide people with relevant, timely and accurate election information that will enable more electors to vote with as much ease as possible.

While the increased use of social media across society is a boon to our communication and outreach activities at Elections Ontario, it also presents some challenges. One trend that emerged strongly on Election Day and that garnered significant media attention was a practice of certain electors to post "selfies" with their ballots. This practice contravenes the *Election Act* as it involves displaying a ballot that indicates how a person voted and can therefore potentially influence other electors. Breaking this law can carry a \$5,000 fine.

When Elections Ontario became aware of posted selfies involving pictures of ballots, action had to be taken to enforce the *Election Act*. Accordingly, we sent messages to the individuals instructing

Fast facts on social media

Elections Ontario's **Twitter** following nearly doubled during the 2014 general election. With our following now at 2,700, Elections Ontario has the potential to reach tens of thousands of voters with every post.

Our **Facebook** followers increased by 42 per cent throughout the election period to more than 1,200.

On Election Day, voters used the campaign tag **#VoteON** over 37,000 times and the more permanent **#ONpoli** tag another 73,000 times.

On average during the election period, our **Facebook** page reached more than 29,000 people per week.

Those using social media (**Facebook**) to contact Elections Ontario rose from less than 1 per cent during the 2011 general election to 6 per cent in 2014.

them to take the photos down. The messages, however, were not well understood by most recipients and, in many cases, not well received. As the use of social media continues to grow, this problem will inevitably become more prevalent. Elections Ontario will address the selfie problem proactively in future elections by posting information to its website, providing a rationale for not allowing voters to photograph their ballot. In the meantime, a more modern legislative framework is needed that addresses the realities of social media.



Student Vote—Teaching young people how to exercise their franchise

Elections Ontario engaged CIVIX, a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization to bring the Student Vote parallel voting and election administration experience for elementary and secondary school students. Student Vote is the flagship program of CIVIX, which supplies participating schools with the materials and information they need to simulate the election in the classroom.

Through Elections Ontario's sponsorship, the Student Vote program is offered at no cost to schools, and runs in tandem with the actual election, mirroring the processes and activities of the official election period. Participating schools are provided with lesson plans, and students are encouraged to share their knowledge about the Ontario provincial election with family and friends. Nearly 1,700 schools registered to participate, representing all 107 electoral districts. Over 163,000 students cast a ballot during the week preceding Election Day on June 12.

A typical day

› Expanding our use of social media

Elections Ontario sent out daily **Tweets** with relevant voting-related content linked to the particular day. We embedded links in each message and successfully directed electors to relevant areas on our website for more information. We also posted voting-related content to our **Facebook** page and English and French videos to our **YouTube** channel. YouTube views of Elections Ontario ads reached nearly 846,000 English viewers and more than 279,000 French.

🐦 **Special ballot voting for June 2014 election begins Thurs. May 15. More at bit.ly/SHTf70**

ELECTIONS ONTARIO'S MAY 13 TWITTER POST WITH KEY INFORMATION ABOUT VOTING VIA THE SPECIAL BALLOT.

Recount in Thornhill—An informative experience

› Election Night results are not “official” election results.

Less than 24 hours after the unofficial Election Night results showed that the Liberal candidate for Thornhill, Sandra Yeung Racco, had won the electoral district, the returning officer for Thornhill undertook the official tabulation.

The official tabulation is conducted by the returning officer in each electoral district and is the process by which returning officers compile official election results. To compile the official results, returning officers review the documentation completed by poll officials that provides a summary of the votes cast per each candidate as well as the number of ballots that have been declined, spoiled, cancelled and cast blank. Ballots are not counted at the official tabulation because they have been sealed and secured following the Election Night count by election officials at various polling places in each electoral district. Once the official tabulation has been completed in an electoral district, the returning officer declares the candidate with the most votes to be elected. The returning officer then reports the results to the Chief Electoral Officer. Official tabulations take place in every electoral district within three days of Election Day.

At the official tabulation in the electoral district of Thornhill, the unofficial candidate results submitted by officials via telephone on Election Night differed in some instances from the official candidate results that were formally documented in the forms submitted to the returning officer. The differences can be attributed to transpositions and other clerical errors. As a result of the official tabulation, the returning officer for Thornhill

declared that the candidate for the PC Party of Ontario, Gila Martow, obtained the most votes.

Because of the change in results, Sandra Yeung Racco requested a judicial recount of the ballots. A judge granted the request and the judicial recount took place on June 23, 2014.

To undertake the recount, Elections Ontario retained 80 staff to count the ballots a second time. Scrutineers and lawyers were present for both the Racco and the Martow campaigns and a judge oversaw the process. The recount confirmed that Gila Martow had won the district by a margin of 85 votes.

The overturning of unofficial Election Night results—and the subsequent recount of votes in the electoral district of Thornhill—are further evidence that election results are highly scrutinized in Ontario, and that we have appropriate checks and balances built into the system to be certain that the results accurately reflect the votes cast.

The Close-out Period

After June 12

The election process does not end on Election Day. In the weeks and months following the 2014 general election, we closed down our field offices, paid thousands of election workers, carefully accounted for the tonnes of materials that we had sent to the electoral districts, and surveyed Ontarians about how the election went.



Efficient management of an immense undertaking

Elections Ontario brought the 41st General Election event to an orderly conclusion, focusing on finalizing several other official processes and completing the preliminary work of preparing for the next election.

Immediately following official tabulation, our 107 returning officers undertook the significant task of closing down their offices and preparing the records and materials to be returned to Elections Ontario's central warehouse. As materials were returned from the field, our priority was to retrieve election records and data files for delivery to secure storage facilities and to begin production of the Record of Official Results, which lists the general election returns and the summary of ballots cast.

In past general elections, the process of official close-out has taken roughly one year. In 2014, we used a new, more efficient process with the intention of taking just six months. Following the new process, we amended the Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario according to information gathered during the election, received materials from returning officers for storing in our warehouse, completed an exhaustive quality control and inventory exercise to ensure all documentation sent to the field was accounted for, and undertook the task of issuing payment to the tens of thousands of election workers on whom Ontario depends for a smoothly functioning election. We also commenced an extensive lessons learned exercise with an eye to improving our processes for the next general election in 2018.

What Ontarians told us

Following every general election, Elections Ontario conducts extensive stakeholder surveys in accordance with section 67.1 of the *Election Act*. In the weeks following the 2014 general election, we commissioned Ipsos Reid to undertake four surveys: general electors and special electors, which includes youth aged 18 to 24, Aboriginals, Ontarians living abroad, Ontarians with disabilities and Ontarians who speak neither French nor English; returning officers; homeless electors; and political candidates, chief financial officers and party officials.

Ninety-two per cent of general electors rated the overall organization of the voting process as excellent.

Results showed that 95 per cent of voters did not experience a problem or barrier to voting. The few barriers that voters did experience included not being on the voters list, problems with identification, inconvenient polling locations, inefficient staff, issues with the ballot, lack of parking at voting places and long line-ups.

Ninety-two per cent of general electors rated the overall organization of the voting process as excellent, and 83 per cent of electors with disabilities rated the overall process as excellent. While results showed a 3 percentage point increase in the number of people who voted in 2014 (52 per cent) over 2011 (49 per cent), results also showed a 10 percentage point increase in turnout among 18 to 24 year olds—from 24 per cent in 2011 increased to 34 per cent in 2014.

Returning officer survey

Elections Ontario invited the returning officers to participate in a comprehensive online survey from May 12 to July 15 that consisted of 332 questions. Respondents reported improvements across many operational and administrative processes compared to the 2011 general election.

Among the survey's many findings were significant improvements in returning officers' perceptions of the support they received from Elections Ontario headquarters in the lead-up to the general election. This includes such activities as the deployment of office equipment and delivery of technology support, the design and delivery of the pre-writ assignments that enabled returning officers prepare for the general election, and the

effectiveness of Elections Ontario's communication with electors (via Notice of Registration Cards, advertisements, etc.).

Areas for improvement include the quality of computer equipment, and the quality and clarity of manuals and guides for poll officials.

Election Finances Act expenditures and costs

Since the election campaign period did not officially end until September 12, 2014 and the deadline for financial reporting in relation to the campaign was December 12, 2014, our full report on the financial aspects of the 2014 general election under the *Election Finances Act* will be published in Elections Ontario's 2014–15 annual report.

A call for legislative change

› Extend the election calendar

The Chief Electoral Officer considers a 29-day election calendar to be insufficient to ensure a successful election that serves Ontarians in a non-fixed-date election environment. In the 2014 general election, Elections Ontario experienced significant logistical challenges in providing more days and more ways for Ontarians to vote. As one example, the “snap” nature of the election created difficulties for opening returning offices on Writ Day and beginning to serve the public the next day, as legislated.

As it happened, the 2014 election calendar was extended to 36 days because of intervening religious holidays. The Chief Electoral Officer contends that this extended calendar was largely responsible for the success of the 2014 general election. Even so, returning officers faced major challenges: phones

and Internet service were installed at all returning and satellite offices only by May 14. The day after the NDP announcement that precipitated the general election, 79 of 107 returning officers did not have leases signed by the Chief Electoral Officer for their returning or satellite offices.

An Ipsos Reid survey of Elections Ontario's returning officers reported that only 53 per cent agreed that they had sufficient time to manage the logistics of opening their returning offices. Only 42 per cent agreed their IT equipment was installed on time. An extended election calendar will provide returning officers with the time needed at the onset of an election to ensure a smooth and seamless voting experience for all electors, regardless of whether they choose to vote on the day immediately following Writ Day, at an advance poll or on Election Day.

Election delivery costs

On Writ Day, the Chief Electoral Officer posted projected costs estimates for the 2014 general election on our website. The estimates were based on comparisons to 2011 general election costs, detailed market research and business case analysis. In total, the election was predicted to cost \$90,314,514.

While previous elections provide an outline for predicting costs, variables abound between any two events and have the potential to disrupt our expenditure plans. Such factors include the number of electors on the Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario, changes in technology from one event to the next and real estate markets, which affect the cost of renting our more than 8,000 voting locations.

The greatest variable for the 2014 general election, however, was the non-fixed-date environment that preceded the event. Elections Ontario put new processes and systems in place to meet the needs of the election environment, balancing the principles of accessibility and integrity while also exercising fiduciary restraint. Ultimately, maintaining a state of readiness while watching our bottom line was a valuable learning exercise. The upshot of this preparation was the implementation of new processes and systems, developed to be as cost effective as possible, that have improved our operations.

Elections Ontario continues to track its post-event activities and all costs that are attributed to the Ontario's 41st General Election. We estimate that, once complete, the 2014 general election will cost between \$78 and \$80 million. As of December 31, 2014, based on the actual expenditures that we have incurred thus far, we have spent \$77,872,422 on the general election. As mentioned above, the campaign filing deadline for political entities was December 12, 2014, so the number for the Election Finances audit and election subsidies is an estimate and there are

other encumbrances still to be paid. The final, actual costs of the general election and the full report on the financial aspects of the 2014 general election under the *Election Finances Act* will be published in the *Elections Ontario 2014–2015 annual report*.

Significant efficiencies for 2014

For the 2014 general election, we were able to realize significant efficiencies by employing fewer consulting services and resources at our Elections Ontario headquarters. This was because the 2014 general election used many of the same elements already in place from the 2011 general election. Our returning officers were also able to realize efficiencies in how they managed their offices and scheduled their teams.

In addition, we were able to realize a savings with our estimates for sustaining readiness activities because we had budgeted for a full year and the election was called within the first quarter. It is important to note that many of the costs incurred in the “sustaining readiness” line item of our finances were costs attributed to other line items in the 2011 election budget. We undertook a number of activities immediately following the 2011 general election to ensure that we were election ready. For the 2014 election budget, the costs associated with sustaining readiness, including the amount spent on salaries and benefits for Elections Ontario headquarters staff between November 2011 and April 2014, are included in the “maintaining election readiness” category.

2014 General election budget and actuals

	Cost estimate published	Actuals as of December 31, 2014
Headquarters		
Salaries and benefits	3,261,099	2,191,289
Salaries and benefits	3,261,099	2,191,289
Transportation & communication	8,984,050	8,648,053
Employee travel	127,173	83,798
Mail, courier, telecom	8,856,877	8,564,255
Services	5,541,795	2,944,927
Consulting	5,527,426	2,937,794
Facilities	14,369	7,133
Supplies & equipment	6,842,709	4,969,527
Furniture & equipment	783,458	230,338
Supplies & sundry	1,048,483	479,322
Rentals	175,656	935,223
Advertising & communication (incl NRC)	4,835,112	3,324,644
Other services	42,801	155,761
Subtotal headquarters	24,672,454	18,909,557
Electoral district field		
Administration of returning offices	17,133,244	14,882,353
Advance polls	4,430,549	4,045,874
Polling day	18,704,443	18,158,998
Printing	1,328,480	1,313,345
Revision personnel	1,591,360	1,572,197
Special ballot	1,771,730	1,481,347
Preliminary duties	347,403	347,403
Subtotal electoral district	45,307,209	41,801,517
Election finances		
Audit and election subsidies*	5,877,067	5,877,067
Maintaining election readiness		
Sustaining readiness activities**	13,839,866	10,473,612
Ramp ups	617,917	810,669
Subtotal maintaining election readiness	14,457,783	11,284,281
TOTALS	90,314,513	77,872,422

* Audit and election subsidies are estimates and the actual amount spent will be reported in Elections Ontario's 2014–2015 Annual Report

** Sustaining readiness activities includes expenses that in previous elections were allocated to specific line items.



Loren A. Wells—Farewell to a stalwart of democratic administration

Following the 2014 general election, Elections Ontario said goodbye to a remarkable leader who shaped and delivered 12 Ontario general elections and 57 by-elections over the course of a 39-year career.



ABOVE: CEO GREG ESSENSA AND RETIRING DEPUTY CEO LOREN WELLS

Loren A. Wells retired in 2014 as Deputy Chief Electoral Officer after graciously agreeing to stay with Elections Ontario to the conclusion of Ontario's 41st General Election. (Ms. Wells first announced her retirement in November 2013.) Ms. Wells made an indelible mark as an internationally respected election administrator. She shared her experience and insights by helping to plan, monitor and assess at least a dozen elections in other jurisdictions. Ms. Wells generously mentored countless Elections Ontario team members on issues of ethics and integrity in democratic administration. Throughout her career, Ms. Wells upheld Elections Ontario's mission of managing elections in an efficient, fair and impartial manner. A commitment to supporting the right of citizens to participate in free and fair elections has always been at the core of her work.

BELOW, L.-R.: FORMER CEO JOHN HOLLINS, LOREN WELLS, AND CURRENT CEO GREG ESSENSA



Looking Ahead

Elections Ontario is working to bring about more modern, more efficient and more effective services for all stakeholders in the electoral process while guarding the integrity and security of a trusted system.



Toward a transformation

Bringing about a deep transformation to the way that we conduct our business has implications across all our activities and operations, and Ontario's 41st General Election provided many lessons in the practices that work best. It also reinforced where we need to continue to improve our services and processes so that we can administer the best possible elections for Ontarians.

Our main objective is to provide electors with more choice in how, when and where they cast their ballots. We do this in many ways, including by improving the accessibility of voting locations, and providing voting by special ballot and at advance poll. In the coming years, we will continue to explore options for voting in new ways.

In 2013, Elections Ontario tabled a review of alternative voting technologies. Building on the knowledge we gained through that experience, we will test and possibly introduce new voting options that are reliable and secure, and that are consistent with the expectations and wishes of Ontario electors. In order to best facilitate this transition, the Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the legislation that governs elections should establish common standards and a certification process for how technology is used in the electoral process at both the provincial and municipal levels. Adopting a set of standards and a process for certification would establish Ontario as a leader in the field of election management.

Many issues arose during the 2014 general election that reinforced other calls we have made for changes to the *Election Act* and *Election Finances Act* (many of which we describe

in this report's Message from the CEO as well as throughout the body of the report). Another call we have made many times is for legislation that provides for a regular, scheduled process for reviewing electoral district boundaries. Ontario is the only province in Canada where the law does not provide for such regular reviews, which are important in responding to population growth and demographic changes. A growing population can mean an elector's vote no longer carries the same weight as in other districts. As one example, Oak Ridges–Markham had 171,682 electors in 2014, while Davenport had just 68,453. Each is represented by one MPP. The federal electoral map has been adjusted to reflect population changes in some Ontario districts. It is time, now, to undertake a similar review provincially.

Looking forward, we will continue to use most, if not all, of the efficiencies we developed in response to a constant need to be ready for an election call. Our need to operate under financial constraint, coupled with an urgent requirement for readiness following the 2011 general election, prompted us to innovate, possibly more than we ever have during a two and half year period. As just one example, we saw great success working more closely with our returning officers. We will continue to provide them with support in the form of Road Tours and returning officer supports. In addition, we found efficiencies in our operations and staffing model that we will carry forward into future elections.

Although we encountered some unique challenges leading up to and throughout the 2014 general election, the experience created a stronger, more nimble and more innovative organization committed to providing the next generation of election for Ontario. Our efforts to make voting easier will continue.

A call for legislative change

› Establish common standards and a certification process for using technology

The chief electoral officer recommends that the legislation that governs elections standards should establish common standards and a certification process for how technology is used in the electoral process at both the provincial and municipal levels.

Technology has naturally evolved and become fully integrated into our society and business practices, and is increasingly in use in municipal elections. In 2014, 97 of Ontario's 444 municipalities offered networked voting for Ontario's municipal elections. Lack of consistency in technologies and the process of integration into election systems leads to challenges and erodes

public confidence in the electoral system. We witnessed problems recently in the New Brunswick election as well as in several other jurisdictions. Yet such problems are not a reason to avoid technology. Technology that is introduced in a principled and measured manner can help solve challenges with the current electoral model by reducing staffing needs, improving the accuracy of results, and delivering improved service to stakeholders. Ontario has the opportunity lead in this area. We can build the public's trust in voting technologies by creating the first binding standards for their use. A common set of standards will help ensure that elections are administered with proven, well-tested and secure technology that protects the integrity of the electoral process.

Appendix A: Summary of the survey of electors

Methodology

Elections Ontario commissioned Ipsos Reid to conduct public opinion and behaviour research following the June 12, 2014 general election.

The primary objective of the research was to measure general elector and special elector (youth 18–24, Aboriginals, Ontarians abroad, Ontarians with disabilities, and non-English/French speaking Ontarians) opinions on and experiences with the procedures, processes, and related communications and information associated with the general election.

Additionally, the 2014 post event research included in-depth interviews with homeless special electors and special electors in shelters, as well as a survey of candidates, CFOs (campaign finance officers) and stakeholders/other party officials.

Similar research was conducted following the October 2003, October 2007 and October 2011 provincial elections. Data from that research is included where applicable. Fieldwork was completed between June 15 and July 18, 2014.

As Table 1 shows, with respect to the larger quantitative electors survey, a mixed methodology approach was taken.

On average, online surveys were 15 minutes long and telephone surveys were 25 minutes long. The survey was available in English for all groups and French upon request. Weighting on age, gender, region and voter turnout was used to ensure that the sample reflected the profile of Ontario electors. No weighting was employed for non-English/French and Ontarians abroad. (All Ontarians abroad were registered electors).

For the qualitative special elector groups (women in shelters and homeless men), paper questionnaires were deployed at two women's shelters (Fred Victor Women's Hostel and YWCA First Stop Woodlawn) and one men's shelter (Gateway) in the city of Toronto. A total of 25 men and 25 women completed questionnaires with the help of members of Ipsos Reid's research team. The interviews were conducted between June 19 and June 27, 2014. Staff members at homeless shelter locations

were able to notify clients that surveys would be conducted prior to the day of the interviews.

CFO, candidate and stakeholders/other party officials survey participants were invited from a list of candidates, CFOs, campaign managers and constituency association presidents provided. The fieldwork took place through an online survey from June 23 to July 14, 2014. In total, 317 participants responded to the survey, including 143 candidates, 123 CFOs, 51 other stakeholders/ party officials including campaign managers and legal counsel. Some respondents held more than one job title.

93% of electors considered the voting process to be easy.

General and special electors (quantitative) Ease of the voting process

Positive ratings of voter satisfaction indicate that voters think the process of voting was easy. 92% of voters were satisfied with their overall voting experience, including an 11% increase (from 82% to 93%) among youth age 18–24. 93% of electors considered the voting process to be easy. All special elector voters also found the process of voting easy, (93% Aboriginal, 93% youth, 89% non-English/French, 83% disabilities, 89% abroad).

Voting satisfaction amongst youth aged 18–24 increased by 11%.

The organization continues to be viewed favourably. 83% agree that Elections Ontario is non-partisan, 81% agree that Elections Ontario has made voting easier and 70% agree that Elections Ontario has modernized the voting process.

Special electors are positive towards Elections Ontario but their opinions are softer than those of general electors; for example, 83% of general electors agree that Elections Ontario is non-partisan vs. 68% Aboriginal, 77% youth, 56% non-English/French. Aboriginals (78%) and non-English/French (57%) were less familiar with Elections Ontario than others and, as noted above, may be confused by whether or not there are political affiliations.

Traditional, in-person voting on Election Day is still the most popular means of casting one's ballot. As Table 2 shows, there is a slight increase in voting through advance polls, particularly among Aboriginals and voters with disabilities.

The physical accessibility of the voting location was reported as excellent or good by 92% of electors. Likewise, 92% of electors reported no problem with the location of their voting place, consistent with 2011.

Table 1: Methodology for quantitative electors survey

Audience	Methodology	Base size (n)	Margin of error (95% of the time)
General Electors (GE)	50% CATI/50% Online	1,612	+/- 2.5%
Voters	50% CATI/50% Online	1,121	+/- 3.1%
Non-voters	50% CATI/50% Online	491	+/- 4.1%
Cell phone ONLY	CATI	100	+/- 9.8%
Special electors			
Aboriginal	CATI	100	+/- 9.8%
Youth 18–24	50% CATI/50% Online	213	+/- 6.7%
Non-English/French	CATI	150*	+/- 8.0%
Disable	Mix of CATI/Online	263	+/- 6.0%
Ontarian Abroad (registered Electors)	Online	83	+/- 10.1%

*Mandarin n=35, Cantonese n=40, Punjabi n=47, and Tamil n=28.

Table 2: Voting on Election Day or advanced polls

	General electorate		Aboriginal		Youth (18–24)		Non-English/French		Voters with disabilities	
	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014
Election Day	80%	79%	85%	78%	85%	78%	87%	79%	76%	63%
Advanced polls	18%	18%	3%	14%	12%	17%	9%	15%	16%	27%

Physical accessibility of the voting location was reported as excellent or good by 92% of electors.

Electors are generally positive in their ratings for being able to locate their name on the voters list, with 85% success among the general electors. Youth responded with the lowest rating at 76%.

Knowledge of the voting process

Electors are quite knowledgeable about the voting process (83% vs. 85% in 2011). That said, they are mostly knowledgeable about Election Day (89%) and, to a much lesser degree, the availability of 29 days of voting. In this case, less than half of general electors (37%) are aware; even fewer special electors are aware—34% Aboriginal, 25% youth, 47% non-English/French, 36% electors with disabilities and 34% abroad. This represents a drop in awareness from 2011 levels.

As Table 3 shows, with respect to changes to the voting process, there has been a slight increase in knowledge over 2011 among general electors.

There is lower awareness with respect to changes to the voting process among special electors. Many special electors report being unaware of many of the special services offered to them. A majority knew that all voting locations were accessible (72% Aboriginal, 68% youth, 68% non-English/French, 72% electors with disabilities). Less than half were aware of the other changes—even the changes that may apply to them specifically. Moreover, there are low levels of knowledge about each of the elements of the voting process, with the exception of Election Day.

- 41% of youth were aware of the designation of a temporary residence and voting for students.
- 22% of electors with disabilities were aware of home visit ballots.
- 36% of electors with disabilities were aware of their ability to vote without proxy.
- 30% of electors abroad were aware that they do not need to register again.

There is lower awareness of changes to the voting process among special electors.

In the data for special electors, a trend appears among Aboriginal Ontarians and youth 18–24. Aboriginals (59%) and youth (56%) are less satisfied with the information provided; 64% of Aboriginals, and 71% of youth did not know what the ID requirements were. Both groups were also less likely to have received the Notice of Registration Card (NRC)¹ (26% and 45%, respectively), and youth are more likely than others to think that you can't vote without it (53%). Youth were also less likely to pick up on any Elections Ontario messaging (36% recall NRC, 42% TV ads, 41% print ads).

Elections Ontario communications

The NRC is still the main source of information about the election (53% general electors, 42% Aboriginal, 28% youth, 43% electors with disabilities). While more electors recall receiving a correct NRC (77%), fewer recall the NRC as a source of advertising. The most recalled form of advertising were television ads (50% general electors, 79% Aboriginal, 42% youth, 50% non-English/French, 48% electors with disabilities).

Looking at all advertising, recall of advertising is down four points from 2011. This may be attributed to the 2011 advertising being re-purposed. Effectiveness of the creative remains strong, if not stronger than 2011; however, 37% of general electors say they got tired of seeing the advertising.

Despite recall of advertising being down slightly, the effectiveness of the creative for electors that recalled the ads increased significantly as compared to 2011. The ads receive good ratings for informing electors about voting being accessible to all (78% vs. 74%), sending a clear message (88% vs. 77%), convincing electors that voting is easy (83% vs. 71%), informing them how to vote (71% vs. 65%) and/or get more information (77% vs. 71%).

¹ NRCs are among the most visible and most important items that Elections Ontario produces. These cards detail electors' names and polling information, providing them with the essential information about where and when to vote.

77% of electors recall receiving a correct Notice of Registration Card.

Awareness of Elections Ontario remains high (93% general electors, 78% Aboriginal, 89% youth, 57% non-English/French, 92% electors with disabilities, 97% abroad), though it has slipped significantly with non-English/French voters.

Alternative voting methods

Although the numbers dropped by 3% from 2011, there remains interest among both general electors and special electors for online voting in the future (49% general electors, 31% aboriginal, 60% youth, 41% non-English/French, 42% electors with disabilities, 73% abroad). However, online voting is viewed not as a replacement for in-person voting, but as an alternative.

Special electors: Homeless—(quantitative) Ease of the voting process

Of the 50 participants, 39 agreed that Elections Ontario has made the voting process easier than ever, 12 participants voted on Election Day and 3 voted in advanced polls.

Only 2 voters experienced issues voting. Both issues were resolved at the voting locations. The main challenge with this population is getting them out to vote. Once they come out to vote they have few issues with the process.

Knowledge of the voting process

Of the 50 participants, 31 felt they were somewhat or very knowledgeable about the voting process and 35 felt they were knowledgeable about the election date. Fewer felt the same about advanced polls, length of time they had to vote or special ballots.

Table 3: Awareness of changes to the voting process: general electors

Changes to the voting process	General electors	
	2011	2014
Voting locations are now accessible to all voters	72%	78%
Students can apply for designation of temporary residence	41%	47%
Ability to vote by special ballot by mail	27%	32%
Ontarians with disabilities can now vote independently	23%	34%
Ability to vote from a hospital	22%	33%
Ability to apply for special home ballot	14%	18%

Table 4: Awareness of voting ID among the homeless population

	Special electors: Homeless	
	2011	2014
Required ID to vote	43	34
Certificate of Identification and Residence Program	11	8

*n=50

As Table 4 shows, there was a drop in awareness about ID required for voting and the Certificate of Identification and Residence Program with shelters.

Elections Ontario communications

The main sources of information for this population are the news, shelters and NRCs. Over half of respondents recalled seeing advertisements—mostly on TV, print ads and billboards.

Candidates, chief financial officers, parties (quantitative)

Election procedures

As Table 5 shows, for candidates, chief financial officers (CFOs) and political party representatives (other party officials category), there was significant improvement over 2011 regarding how the election was run overall.

Among experienced CFOs, candidates and other party officials, 21% thought the 2014 election was run better than previous years, and 61%

said that it was run about the same. In 2011, 47% of experienced candidates said the election was run worse than in previous years. In 2014, that number significantly improved, with only 28% considering that the election was run worse than in previous years. This is a dramatic improvement in particular given that there was no fixed election date.

As in 2011, the majority of CFOs (85%) and candidates (83%) believe that Elections Ontario is unbiased. However, one in five (18% down from 22%) of candidates disagree and believe that Elections Ontario is biased in some way. Perception of bias among CFOs rose slightly to 15%.

There was a significant reduction (46% to 32%) of candidates who had problems with processes and procedures for the 2014 election. There was a slight increase (26% to 32%) for CFOs. As Table 6 shows, the top issues cited by candidates and CFOs in 2011 were halved by 2014.

Table 5: Favourable impressions for how the election was run

Overall		Candidates		CFOs		Other	
2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014	2011	2014
61%	68%	53%	65%	68%	71%	59%	71%

Table 6: Candidates and CFOs who experienced issues

Issues	Candidates		CFOs	
	2011	2014	2011	2014
Voters list	22%	11%		
Lack of information and communication prior to the election			28%	14%

In 2014, candidates most commonly cited problems with registration (18%) and lack of communication/information prior to the election (13%). CFOs most commonly cited that problems in 2014 were with inadequate information/explanation of rules/election procedures (18%) and issues were with the voters list (18%).

Top issues cited by candidates and CFOs in 2011 were cut in half by 2014.

Working with Elections Ontario

When asked to evaluate their main point of contact with Elections Ontario, candidates, CFOs and other party officials continued to provide high ratings (80%). Candidate ratings significantly improved, from 70% to 80%. Other party officials also saw a significant satisfaction increase, from 69% to 85%. However, CFOs saw a decrease in satisfaction, from 87% to 76%, based on the service and information they received.

Candidates reported a significant improvement for their main point of contact with Elections Ontario.

As could be expected, CFOs mostly contacted Elections Ontario regarding finance issues (38%). There has been a significant decline in phone calls to the Election Finances Unit (30% from 49%), and there has been an increase in use of the Elections Ontario website (27%, up from 15%).

Candidates increased their preference to visit or phone the local returning office (79%, up from 65%) to discuss rules, regulations and maps (29%). In total during the 2014 provincial election, 4 in 10 (41%) used email to contact Elections Ontario and ask for information or submit forms.

Elections Ontario's online resources, including the website and email support, were rated highly by those who used them (72%).

Elections Ontario has committed to continue to consider these comments in its preparations for forthcoming elections. In 2014, there was a significant increase in the satisfaction rating for Election Day support (58% in 2011 to 66% in 2014) and post-election support (53% in 2011 to 60% in 2014).

Appendix B: Accessibility measures for the 2014 general election and summary reports

Introduction

When the 2011 general election resulted in the election of a minority government, Elections Ontario immediately began preparations for the first non-fixed date general election that would need to meet the new requirements for the enhanced services to voters introduced with the passage of the *Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010*.

The Act introduced several changes including offering the option to vote by special ballot the day after writs are issued, ensuring that returning offices have accessible voting technology in place for advanced voting and ensuring that all returning offices, satellite offices and voting locations are accessible. These enhanced services were introduced for the first time in 2011. In a fixed-date election period, there would be four years for Elections Ontario staff to complete the advanced work necessary to be able to offer next-day special ballots and ensure that all office and voting locations are well researched, pre-determined and leased in advance of an election. However, the 2011 election resulted in a minority government making the delivery of these enhanced services especially challenging. To ensure that we would be ready to administer a general election at any time, our 215 returning officers and election clerks completed readiness assignments on a regular basis in each of the 107 electoral districts. Many more people—nearly 76,000 election officials working in more than 8,000 voting locations—had to be ready to mobilize as soon as the political climate triggered a general election.

For the 2014 general election, Elections Ontario committed to a goal of maintaining the level of accessibility that was introduced in the 2011

general election, regardless of the logistical challenges posed by the non-fixed date environment.

Prior to 2011, we had approached accessibility as an accommodation service delivered to voters as required. In the preparations for the 2011 general election, we recognized that a systemic, more inclusive approach to accessibility was needed. For guidance, we looked to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and consulted with electors. As a result, we made significant accessibility improvements in our delivery of the 2011 general election. While recognizing that there is more work that needs to be done in the future, the goal for the 2014 general election was to maintain the level of accessibility service from 2011. Therefore where this report describes adopted accessibility measures, it is written in the context of a comparison to the changes first adopted in 2011 to evaluate if we met our goal of delivering a consistent level of service.

As shown in the summary report below, Elections Ontario is satisfied that we maintained the level of accessibility services from 2011. In some areas we exceeded our goal and were able to make improvements in 2014 beyond the level of service delivered in 2011. One such success is the accessibility of voting locations. Of the 8,019 voting locations used, all were measured against our Site Accessibility Standards and sites that required remediation were identified. In total 40% were remediated to ensure they were accessible; this is a significant improvement over the 2011 general election, as more than half of the voting locations at that time (56%) required remediation to suit the standard. This improvement is due in part to our staff's greater familiarity with accessibility standards. It also

reflects the efforts of all Ontario communities to renovate and build infrastructure to meet advancing accessibility standards.

Electors with disabilities agreed that accessibility improved in 2014. When these electors were asked, in post-election survey conducted by Ipsos Reid, if Elections Ontario made the overall voting process easier, support was strong, with 78% agreeing. This is an increase of 2 percentage points over 2011.

One initiative in particular that improved accessibility among electors with disabilities was Elections Ontario's "more ways" strategy, which includes the provision of advance polling days and the special ballot program which allowed in-home and hospital voting. In 2014, electors with disabilities significantly increased their use of advance polls by 11 percentage points over 2011.

Overall, Election Ontario was able to deliver a consistent voting experience in 2011 despite the challenges posed by the non-fixed election date. Benchmarks set in the 2011 general election for accessibility were met or improved upon in 2014. In the report below you will find a detailed summary of accessibility measures adopted and used in the 2014 general election.

Principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 in action: Elections Ontario's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan objectives

Respect for the **dignity** of persons with disabilities

Ontarians with disabilities are **aware of services** provided by Elections Ontario and **receive quality service**

Respect for the **independence** of persons with disabilities

Ontarians with disabilities **can participate in all aspects** of the electoral process as electors or candidates

Goods and services that are **integrated** for persons with disabilities unless an alternate measure is necessary (either temporarily or on a permanent basis)

Elections Ontario staff are knowledgeable about the needs of all elector groups and **integrate quality service best practices** into the delivery of the election

Equality in the ability to obtain, use and benefit from goods and services given to others.

Elections Ontario fosters a **work environment that is accessible**

What you will find in the remainder of Appendix B

The *Election Act* requires that the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) submit a report that includes a summary of all actions, services, feedback and responses related to accessibility. The remainder of Appendix B fulfills our legislative requirement to report on accessibility following each general election. It summarizes:

- measures and initiatives that have been integrated to provide greater access and services to electors with disabilities
- customer service feedback collected during the electoral event, and our response
- summary of returning officers' reports on accessibility measures
- results of public opinion research as it relates to accessibility or service to persons with disabilities

Legislative and policy framework

The *Ontario Human Rights Code* together with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* protects and guarantees the rights of all Ontarians to access goods, services, facilities and employment. Elections Ontario is committed to delivering elections that are accessible, transparent, and fairly and efficiently administered. Elections Ontario's **Accessible Customer Service Policy**, **Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy Directive**, and **Multi-year Accessibility Plan** communicate our commitment to deliver high-quality service to all Ontarians engaged in the electoral process as electors, administrators, candidates and other stakeholders.

As we maintain our compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), we use the *Election Act* to reinforce the AODA's accessibility principles. For example, the *Election Act* includes a requirement that assistive voting technology be available for advanced voting at returning offices and advance polls from the start of advance polls to the day before Election Day. It also sets out the parameters of the special ballot program, which increases accessibility for all electors.

Elections Ontario carries out its obligations to deliver elections and day-to-day operations that are free from discrimination, and we proactively remove and prevent barriers by promoting processes that are inclusive.

Report on accessibility-related actions, services, feedback and responses

Requirement(s)— <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) After every election, the CEO shall prepare a report on accessibility issues.</p> <p>The report is to be included in the election report or the next annual report.</p>	<p>The following information serves as the CEO's report on accessibility issues, measures, services, feedback and responses and includes summaries of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures taken during the election to address barriers to accessibility and other accessibility issues [Section 67.2(1) (d)] • Feedback received on the manner in which services were provided to persons with disabilities [Section 67.2(1) (a) (i)] • Elections Ontario's response to feedback, including steps taken to respond to negative feedback [Section 67.2(1) (a) (ii)] • Reports made by returning officers on the measures taken to provide accessibility to electors with disabilities [Section 67.2(1) (b)] • Results of the public opinion survey conducted following the general election [Section 67.2(1) (c)] • Recommendations from the CEO respecting barriers to accessibility and other accessibility issues [Section 67.2(1) (d)]

Requirement(s)— <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (d) Summary of measures to address barriers to accessibility and other accessibility issues</p>	<p>Measures taken during the election to address barriers to accessibility and other accessibility issues</p> <p>Elections Ontario has long held a commitment to making the electoral process more accessible. Since the 1970s, our agency has pioneered important initiatives to help Ontarians exercise their right to vote. In recent years, we have introduced closed-captioning and descriptive video for election commercials, provided magnifying devices and Braille templates at every voting location, and provided large print materials, pictographic and plain-language instructions for electors. In addition, we have piloted accessible voting equipment in by-elections' advance voting locations, which we have recommended and received authority to use in general elections.</p>

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (d) Summary of measures to address barriers to accessibility and other accessibility issues (continued)</p>	<p>Elections Ontario deployed the following devices, tools, services, training and employment measures during the 2014 general election:</p> <p><i>Communications and public education leading to Election Day</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative formats—General information on the election and voting process from Elections Ontario was provided in a range of formats to ensure that all voters could understand where, when and how to vote. Formats included print, large print, audio file, Braille and .dxb (Druxbury drawing exchange binary) and .brf (Braille) electronic files. • Audio version of <i>Householder</i>—This audio recording of Elections Ontario’s <i>Householder</i> (a brochure that outlines election dates and details, including when to vote and options for voting) could be accessed through cable, satellite or the Internet by individuals, providing them with independent access to current information about the election and voting process. • Closed caption advertising—closed captioning was provided on television advertising. This service displays text on a television screen to provide additional or interpretive information to viewers. The term “closed” in closed captioning indicates that not all viewers see the captions—only those who choose to activate them. Captions aim to describe all significant audio content—spoken dialogue and non-speech information such as the identity of speakers and, occasionally, their manner of speaking—along with music or sound effects using words or symbols. • Descriptive video—Descriptive video (DV) is a narrative track of visual media for a person with visual challenges. It provides a voice-over description of a program’s key visual elements with narration that is inserted during natural pauses in program dialogue. The descriptive narrator talks through the presentation, describing what is happening on the screen during the natural pauses in the audio. In general, DV describes actions that are not otherwise reflected in the dialogue, such as the movement of a person in a scene. • TTY—this audio service enables people with hearing loss to access information by telephone. During regular business hours, TTY is available at Elections Ontario headquarters. TTY was also available through Elections Ontario’s public call center during the election period.

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (d) Summary of measures to address barriers to accessibility and other accessibility issues (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain language communications—All communication materials, such as advertising and public education materials, were drafted in plain language to be accessible to all Ontarians. • Notice of Registration Card (NRC)—An NRC was sent to each elector in the Permanent Register of Electors. In addition to other election-related information, such as the date and time of the election, the NRC informed electors of the accessibility of the advance poll and Election Day voting locations. For voting locations that required more detailed information, the voter was directed to Elections Ontario’s public call center or the voter’s returning office. • Radio advertising—Election information was advertised in part by broadcasting it on radio in an audio format. • Website—the 2014 general election site was built in alignment with the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and, more specifically, in full compliance with W3C’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0) at level AAA. WCAG 2.0 level AA and AAA websites incorporate tools and design elements to ensure accessibility. For example, text alternatives for any non-text content will be provided so that the content can be changed into other forms that people may need, such as large print, Braille, speech, symbols or simpler language. In addition, the 2014 general election website featured adjustable font size, adjustable contrast, clean design and plain language. • Public education—Elections Ontario is mandated to make the electoral process better known to and understood by the public, including young Canadians. Public education projects include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Vote, an election simulation program for students that parallels municipal, provincial and federal elections • PowerPoint presentation, a plain language description of the election process, special ballot and assistive voting technology

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (d) Summary of measures to address barriers to accessibility and other accessibility issues (continued)</p>	<p><i>Training and staffing in support of accessibility</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service training—A key challenge for Elections Ontario in the 2014 general election was the delivery of effective training for the approximately 76,000 temporary election workers who joined Elections Ontario for a short period to deliver the election. Elections Ontario delivered training for front-line personnel, including poll officials, to ensure effective responsiveness to voters with disabilities. In addition to in-person training, we used our 2011 award-winning training video to inform poll officials and returning office staff on ways to better serve voters with disabilities. While watching the video, staff answered a series of eight questions from their manuals. Each individual who was trained signed a certificate confirming that they completed their training and are prepared to deliver excellent customer service. • Manuals for poll officials and in poll kits included instructions on how to assist voters with disabilities and emphasized that the deputy returning officer’s role includes providing assistance to a voter with a disability at the voting location, if required. • Employment—Accommodation was provided for employees with disabilities and, where requested, provided for those applying for jobs. <p><i>Specialized voting services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special ballot: Vote by mail—an elector can apply in person or by mail, courier, email or fax for a special ballot and can then vote with the special ballot via mail or in-person at the returning office or satellite office in their electoral district. • Special ballot: Home visits—A voter can request the assistance of a special ballot officer to complete an application form and to cast a write-in special ballot at any place in the electoral district that the voter requests, provided that the voter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would find it impossible or unreasonably difficult to personally go to the returning office • needs assistance with making an application to vote by special ballot because of a disability or because he or she is unable to read or write

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (d) Summary of measures to address barriers to accessibility and other accessibility issues (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Ballot: Hospital visits—an eligible elector who is temporarily in an Ontario hospital may be visited by a special ballot team who can take the elector’s application for a special ballot and accept their marked ballot inside the applicable security envelope. • Voting locations in hospitals and other institutions—voting locations must be set up in sites such as chronic care facilities with 20 or more beds, or retirement homes of 50 beds or more. Voters who are on the list of electors and reside at one of these institutions are able to vote at such a voting location. The deputy returning officer and the poll clerk may take the ballot box to voters at their bedsides to facilitate voting by eligible residents. • Certificate to Vote—Voters with restricted mobility or other disabilities who can vote more conveniently at another voting location can apply at a returning office to have their name included in the polling day list of electors for that alternative voting location, up to an including the day before Election Day. The voter is provided with a Certificate to Vote to present to the deputy returning officer at the alternative voting location, together with their proof of identity. This enables voters to vote in the alternative location. • Homeless elector process—Recognizing that homelessness and disability may intersect, Elections Ontario developed a process where administrators of facilities that provide food or shelter to homeless electors could be authorized to issue temporary identification certificates to individuals who do not have ID and/or a permanent residence. Elections Ontario worked closely with food banks, soup kitchens, shelters and provincial umbrella organizations like the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Ontario Association of Food Banks, and the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association to disseminate information about the process to service providers across the province.

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (d) Summary of measures to address barriers to accessibility and other accessibility issues (continued)</p>	<p><i>Services, tools and technology at the polls</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting location accessibility standards—In order to assist returning officers in assessing and verifying the accessibility of voting locations, prior to the 2011 general election Elections Ontario created Site Accessibility Standards. This ensures that the definition of what is required under the <i>Election Act</i> for an accessible voting location is transparent consistently understood and uniformly defined across all electoral districts. In addition to the standards, Elections Ontario also delivered accessibility inspection training for returning officers and their staff in order to support a consistent approach to the implementation of the voting location requirements across the province. • Assistive devices at voting locations—Assistive devices were provided at voting locations to assist voters with disabilities to vote independently and in secrecy. Devices include magnifiers, ballot templates that have raised numbers and cut-outs to assist voters with vision loss; pad and paper for communicating with voters with hearing loss; and easy-grip pencils for individuals who have a manual dexterity disability. • Assistive voting technology (AVT)—this equipment was available in every returning office and satellite office for the 15 days before Election Day so that electors with disabilities were able to vote independently and verify their ballot. The equipment can process hand-marked paper ballots in addition to ballots marked by electors via an integrated ballot-marking device that has audio and tactile interfaces. • Ballot font size—the candidate’s given name appeared on the ballot in 18-point font, the candidate’s surname appeared in 24-point font, and the political party name or candidate’s status as independent appeared in 14-point font. • Feedback process—if a voter wanted to provide either general feedback to Elections Ontario or specific feedback on a particular situation, each voting location, returning office and satellite office had feedback forms that the voter could complete and put in the feedback box. In addition, the feedback form is available online: elections.on.ca. • Interpreters—the voter is responsible for booking the services of an American Sign Language interpreter, if required, and Elections Ontario covers the cost of the service when used at a returning office, satellite office or at a voting location.

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (d) Summary of measures to address barriers to accessibility and other accessibility issues (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving the ballot box—the ballot box may be moved by the poll officials to facilitate voting should an elector require that service. • Notices of disruption—Temporary disruptions in services at voting locations may interfere with the ability of voters to cast their ballots and could include unscheduled or scheduled maintenance, repairs, construction, etc. When a temporary disruption occurs, Elections Ontario provides notice to the public including the following information: the nature of the service that is not available; the reason for the temporary disruption, such as repairs, weather, etc.; the expected length of the temporary disruption; and an alternate means for accessing the service, if available. Notices are posted online and signage is posted at the affected location. • Service animals—Elections Ontario welcomes service animals that are providing assistance to voters with disabilities. Voters with disabilities are permitted to keep their service animals with them while in Elections Ontario premises, including voting locations, and while accessing election services or voting, unless excluded by law. • Voting assistance from a friend or support person—a voter who requires the assistance of another individual in order to vote may be accompanied by a friend to the voting screen. The friend may mark the ballot for the voter who requires assistance after fulfilling various requirements under the <i>Election Act</i> such as making a declaration to maintain the secrecy of the vote.

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (a) (i) Summary of customer service feedback</p>	<p>At voting locations across the province, customer service feedback forms were available for electors. Over the course of the 2014 election period, Elections Ontario received 5,852 customer service feedback forms, 267 of which were related to accessibility issues or service. This is a decrease from 2011 when just over 700 pieces of individual feedback were received. Feedback was also received directly from electors through emails and telephone calls to our head-quarters, and indirectly from returning officers who listened and responded to feedback in the electoral district offices.</p> <p>Generally, feedback regarding customer service and personal service was positive. Election officials were seen as doing their best to accommodate the</p>

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (a) (i) Summary of customer service feedback (continued)</p>	<p>needs of electors with disabilities and ensure that they had a positive voting experience. The following are some examples:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">One voter, who uses a mobility chair, noted that poll staff were “caring, helpful, and efficient.”</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“The helpers were fantastic. They acknowledged the same problem I did right away.”</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“The polling staff were extremely helpful and considerate. I had brought my father who is 87 years old and visually impaired. The poll official was kind enough to bring the polling station close to us and made it a pleasant experience.”</p> <p>Negative feedback received was largely related to voting locations such as: not enough accessible parking spaces, a long distance to walk from the parking lot to the polling station, directional signage that was not high contrast and therefore not visible to persons with low vision, or barriers at the doorway or elevator, including small edges on thresholds that were difficult for those using a walker. The following are two examples:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“My wife is disabled, is there any chance to vote online in the future?”</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“Can’t do stairs and my scooter wouldn’t go in elevator.”</p> <p>A very small number of electors (less than 10) stated that the small font on the Notice of Registration Card and/or other printed materials was a barrier. Some electors suggested that better training is needed for election officials regarding the assistive materials (Braille, template, magnifiers, special ballot applications) and assistive voting technology (AVT) so that they are better able to provide clear instructions on the use of these materials and technology to the voter.</p>

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (a) (ii) Response to customer service feedback, including steps to respond to negative feedback</p>	<p>When responding to the feedback, Elections Ontario discussed the issues/ barriers faced by the elector, how Elections Ontario could better accommodate their needs in the future, and verification of the action that would be taken immediately and in the future to rectify any problems.</p> <p>Returning officers were quick to respond to and make immediate improvements where possible. Where the barrier or challenge was a physical one, remediation was made onsite, if possible. For example, ramps were used to smooth out uneven thresholds. Elections staff were deployed in locations where doors were not accessible to assist electors to open doors, or to direct electors to an accessible entrance. There were a small number of cases election officials were made available to bring a ballot and secrecy screen to the elector.</p>
<p>67.2(1) (b) Summary of returning officer accessibility reports</p>	<p>The <i>Election Act</i> requires that the Chief Electoral Officer submit a report after each election that includes a summary of every report made by returning officers in respect to the accessibility measures that were deployed for persons with disabilities in their electoral district.</p> <p>Returning officers were asked to report on nine aspects of election accessibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Accessibility training <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Accessible voting locations <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Accessible materials <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Notices of disruption <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Voting by special ballot <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Other accessibility measures <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Other accessible voting options <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Customer service feedback <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Employment of persons with disabilities

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (b) Summary of returning officer accessibility reports (continued)</p>	<p>Election staff accessibility training</p> <p>The election staff includes approximately 3,500 returning office staff, including special ballot officers, who work for the entire election calendar, and approximately 76,000 poll officials who work in the advanced polls and on Election Day. Despite the short tenure of their roles, all staff are trained and certified to deliver services in an accessible manner, and to support electors with disabilities, depending on their needs and specific requests for assistance.</p> <p>The training consists of an in-person training session outlining the requirements of the job and detailing the processes of electoral administration. Videos are also presented to demonstrate how to provide accessible customer service to a variety of individuals who represent the spectrum of disabilities in our communities. This training video won two awards in July 2012 from International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). The first for excellence in video production and the second for media that influences employee behaviour. Elections Ontario staff are trained on the use of assistive devices, interacting with people who employ support persons or service animals, and providing support for those who request specific assistance.</p> <p>Manuals clarify for staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to relocate the ballot box to provide service for those who may have difficulty getting into the voting location • how to assist and communicate with persons accompanied by an interpreter or support person • how to directly assist a person with a disability who requests help behind the voting screen • how to use assistive voting materials and technology <p>Accessible materials</p> <p>All returning offices were provided with materials to facilitate voting by persons with disabilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braille versions of householders that were mailed to homes across Ontario • documents in various formats, available on request from Elections Ontario

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (b) Summary of returning officer accessibility reports (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assistive voting devices—magnifier sheets, easy-grip pencils and ballot templates • high-contrast directional arrows to direct voters to accessible pathways and entrances at the voting locations • customer service feedback kits • notice of disruption forms <p>Voting by special ballot</p> <p>For this election, 77,628 ballots were cast through the special ballot program. Of those, 4,058 were cast using the special ballot home and hospital ballot programs.</p> <p>Services provided by special ballot officers</p> <p>Special ballot officers provided a range of services, as directed by the elector, including assistance filling out forms and ballots in full, finding and retrieving identification documents, reading instructions or candidate names aloud, providing assistive voting technologies such as magnifiers or ballot templates or setting up a stable writing area. Returning officers also built on grassroots promotion of the special ballot options.</p> <p>“We promoted special ballot home visits by contacting care services housed within special needs buildings.”</p> <p>“An elector asked that the special ballot officer double check that her ballot was properly completed as she was visually impaired.”</p> <p>“Hospital voting—The special ballot officer assisted an elector by placing a marker in the voter’s mouth to facilitate independent marking of the ballot.”</p>

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (b) Summary of returning officer accessibility reports (continued)</p>	<p>Other accessible voting options <i>Assistive voting technology (AVT)</i> Assistive voting technology incorporates audio and tactile interface, and has large paddle buttons and an optional ‘sip and puff’ device, all of which enable electors with disabilities who would have difficulty marking a ballot by hand to independently cast their vote in secret. A total of 95 votes were cast using AVT.</p> <p><i>Transfer to a more accessible voting location</i> Twenty-one voters requested to be transferred to an alternate voting location within their electoral district to accommodate restricted mobility and familiarity with a particular facility.</p> <p><i>Using an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter</i> Elections Ontario worked with the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) to make interpreting services available to electors who are deaf or hard of hearing. Under the agreement the elector could contact CHS directly to request ASL interpretation services and Elections Ontario covered the cost. While no electors used this arrangement during this cycle, Elections Ontario will maintain this service for future events.</p> <p>Employment of persons with disabilities Nearly all returning officers employed persons with disabilities to work as poll officials, and more than half reported employing persons with disabilities within their key office staff. Employees with disabilities were accommodated in a variety of ways to ensure that they could contribute on equal footing with their colleagues.</p> <p>Accessible voting locations The <i>Election Act</i> requires that all voting locations be accessible to persons with disabilities. Elections Ontario accomplishes this goal by applying its Site Accessibility Standards, which assess the accessibility of a given location based on quantitative and qualitative criteria. Locations that did not naturally meet the standards were remediated using various tools. Remediation included the employment of additional information assistants to direct electors to an accessible pathway, or to assist electors on ramps or in elevators (there were 1,783 information assistants for accessibility in 2014). Directional signage was used to show an alternate/accessible pathway (4,590 directional signs were posted), and parking cones were used to define accessible parking spaces (5,042 cones used throughout Ontario). Mats and beveled threshold spacers were used to smooth out thresholds (203 ramps, 524 beveled thresholds and 275 mats were used).</p>

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
<p>67.2(1) (b) Summary of returning officer accessibility reports (continued)</p>	<p>Of the 8,019 voting locations used, all were measured against our Site Accessibility Standards and sites that required remediated were identified. In total 40% were remediated to ensure they were accessible; this is a significant improvement over the 2011 general election, as more than half of the voting locations at that time (56%) required remediation to suit the standard. This improvement is due in part to our staff’s greater familiarity with accessibility standards. It also reflects the efforts of all Ontario communities to renovate and build infrastructure to meet advancing accessibility standards.</p> <p>Notices of disruption Returning officers posted 31 notices of disruption throughout the election calendar, 17 of which were posted on Election Day.</p> <p>The majority of disruptions in service were related to malfunctioning elevators, intermittent power outages or false fire alarms. Here are some examples:</p> <p>“A notice of disruption was posted at a voting location where power was lost, directing electors to a temporary location across the road. An information assistant was assigned at the original site to redirect electors. When power was restored the original voting location was reopened.”</p> <p>“A false fire alarm was engaged and the school, which was the voting location, was vacated for a brief time. As a result, the polls were closed for 10 minutes. Several voters cast ballots in the parking lot. One or two left without voting. We encouraged them to return after the delay to vote. The deputy returning officers took the ballot boxes, ballots and poll records with them when they evacuated the building. All poll workers returned to their stations once the all clear was called and the alarm was silenced by school staff.”</p> <p>“At a voting location with multiple polls, the elevator malfunctioned and while it was out of service we positioned an information assistant to identify electors requiring support. Electors requiring support were provided with their ballot and ballot box in the lobby.”</p> <p>Other accessibility measures Poll officials and returning office staff ensured accessibility of voting services through other measures. These included providing documents or information in accessible formats, reading aloud the candidates’ names on the ballot, promoting special ballot home/hospital visits with eligible community members, hiring and training additional staff to accommodate electors’ needs, and working with stakeholder groups.</p>

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
67.2(1) (c) Findings from public opinion survey	<p>Following each general election, Elections Ontario commissions research to measure the opinions and experiences of electors. Ipsos-Reid conducted online and telephone surveys with the general electorate and specifically broke out experiences of special electors including but not limited to electors with disabilities. For 2014, there was a significant increase in awareness about voting options amongst the general electorate and also amongst electors with disabilities. 81% of the general electorate surveyed agreed that Elections Ontario makes voting easy for ALL electors.</p> <p>Overall impressions of the voting experience</p> <p>The rating of the overall voting experience remained high at 83%—the same as 2011.</p> <p>Electors with disabilities have greater confidence today than in 2011 about the voting information and process with respect to being treated with dignity and receiving service that is respectful of their disability.</p> <p>Nearly all electors with a disability rated the ease of voting as either the same or easier compared to 2011.</p> <p>Electors with disabilities maintained their positive attitudes toward voting. Similar to 2011, and consistent with the general electorate, the community of persons with disabilities that responded to our survey thought that voting is important, that it is easier than ever, and that they felt well informed about the process. Elections Ontario will continue to build on these positive elements.</p> <p>Voting Behaviour</p> <p>The reasons that electors with disabilities cited for voting are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that it is a civic duty/responsibility • that voting is a right/privilege • that they want to have their say/voice an opinion/be heard

Requirement(s) – <i>Election Act</i> section	Summary
67.2(1) (c) Findings from public opinion survey (continued)	<p>Electors with disabilities, who did not vote, cited the same reasons as the general electorate for not voting; such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “dislike the candidates/parties” • “mistrust government/elections” <p>Compared to the general electorate, the incidence of voting is higher amongst most special elector groups, including electors with disabilities.</p> <p>Electors with disabilities increased their use of advanced polls by 11 percentage points over 2011 and correspondingly decreased their instances of voting on Election Day by 13% as compared to 2011.</p> <p>Awareness of accessibility services</p> <p>Compared to 2011, there was an increase in the awareness of availability of accessibility services within the disabilities community. There has been a doubling of awareness about wheelchair accessibility for voting locations since 2011. Awareness of assistance or assistive devices in the voting location is up by 7% over 2011. Awareness of accessibility services has also improved by 5% since 2011.</p> <p>Four in 10 electors cite Elections Ontario as their main source of information about election-related accessible services. This is a 10% improvement over 2011.</p> <p>Rating of accessibility services</p> <p>About half of voters with a visual disability rated the services in place for them as either excellent or good.</p> <p>The majority of electors with auditory disabilities were pleased that staff maintained appropriate eye contact, and provided accessible services and tools that made the process easy.</p> <p>Nearly two-thirds of electors with a physical/mobility disability rated the accessible services provided for them as good/excellent.</p>

Requirement(s) – Election Act section	Summary
67.2(1) (c) Findings from public opinion survey (continued)	<p>Barriers to voting</p> <p>The majority of electors with disabilities did not report any problems or barriers to voting.</p> <p>Area for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Of the 22% of electors with disabilities who did report experiencing a barrier there was a significant increase from 2011 of reports that voting location staff were inefficient, confused or did not know proper procedures. This is an increase of 16% from 2011. There was also a 17% increase compared with 2011 about locations being inconvenient and far from home. The number of locations that were cited as difficult to access remained consistent with 2011. Interestingly, in contrast to the reports above, when electors with disabilities were asked directly about their voting experience there was an increase of nearly 10% in voters who said staff took the person’s disability into account when communicating with them, and an increase of 6% in voters who said they were treated with dignity and respect throughout the voting process. Elections Ontario has identified customer service training as an area for improvement so that a consistent level is delivered across Ontario. <p>Communications to voters</p> <p>Information available to electors prior to Election Day has a significant impact on the elector’s perception of whether the overall voting process is easy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent with the general electorate, approximately one in five voters with a disability stated that they either did not receive an Notice of Registration Card (NRC) or that the NRC was not entirely clear regarding how, when and where to vote in an advance poll, as well as what identification electors needed to bring to the poll. <p>The confidence in the information available regarding processes such as where and when to vote has improved among electors with a disability over 2011.</p> <p>Knowledge of the voting process</p> <p>The majority of electors are knowledgeable about the voting process (where, when, how) and the date of Election Day. When discussing particular elements of the voting process, there was an overall decline amongst the general electorate about particular services such as 29 days of voting and mail-in ballots. Electors with disabilities also showed a decline of knowledge in this area. This is possibly due to the fact that not as much pre-writ communications was available because of the non-fixed date.</p>

Requirement(s) – Election Act section	Summary
67.2(1) (c) Findings from public opinion survey (continued)	<p>Electors with disabilities are more aware of in-hospital and home-visit programs, through the special ballot program.</p> <p>Contacting Elections Ontario</p> <p>Electors with disabilities were the largest group of electors to contact Elections Ontario. One in seven surveyed stated they contacted us, compared to only one in 20 among general electors. Most contact experiences were positive. Our analysis of the channels this group used to contact us appears to indicate that they favored direct contact; they chose to call either the toll free number or local number in greater proportions than general electors.</p> <p>Preferred method of voting in the future</p> <p>When asked about their preferred method of voting in the future, electors with disabilities had increasing expectations of being able to vote online or by telephone. Their expectations were even greater than among the general electorate. Amongst the general electorate preference for online voting declined somewhat.</p>
67.2(1) (e) CEO recommendations	<p>At this time Elections Ontario is satisfied that we delivered a level of accessibility service in the 2014 general election that was consistent with the accessibility measures first adopted in 2011. We recognize that there is work to be done with regards to feedback received from electors through our customer feedback forms and the Ipsos Reid Survey.</p> <p>As outlined in our Strategic Plan 2013 to 2017, Elections Ontario is committed to updating our services for all Ontarians in a way that put the needs of electors first. We intend to build on our past successes and strengths to improve Ontario’s provincial electoral process. We plan to ensure that our processes foster inclusiveness and that barriers are removed.</p> <p>We will work with our stakeholders to build an electoral process that provides Ontarians with their choice of services, delivered in an up-to-date, accessible, safe, secure and transparent manner that protects the integrity of the electoral process.</p>

Appendix C: Candidates and parties in the 2014 general election

Political party	Number of candidates on the ballot	
	in 2011	in 2014
Canadians' Choice Party	3	4
Communist Party of Canada (Ontario)	9	11
Family Coalition Party of Ontario	31	6
Freedom Party of Ontario	57	42
Green Party of Ontario	107	107
New Democratic Party of Ontario	107	107
Northern Ontario Heritage Party	3	3
Ontario Liberal Party	107	107
Ontario Libertarian Party	51	73
Ontario Provincial Confederation of Regions Party	3	2
Party for People with Special Needs	4	3
Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario	107	107
Socialist Party of Ontario	5	2
The Peoples Political Party	4	5
Vegan Environmental Party	3	5
Pauper Party of Ontario	2	3
Equal Parenting Party	N/A	2
None of the Above Party of Ontario	N/A	8
Trillium Party of Ontario	N/A	2
Ontario Moderate Party	N/A	2
Independent	29	14
Other candidates without party affiliation on the ballot	7	N/A
TOTAL	655	615

Appendix D: The special ballot program

The special ballot program—2014 general election

Special ballot kits		
The Chief Electoral Officer (Elections Ontario headquarters)	Mailed	10,609
	Returned	9,173
Returning offices	Mailed	917
	Returned	119

Special ballot counts	
Number of electors who voted by special ballot	77,638
Declined special ballots	183
Unmarked special ballots	139
Total rejected special ballots	876

Report under the *Election Act*, subsection 45.11

Special ballots set aside	
Paragraph (a) Elector information on envelope does not correspond to application	18
Paragraph (b) Declaration not signed by elector	20
Paragraph (c) Electoral district cannot be determined	6
Paragraph (d) Special ballots received after 6:00 p.m. on polling day	296
Paragraph (e) Election postponed (deceased candidate)	0



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