



## Ontario Museum Association Ontario's 2022 Election Toolkit for Museums

The Ontario Museum Association is the province's only professional association dedicated to museums and those who work and volunteer in them. The OMA is a registered non-profit and does not endorse a specific candidate or party.

### **About provincial elections**

The Ontario Provincial Election is taking place on **June 2, 2022**.

- Learn more about the Ontario provincial election process from Elections Ontario [HERE](#).
- You can find information about ways to vote, how to register as a voter, how to find your electoral district and candidates, and accessible voting methods.


### **Why Museums Matter & the 2022 Election**

The more than 700 museums, galleries, and historic sites across the province are located in every community—urban, rural, Northern, Indigenous, east and west—and serve as vital community-building infrastructure. Museums are heritage assets, key to education, employment, economic development, tourism, culture, and equity. As trusted public institutions, museums foster social wellbeing and visitor engagement through high-quality, authentic experiences and connections. Museums can play a vital role in rebuilding and reconnecting Ontario, both socially and economically. **Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, museums have exhibited resilience and delivered valuable engagement, serving their communities where possible. With adequate and stabilizing government support they can continue to build their contributions.**

The Ontario Museum Association recommends \$10million in additional operating support annually for community museums – reaching 300 communities across Ontario – as necessary stabilization for our sector. Further investments in Ontario museums' digital response will provide more quality educational experiences for more of Ontario's students.

Investing in Ontario museums means:

- Boosting Local Economic Development
- Improving Tourism
- Retaining Skilled Jobs
- Supporting High-Quality Education
- Building Equity, Social Cohesion, and Wellbeing
- Expanding Digital Engagement
- Social Return on Investment
- Advancing Truth & Reconciliation



Implementing the OMA recommendations will help to preserve the gains and successes that museums have been able to achieve and will bring the benefits of strong museums to more communities across Ontario.

Ontario museums contribute to:


- **Economic Development:** Estimated \$1.6 Billion in total economic value annually
  - For every \$1 spent on museum operations, museums deliver a \$3.70 return-on-investment
  - Integral partners in recovery with tourism, education, libraries, arts, and culture, in the \$75 Billion portfolio of the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
- **Tourism:** Part of the hardest-hit sector contributing \$34 Billion to Ontario's GDP, with 19.4 Million in-person visits annually pre-pandemic
- **Education:** Estimated \$600 Million in value of formal school visits per year
  - Before pandemic-related closures, Ontario museums were recording 113 Million online visits per year—nearly 4 per second!
- **Employment:** Employing 11,000 people across the province
- **Equity:** Fostering social cohesion and engaging all communities
  - Supporting equity & accessibility
  - Producing local, culturally-relevant programming and exhibits

#### **Tips for Election Advocacy:**

- Consult your organization's leadership before engaging in election-related activity
- Have an understanding of the issues, current policy, and the political positions and priorities of candidates. Always double-check facts and evaluate your sources.
- **The Elections Ontario list of registered parties and links to their official websites is [HERE](#).**

*We encourage museums to be aware of the public discourse during an election season and to foster meaningful dialogue about the value of museums so visitors, municipal governments and provincial governments recognize that museum personnel are informed and care about the future of museums related to the upcoming election.*

- Define your museum's priorities, objectives and goals, referencing the OMA's messages and recommendations and within the scope of the provincial government's responsibilities
- Keep your message consistent — brief museum staff & volunteers about the need for a \$10million increase in operating funding support for 300 Ontario community museums

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- Stay non-partisan — engage with and invite all candidates to participate
  - Partner with others — support and share resources with sector and community organizations
  - Share your success stories — raise your organization’s profile

### **Ways to Engage with Candidates**

*May is Museum Month* is an excellent opportunity for engagement with candidates in the days before the June 2 election! Download the *MMM* social media kit and graphics [HERE](#).

#### **1. One-on-one meetings**

- a. Meeting with candidates and campaign staff to ensure that they are aware of your priorities and concerns. It is a good way to get to know the candidates, share local perspectives and educate them on how they can support your museum
- b. Contact the OMA if you are hosting a meeting with candidates

#### **2. Letters and emails**


- a. Write to all your local candidates and share the OMA’s recommendation for increased operating funding and what it means for your museum and your local community

#### **3. Invitations**

- a. Invite your local candidates, public officials and community leaders to your “May is Museum Month” events
  - Invite museum members and volunteers to attend events where candidates can meet them so they can share what museums mean to them
  - Download a customizable meeting invitation template [HERE](#).

#### **4. Engage through social media**

- a. You can raise awareness of the priorities and concerns confronting your organization through online engagement. Social media can be used to share the impact of museums across Ontario and in your local community.
- b. Participate in *May is Museum Month* to promote your museum to a wide audience, showcase the ways your museum offers unique virtual or safe in-person experiences and promote museums as vital tourism assets
- c. Post your May events on your Discover Ontario Museums page: <https://www.museumsontario.ca/whats-on>
- d. Post about *May is Museum Month* on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn using #MayIsMuseumMonth or #MuseumsConnectON, and remember to tag @MuseumsOntario

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- e. Use one of the sample posts to talk about *May is Museum Month* more generally. You can find sample posts, images, fast facts and tips on how to engage your audience(s) in our Social Media Kit [HERE](#).

#### **Resources for Elections Advocacy for Registered Charities:**

- *Election Toolkit: A guide for nonprofits to meaningfully engage in elections*, by the Ontario Nonprofit Network <https://theonn.ca/resources/ontarios-nonprofit-advocacy-in-action/ontario-election-2022/>
- Canada Revenue Agency resources regarding:
  - [Political activities](#)
  - [Public policy dialogue and development activities by charities](#)
  - [Resources for charities about political activities](#)

*For Inspiration:*

#### **Ontario's Museums 2025: Strategic Vision & Action Plan**

Read more [HERE](#).

*Ontario's museums are ready to play a fundamental role in creating dynamic communities and a prosperous knowledge-based economy. Facing massive economic, cultural and social transformations of the 21st century, museums are also uniquely positioned as public organizations to help our communities prepare for, and proactively respond to, these changes.*

**Vibrant & vital museums:** Museums are relevant to contemporary society in Ontario. They engage their communities, stakeholders, and the public in developing and delivering their work. Museums provide welcoming spaces for rich and layered experiences, as well as opportunities for lifelong learning.

**Strong & successful sector:** Ontario's museums contribute to growing our local, provincial and national economies. They collaborate and partner within the museum and culture sector, and within other sectors. Museums operate with robust and relevant funding models based on the support of government, other not-for-profits, and private-sector partners. They manage their operations, buildings and collections in a sustainable and effective manner.

**Effective & collaborative workforce:** Museums can demonstrate the impact of their work on Ontario's economy, as well as on Ontario's social and cultural vitality. They communicate their value to their communities and to Ontarians. Museum workers are recognized as highly skilled and dedicated professionals.

**Relevant & meaningful collections:** Museums care for and develop collections for the public benefit. Museums enhance public access to, and interpretation of, collections to enable people to make meaning of their place in society.