

Rules of Procedure for Policy Development (“Policy Development Rules”)

Approved by Ontario Liberal Party Executive Council on February 11, 2019.

NOTE: These Rules of Procedure supplement and are subordinate to the Ontario Liberal Party Constitution. Please refer to the Ontario Liberal Party [website](#) for the most current version of these documents.

Purpose & Principles

1. The purpose of these Rules of Procedure is to establish the framework and processes for determining the policies and policy priorities of the Ontario Liberal Party (OLP).
2. The principles of the policy development process are that it,
 - a) is accessible,
 - b) is fact based,
 - c) is fair and accountable, and that it,
 - d) further the objects of the Ontario Liberal Party, namely to engage Ontario Liberals and promote the election of Liberal candidates to office.
3. There are five separate mechanisms by which the Party’s policy is determined, priorities identified, or feedback received through this by-law:
 - a) policy resolutions
 - b) theme prioritization
 - c) membership surveys
 - d) policy forums
 - e) policy working groups
4. The Leader, the Ontario Liberal caucus, and nominated candidates shall consider the resolutions approved, priorities identified and feedback received through these Rules of Procedure, but shall not be bound by them.
5. The Party’s Code of Conduct applies to all members, specifically in these Rules of Procedure with respect to members promoting policy positions in a respectful manner free of harassment, as well as any participants in any Party policy development process described in these Rules of Procedure.
6. The Vice-President (Policy) shall be responsible for administering these Rules of Procedure, for promoting the policy development process, including through social media and the Party website, and for developing and maintaining a policy manual and any other tool-kits, guides, graphic design elements, promotional materials etc. Where any of these materials or documents contradict these Rules of Procedure, the Rules of Procedure shall prevail.
7. Notwithstanding any provision of these Rules of Procedure, the policy development process shall be accessible in both official languages and reflect the diversity of Ontario.

Definitions

8. “**policy resolution**” - a specific policy proposal including a title, proponent(s), sponsor(s), preamble, and direction (see Appendix A)
9. “**policy plenary**” - a session of any Provincial Council meeting, annual meeting or policy convention where policy resolutions are debated.
10. “**proponent**” - the individual responsible for speaking on behalf of a policy resolution. Up to three proponents may be named in the case of a blended policy resolution.
11. “**sponsor**” - an affiliated association, region, or the Policy Committee
12. “**theme prioritization**” - a process by which members who attend local, regional, and province-wide events discuss and prioritize key themes from their communities
13. “**policy forum**” - any event held in person or online, to facilitate collaboration and discussion on public policy
14. “**policy working group**” - an expert panel established with a defined and specific public policy area with a terms of reference, to support the Liberal Caucus and members in the development of policy.

Policy Resolutions

15. A policy resolution may be proposed at any time.
16. In the case where either;
 - a) a member of the public, or
 - b) a member in good standing, where they demonstrably cannot contact an affiliated association,expresses interest in bringing forward a policy resolution, the Executive Council may allow the Policy Committee to sponsor that resolution, on the recommendation of the Vice-President (Policy).
17. In order to be considered at a policy plenary, a policy resolution must:
 - a) be within the jurisdiction of the Government of Ontario;
 - b) be factual, containing references to supporting materials;
 - c) focus on a specific policy objective or goal;
 - d) be no more than 250 words; and
 - e) be received by the Vice-President (Policy).
18. No constituency association, region or affiliated association may sponsor more than three (3) policy resolutions for a given policy plenary.
19. Policy resolutions must be received at least 21 days before a policy plenary is to be held, and for a period of no less than 7 days, the policy resolutions shall be posted online and emailed to delegates. A ballot with a list of policies shall be provided to delegates when registering, where they may choose up to 10 policies to move forward to the plenary. The top ten (10) policies receiving the most votes shall be debated at the policy plenary.
 - 19.1 The Ontario Women’s Liberal Commission (OWLC) and the Ontario Young Liberals (OYL) may each bring forward three (3) policies directly to the plenary, provided they are sponsored by the executive committees of the commissions.

20. A policy resolution must be approved by 2/3rds of delegates at a policy plenary in order to be considered Party policy.
21. A proposed policy resolution may only be rejected by the policy committee on the recommendation of the Vice-President (Policy) if;
 - a) the proponent(s), or the supporters of a policy resolution have engaged in harassment or harassing behaviour;
 - b) the policy resolution, if approved, would stand in opposition to the objects of the Party;
 - c) the policy resolution is deemed to be vexatious or spurious; or
 - d) the proponent(s) or a proposed policy resolution fail to follow this by-law.
- 21.1 The rationale with regard to the rejection of a policy resolution shall be clearly communicated to the proponent and sponsors (if any) and shall not exceed 250 words.
22. The rejection of a policy resolution may be appealed to the Executive Council.
23. Policy resolutions shall expire following a general election. After a general election, the Vice-President (Policy), in consultation with the Executive Council will create a plan to consult and engage the membership on policy priorities and present that plan to the next Provincial Council meeting.

Policy Plenary

24. A policy plenary may be held at any Provincial Council meeting, annual meeting or policy convention, provided ninety (90) days notice has been provided.
25. A breakout session and/or conference call may be held with policy resolution proponents, chaired by the Vice-President (Policy) to resolve any disputes or to blend resolutions.
 - 25.1 The blending of resolutions may only be done with the consent of the relevant proponents. The Vice-President (Policy) may make recommendations, moderate discussions, and arbitrate disputes, but shall not direct the final language in any policy resolution.
26. A policy plenary shall;
 - a) be chaired by the Vice-President (Policy) or their designate;
 - b) provide that all speakers have up to one (1) minute to speak in favour or against a policy statement, with a maximum of three (3) in favour, three (3) against, alternating; and
 - c) allow the proponent thirty (30) seconds to introduce their policy resolution.
27. The presiding chair may reduce the speaking time provided to thirty (30) seconds, provided it is applied equally and impartially, and notice is given at the beginning of the plenary.
28. Challenges to the presiding chair, amendments to policy resolutions from the floor, other than technical changes (spelling & grammar) are prohibited.
29. The time for debate on a specific resolution may be extended by the Chair, provided it is approved by 2/3rds of delegates present.

Theme Prioritization

30. All regional meetings, where possible, shall include a process by which attendees are encouraged to discuss local issues and priorities for their communities.

31. Responses received shall be referred to the Policy Committee and the Executive Council through the Vice-President (Policy) and be reported back to the membership at Provincial Council meetings and annual meetings, as well as to the Leader.

Membership Survey

32. At least twice a year, the Party shall survey the membership to determine the policy priorities of the membership, among other questions.
33. The results will be referred to the Policy Committee, any policy working groups established as well as members of the Provincial Council, and at annual meetings.

Policy Forums

34. The Vice-President (Policy) shall coordinate opportunities for interested members of the Party to engage with other members and members of the public on policy development and policy ideation.
35. A policy forum may be held at any time provided there is public notice, an identified facilitator, and a summary of the discussion and participants is provided to the Vice-President (Policy). No formal structure or agenda is required.
36. The Vice-President (Policy) shall provide a report on the policy forums held to the Executive Council and the Provincial Council.

Policy Working Groups

37. The Executive Council may establish policy working groups from time to time on the recommendation of the Leader and the Vice-President (Policy).
38. The membership of any working group must reflect the diversity of Ontario and shall be appointed by the Vice-President (Policy), including a chair (or co-chairs), who shall report the appointments to the Executive Council.
 - 38.1 Vice-President (Policy) shall ensure that there is an OWLC and OYL representative (or representatives) on each policy working group
39. Policy working groups are responsible for researching and recommending policy options for the Party and/or Liberal MPPs. No recommendation of a policy working group is considered Party policy unless approved at a policy plenary.
40. The Vice-President (Policy), or their designate, shall be an ex officio member on any working group.
41. All policy working groups shall operate on a consensus decision making model.
42. Policy working groups shall provide regular updates through mailing lists as well as seek input and feedback from the membership and members of the public at large.
43. Following an annual meeting, any previously established policy working groups shall be reestablished at the first meeting of the new Executive Council.

Policy Resolution Format

- TITLE:** Should be concise and quickly convey the subject of the resolution
- PROPONENT:** The name(s) & constituency association(s)/affiliated association(s) of the proponent(s), contact information to be provided to the Vice-President (Policy) (contact information may be displayed at the discretion of the proponent)
- SPONSOR(S):** The sponsoring constituency association(s), region(s), or where necessary the Policy Committee with a rationale
- PREAMBLE:** The situation or context that gives rise to the policy idea and why it is important; statements based on objectively verifiable facts that start with “WHEREAS”; identify third parties consulted in preparation of policy proposal & supporting materials.
- DIRECTION:** Identify actions the sponsor wants the Party to take in a statement or series of statements starting with the phrase “BE IT RESOLVED”