

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF VETERINARY TECHNICIANS

2022 ONTARIO ELECTION TOOLKIT

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ONTARIO
ASSOCIATION OF
VETERINARY
TECHNICIANS

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ELECTION OVERVIEW

The 2022 Ontario provincial election will be held on Thursday, June 2, 2022. The official campaign period (known as “the writ period”) began on Wednesday, May 4, 2022.

The campaign period offers an excellent opportunity to engage political decision-makers and shape the policy issues that the next government will care about. While the campaign period is ongoing, we encourage our members to engage with their local candidates about the importance of the RVT profession and how RVTs can offer a solution to challenges Ontarians are facing with accessing veterinary care.

HOW TO FIND YOUR LOCAL CANDIDATES

You may remember from last election that riding boundaries shifted to accommodate the now 124 seats in the legislature. For more information on riding boundaries, you can visit [Elections Ontario’s website](#), or to find your electoral district, you can [click here](#).

Once you have found your electoral district, you can find information about your local candidates through the websites of their political party, linked below.

- [Green Party of Ontario](#)
- [Ontario Liberal Party](#)
- [Ontario NDP](#)
- [Ontario PC](#)

During the campaign period, we will be encouraging all political parties to commit to modernizing the *Veterinarians Act* to reduce strain on Ontario’s animal health system and elevate the role and scope of the RVT profession. When engaging with local candidates, it is important to remember to **never engage in partisan critiques**, even of another party.

OUR KEY MESSAGES

Below are some key messages that you can use when engaging with local candidates about the importance of modernizing the *Veterinarians Act* to support and strengthen the RVT profession:

- **Ontarians are increasingly having difficulty accessing veterinary services** due to a shortage of veterinarians and RVTs. This shortage is felt across the province, and is impacting urban and suburban pet owners, as well as farmers in rural and remote areas.
- **This shortage has been severely exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic**, resulting in longer wait times for all types of veterinary services, including emergency care.
- **The demand for veterinary services will continue to exceed capacity in the future**, according to the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. We need to take action to ensure that Ontarians have timely access to veterinary services, now and in the future.
- **RVTs are highly trained professionals** working as an integral part of the animal health care team, **but are not currently recognized for their role.**
 - The current *Veterinarians Act* does not distinguish between RVTs and lay staff because the Act only recognizes veterinarians and “auxiliaries” (which could include someone hired with no animal health experience or training).
 - This means that RVTs are currently underutilized and not permitted to fully apply their education and training in the provision of veterinary care.
- The Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians, the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, and the College of Veterinarians of Ontario have jointly **identified further opportunities to utilize RVTs to their full scope of practice** to improve the affordability, accessibility, and efficiency of animal health services.
 - We are calling on all political parties to commit to modernizing the outdated *Veterinarians Act* to meet the current demand for animal health services in the province and create a future-ready framework for veterinary care.

SAMPLE ELEVATOR PITCH

During the campaign period, it is possible that you may encounter local candidates around your community. Should an opportunity for a brief interaction with a local candidate arise, we have prepared an “elevator pitch” that succinctly explains the OAVT’s advocacy priorities. Feel free to adapt this pitch to speak to your personal experience – local examples in particular are likely to resonate best with candidates.

Hi **[CANDIDATE NAME]**, it’s great to meet you.

My name is **[NAME]** and I am a Registered Veterinary Technician from **[RIDING/AREA]**.

You may know that Ontarians are increasingly having difficulty accessing veterinary services - a problem which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians (OAVT), the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, and the College of Veterinarians of Ontario believe that RVTs can be part of the solution.



Members of our profession are currently underutilized, and due to the outdated Veterinarians Act, we are not permitted to fully apply our extensive education and training in the provision of veterinary care. Updating the Act to better use RVTs to the full extent of our knowledge and skills would improve the affordability, accessibility, and efficiency of animal health services for pet owners and/or farmers in [RIDING].

The OAVT is calling on all parties to commit to modernizing the outdated Veterinarians Act to meet the current demand for animal health services in the province and create a future-ready framework for veterinary care. We look forward to working with all elected representatives to improve the delivery of veterinary medicine for Ontarians, following the election.

CANDIDATE OUTREACH EMAIL

The following note can be used in email communications with candidates and their staff over the course of the campaign. Again, this note may be adapted to speak to your personal experience and local examples from your riding.

RE: Updating the Veterinarians Act to Address Ontario's Shortage of Veterinary Professionals

Dear [CANDIDATE NAME],

My name is [NAME] and I am a [INSERT JOB TITLE] at [INSERT PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT]. I am writing to you as a local resident and on behalf of the Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians (OAVT) to urge your party to commit to modernizing the regulation of Registered Veterinary Technicians (RVTs) by updating the *Veterinarians Act, 1990*. This change would improve the utilization of RVTs in the provision of veterinary care, with benefits for the affordability, accessibility, and efficiency of animal health services in Ontario.

As you may know, Ontarians are increasingly having difficulty accessing veterinary services due to a shortage of veterinarians and RVTs. While this shortage has been long reported by farmers in rural and remote areas, the situation is now equally impacting pet owners residing in urban and suburban areas. The shortage of animal health professionals has been severely exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in longer wait times for all types of veterinary services, including emergency care. Coupled with existing professional shortages, the increase in pandemic pets and additional public health requirements for veterinary clinic operations have resulted in a crisis situation. [OPPORTUNITY TO ELABORATE IF YOU HAVE A STORY SHOWCASING THE DIFFICULTY OF ACCESSING ANIMAL HEALTH CARE].

RVTs are highly trained professionals and we have completed rigorous training and a demanding registration process in order to achieve our level of skill and knowledge in veterinary medicine. Despite this, the current *Veterinarians Act* does not distinguish between RVTs and lay staff, which has limited the ability of RVTs to fully apply our education and training in the provision of veterinary care.

On behalf of the OAVT, I encourage your party to commit to amending the *Veterinarians Act*, in order to modernize the regulation of veterinary professionals to best meet the growing animal health needs in the province. Utilizing the more than 4,200 RVTs in Ontario to our full scope of practice, including enabling us to initiate care in certain specific instances such as veterinary emergencies, could help alleviate current and future issues associated with the availability of veterinary care.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of the OAVT's goal to improve the delivery of veterinary medicine in Ontario.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR TITLE]

Member, Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians

TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING WITH CANDIDATES

Brevity is important: Ensure your message is clear and impactful, without overwhelming anyone with lengthy notes or unnecessary details.

Avoid technical terms: Stay away from acronyms, programs and other technical terms when engaging with local candidates. Do not assume that candidates have a detailed understanding of the role of an RVT or how RVTs are distinct from veterinarians.

Tell your story: Incorporating your experience as an RVT to explain how this issue impacts you and your fellow RVTs can be a powerful tool when engaging with candidates. Integrating local examples and stories will help make the issue *real* to candidates, showcasing what it means for local residents (and potential voters).

Repetition is key: Candidates are going to be engaged from all sectors, on many issues, so you need to ensure your ask and messages are clear, consistent and repeated, so they stick in minds.

The “so what” rationale is imperative: Show why your ask matters (speaking from personal experience is a great way to do this), how it aligns with the party’s objectives, and why the candidate/party should take action.

Never engage in partisan critiques: Even of other parties!

You don’t need to know everything: If there’s a question you can’t answer, that’s okay – share the answer in follow up. Speaking of which...

Follow up: If you meet with or receive correspondence back from a candidate, it is important to thank them for their time by sending a thank you email or letter. This note should reinforce the key messages you brought up in your previous engagement. If the candidate had any questions, or requested additional information, this can also be provided in the follow-up letter. Please reach out to the OAVT if you would like assistance.