



**Professional Engineers
Ontario**

Professional Engineers Guide to Running for Public Office

Prepared by:
Brown & Cohen Communications & Public Affairs Inc.

Prepared for:
Professional Engineers Ontario

Date:
April 2011

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Introduction

Running for public office is serious business and not for the faint of heart.

Since 2005 when PEO set up their Government Liaison Program, they have worked hard to encourage engineers in running for public office.

Since that time, they have:

- Held Annual Queen's Park Days where members of the legislature met with engineers
- Held Campaign and Candidate Colleges where engineers learn the ways and intricacies of elections
- Held public meetings to inform legislators on issues of importance to engineers.

In 2007, they set a goal to have 11 engineers in the 2011 legislature. One senior Minister of the Ontario government encouraged PEO to ensure gender balance and suggested 6 of the 11 be women.

This manual looks at three major issues:

- **“How do I seek public office and run for a nomination?”**
This section reviews the questions that need to be addressed when seeking a federal, provincial nomination. It also looks at intricacies of seeking municipal office or school board.
- Section two looks at, **“Now that you've won a nomination, How do I win my riding?”**
- Section three looks at **what is reasonable to expect from your employer when seeking elected office.**
- Addendums will provide information on **Canada's political parties** and additional **online resources** available for prospective candidates.

Letter from the CEO and Registrar – Professional Engineers Ontario

If you're a young engineer, there isn't a lot of incentive to run for public office. At first glance, it seems crazy to give up a well-paying job in the private sector for a public service role that pays a few cents an hour. Why would an engineer – particularly one far from retirement – want to trade their private life for a life of public scrutiny, little pay, thankless work and a roller coaster life of emotional ups and downs?

Here are some reasons:

- If you feel the call, run for an elected office. Any office will do—might be City Council, School Board, etc. We are all better off with representatives who understand engineering, and business in general.

You don't need to serve for life – you can serve a successful term. In other words, your brief stint in public policy where you make a positive impact on the society environment – such as advocating for thoughtful technical decisions.

- It is possible to maintain your private sector job and your family life while in public office. Yes, it's difficult, but with planning and support it can be done. It's essential to have the support of two people before you consider running for office: Your spouse and your boss. Many officials said that they successfully use technology to keep up with their regular job during your session. It's also an option to consider asking your employer if there is someone who can help cover for you during session.
- The engineering community doesn't have the right to complain unless it's willing to support experienced engineers in their runs for public office. If you're sitting on the sideline or think it's (the political system) is beyond repair, you're part of the problem. As we get more people like you (engineering-minded people) involved, we are working toward a solution. Don't believe all the headlines – there's a lot of opportunity to change things. Positive improvements are happening all the time in a bipartisan way that we never hear about.
- If you're an engineer, there are many resources out there to help ease your transition and manage your life while serving in public office:
 - Many representatives who have retained their day jobs are happy to help you. Many elected officials and their employer would be happy to talk to anyone who's interested in running for office.

- Have an elected official talk to your boss. These conversations can have a huge impact in helping you garner your employer's support.
- Do a good job for your constituents, be organized and set your limits on the amount of time you spend, public service is manageable. You actually have more control and flexibility over your schedule than you might think, so if you're technology savvy, productive and manage your time well, it's possible to maintain your day job and serve as an elected official.

We will all benefit personally and professionally if we have more engineering representation in politics. We'll have more diversity of backgrounds and hence better discussion, debate and ideas coming out of government. Our economy will improve when our government has more decision-makers who understand technology and what it takes to keep employers and job-creators in Ontario.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Allen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kim Allen, P.Eng. FEC
CEO and Registrar
Professional Engineers Ontario

1. How to Seek Public Office: Running for Nomination

The following are so questions to ask yourself before you begin

- **Why do you want to run?**
 - You want to make a difference
 - Chance to get your point-of-view across
 - You have a certain valuable expertise
 - You have been encouraged by friends and family
 - You enjoy politics
 - You think we need better people in government

- **Why should you NOT run?**
 - Money
 - You want recognition/notoriety
 - You think it will be easy (it's not)
 - You need a job

- **What issues are you passionate about?**

- **Do you have expertise or credentials?**

- **Do you have a following in the community?**

- **What do you want to accomplish?**

- **What party speaks for you?**

- **Identify what level of government is best to accomplish your objectives?**
 - School issues? – School Board
 - If you're concerned about a lack of recreation centres? – municipal
 - If you're concerned about health care and quality, spending, taxation, environment? – provincial
 - If you're concerned about Canada's standing in the world, jobs, economy – federal

We recommend putting your thoughts on paper. This will be important down the road in all candidate meetings and at the door when voters ask you why they should consider voting for or supporting you

Once your ideas are on paper you can begin to understand which party is closely aligned to your own ideals/issues/concerns and which level of government is responsible for them.

Federal and Provincial

If you're running federally and provincially, your issue could bubble up from the party's central campaign.

Municipally

If you're running locally, it's important to know what the local issues are. i.e. Waste management, snow clearance, traffic, development.

SO YOU WANT TO RUN?

Things to consider:

- **Have you been involved in a campaign before?**

If you haven't done it before, it's tough to do the first time for yourself. If you're thinking of running, volunteer now to help someone else by going to a fundraiser, making phone calls or helping run the campaign. Make sure you go door to door with the candidate and see how it's done.

- **Are you involved in your community?**

Get involved with your community. e.g. Rotary clubs, United Way, Sports team, community groups, charities

Voters are looking for someone that is involved. Take a leadership position, run an event and begin to take responsibility for your community. Don't be afraid to look outside your profession but remember that the profession is another vital key. If you're not involved with your PEO Chapter, do so!, This is a great way to build your community relations and expertise.

- **Have you put your thoughts on paper?**

If you have issues or concerns, write about them and be specific in your recommendations. Do your research. Do analysis. Write articles for publications like Engineering Dimensions. It's not enough to just complain, show that you have a solution. Start by showing your expertise in your profession.

If you are an environmental engineer, give examples of how your expertise benefits your community. If you're a civil engineer, talk about how your knowledge of infrastructure could benefit the community. It is important to remember to always speak in the public interest.

- **What level of government is best for your objectives**

 - Listing of the responsibilities of each level of government**

 - Federal Responsibilities:** Defence, criminal law, employment insurance, postal service, census, copyrights, trade regulation, external relations, money and banking, transportation, (airports, customs, etc) citizenship and Indian affairs.

 - Provincial Responsibilities:** Property and civil rights, administration of justice, natural resources and the environment, education, health and welfare.

 - Municipal Responsibilities:** Water supply, sewage treatment, waste collection, public transit, land use planning, libraries, emergency services, animal control and economic development.

- **Thinking of Running Provincially or Federally?**

 - Then you must first seek a nomination. If you're running for school board or municipal, there is no need to be nominated.

- **What riding will you run in?**

 - The best way to pick a riding is if you live there or if you have a specific connection or issue. If you don't live there, you should have a great reason to run there.

 - Building a team is key. Talk to people in the community, riding or party that have been involved politically before. Talk to your riding president and others who play leadership roles in the riding. Ask candidates, campaign managers, fundraisers and others if they have lists of party members in your riding. Then, get out and visit those people and ask them for help. This is all a part of building the team.

- **Prepare yourself and your message!**

 - Get your business cards ready; prepare your stump speech and your fundamental messages. Take time to position yourself to mirror what you will be representing. Build your brand.

- **Community support - Volunteer**

 - PEO chapters & councils, charity, community organizations, school associations, rate payer groups

- **Attend public events**

These meetings are the access point to introductions to government leaders and members of the community

- **Raise your voice**

Write opinion pieces. Write for papers, journals, etc. Let your opinions be known

- **What are the steps in seeking office?**

- **Get your message out and meet the people**

- **Build a team**

Teams should include new people as well as people who have experience doing this before. Hopefully you're a member of a riding association that you want to represent.

- **Develop your campaign committee and army of volunteers:**

- Campaign management
- Canvassers - knock on doors and work phones
- Office management
- Collecting donations
- Fundraisers
- Communications and media
- Create a website

- **Getting out the vote!**

If you are seeking a provincial or federal nomination the key to winning is to get out the vote at the nomination meeting on nomination day. Hopefully you will have signed up new party members and the key is getting them out.

- **Talk about your platform and position yourself**

Raise your profile in your profession and the community

2. Running and Winning of an Election

Now that you've won the nomination, you have to win the riding!

Make sure your positioning accommodates the realities of the nomination meetings. Build your team to reflect that your needs are now different. To win an election you need to win more broadly. You can win nominations with a small number of votes, but elections take much more.

HOW DO YOU WIN AN ELECTION?

- Build a campaign team
- Knock on doors
- Build and position yourself and your brand
- Meet people
- Make sure your people come out to vote at election time

TIPS AND EXPERIENCES FROM MEMBERS OF EACH LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE AN INSIDE LOOK INCLUDING:

- (Municipal) Diane Freeman, P.Eng. – Waterloo Councillor
- (Municipal) Stewart Meikleham, P.Eng.– Espanola Councillor
- (Provincial) Phil McNeely, P.Eng., MPP – Ottawa Orleans and
- (Provincial) Norm Sterling, MPP - Carleton- Mississippi Mills
- (Federal) Pierre Poilievre, P.Eng., MP – Nepean-Carleton and Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister
- (Federal) Omar Alghabra, P.Eng. and former MP, Mississauga-Erindale

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS, FUNDRAISING LIMITS AND CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS:

Municipal & School Board: Information can be found in the addendum under the **Elections Ontario 2010 Guide** and **Running for Election as a School Board Trustee – Guide for Candidates and Communities.**

Provincial: See addendum under **“Provincial Guidelines for Candidates: Campaign Contributions and Fundraising”**

Federal: See addendum under **“Federal Guidelines for Candidates: Campaign Contributions and Fundraising”**

3. What is Reasonable to Expect from Your Employer When Seeking Elected Office

Employees have no legal protection to keep their jobs in Ontario and many seeking office take time off from work when choosing to run for political office. This depends heavily on what level of government the candidate seeks office in.

A willingness from both the candidate and the employer to create a flexible work schedule should be explored. Each situation will be unique, but must be acknowledged. Often in small communities there are a handful of people who do most of the volunteer work. Likely if you are running for municipal politics you are one of these people and your employer is aware of your dedication to community involvement. - Stewart Meikleham, P.Eng. Espanola Councillor

The employer may be really pleased that the employee is seeking to be nominated and running for election. However some firms that does a lot of business with one or more of the Federal Department, Provincial Ministries or the municipal governemtn and might be concerned if the employee is seeking to be elected to the party not in power. This could be seen as bad for business. In this case the employee may have to sever all connections with the firm so as not to have or seem to have a conflict of interest. A matter that should be fully explored with the employer

As anyone who has ever done it can attest, running for office is hard... the campaign rallies, fundraising events, calls, letters, grassroots campaigning... it takes a toll. This is double true for candidates who have full-time jobs. If you're running for office on nights and weekends, but holding down a full-time job during the day, these tips are for you:

Plan Ahead¹

The single best thing you can do to prepare to run for office while working full-time is to plan ahead. A year or more out from Election Day, sit down with your calendar and figure out when you'll most need to be out of the office to campaign. When do you need a flexible schedule? Certainly around Election Day, and perhaps around debates, party conventions, and other events.

Check in with your employer, supervisor, or, if you're the boss, with the board of directors of your company to see if you can arrange some flex-time that you can use to campaign. Many companies are glad to see their employees and managers getting involved in the community, and are more than willing to allow you some leeway so that you can campaign.

¹ From: <http://www.localvictory.com/miscellaneous/running-for-office-have-a-job.html>

Some possibilities include: allowing you to shift hours, allowing you to work a portion of time from home, letting you work extra hours now to save up time off for when you need it to campaign, and letting you go part time for a few months or take an unpaid leave of absence.

Whatever you arrange with your employer, just be sure you don't violate any campaign finance laws (in many places, it may be illegal for a corporate employer to pay you while you are out campaigning, unless you have sick or vacation days saved up, etc.)

A Federation of Canadian Municipalities Workshop on getting more women involved in municipal politics suggested working with employers to encourage people to run for municipal office and to ensure a diverse representation of people on council.

In Charlottetown, PEI, workshop participants discussed the potential for an employer "buy-in" strategy, where employers would offer compensation to allow employees who are in elected office to participate in municipal meetings.

Some workplaces have implemented a paid volunteer day for employees. The employee chooses the date and a local organization to volunteer for a day. This type of program could be extended to include "municipal days" to encourage employee participation on municipally appointed committees, boards and commissions.

Next steps include:

- Approach the Chamber of Commerce and local employers to discuss opportunities to develop workplace support programs for women interested in running for office.
- Encourage employers to offer 'political leave' similar to the concept of maternity or paternity leave.
- Promote the development of volunteer days or municipal days in all sectors to encourage people to participate in community life including municipal meetings.

New Brunswick Energy Minister Bruce Fitch credits Scotia Bank's support for his decision to become involved in municipal government as a councillor and then as Mayor of Riverview, which led to his role as Minister of Energy and Minister of Justice & Consumer Affairs for the Province of New Brunswick.

4. PEO's Support to its Employees

PEO is a socially conscience employer and supports employees who want to contribute to public service.

Putting Your Name Forward

If an employee is seeking a Nomination (Federal or Provincial) or has placed his or her name directly on the ballot (i.e. municipal, school board, running as an independent, etc) PEO provides flexible work hours to permit the employee to juggle his or her schedule and take time off as may be needed by:

- Using vacation time,
- Working with his or her supervision to make up the time, or
- Unpaid leave of absence

If the employee wins the nomination for a party nomination for a federal or provincial seat, in addition to the above flexibility for the employee to juggle his or her schedule and take time off as may, PEO will match paid leave for time take off through the use of vacation or unpaid leave of absence, to a maximum of three weeks paid leave.

5. Addendum

LIST OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Provincially:

<http://www.mondopolitico.com/parties/canada/ontario/can.on.pp.htm>

Federally:

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=pol&dir=par&document=index&lang=e>

ELECTIONS ONTARIO HANDBOOK

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=pol&dir=can/man/ec20190&document=index&lang=e>

RUNNING FOR ELECTION AS A SCHOOL BOARD TRUSTEE – GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES AND COMMUNITIES

<http://www.opsba.org/index.php?q=system/files/2010PreElectionGuide.pdf>

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS 2010 GUIDE

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=7269>

PROVINCIAL GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES: CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS AND FUNDRAISING

http://www.mapleleafweb.com/old/participation/guides/run_office/provincial/on.html

FEDERAL GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES: CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS AND FUNDRAISING

http://www.mapleleafweb.com/old/participation/guides/run_office/federal/index.html

FUNDING A CAMPAIGN

Federal - only individual contributions

- No more than \$1,100 a year to a political party
- No more than \$1,100* a year to riding associations

Provincial – individual or corporate

- No more than \$9,300 to a provincial party
- No more than \$1,240 to a constituency association
- No more than \$6,200 total to various constituency associations
- No more than \$1,240 to a candidate during an election year

Municipal (York Region) – individual or corporate

- No more than \$750 to a candidate

LIST OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN CANADA

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=pol&dir=par&document=index&lang=e>

<http://www.mapleleafweb.com>

HOW MUCH DOES EACH LEVEL PAY?

Role	Salary
The Premier	\$202,788
Cabinet Minister with Portfolio	\$160,941
Cabinet Minister without Portfolio	\$134,815
Parliamentary Assistants	\$129,273
MPPs	\$113,100

LINKS TO MAJOR WEBSITES

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca>

<http://www.elections.ca>

JOINING A PROVINCIAL PARTY IN ONTARIO



Liberal Party of Ontario

Membership Prerequisites

- Residents of Ontario
- Fourteen (14) years of age or older
- Not members of another provincial political party

Online Application

1. Go to the [Ontario Liberal Party website](#).
2. Click on [Become a Member](#)
3. Fill out the on-line application form to request a membership application
4. You will receive an application form in the mail, which you will sign and return with payment

Phone Application

1. Contact the Party at 1-800-268-7250
2. Ask to be a member of the Party
3. A Party representative will provide you with the information and materials to apply for membership.

Mail Application

1. Contact the Party at:
 - Liberal Party of Ontario
10 St. Mary Street, Suite 210
Toronto, Ontario
M4Y 1P9
2. Ask to be a member of the Party and provide contact information in your letter.
3. A Party representative will provide you (via phone or mail) with the information and materials to apply for membership.

Membership Fees

- A yearly fee of \$10 is required for membership (\$5 for youth and seniors, \$25 for a family)
- Contributions to a political party are tax-deductible

Additional Information

- Membership in the Ontario Liberal Party will not be considered valid until a signed application form, together with the appropriate membership fee, is received.
- All rights and duties of a member are set out by the Party's Constitution.

Links

- [Liberal Party of Ontario Website](#)
- [Ontario Liberal Party Constitution](#)



New Democratic Party of Ontario

Membership Prerequisites

- A resident of the Province
- Support the principles of the New Democratic Party
- Not a member or supporter of any other political party

Online Application

1. Go to the [New Democratic Party of Ontario website](#).
2. Click on [Get Involved](#)
3. Click on [Join the Party](#)
4. Choose the type of membership you would like and continue to payment option.
5. Fill out online form (payment and person information) and click on “Join Now!”

Phone Application

1. Contact the Party at 1-416-591-8637
2. Ask to be a member of the Party
3. A Party representative will provide you with the information and materials to apply for membership.
4. You may also fax your request to 1-416-599-4820

Mail Application

1. Contact the Party at:
 - New Democratic Party of Ontario
33 Cecil Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1N1
2. Ask to be a member of the Party and provide contact information in your letter.
3. A Party representative will provide you (via phone or mail) with the information and materials to apply for membership.

Membership Fees

- A yearly fee of \$25 is required for membership (\$5 for those not gainfully employed)

- Contributions to a political party are tax-deductible

Additional Information

- All rights and duties of a member are set out by the Party's Constitution.
- To have voting rights in the party, a member must be 13 years of age or older

Links

- [Website of the New Democratic Party of Ontario](#)
- [Constitution of the New Democratic Party of Ontario](#)



Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario

Membership Prerequisites

- Resident of Ontario
- Fourteen (14) years of age or older
- Support the principles and aims of the Party as set out by the Party's Constitution

Online Application

1. Go to the [Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario](#) website.
2. Click on [Party Membership](#)
3. Click on [Join the Party](#)
4. Fill out online form (payment and personal information) and submit membership

Phone Application

- Contact the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party at (416) 861-0020
- Request application information, which will be sent to you via mail.

Mail Application

- Send a request for membership information, along with your contact information, to:
 - Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario
Suite 2020 120 Adelaide Street West Toronto,
Ontario M5H 1T1
- A membership application will be sent to you via mail

Membership Fees

- A yearly fee of \$10 is required for membership
- Contributions to a political party are tax-deductible

Additional Information

- All rights and duties of a member are set out by the Party's Constitution.

Links

- [Website of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario](#)
- [Constitution of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario \[PDF\]](#)



Green Party of Ontario

Membership Prerequisites

- Resident of Ontario and at least 16 years of age
- Not a member of another Ontario political party
- Respect and uphold the constitution of the party

Online Application

- Contact the party at admin@greenparty.on.ca to request membership information and packages

Phone Application

- Contact the party at 1-416-929-2397
- Or toll free 1-888-6GREEN6 to request membership information

Mail Application

1. Go to the [Green Party of Ontario website](#)
2. Under, “Get Involved,” click on [Become a Member](#)
3. Download the [Membership Form](#)
4. Complete the form and send to:
 - Green Party of Ontario
 - 244 Gerrard Street East
 - Toronto ON M5A 2G2
5. Membership fee must be included. Payment is accepted by cheque, money order, credit card, or direct debit.

Membership Fee

- \$20 annual fee, \$10 for students
- Fees and donations are tax deductible

Additional Information

- A member is registered with the provincial membership secretary
- The duties and privileges of members are set out in the party constitution

Links

- [Green Party of Ontario website](#)
- [Constitution of the GPO](#)

Contact Information

Brown & Cohen Communications & Public Affairs Inc.

321 Brooke Avenue
Toronto, ON M5M 2L4
www.brown-cohen.com

Phone: 416-484-1132
Fax: 416-783-8177

Principal Contact:

Howard Brown
President
Email: howard@brown-cohen.com
Mobile: 416-844-1180
Direct: 416-783-1140