

Leadership Contest Rules

Approved and enacted by the Ontario Liberal Party Executive Council on February 7, 2026.

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.

1. Authority and Definitions

- 1.1 **Authority** - These *Leadership Contest Rules* for the 2026 Leadership Contest are enacted pursuant to sections 3.6, 5.9(e) and 9.2.4 of the *Constitution* of the Ontario Liberal Party (the “**Constitution**”) and are subject in all respects to the provisions of the *Constitution*. These *Rules* are enacted de nouveau and in consultation with the Leadership Vote Committee. In the event of a conflict between any provision in these *Rules* and any provision in the *Constitution*, the *Constitution* shall prevail to the minimum extent necessary in order to resolve that conflict.
- 1.2 **Defined Terms** - Unless otherwise defined by these *Rules*, all terms defined in the *Constitution* and which appear in these *Rules* shall have the same meaning as in the *Constitution*.
- 1.3 **Leadership Candidates** - Reference to a “leadership candidate” in these *Rules* shall be interpreted to mean any or all of the following in any specific context to achieve the most meaningful applications of these rules in that context:
 - a) The individual seeking the Party’s leadership
 - b) Said individual’s leadership campaign as a regulated entity defined as a leadership contestant under the *Election Finances Act*
 - c) All persons engaging in campaign activities in support of said individual’s leadership campaign, including all agents, staff, campaign volunteers, and commercial service providers
- 1.4 **Chief Returning Officer** - Unless specific authority is otherwise specified, the Chief Returning Officer (“CRO”) shall have plenary power to issue directives and guidelines to operationalize, give effect, address gaps and uncertainty in relation to matters covered in article 9 of the *Constitution* and in these *Rules*. Such directives or guidelines may at no time conflict with the *Constitution* and the *Rules of Procedure*. The CRO shall have standing at all appeals to the Arbitration Committee relating to the leadership contest.
 - 1.4.1 The CRO may appoint deputy returning officers and other officials necessary for the carrying out of any process or procedures prescribed, and may delegate any specific authority or geographical reach of such authority to such officials, who shall act within the scope of their delegated authorities and be at all time subject to the direction of the CRO.
- 1.5 **Call Date - Act** - The date of the call of the contest, for the purpose of section 14(2) of the *Elections Finances Act*, shall be February 9, 2026.
- 1.6 **Call Date - Constitution** - The date of the call of the contest, for the purpose of sections 9.2 and 9.6 of the *Constitution*, shall be July 3, 2026.
- 1.7 **Vote Date** - The final day of voting, November 20, 2026, shall be the date fixed for the leadership vote for the purposes of section 14(2) of the *Elections Finances Act* and section 9.7 of the *Constitution*.
- 1.8 **Time** - All references to time in these *Rules* shall mean the local time observed in Toronto, Ontario.

2. Nomination Procedures

2.1 Green Light Committee - There shall be a Green Light Committee, consisting of the CRO as Chair, the President, the Executive Vice President, and the Constitution Committee Chair. The committee shall be tasked with the vetting of prospective leadership candidates. The committee shall focus its vetting on risk identification and assessment, and must not construe vetting as a substitution or moderation of members' evaluation of the leadership candidate's viability or desirability.

2.2 Nomination Papers - The content and requirements of the leadership candidate nomination papers shall be prescribed by the Green Light Committee, and it shall, at a minimum, require the following from the prospective leadership candidate:

- a) A completed vetting questionnaire seeking comprehensive disclosure of information directly material to the assessment of the prospective leadership candidate's suitability as a leadership candidate
- b) A Criminal Record & Judicial Matters Checks obtained from the local police authority where the person resides
- c) A credit report obtained from either TransUnion or Equifax
- d) Signatures of two hundred and fifty (250) OLP members
- e) A certification of their eligibility to sit as a member of the provincial Legislature or their willingness to meet the necessary criteria
- f) An undertaking to comply with all applicable provisions of the *Constitution*, these 2026 *Leadership Contest Rules* and all *Rules of Procedure*, and the law, and all applicable resolutions adopted by the Executive Council
- g) An Elections Ontario LC-1 registration form with all sections except section I completed

2.2.1 A copy of the nomination papers shall be provided to a member upon a written request from said member, delivered via email to the Executive Director, indicating their intention to seek the leadership of the Party.

2.3 Vetting Process As part of its review of a prospective leadership candidate's nomination papers, the Green Light Committee may request additional information, documents, or any other form of disclosure from a prospective leadership candidate, may conduct interviews with the prospective leadership candidate, and may condition its approval on such requests being fulfilled to its satisfaction.

- 2.3.1 The onus is on the prospective leadership candidate to provide information relevant and sufficient to satisfy the Green Light Committee of their eligibility and suitability as a leadership candidate. The prospective leadership candidate must establish that their approval would not be detrimental to the best interests of the Party.
- 2.3.2 The Green Light Committee shall facilitate its requests by providing particulars of its request as appropriate and upon request by the prospective leadership candidate.

2.4 Expedited Review - If the member making a request under section 2.2.1 is a current member of the Ontario Liberal caucus in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and was elected as an Ontario Liberal candidate in the most recent election they contested, the Green Light Committee shall substitute the requirements prescribed in subsections (a), (b), (c) and (e) of section 2.2 with a requirement for certification listing any material changes, unless the committee deems it not to be in the Party's interest to do so. If the committee so decides, it shall communicate its decision to said member.

2.5 Nomination Deadline - To be eligible for approval as a leadership candidate, a prospective candidate must, by no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern time on Friday July 31, 2026, have completed and submitted their nomination papers, inclusive of all documents and forms required by the nomination papers, to the Executive Director, or their designate.

2.6 Approval of Leadership Candidates - Upon review of the completed nomination papers submitted by a prospective leadership candidate, the Green Light Committee shall make a determination to approve or decline to approve the member as a leadership candidate.

2.6.1 The Green Light Committee must construe its authority under section 2.6 narrowly, and shall only decline approval for reasons that point to an apparent risk of harm to the Party's reputation or electoral interests.

2.7 Determination - The Green Light Committee shall inform the prospective leadership candidate of its determination no later than the close of business on the fifth business day after their completed nomination papers were submitted to the Executive Director, or inform the prospective leadership candidate that it requires additional time to make a determination.

2.7.1 The Green Light Committee shall advise the Executive Director of its approval of a leadership candidate forthwith and direct the Executive Director to complete the registration of said leadership candidate with Elections Ontario.

2.8 Appeal - Any determination by the Green Light Committee other than approval may be appealed by the prospective leadership candidate to the Arbitration Committee by invoking section 2.1 of the *Arbitration Rules (Rules of Procedure, Ch. 9)*.

2.9 Penalty for Misrepresentation - If a material misrepresentation by a leadership candidate is discovered following their approval, the Green Light Committee may:

- a) make a determination to disqualify the contestant; or
- b) refer the information to the Leadership Compliance Committee for a determination under section 3.2.

3. Compliance Procedures

3.1 Compliance Committee - There shall be a Compliance Committee, consisting of the CRO as Chair, the President, the Treasurer, and the Executive Director. The committee shall be vested with the authority to make findings of breaches by any leadership candidate of any applicable provisions in the *Constitution*, the *Rules of Procedure*, the *Election Finances Act*, or resolutions adopted by the Executive Council, if the resolutions have been published or communicated to the leadership candidates, and impose penalties it deems appropriate in accordance with sections 3.3 and 3.4.

3.2 Findings of Breaches - Upon learning of an alleged breach, the Compliance Committee shall advise the leadership candidate in question and give said leadership candidate a reasonable opportunity to provide information responsive to the alleged breach. Upon making a finding of a breach, the committee shall inform the leadership candidate in question of the finding and any penalties being imposed.

3.3 Deposit Forfeiture - Upon findings of a breach, the Compliance Committee may, in its discretion, direct that up to \$10,000 from the leadership candidate's compliance deposit be forfeited to the Party, and may impose a suitable penalty of a non-monetary nature. If a leadership candidate's entire compliance deposit has previously been forfeited, and the leadership candidate is found to be liable to a further forfeiture under this Rule, the Compliance Committee may disqualify said leadership candidate from the leadership contest.

3.4 Additional Penalties - In determining a suitable penalty for the purposes of Rule 3.3, the Compliance Committee may issue a private or public reprimand, impose other financial penalties, reduce opportunities to communicate with members of the Party, impose an appropriate penalty not otherwise set out herein, or, in what it considers to be sufficiently serious circumstances, it may disqualify the leadership candidate from the leadership contest.

3.5 Disqualification - Upon being disqualified from the leadership contest, a disqualified leadership candidate:

- a) shall cease to have right of candidate participation in any remaining elements and events in the leadership contest;
- b) shall forfeit all fees already paid and all deposits already remitted to the Party;
- c) shall cease all broadcast communications to members, except members who have consented to receive communications from their campaign;
- d) shall cease to have access to membership data;
- e) shall not appear on the leadership election ballot, and if the disqualification occurs too late to have their name removed, shall be treated as a leadership candidate having been eliminated in a preceding ballot in all ballots including the first ballot;
- f) remains liable for any outstanding financial liabilities, including those to the Party; and
- g) remains subject to the reporting requirements prescribed in section 5.7, and all registration and financial filing requirements prescribed by the *Election Finances Act*.

3.6 Appeal - A decision of the Compliance Committee may be appealed by the leadership candidates against whom the decision was made to the Arbitration Committee by invoking section 2.1 of the *Arbitration Rules (Rules of Procedure, Ch. 9)*.

4. Communications Procedures and Data Access

4.1 Ethical Use of Data - Data access granted to, and data obtained through such access by, leadership candidates, may only be used for lawful and ethical purposes directly related to the campaign of said leadership candidates in the leadership contest. Leadership candidates shall be liable for any misuse of any data or data access by any persons, including vendors, acting for them or who have gained access through them.

4.2 Prohibition of Data Export - Leadership candidates may not export or extract in any manner data from the Party's database without explicit prior written permission from the Executive Director.

4.3 Commercial Service Provider - A Leadership candidate may engage a commercial service provider ("vendor") in providing any communications services that require members' contact data if all of the following conditions are met:

- a) The vendor has entered into a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement, containing terms prohibiting the vendor from providing any contact information of members in any format to any leadership candidates, with the Party acceptable to the Leadership Compliance Committee.
- b) The vendor maintains privacy policies compliant with applicable law and satisfactory to the Leadership Compliance Committee.
- c) The vendor has undertaken that all data used in connection with such services shall flow exclusively between the Party and the vendor, with no data being shared, accessed, or stored by any third parties outside the scope of the confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement.
- d) The vendor has undertaken not to provide any person, including the leadership candidate who has engaged their services, any mechanism or means to obtain the contact information provided by the Party.

4.4 Communication Opt Out - Leadership candidates shall adhere to all communication opt-out requests by members made to them directly or conveyed by the Party relating to emails, text messages, pre-recorded voice messages, and phone calls.

4.5 Limits on broadly distributed communications - Leadership candidates shall be subject to the following limits on the number of broadly distributed communications to members:

- a) three (3) emails per calendar month until the end of October 2026
- b) five (5) emails for the month of November 2026
- c) one (1) automated phone call per calendar month. A virtual town hall event that includes both an automated phone call in advance to inform the recipient of the upcoming event and a second phone call for the event itself shall count as one (1) phone call.
- d) one (1) automated text message per calendar month until the end of October 2026
- e) three (3) automated text messages for the month of November 2026

4.6 Internal Communications - Section 4 shall not be construed so as to restrict or limit the following:

- a) internal campaign team communications
- b) communications that are neither automated nor distributed in bulk
- c) leadership candidates' communications to members who initiated inquiries or dialogues with them, or have specifically requested or consented to be added to the leadership candidates' distribution list

4.7 Email Distribution - Broadly distributed emails ("email blasts") may only be sent to members via the email distribution service provided through the Party's database.

4.8 Further Directives - The CRO may issue further directives to facilitate and ensure compliance with all of the provisions contained in section 4.

5. Financial Procedures and Requirements

5.1 Contest Fees - To be eligible for inclusion on the leadership ballot, a leadership candidate must have paid the contest fees in the amount of \$150,000. The contest fees shall become due in installments on the following schedule. All payments are payable to the Party at no later than 5:00 p.m. on the due date, and shall be made by the chief financial officer ("CFO") of the leadership candidate¹.

- a) Fees installment #1 of \$5,000 shall be due on the 7th day following the date of the completion of the leadership candidate's registration with Elections Ontario ("registration date").
- b) Fees installment #2 of \$20,000 shall be due on Friday, May 29, 2026 or on the 28th day following the registration date, whichever is later.
- c) Fees installment #3 of \$25,000 shall be due on Tuesday, June 30, 2026 or on the 28th day following the registration date, whichever is later.
- d) Fees installment #4 of \$25,000 shall be due on Friday, July 31, 2026 or on the 28th day following the registration date, whichever is later.
- e) Fees installment #5 of \$25,000 shall be due on Monday, August 31, 2026.
- f) Fees installment #6 of \$25,000 shall be due on Wednesday, September 30, 2026.
- g) Fees installment #7 of \$25,000 shall be due on Friday, October 30, 2026.

5.2 Compliance Deposit - Each leadership candidate shall remit a compliance deposit of \$25,000. The deposit shall become due in two installments as prescribed below. All payments are payable to the Party at no later than 5:00 p.m. on the due date, and shall be made by the chief financial officer ("CFO") of the leadership candidate.

- a) Deposit installment #1 of \$5,000 shall be due on the 7th day following the registration date.
- b) Deposit installment #2 of \$20,000 shall be due on Thursday April 30, 2026 or on the 28th day following the registration date, whichever is later.

¹ All references to payments to be made by "CFO of the leadership candidate" are to be interpreted as payment must be issued from the leadership campaign bank account.

5.2.1 The compliance deposit, less \$6,250 tithe applicable to the contributions corresponding to the compliance deposit, any amount forfeited as penalties levied by the Leadership Compliance Committee, and any outstanding administrative amount owed to the Party, shall be refunded to the leadership candidate's CFO, on or after Friday, March 31, 2028.

5.3 Tithe - Leadership candidates shall, on a biweekly basis, on dates determined by the CRO, pay the Party 25% of all contributions received, including contributions received after the announcements of the result.

5.3.1 Contribution amounts corresponding to the contest fees described in section 5.1 and paid by leadership candidates are exempt from tithe. For greater clarity, if a leadership candidate withdraws from the contest without having made full payment of the contest fees but have claimed tithe exemption on the corresponding amount, the amount would be payable by the leadership candidate.

5.3.2 Contribution amounts corresponding to the deposit payments described in section 5.2 shall be deducted from the refund to be issued.

5.3.3 For fundraising event proceeds, tithe shall be transferred for the gross amount. If a determination is made by the Party in preparation of the contribution tax receipts to consider any portion of the ticket price to not be a contribution due to the calculation of direct costs of the event, tithe previously paid to the Party for that portion shall be refunded.

5.4 Debt Limit - The sum of all outstanding financial liabilities of a leadership candidate may not exceed \$50,000 at any given time. Outstanding financial liability includes, but is not limited to, all loans received that are not repaid, all amounts owing to suppliers or contractors for goods or services rendered, all remuneration owing to staff for time worked, all campaign expenses incurred and not paid or reimbursed.

5.5 Constituency Association Loans and Financial Support Prohibited - Leadership candidates may not borrow from, have loans guaranteed by, accept transfers or in-kind donations, or any financial support from any constituency association.

5.6 Spending Limit - A leadership candidate may not incur campaign expenses exceeding \$1,000,000 in total.

5.6.1 A campaign expense for the purpose of section 5.6 means any expense incurred for goods or services in relation to this leadership contest by or on behalf of a leadership candidate other than contest fees, compliance deposits and tithe required by sections 5.1 to 5.3.

5.7 Reporting Requirement - Leadership candidates shall, on a biweekly basis, on dates determined by the Compliance Committee, file financial reports with the Party. The financial reports shall be in a format prescribed by the Compliance Committee, and shall be accompanied by a current bank statement and such other supporting documentation as the Compliance Committee may from time to time require.

5.7.1 The CFO and auditors of leadership candidates shall make themselves available for meetings with the Compliance Committee upon the committee's request.

5.8 Disqualification for Contest Fees Default - Upon any failure to make payments of contest fees installment #4 to #7 referred to in section 5.1, a leadership candidate shall be disqualified from the contest.

6. Member Voting Procedures

6.1 Voting Period - The Leadership Election Votes shall be conducted online and shall be open from Monday, November 9, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. to Friday, November 20, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

6.1.1 End of voting - A member must have completed voting by the close of voting for their ballot to be counted.

6.2 Qualifying Date - All current members as of Monday, September 7, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., shall be eligible to vote in the leadership contest.

6.2.1 Student Club Special Qualifying Date - Notwithstanding section 6.2, all current members of Ontario Young Liberals student clubs as of Friday, September 25, 2026 at 5:00 p.m., shall be eligible to vote in the leadership contest. A student club member who was not a member of the Party on September 7, 2026 shall have their vote included in the tally of the student club and shall not be entitled to make tally selection referred to in section 6.3.

6.3 Tally selection - Members who are eligible to vote in two or more affiliated associations in the leadership contest shall be provided with an opportunity, in a manner to be determined by the CRO, to select the affiliated association to have their vote included in the association's tally. Members entitled to make tally selection shall make their selections by a date and time to be determined by the CRO. If no such selection was made, their vote, if cast, would be included in the tally of their resident constituency association.

6.4 Notice of Vote - Formal notice of the Leadership Election Vote shall be sent by the Party to all members by such means as determined by the CRO.

6.5 Verification - In order to receive a ballot for a Leadership Election Vote, a member eligible to vote must verify their identity and address. The CRO shall issue specific directives prescribing the verification period, method, acceptable identification, and any other matters required to facilitate the verification of members eligible to vote.

6.6 Challenges to Members' Right to Vote - Challenges against any member's right to vote in the leadership contest shall be submitted via email to the CRO not later than 12:00 noon on Monday October 19, 2026, and shall, for each person so challenged, provide reasons for the challenge. The CRO shall make the determination after any inquiry they deem appropriate, if any. The rulings of the CRO made under this rule shall be final.

6.7 Voting - The CRO shall issue specific directives prescribing voting method, and any other matters required to facilitate the voting process.

6.8 Process Interruptions and Remedies - The CRO shall have authority to determine, with respect to any downtime, system failures or lack of availability ("process interruptions") for tally selection, verification or voting at any time, whether such a process interruption warrants a remedy and if so, what the remedy will be.

7. Ballot Counting and Result Announcement Procedure

7.1 Determination of Results - The CRO shall take all necessary action to ensure the tabulation and calculation of all results of all Leadership Election Votes, regardless of the mode of voting, are conducted in accordance with sections 9.13 to 9.15 of the *Constitution*.

7.1.1 The CRO shall be responsible for determining the manner in which ballots are counted, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the date, times and location(s) of the

tabulation of the ballots, the manner and means by which points are to be calculated and allocated to leadership candidates in accordance with the *Constitution*, and the nature of the technology, if any, that is to be utilized to facilitate vote and the counting of the ballots.

- 7.2 **De facto Elimination** - A leadership candidate who has withdrawn, died, or been disqualified prior to the determination of results in section 7.1 shall be treated as if they have been eliminated in a preceding ballot during all ballots, including the first ballot.
- 7.3 **Official Results** - The CRO shall review and verify the counts and calculations and shall determine the official results.
- 7.4 **Scrutineering** - Where the CRO deems appropriate and where the integrity of the leadership election process would reasonably require it, the CRO shall provide reasonable and due opportunity for representatives appointed by leadership candidates to meaningfully scrutinize any process or portion of the process. The CRO may prescribe reasonable instructions and conditions for the purpose of mitigating against undue process impediment.
- 7.5 **Announcement of Results** - The results shall be announced on Saturday November 21, 2026. The CRO shall determine the manner and the location, if any, for the announcement.

Ontario Liberal Party

Rules of Procedure, Chapter 8

Leadership Contest Rules

(as approved and enacted February 7, 2026)