

LESSON 8

CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATIONS

Elections are contests of leadership, ideas, politics and power, where interested groups and individuals campaign for our support and, ultimately, our vote.

An individual who seeks public office or competes for the job of elected representative is called a **candidate**. Most candidates are affiliated with a political party.

A **political party** is a group of like-minded individuals with a shared political beliefs and goals whose intention is to achieve power and create meaningful political change.

For provincial elections, Ontario uses an electoral system called Single-Member Plurality, more commonly known as First-Past-the-Post.

The province is divided into 124 smaller geographic areas, called electoral districts. Each district has its own race, which elects one **Member of Provincial Parliament**.

Voters can choose only one candidate on the ballot and the candidate with the most votes wins.

In our system, voters do not directly vote for the leader of the province. The political party with the most elected representatives that usually forms the government, and the leader of that party becomes premier.

It is the job of political parties and candidates to share their vision and ideas with voters in order to gain their support. A **political platform** is a series of declared values and proposed actions the party will take if elected.

Candidates and parties use a communications strategy that incorporates all three types of media (paid, earned, owned), as well as outreach activities and events to spread their message. This includes advertising, lawn signs, mailings/pamphlets, social media, public events, door-to-door canvassing, media coverage and campaign events.

As a voter, it is your job to gather, interpret and analyze campaign information, formulate conclusions and judgments, and make your voting decision.