

## **Your Ontario Government Map**

### **Lieutenant Governor**

The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario is the representative of the Queen in Ontario. The role of the Lieutenant Governor is to carry out the constitutional and ceremonial duties of the Queen in the province. The Governor General appoints the Lieutenant Governor on the advice of the Prime Minister and the Premier of Ontario.

### **The Executive Council**

#### **Premier**

The premier is the head of government in a province or territory and selects the members of provincial parliament that will serve in cabinet, also called the executive council. As head of the executive council, the premier is the chief minister or first minister in the province. The current Premier of Ontario is Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Ontario Liberal Party and MPP for Ottawa South. It is the custom in Ontario that all premiers are also MPPs.

#### **Cabinet Ministers**

Right now, there are 29 ministers in the Ontario Government. Each minister is of head of a ministry which oversees a specific area of government. Cabinet ministers are selected by the premier from among the sitting MPPs from the governing party and are accountable to Parliament.

The job of a Cabinet Minister is not only to oversee the ministry they lead, but also to advise the Premier on matters of public policy in specific areas, as well as to collectively set government priorities.

## **The Legislative Assembly**

### **MPPs**

An MPP, or Member of Provincial Parliament, is a member of the legislative assembly. He or she is elected to represent a particular geographical area, or riding, in the Ontario Legislature. Currently, there are 107 MPPs in Ontario. The role of an MPP is to make laws as well as to represent their riding. MPPs who are not members of the cabinet or of the governing party can also introduce legislation. This legislation is called a private members' bill.

### **The Party in Power**

The party in power is the party elected with the highest number of seats in the Legislative Assembly. The party in power forms the Government of Ontario. Currently in Ontario, the party in power is the Ontario Liberal Party which is led by Premier Dalton McGuinty, MPP for Ottawa South.

### **Official Opposition**

The Official Opposition is the political party elected with the second highest number of seats in the Legislative Assembly. The job of the official opposition is to scrutinize the policies put forward by the government and to be a credible democratic alternative to the party in power. In Ontario, the official opposition is the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party. The current leader of the Ontario PC Party is Tim Hudak, MPP for Niagara West-Glanbrook.

### **Third Party**

The third party is the party elected with the third highest seat count in the Legislative Assembly. Like the Official Opposition, it is the job of the third party to point out weaknesses in the policies of the government of the day and to provide alternative policies to the party in power. Currently the third party in Ontario is the Ontario New Democratic Party (NDP). Andrea Horwath is the leader of the NDP and the MPP for Hamilton Centre.

## **The Judiciary**

The Judiciary is very important to our system of government because it is through them that our democratically passed laws are enforced and interpreted. It is the job of judges to protect the rights of citizens by ruling on criminal and civil matters in the courts.

There are 3 types of courts in Ontario;

Ontario court of Justice. The Ontario Court of Justice hears the following matters:

Family Law relating to child custody, parental access, child and spousal support, enforcement of child support, child protection and adoption.

Criminal law cases that do not involve juries as well as special criminal courts such as the Drug Treatment court and Mental Health Court.

Bail Court for bail applications and hearings

Youth Court for those charged under the Youth Criminal Justice Act

Provincial Offenses like trespassing, traffic offenses, parking, noise by-laws and environmental protection

Superior Court of Justice. The Superior Court of Justice is made up of federally appointed judges and hears the following matters:

Criminal law relating to serious criminal offences being heard by a jury

Family Law relating to property issues, child and spousal support as well as child custody and access during divorce.

Appeals for civil cases for amounts less than \$25,000

Small claims court- civil disputes for amounts of \$10,000 or less

Divisional courts- appeals of interim orders and judicial reviews of decisions made by administrative tribunals ie: municipal boards or school boards, or police commissions.

Court of Appeal. The Ontario Court of Appeal is made up of federally appointed judges and hears appeals from Superior Court of Justice.

## **Civil Service**

The Ontario Public Service is the non-political staff, or bureaucracy, of the Government of Ontario. The civil service is non-partisan and is responsible for providing advice to the Executive Council, for implementing the policies and priorities of the government of the day and for delivering government services to Ontarians.

The civil service does this through departments (ministries or other departments of government), provincial agencies and commissions as well as through crown corporations.

The head of the Ontario Public Service is known as the Secretary of the Cabinet and Clerk of the Executive Council. Each ministry is officially headed by a Cabinet Minister who is responsible to the legislature however the senior civil servant in each ministry is called the Deputy Minister. He or she is responsible for the on-going operations within each ministry. The Deputy Minister reports to the Secretary of the Cabinet/Clerk of the Executive Council.

*Source: The government of Ontario*