

## Q&A

*This Q&A is intended to provide possible answers to questions that may come up when engaging with candidates and campaigns. Again, as with Key Messages, These are not meant to be broad or complete and are instead intended as a guide for you to keep in mind and use throughout your engagement with candidates. There may be questions that come up that you can't answer. Simply say you will get back to them and reach out to representatives from the #WaitingtoBelong Campaign for assistance in answering them.*

**Q: The Progressive Conservative Party insists that it has provided \$3.5B in investment to the Developmental Services Sector, why do you need more investment?**

**A:** The dollar figure is only a part of the story. It's important to understand the context. For example, the province spends **\$80 billion on health care** every year, yet **2.5 million people don't have access to a family doctor**. The province spends **\$9 billion on long-term care facilities**, yet **50,000 people are waiting for a long-term care placement**. Meanwhile, thousands of people with developmental disabilities are languishing inappropriately in hospitals and long-term care facilities because our sector is under-resourced. A focus on dollar figures takes attention away from these real issues and their effects on real people.

**Q: Why is it essential to support the developmental services sector?**

**A:** Developmental services are not luxuries—they are lifelines. These services empower people with developmental and intellectual disabilities to live, work, and fully participate in their communities. With over **52,000 Ontarians currently on wait lists** for these critical supports, further investment and support is essential to ensure everyone has the opportunity to belong, contribute, and live with dignity. Investing in these services has a profound ripple effect:

- It **reduces long-term costs by preventing crises and reducing reliance on emergency services**.
- It fosters a **more inclusive and diverse workforce** as individuals gain independence and new skills.
- It **alleviates the undue burden on families**, allowing them to thrive and contribute more fully to society.
- Ultimately, a well-supported developmental services sector **builds resilient communities where everyone has the opportunity to flourish**.

**Q: What is the current state of developmental services in Ontario?**

**A:** The data is alarming:

- **52,000+ people** on waitlists for various developmental supports.

- Over **28,000 people** are on wait lists for housing-related support. The Financial Accountability Office (FAO)'s June 2024 Report showed that while access to supportive housing has dropped over recent years, the wait list has surged by **60%**.
- More than **42,000 people** are waiting for community support services such as respite care, social work, mental health support and employment assistance. Without these supports, many are isolated from the very communities they wish to contribute to.
- In the Passport program, which provides financial support ranging from \$5,500 to \$45,000 per year, over **30,000 people** are waiting to receive their full assessed allocation.

These figures highlight a system that is not meeting the needs of a majority of its population.

**Q: How has underfunding impacted the quality and accessibility of services?**

**A:** Chronic underfunding forces agencies providing supports to operate with severely limited resources, which in turn:

- Creates longer wait lists for critical services.
- Reduces the availability of staff and specialised supports.
- Increases the pressure on families, who are often left to bridge the gap by providing additional care at home or forced to place them in often inappropriate settings such as hospital or long-term care.

The gap in funding forces families to shoulder more financial, emotional, and physical burdens just to meet basic needs, further underlining the systemic crisis.