ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS

Running for the OAO Board of Directors



January 2026

INTRODUCTION

Member involvement strengthens the foundation of the Ontario Association of Optometrists (OAO), allowing the organization's century-old legacy to continue. Serving on the Board of Directors gives members a chance to shape the Association's direction. If you're a member in good standing and are interested in running for the OAO Board of Directors, the information below lends expectations and outlines for the nomination and election process.

OVERVIEW

For over 100 years, the Ontario Association of Optometrists (OAO) has represented more than 2,000 optometrists and served as the leading voice of the profession in the province. We are dedicated to helping our members provide the highest standard of eye health and vision care for Ontarians while driving the profession of optometry forward at the government, regulatory, and public levels. We work to increase awareness and understanding of the role that optometrists play in ensuring the health of patients.

The OAO is the designated representative for optometry and meets with the provincial government on its members' behalf and monitors provincial legislation.

ROLE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is responsible for governing the affairs of the OAO, guiding its strategic direction, and ensuring long-term sustainability. Their oversight includes managing the OAO's assets and staying true to its mission: to be the essential resource for optometrists to thrive in their profession.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOARD

There are 12 board members in total. A director is elected for a 3-year term, and terms are staggered such that each year, 4 directors are elected. A director must be a member of the OAO in good standing and may serve for 3 consecutive terms for a maximum of nine (9) years.

Directors shall be elected without restriction to their Electoral Ward, except when the number of nominees is greater than the number of vacancies. If this occurs, the maximum number of Directors elected to serve from any Electoral Ward (based on primary practice location) will be less than a majority of Directors.

The Board elects Officers (President, Vice-President, and Treasurer) from within the Board to form the Executive Committee. The board also elects a Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) representative.

Expectations:

- The OAO Board of Directors meets quarterly, with additional meetings scheduled for training or urgent issues as needed. Quarterly meetings (May, August, November, and February) are typically in person and span 1.5-2 days. Additional meetings are often virtual and are more variable in length.
- Directors may be expected to serve on one or more committees. Committees meet at the direction of the committee chair several times per year, and the time commitment is generally 2-3 hours per meeting.
- Directors are expected to attend the OAO Symposium. The director’s travel and lodging expenses, as well as Symposium registration costs, are covered by the OAO.
- Details of both Board and Committee structure can be found in the OAO Governance documents in the members section of the OAO website under the “Governance” tab.

HONORARIUMS AND EXPENSES

Directors are compensated for their time both for attending virtual and in-person board and committee meetings as well as preparation time and travel expenses. Compensation and expense details can be found in the OAO Governance Policy, Appendix B "OAO COMPENSATION SCHEDULE HONORARIUMS AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES" and are reviewed annually to ensure they are appropriate for the demands of the role.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All directors are expected to sign a confidentiality agreement once elected.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Directors and Officers shall disclose any Conflict of Interest in any matter as required by the Act and comply with all other requirements in respect of a Conflict of Interest as set out in the Corporation's Conflict of Interest Policy (see 1. E of the OAO Governance Policy). Depending on the length of term a Director or Officer remains in office, an Acknowledgement and Disclosure Form must be completed annually (Appendix A).

Directors are expected to disclose any conflict of interest to the board and recuse themselves from any discussion that may present a conflict.

Directors and Committee Chairs may not serve on the Council of the College of Optometrists of Ontario per COO regulations.

ELECTIONS

See section 5 of the OAO Bylaws for information on elections. Association members in good standing may be nominated by another member once the Call for Nominations is sent out by the CEO, 60 days prior to the Annual Meeting (AM). Those nominated are given the opportunity to complete a Candidate Platform, including the candidate's perspectives on "critical issues", which will be posted prior to the election for the membership to view. Members will elect 4 directors at the AM.

Here are the key steps in the nomination and election process:

- Call for Nominations with Election Profile Questions
- Deadline for Receipt of Nominations
- Deadline for Completion of Election Platform
- Election Profile is Posted to the OAO Website
- Official Notice of Annual Meeting (AM)
- Day of Election - Annual Meeting (AM) and Election of Directors
- New Board is Formed

When nominations are received, specific dates for these steps will be communicated to each nominee.

Once duly nominated and after their completed election profile is posted to the OAO website and communicated to the Members, a nominee shall become a candidate. During the election process, candidates shall:

- Adhere to the OAO's Code of Conduct;
- Restrict their campaign material and communication to issues which are pertinent to the OAO or the practice of optometry in Canada and Ontario; and
- Adhere to all By-Laws and Policies of the OAO, including those which apply to Directors.

NOTE

This document summarizes background, key steps, and eligibility information regarding the OAO nomination and election process. In case of inconsistency, the OAO By-Law and Governance Policies take precedence: see OAO Website (Member Section)>Governance>Governance Documents>OAO By-Law and Governance Policies.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS