

BACKGROUND

Ontario Supporting Stronger Local Governance

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[Municipal Affairs and Housing](#)

Ontario has re-introduced legislation that would, if passed, protect Ontario communities by strengthening municipal governance and accountability. The proposed *Municipal Accountability Act, 2025*, would enable a new, standardized municipal code of conduct and integrity commissioner framework.

Below is a description of the proposed initiatives and changes:

Municipal Code of Conduct

The proposed changes in the *Municipal Accountability Act, 2025* would amend the *Municipal Act, 2001* and the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, to strengthen the municipal code of conduct and integrity commissioner framework in order to:

- Allow for the creation of a standard code of conduct for all municipalities and require mandatory code of conduct training for members of council and certain local boards.
- Create a regulation-making authority to set out the municipal integrity commissioner investigation processes, including a complaints mechanism and reporting requirements.
- Provide a role for the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario to provide advice to municipalities and training to municipal integrity commissioners as well as review and conduct inquiries into all reports from municipal integrity commissioners recommending that a member be considered for removal and disqualification.
- Establish a stronger penalty by establishing a mechanism for members of council and certain local boards to be removed and disqualified from office for four years for serious violations of the code of conduct.

The *Municipal Accountability Act, 2025*, if passed, would establish rules so that municipal integrity commissioners and the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario would only be able to consider and recommend removal and disqualification from office if they determine that all four criteria are met:

1. The member has contravened the code of conduct;
2. The contravention is of a serious nature;
3. The member's conduct that is the subject of the inquiry has resulted in harm to the health, safety or well-being of persons; and
4. The existing penalties are insufficient to address the contravention or ensure that the contravention is not repeated.

If passed, the legislation would also establish that the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario, when in the process of conducting an inquiry, could also consider, whether the contravention negatively impacts public confidence in the ability of the member to discharge their duties, and, of the council or local board to fulfill its role, including by meeting its statutory obligations.

The proposed changes would also create a process to remove and disqualify members of council and local boards that would include the following steps:

1. Upon receipt of a complaint, the municipal integrity commissioner conducts an inquiry. If they find that the criteria for removal and disqualification are met, they can make a recommendation for removal and disqualification to the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario.
2. If the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario receives a recommendation from the municipal integrity commissioner, they would be required to conduct an inquiry and determine whether the criteria for removal and disqualification have been met. If so, they can provide a recommendation to municipal council that the member be removed from their seat and disqualified for four years.
3. If the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario recommends that a member be removed and disqualified, council must vote on the recommendation:
 - All members of council who are not exempt would be required to vote on the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario's recommendation to remove and disqualify a member.
 - Only the member(s) who is/are the subject of the report, members with approved absences or members who have a conflict of interest under the [Municipal Conflict of Interest Act](#) would be exempt from the vote.
4. If council unanimously votes to approve the recommendation, the member is removed from their seat and is disqualified for four years.

The government intends to consult on these changes and work with the municipal sector to develop the necessary regulations to support the new framework coming into effect for the new term of councils in 2026.

Additional Resources

- [Ontario Taking Action to Strengthen Local Governance](#)
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