# FAQ: Standing for Election to the Sustain Ontario Advisory Council

Dear Food and Farming Leader,

We commend your interest in the Sustain Ontario Advisory Council. This document is meant to give you the information that you need to decide whether this role is a good fit for your skills and interests.

There is more detail on all points in the *Sustain Ontario Terms of Reference*. If you have any questions about the role that aren’t answered by either document, please feel free to direct them to the Advisory Council Chair.

## Role

The role of the Advisory Council is to recommend policy and advocacy priorities and strategy for Sustain Ontario.

## Responsibilities

In order to support the role of the Advisory Council, members:

* identify key and emerging policy issues
* approve strategic directions and policy statements for Sustain Ontario
* support staff in membership development
* act as liaisons to or lead one or more Working Groups within their area of expertise where appropriate
* elect a chairperson from among the Council members
* elect a Steering Committee from among the Council members
* report to the Steering Committee through the Advisory Council Chair and/or Vice-Chair

## Time Commitment

Advisory Council members are required to attend Council meetings, which may be in person or by conference call (generally four per year), plus respond in a timely fashion to email requests.

If meetings are in person, Sustain Ontario will attempt to support travel costs.

In the past in-person Advisory Council meetings have generally been 1-2 days long and phone meetings have been 1-3 hours long. In the past, there have been 2 in-person meetings and two phone meetings per year.

You can expect an average of 2 emails that require your response each month. During particularly busy periods (for example, provincial elections), there may be more, and during slow periods there may be less. Between meetings and responding to emails, the entire time requirement is likely to be between 9 and 12 work days over the course of the year.

## What if I’m not able to attend meetings?

If you miss three Advisory Council meetings in a row, you will be asked to reconfirm your commitment to the Council.

## How decisions are made

Advisory Council decisions will be made by consensus of the members. In the absence of consensus, a decision will require a 75% majority.

## Selection Process

Only voting members of Sustain Ontario may be elected to serve on the Sustain Ontario Advisory Council. For more information about members please see the [Sustain Ontario Member Page](http://sustainontario.com/members/directory#action=AdvancedSearch&cid=846&did=1&listingType=O).

A Nominations Committee will be struck to recruit members to run for Advisory Council. The Nominations Committee will invite members to self-nominate and will proactively seek nominees representing diverse geographical areas and sectors of Sustain Ontario’s membership. This Committee may seek ideas and advice from staff and members.

Organizations running for Advisory Council will designate a lead representative and may designate an alternate, who may attend meetings in the absence of the lead representative and vote on their behalf.

The Nominations Committee will use best efforts to obtain nominations of at least 45 candidates in order to prevent creating a slate that will be acclaimed, and will attempt to ensure an election that is based on merit as decided by the membership of Sustain Ontario. The Nominations Committee will use best efforts to present a group of candidates in which at least one third of nominees are returning members of the Advisory Council in order to ensure institutional memory. If the Nominations Committee is unsuccessful in obtaining 41 candidates they may seek the approval of the Advisory Council to reduce the total number of representatives to be elected in the upcoming election.

At least two weeks prior to the election date, the voting members will be provided with the slate of nominees, their written submissions and access to the electronic balloting system. Voting will be by secret electronic ballot overseen by the scrutineers. Each voting member will be entitled to cast a vote for up to the maximum number of seats available on the Advisory Council during the present election. Those receiving the most votes will be declared members of the Council. If there is a tie for the last position(s) on the Council, the Nominations Committee shall use its judgment in selecting one or more members that will round out the geographical and sector-based diversity of the Council.

### Term

Advisory Council members will serve a term of two years. Elections for Advisory members are held, prior to the Biennial Meeting. Members may be re-elected and serve a maximum of six consecutive years, with the option of running for election again following a break.