



Rural Ontario  
Municipal Association

# ROMA Strategic Plan 2024-2027



**ROMA's Vision** is a progressive future for rural Ontario.

**ROMA's Mission** is to support municipal governments to make rural communities the best they can be.

## **ROMA's Guiding Principles**

As the voice for rural municipal governments, ROMA will:

- undertake research and analysis that speaks to shared priorities, current and emerging;
- champion solutions that acknowledges rural governments' uniqueness and their own capacity which is varied;
- work for a common voice with stakeholders when there are shared interests; and
- provide input, advice and listen to others that have specific interests in rural communities, their economies and their community well-being.

## **ROMA's Core Values**

ROMA will:

- act and be seen as non-partisan, always putting municipal governments' interests first and foremost;
- be a unifier in the municipal sector to speak as one strong voice;
- recognize that one size does not fit all, even across rural communities; and
- promote practices that empower rural councils.

## What we know

Municipal governments' day-to-day responsibility for community services is framed by its capacity. Capacity is not aligned well with the responsibilities assigned by federal/provincial statutes, policy and revenue sources and funding.

Municipal capacity has various components including:

- municipal finances
- municipal administration
- municipal growth
- municipal and community well-being

These components are different across the municipal sector. Even within rural Ontario, municipal governments are not similar in their capacity. Rural municipalities are very diverse.

## Objectives

**1. Supporting municipal capacity building** means making different resources available to rural governments.

ROMA will:

- support a growing network of rural expertise by creating connections and the means to share good practices and other resources.
- showcase and share the remarkable innovation occurring in rural municipalities including examples of shared services and collaboration.
- support activities to broaden representation to municipal government and the goal of building civil engagement and improving voter turnout in rural Ontario.
- promote work to support rural municipalities so that they have access to money-saving and cost-effective services and products.
- enhance its communications to create additional opportunities to hear from municipal government officials through its Zone structure.
- support activities that aid in developing and retaining Ontario's municipal workforce and that attract community builders of the future.

## **2. Advocating for change** that contributes to the wellbeing of rural communities.

ROMA will:

- advance public policy that reflects the needs, aspirations, and resources of rural Ontario, ROMA will deliver Canada's preeminent annual rural affairs conference, convening rural officials, and the provincial government and community partners.
- provide input to the work of AMO to inform, advance and amplify policy development and advocacy.
- undertake timely research, data collection and analysis that supports current and emerging rural issues.
- collaborate with key rural sector partners including agriculture, tourism, forestry and mining to address shared issues facing rural communities.
- challenge practices and policies that disadvantage rural municipalities.
- promote faster implementation of cell and broadband services across rural Ontario by building on its successful advocacy.

### **Implementation:**

- ROMA's annual work plan and budget will reflect this Strategic Plan.
- ROMA's Annual Report will describe on how this Plan is being implemented.
- This Strategic Plan will be reviewed in advance of 2027 when it concludes.