



Native Women's
Association of Canada

L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada

**HONOURING OUR PAST,
SHAPING OUR TOMORROW**

Vote

VOTING GUIDE

Making Your Voice Heard



Making Your Voice Heard

Federal elections represent a significant opportunity to drive change and leverage the democratic process to have your voice heard. At the root of the democratic process is understanding the available options and how to exercise your democratic voice. NWAC has created this brief factsheet to support Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse People in deciding how they would like to vote.

WHO AM I VOTING FOR?

In a federal election, Canadian citizens have an opportunity to vote for one of the 343 available seats in the House of Commons. Each seat represents a different geographic area, called a riding, that are determined before the start of an election. Ridings often have multiple candidates that electors may pick from, with each candidate running independently or with the support of a political party. Candidates endorsed by political parties will often have to undergo a rigorous nomination contest to represent a political party on the ballot. Further, these candidates would have also attained the signatures of at least 100 qualified electors in their riding who consented to their candidacy.

Due to the structure of the Canadian parliamentary system, the political party whose candidates have won the most seats in a general election will be asked to form government. By convention, the leader of that party will be asked by the Governor General to be the next Prime Minister. Within the Canadian context, party leadership is often determined through a nomination contest that is voted on by registered party members.

So, what does this mean for your vote? Put simply, on election day your vote is being counted towards one candidate in your riding. Should your chosen candidate win your riding, they will hold one seat in the House of Commons. If your candidate is from the political party that won the most seats in the House of Commons then their political party will be asked to form government, with the party leader becoming Prime Minister. As a result, your vote can influence who will lead Canada over the course of the next four years.



Every vote counts and every vote is represented equally. Voting is a chance for Indigenous WG2STGD+ people to be heard and to make a difference.



KNOWING YOUR OPTIONS

When looking at your ballot on election day, you may feel overwhelmed by the options that are shown on the ballot. This can make deciding who to vote for tricky, but there are several actions that can be taken to simplify this process.

After the 2023 Census, it is likely that the boundaries and name of your electoral district has changed. As such, we recommend researching your riding to determine which candidates and parties are running in your electoral district. Information about your electoral district can be found using Elections Canada's [Voter Information Service](#). This resource will provide you with a profile of your riding, a list of registered candidates, and details on past election results.

After identifying the registered candidates in your electoral district, it is important to do some research into the candidates. Consider looking into their leadership abilities, relevant experience, political affiliations, and past engagement in politics. This information is available online and can be found through a quick search. Further, if a candidate is aligned with a political party, consider looking up their party's platform. Comparing each platform will clarify the common beliefs and policies that will be supported by a candidate when in Parliament.

Some other things you may want to ask yourself before casting your ballot are:

- What issues are most important to me?
- What kind of future do I want for Canada?
- How has each of the political parties performed over the last few years?
- How do each of the political parties represent issues that are important to me?
- How has my electoral district voted in the past?

CHECKING THE BOX

Election day represents the culmination of all your research, and an opportunity to cast a vote for who you think will best manage the affairs of the country. At your polling station, Elections Canada will provide you with all the necessary supplies to cast your ballot. Each ballot will contain a list of eligible candidates in your riding, accompanied with each candidate's political affiliation. It is important to mark your ballot correctly, Elections Canada will only accept your ballot if:

- The ballot is marked in only one circular space to the right of the chosen candidate.
- The ballot is marked with an "X" or other mark made with any writing instrument.
- The counter is satisfied with the mark or that any other writing on the ballot can not be used to identify the elector.

Your vote is secret. This is your opportunity to make your judgement about which political party or candidate will best represent you and your community. Remember, it is impossible to discover which candidate a voter has voted for. This means you can vote for your preferred candidate without fear of any repercussions.

Your vote is one way to voice your opinion and guide the future of the country. So, why not **make your voice heard** this election?

