



Native Women's  
Association of Canada

L'Association des  
femmes autochtones  
du Canada

**HONOURING OUR PAST,  
SHAPING OUR TOMORROW**

**Vote**

**VOTING GUIDE**

**For Indigenous Women,  
Two-Spirit, Transgender, and  
Gender-Diverse Voters**



# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ..... 3

**Why Vote?** ..... 4

**Canada’s System of Government** ..... 5

**How Is the Federal Government Structured?** ..... 7

**A History of Indigenous Women and Voting** ..... 10

**Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples in Canadian Politics** ..... 11

**How to Vote** ..... 16

**Planning Your Vote – Q&As** ..... 20

**Beyond Voting in Federal Elections: What Else Can I Do?** ..... 28

**Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+: Q&As** ..... 33

**Voting Accessibility: Q&As** ..... 34

**Useful resources and websites** ..... 41



## Introduction

This upcoming federal election is more important than ever. We need a government that will deliver meaningful and concrete change to support the success, health, and safety of Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse (W2STGD+) Peoples. To achieve this, Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples need to use their voice and vote for change.

**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.**

Use your voice this election to fight for the change that Indigenous communities have been asking for far too long.

Indigenous women are among the fastest-growing population segment in Canada. They are also greatly under-represented in voter turnout in Canadian elections. The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is striving to change that, which is why we are releasing this voter's guide on when, where, and how to vote.

This guide offers step-by-step voting instructions, along with actionable solutions to some common barriers. It provides information on the benefits and challenges of voting. And, for those who wish to understand their own community's historical relationships to elections and government, it introduces that history alongside an outline of Canada's governmental structure.



### THIS GUIDE

offers step-by-step voting instructions, along with actionable solutions to some common barriers.

**BEING AN ACTIVE PART  
OF A COMMUNITY OF  
VOTERS IS ANOTHER WAY  
TO STRENGTHEN THAT  
COMMUNITY.**



## Why Vote?

Voting is about asserting the democratic right to power: the power to decide one's own future, to claim and extend opportunities for one's children, to assert the rights of a community, and to shape the broader society.

A recent vote count in the electoral district of Labrador West measured the margin of victory at just five votes.<sup>1</sup> A single family voting could have changed the outcome. Similarly, in 2017, the governing political party in British Columbia lost its majority government by losing one riding. The difference in one riding was nine votes.<sup>2</sup>

“

At first glance, “**Why should I vote?**” is a difficult question to answer; elections are rarely decided by one vote.

So, consider instead the question, “**Why should we vote?**”

Now imagine that “we” represents an entire community, or even a network of communities across Canada. In that case, a “we” vote can clearly make a political difference, locally, provincially, even nationally.

But beyond the specific victories and defeats, there's a larger reason why Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples should vote. When governments know that an entire community can be for or against them in the next election, they are compelled to listen, to respond, to represent the priorities of that community in some way. And that is the basic power at the core of any democracy.

In the end, being an active part of a community of voters is another way to strengthen that community.

Now, consider again the question, “**Why should I vote?**” Perhaps the answer is simply, “**I vote so that we vote, so that we are stronger together.**”



1 [Find CBC coverage here](#)

2 [Find Maclean's coverage here](#)





# Canada's System of Government

In Canada, the electoral process is at the centre of the political system and ensures that Canadians are represented in the democratic process regardless of geographic location. At the base of this system are the basic principles set out in the *Constitution Acts* (1867; 1982) and the *Canada Elections Act*. These acts set out that an election must be held every five years, barring a war, invasion, or insurrection,<sup>3</sup> with elections taking place on the third Monday in October in the fourth year following the previous general election. However, an election may be called earlier should the government of the day lose confidence.

## WHAT DOES “CONFIDENCE” MEAN?

As the governing party is responsible to the House of Commons—and Canadians—they must maintain the support and confidence of a majority of the members of the House to remain in power. Often referred to as the “Confidence Convention,” this unwritten rule provides that when the government is defeated on a matter of confidence, such as a budget vote or a confidence motion, then it is expected that the governing party members resign or that the party seeks the dissolution of Parliament. Often, a loss in confidence in the government will lead to a general election.<sup>4</sup>

3 [Elections Canada. \(2023\). \*The Electoral System of Canada – The Political System\*](#). Retrieved from Elections Canada

4 [Parliament of Canada, \*House of Commons Canada. \(2017\). \*House of Commons Procedure and Practice\*\*](#). Bosc, M. and Gagnon, A. (eds.). “Chapter 2 Parliaments and Ministries.”

## MAJORITY

Formed by a party that secured more than 170 seats in the House of Commons.

*Characteristics: more stable; more likely to last the entirety of its four-year term; can implement mandate and accomplish electoral goals as it holds majority support and can easily pass legislation.*

## MINORITY

Formed by a party that received fewer than 170 seats in the House of Commons, but attained the greatest number of seats in the election.

*Characteristics: less stability (as it can lose confidence in the House at any point); often unlikely to complete its four-year term (lasting an average of two years); must compromise with other parties to implement mandate and accomplish electoral goals; legislation is not passed as efficiently and can easily pass legislation.*

## COALITION

Formed by two or more political parties that together have the greatest number of seats in the House of Commons following a general election and that agree to govern together. Coalition governments are extremely rare in Canada and only occur following the election of a minority government. In instances where a coalition is formed, cabinet will include members of both, or all, parties with the Prime Minister being chosen by the parties.

*In most instances, minority governments may use informal agreements with other parties to govern instead of forming a coalition government.*



Currently, Canada uses what is known as a “single-member plurality,” more commonly referred to as “first-past-the-post,” voting system. This means that for a candidate to win their riding, they must attain the highest number of votes out of any candidate in their riding. In this system, each of the 338 electoral districts (each representing a seat in the House of Commons) elects their own candidate to represent their riding. Following the election, the party that attained the most seats is asked by the Governor General to form the government. Depending on the number

of seats, parties will form a government with either a majority, minority, or coalition of seats in the House of Commons.

Following an election, the party that received the second most seats in the House of Commons becomes the Official Opposition. The Official Opposition has the responsibility to hold the government responsible for its actions, with the aim of improving legislation and forming the government in the next election. The Official Opposition also ensures that all elected voices are heard in debate, while also introducing bills and legislation that may be supported by their constituents.

### THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT – THE BASICS

The Canadian government is a representative democracy. This means it is a government in which all citizens have the right to participate in decisions that affect them, either directly or through an elected representative.

Prior to European contact, democratic forms of government were already well-known to Indigenous Peoples in Canada and were included in the range of systems by which they governed themselves. In addition to being an independent sovereign democracy, Canada is also a federal state made up of 10 provinces and three territories.

In democracies such as Canada, political parties are elected to run a government. A political party is a group of people who share common ideas, goals, and principles as to how the country should be governed.

### WHAT ARE THE THREE LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

Canada has three main levels of government: federal, provincial or territorial, and municipal.

Sometimes these three levels of government share responsibilities over the environment,



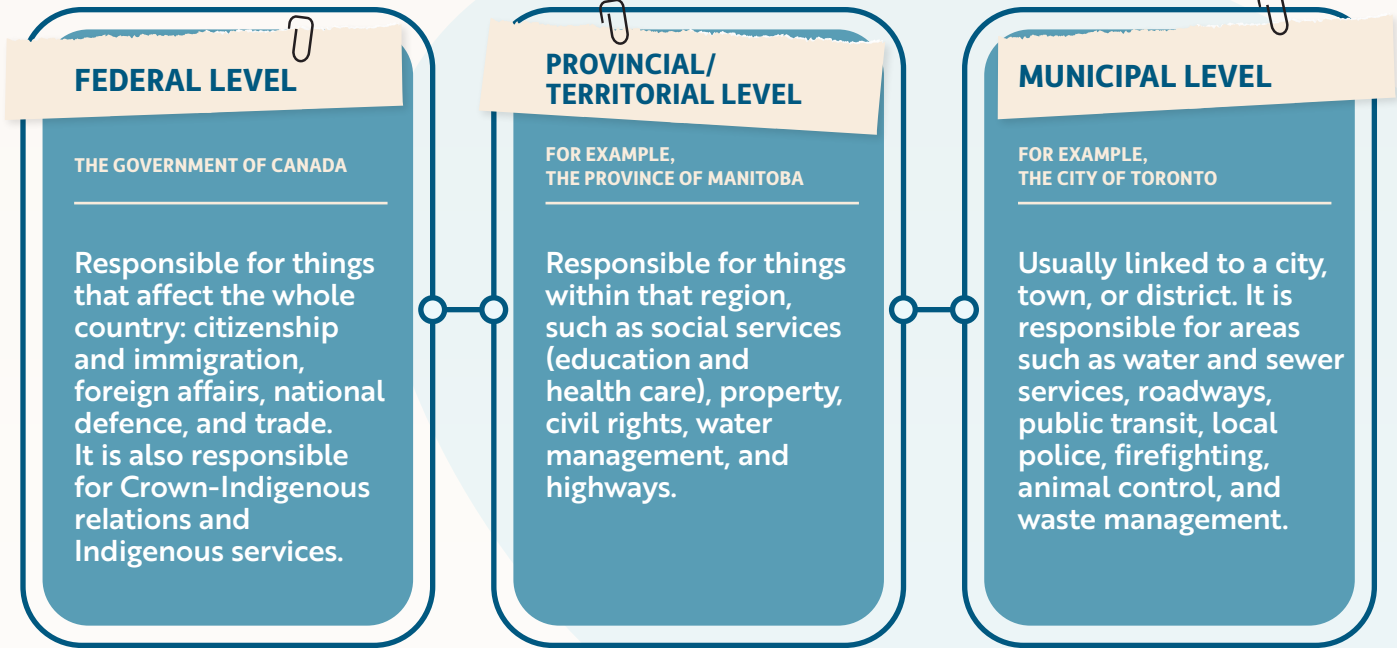
DID YOU KNOW



The words **Parliament** and **Government** do not mean the same thing.

**GOVERNMENT:** the running or governing of a country

**PARLIAMENT:** made up of the Crown, Senate, and House of Commons and has legislative (law-making) responsibilities

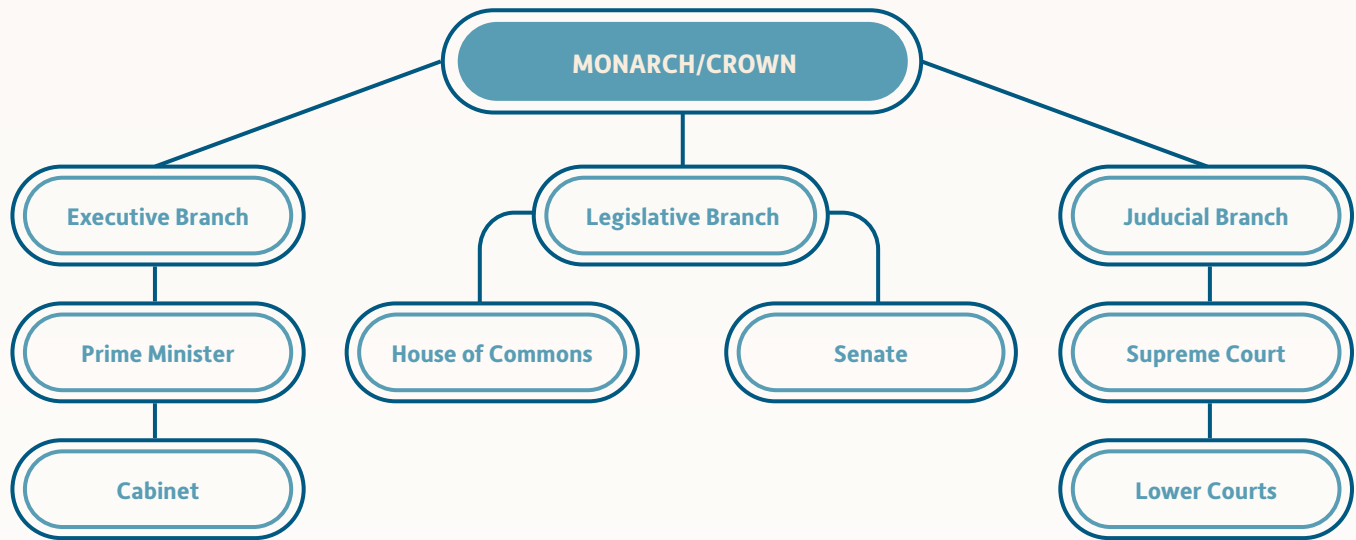


parks, economic development, and laws. Also, across the country, there are band councils that govern First Nations communities, as well as Inuit and Métis governance structures that make decisions and policies in their communities. These elected councils are similar to municipal councils. They make decisions on issues such as membership, education, health, cultural programs, planning and land use, hunting, fishing, trapping, and plant harvesting.

**CANADA HAS THREE MAIN LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT: FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL OR TERRITORIAL, AND MUNICIPAL.**

## How Is the Federal Government Structured?

In addition to being a representative democracy, Canada is also known as a constitutional monarchy, which means the executive authority resides with the Crown. While the role of the Crown as the Head of State is now largely ceremonial, it was central to the formation of Canada's current system of government, which consists of three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. The image below provides an outline of the three branches of government in Canada and how they interact.



## EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The executive branch is the decision-making arm of the government, which comprises the Crown (represented by the Governor General), the Prime Minister, and Cabinet.

**Crown:** The Governor General (GG) is the King’s representative in Canada. The GG does not support any political party, and today has mostly ceremonial duties. However, the GG is responsible for signing bills into law, also known as giving “royal assent,” and is also the Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian Forces.

**Prime Minister:** The Prime Minister is the head of the government and oversees Cabinet. Following a general election, the Prime Minister is often the leader of the party that has won the most seats in the House of Commons and is usually approached by the Governor General to form Parliament. The Prime Minister and their government must maintain “confidence” to remain in power, as a loss in “confidence” will lead to the dissolution of government and the start of an election.

**Cabinet:** Following an election, the new Prime Minister selects several confidential advisors, usually selected from members of the governing party, which make up their cabinet. The selection of Cabinet is a politically driven process in which the Prime Minister determines their cabinet based on the geographic, gender, and cultural backgrounds of members of their party. Members of Cabinet, often called ministers, are either designated to a particular portfolio or oversee a government department, such as Global Affairs Canada. A ministerial tenure in Cabinet is determined by the Prime Minister, who may replace or ask a minister to resign at any time from their position.<sup>5</sup>

5 Ibid.

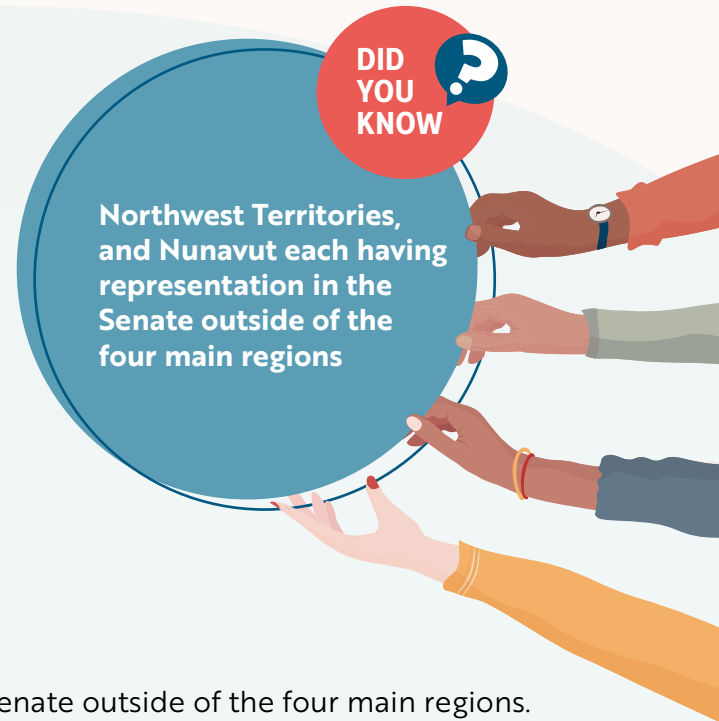


## LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Canada's legislative branch, also known as Parliament, is a bicameral institution divided into the Senate (upper) and House of Commons (lower). Within this system, the government/executive and other elected members of Parliament sit in the House of Commons, while the Senate is made up of individuals appointed by the Governor General based on the recommendations of the Prime Minister.<sup>6</sup> In their capacity, both the Senate and House of Commons can propose, debate, pass, and/or reject legislations. Both houses must approve a piece of legislation before it can go to the Governor General for royal assent. Ultimately, the legislative branch has the power to enact laws that represent the Canadian people.

**House of Commons:** The House of Commons is made up of 338 elected Members of Parliament (MPs) from across Canada's provinces and territories. In the House of Commons, MPs spend most of their time debating, voting, and participating in committees to best represent the needs of their constituents. MPs represent the people in their riding and are usually associated with a political party. Each MP represents approximately 100,000 Canadians.

**Senate:** Senators are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister. Since the Senate is composed of appointed members, representation in the Senate is divided into four main regions (Western Provinces, Maritime Provinces, Ontario, and Quebec), with Newfoundland and Labrador, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut each having representation in



the Senate outside of the four main regions. Currently, there are 105 Senators with each of the four main regions having 24 Senators, Newfoundland and Labrador having six Senators, and each territory having one Senator.<sup>7</sup> In their role, Senators review and debate bills as part of the process of voting bills into law. Senators can also present petitions, discuss committee reports, and make statements on key issues.

## JUDICIAL BRANCH

The judicial branch of government is responsible, through a series of independent courts, for applying laws to citizens, governments, and corporations.

Supreme Court, Federal Court, and Federal Court of Appeal: The laws passed by the executive and legislative branches. Federal judges are appointed by the federal government.

6 Ibid.  
7 Ibid.





## A History of Indigenous Women and Voting

Traditionally, Indigenous women played a central role in the health and well-being of their communities. They were decision-makers in the use of resources, economics, and politics; they determined leadership; and they were leaders themselves.

Before colonization, Indigenous women enjoyed political and economic power comparable to that held by the men in their communities.

Colonization changed those relationships: Indigenous women no longer could expect any sort of gendered power-sharing and would be denied any role in the politics and economics of colonial society, as part of a broader subjugation of all Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Indigenous Peoples would not initially be granted full citizenship in Canada.

While Canadians had the right to vote, First Nations people could only vote if they chose to give up their treaty rights and Indian status. This was called “voluntary enfranchisement.” While non-Indigenous women were granted the right to vote in federal elections in 1921, it was not until 1960 that all First Nations people—men and women—were granted that same right without giving up their treaty rights and status. Unlike First Nations, Inuit women and men had the right to vote in federal elections held after 1950. Métis men never had specific restrictions put on their right to vote, and Métis women obtained the right in 1921 alongside non-Indigenous women.

While nearly one-quarter (24%) of First Nations chiefs in 2022 were women,<sup>8</sup> this was still slightly higher than the representation of female mayors in Canadian municipalities, which consists of one-fifth (20%) of all Canadian mayors.<sup>9</sup>

We continue to see a growing number of Indigenous women holding leadership roles in regional and national political organizations, as well as at various levels of government.



**FROM 2012 TO 2022,  
THE NUMBER OF FEMALE  
CHIEFS INCREASED BY  
6 PER CENT.**

8 [First Nations women under-represented as chiefs in Canada | CTV News](#)

9 [Run, Win and Lead: Toward Parity in Municipal Politics \(fcm.ca\)](#)





# Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples in Canadian Politics

The inclusion of Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples in Canada’s political arena is a recent phenomenon, and they have since shown their value within the political process. Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples are resilient; they are caretakers and leaders; and they are committed to creating positive change that will benefit their communities and all Indigenous Peoples.

“

The inclusion of Indigenous  
WG2STGD+ Peoples in  
Canada’s political arena is a  
recent phenomenon.



Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples are making a difference working within parties, as well as running as candidates, and in leadership and decision-making roles. Here’s a list of notable Indigenous WG2STGD+ People who are making a difference in community, federal, provincial, and territorial politics and in academia and research.

## **ETHEL BLONDIN-ANDREWS, O.C.**

Ethel Blondin-Andrews, a Shútao’tine from Tuli’ta (NWT), is the first Indigenous woman to be elected to the Parliament of Canada. She was first elected as MP for the Western Arctic in 1988 and was appointed Secretary of State (Children and Youth) after her re-election in 1993. Serving as the MP for the Western Arctic until 2006, she is the longest-serving parliamentarian in the history of the Northwest Territories.

## **MARY SIMON, O.C., O.Q**

From Kuujjuaq, Simon is the 30th Governor General of Canada—making history as the first Indigenous person to hold this role. Simon been an advocate for Indigenous Peoples over the course of her career, including during her time as President of the Makivik Corporation, President of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, and President of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Simon has also held roles in the government, serving as Canada’s first Arctic Ambassador and Canada’s first Ambassador to Denmark.

## **NAHANNI FONTAINE**

From Sagkeeng Anishinaabe First Nation, Fontaine is the MLA for St. John’s, a neighbourhood in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She is a nationally recognized expert on Indigenous women in Canada, and has helped to bring international attention to the crisis of missing



and murdered Indigenous women and girls, Indigenous/police relations, and women's representation in politics. In addition to being the NDP Official Opposition's House Leader, Critic for Justice, and spokesperson for Veterans Affairs, she is also the first Indigenous woman to be House Leader of any Legislature or Parliament in Canadian history

### **LEAH GAZAN**

Leah Gazan is the MP for Winnipeg Centre, the NDP Critic for Families, Children, and Social Development, and the Deputy Critic for Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship. Recently, Gazan presented a motion to declare the deaths and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls a national emergency and called for the creation of a new alert system, which passed unanimously.

### **JODY WILSON-RAYBOULD**

A member of We Wai Kai Nation, Wilson-Raybould served as MP of Vancouver Granville from 2015–2021. She served as Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada in the cabinet of Justin Trudeau from 2015–2019 and then as Minister of Veterans Affairs of Canada in early 2019. Before entering Canadian federal politics, she was a Crown Prosecutor for B.C., a Treaty Commissioner, and a Regional Chief of the B.C. Assembly of First Nations.

### **ROSEANNE ARCHIBALD**

Roseanne Archibald is a First Nations advocate and politician, and was the first woman to hold the title of National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). This was not the only time Archibald was the first woman to hold a position of leadership—she was the first woman to be elected as chief of Taykwa Tagamou Nation, to act as Deputy Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, to serve as

Grand Chief of the Mushkegowuk Council, and to be elected as Ontario Regional Chief.

### **LORNA STANDINGREADY**

Born and raised on the Peepeekisis Reserve, Lorna Standingready excelled at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, University of Regina, and holds a Bachelor of Administration (2000). Standingready is known for her commitment to community work, including with the John Howard Society and Regina Action and Education on Child Hunger (REACH). She was the recipient of the Saskatchewan Indian Women's Association Appreciation Award and the Saskatchewan and Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Awards.

### **BETTY NIPPI-ALBRIGHT**

Betty Nippi-Albright, a Salteaux and Cree politician, was elected as MLA for Saskatoon Centre—in the 2020 Saskatchewan general election. A member of the Saskatchewan NDP, she is the critic for First Nations and Métis Relations, Truth and Reconciliation, and the Public Service Commission.

### **EVA AARIAK, C.M., O.NU**

Eva Ariak was elected in the 2008 territorial election to represent the electoral district of Iqaluit East in the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. She subsequently served as Nunavut's first female premier from 2008 until 2013. In 2021, Ariak was appointed as commissioner of Nunavut.

### **NELLIE COURNOYEA, O.C., O.NWT**

A former politician of Inupiaq heritage, Nellie Cournoyea served as the sixth premier of the Northwest Territories from 1991 to 1995. She was the first Indigenous woman to be elected as premier in Canadian history.



### THELMA J. CHALIFOUX

Thelma Chalifoux was the first female Métis woman to be appointed to the Canadian Senate. She served in the Senate from 1997 to 2004, when she retired and returned to her roots—founding the Michif Cultural Institute.

### TINA KEEPER, O.M.

Tina Keeper is a Cree activist, politician, and former actress from Winnipeg, Manitoba. She has been very active on suicide prevention as a member of a visioning committee for a Manitoba suicide prevention program. From 2006 to 2008, Keeper was the MP for the riding of Churchill in Manitoba.

### CINDY BLACKSTOCK, O.C.

A Gitksan activist for child welfare, Cindy Blackstock is the co-creator and Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada and a professor for the School of Social Work at McGill University. Blackstock, working with First Nations colleagues, was successful in a human rights challenge against Canada’s inequitable provision of child and family services.

### BLAKE DESJARLAIS

Blake Desjarlais (he/him), born in Edmonton and raised in the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement, made history in September 2021 when he was the first openly Two-Spirit person to be elected to the House of Commons. Desjarlais is Alberta’s only Indigenous MP and also serves as the Deputy Critic for 2SLGBTQI+ Rights and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and as the Caucus Vice Chair and Critic for the Treasury Board, Diversity and Inclusion, Youth, Sport and Post-Secondary Education.

### LORI IDLOUT

Lori Idlout was elected MP for Nunavut in the 2021 election and has been a strong advocate for housing, infrastructure, and resource management while in office. Before her election, she was a practising lawyer, small business owner, community leader, and strong advocate for Inuit health and wellness—with previous experience as in health-related organizations, including the Nunavut Embrace Life Council and Nunavut’s Department of Health.



**INDIGENOUS WG2STGD+ PEOPLES ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE WORKING WITHIN PARTIES, AS WELL AS RUNNING AS CANDIDATES, AND IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING ROLES.**



### **NANCY UQQUUJUQ KARATEK-LINDELL, C.M.**

Nancy Uqquujuq Karetak-Lindell was the MP for Nunavut from 1997–2008 and was the first female MP for the Eastern Arctic. Since leaving office, Karatak-Lindell has served as president of the Inuit Circumpolar Council and has been on the board of directors of several organizations, including Polar Knowledge Canada and the Kivalliq Inuit Association.

### **LEONA AGLUKKAQ**

Leona Aglukkaq was the MP for Nunavut from 2008–2015 and was the first Inuk woman to serve in cabinet. Before entering federal politics, she was a member of the non-partisan Legislative Assembly of Nunavut representing the riding of Nattilik from 2004–2008.

### **SANDRA LOVELACE NICHOLAS, C.M.**

Sandra Lovelace Nicholas, Wolastoqiyik from Tobique First Nation, is a former Senator representing New Brunswick. Serving as a Senator from 2005 to 2023, she was the first Indigenous woman appointed to the Senate from Atlantic Canada. Lovelace Nicholas is known internationally as an activist, advocating for changes to the *Indian Act* to restore the legal rights of Indigenous women and girls.

### **SEN. MARY JANE MCCALLUM**

Senator Mary Jane McCallum is a Cree advocate who spent much of her distinguished career working to provide dental care to First Nations communities across Manitoba and Saskatchewan. She was appointed to the Senate in 2017 and in 2021 was named Chancellor of Brandon University—becoming the first Indigenous woman to hold that position.

### **SEN. YVONNE BOYER**

Senator Yvonne Boyer, a Métis lawyer, was appointed to the Senate of Canada in 2018—the first Indigenous person to be appointed from Ontario. With extensive experience on the intersections of Indigenous health and Aboriginal rights and treaty law, Boyer previously worked for a number of organizations, including for NWAC and the Canadian Human Rights Commissioner.

### **SEN. MICHÈLE AUDETTE**

Senator Michèle Audette, an Innu politician and activist, was appointed to the Canadian Senate in 2021. A recognized Indigenous leader, Audette was appointed as one of five commissioners to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2017 and served as President of the Femmes autochtones du Québec from 1998–2004 and of NWAC from 2012–2014.

### **SEN. MARGARET DAWN ANDERSON**

Senator Margaret Dawn Anderson is an Inuvialuk politician, first appointed to the Senate of Canada in 2018. With extensive experience as a civil servant in the Northwest Territories territorial government, she previously worked in the departments of justice, health and social services in areas related to social work, probation, parole, restorative justice, and domestic violence.

### **SEN. MARGO LAINNE GREENWOOD, O.C.**

Senator Margo Greenwood is a Cree politician and academic who was appointed to the Senate of Canada in 2022. Recognized as a leading Indigenous scholar in the field of early childhood care and the education of Indigenous children, she served as the





Academic Leader of the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health and continues to work as a professor in the education program at the University of Northern British Columbia.

**MELANIE MARK**

Melanie Mark, a politician of Nisga’a, Gitksan, Cree, and Ojibway ancestry, is the first First Nations woman to serve as both MLA in the province of British Columbia and in the Cabinet of British Columbia. Representing the riding of Vancouver-Mount Pleasant from 2017–2023, she also served as the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and subsequently as Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport.

**JODI CALAHOO STONEHOUSE**

Jodi Calahoo Stonehouse, a Cree and Mohawk politician, is the MLA in Alberta for the riding of Edmonton-Rutherford. A member of Michel First Nation, where she served on the band council, she previously worked as Executive Director of the Yellowhead Indigenous Education Foundation and as a member of the Edmonton Police Commission.

**INDIGENOUS WG2STGD+  
PEOPLES ARE RESILIENT;  
THEY ARE CARETAKERS  
AND LEADERS**

**LELA EVANS**

Lela Evans, a politician of Inuit and Norwegian descent and a proud member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, has served as MLA for the electoral district of Torngat Mountains (Newfoundland and Labrador) since 2019.

**ANNIE BLAKE**

Annie Blake, a descendant of the Dagoo people and a Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation citizen, was elected to the Yukon Legislative Assembly in 2021 for the electoral district of Vuntut Gwitchin. Blake currently serves as Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committee of the Whole of the Yukon. Blake is also the NDP caucus critic for health and social services, justice, tourism and culture and youth issues and a member of the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments.





# How to Vote

## AM I ELIGIBLE TO VOTE?

You are eligible to vote if:

- 1 You are a Canadian citizen
- 2 You are at least 18 years old on election day
- 3 You can prove your identity and address

or have someone eligible vouch for you. For all I.D. questions, see Proof of Identity and Address list (see page [17](#)).

## HOW DO I REGISTER TO VOTE?



Using the [online](#) voter registration service (e-registration) at [elections.ca/register](#). This service platform will guide you in completing your registration or updating your address online.



By mail (outside of an Election). Contact [Elections Canada](#) at 1-800-463-6868. They will e-mail, mail, or fax you a registration form.



At any Elections Canada office once the election is called.



At the polls. If you couldn't register ahead of time, you can still register when you go to vote.

**HOW DO I CONTACT ELECTIONS CANADA?**

Call: 1-800-463-6868  
Visit: [www.elections.ca](#)



## HOW DO I VOTE IN A FEDERAL ELECTION?

### 1 On Election Day

On election day, go to your polling station to vote. Take your voter information card, accepted identification, and proof of address with you when you go to vote. The date, times, and address will be on the card. Elections are normally held on a Monday, and polls are open for 12 hours. Polling hours are typically as follows:

**VOTING HOURS ON POLLING DAY<sup>10</sup>**

TIME ZONE	VOTING HOURS (LOCAL TIME)
Newfoundland	8:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Atlantic	8:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Eastern	9:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.
Central	8:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Mountain	7:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Pacific	7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

*Note: In Saskatchewan, when daylight saving time is in effect for the rest of the country, voting hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.*

10 Elections Canada. (2023). *Voting Hours on Election Day*. Retrieved from [Elections Canada](#).

The correct voting times will be listed on each voter information card or can be found through the [Voter Information Service](#).





## 2 At the Advance Polls

You can vote earlier at the advance polls. These are polling stations made available before election day for those who are unable to vote on that day or for convenience. They are held on the tenth, ninth, eighth, and seventh day before the election. The location and times for accessing advance polls can be found on the voter information card, by contacting [Elections Canada](#), or by using the [Voter Information Service](#).

To vote at an advance poll, electors must be registered or can register at the polling station. Electors must be able to prove their identity and home address.<sup>11</sup>

## 3 Elections Canada Offices

From the day after the election is called **until 6 p.m.** six days before the election, electors can vote at any of the over 500 Elections Canada offices that will be open across the country. Hours will vary, but each office will be open between 7.5 and 12 hours each day during the election.

To vote at an Elections Canada office, electors must submit an *Application for Registration and Special Ballot* and provide proof of identity and address. After completing the applications, the elector can choose to vote at that time or can come back to vote at a later date, but before or on election day.<sup>12</sup> The location of Elections Canada offices can be found [online](#) or by contacting [Elections Canada](#).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

## 4 By Mail

Once the election is called, eligible voters can choose to vote by mail (special ballot). Don't wait to request your voting kit. There are deadlines to vote by mail. For in-depth instructions on voting by mail, see page [23](#).

### PROOF OF IDENTITY AND ADDRESS AT THE POLLS

To vote in the federal election, all electors must prove their identity and address upon arriving at their polling station. In doing so, electors have three ways to prove their identity and address:

#### Option 1: Show one of these pieces of ID

- Your driver's licence;
- Any other card issued by a Canadian government (federal, provincial/territorial, or local) with your photo, name, and current address;
- Expired ID is acceptable so long as it has your name and current address;

#### Option 2: Show two pieces of ID

- Both must have your name and at least one must have your current address. For example:
  - » voter information card and bank statement
  - » utility bill and student ID card
- Don't have these? No problem! See the list of acceptable IDs to prove your identity and address on the next page.

#### Option 3: If you don't have ID

- You can still vote if you declare your identity and address in writing and have someone who knows you and who is assigned to your polling station to vouch for you.
- The voucher must be able to prove their identity and address. A person can vouch for only one person (except in long-term care facilities).



## LIST OF ACCEPTED IDS TO PROVE YOUR IDENTITY AND ADDRESS

<p>FROM A GOVERNMENT OR GOVERNMENT AGENCY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Band membership card</li><li>• Birth certificate</li><li>• Canadian citizenship card or certificate</li><li>• Canadian Forces identity card</li><li>• Canadian passport</li><li>• Card issued by an Inuit local authority</li><li>• Firearms licence</li><li>• Government cheque or cheque stub</li><li>• Government statement of benefits</li><li>• Health card</li><li>• Income tax assessment</li><li>• Indian status card or temporary confirmation of registration</li><li>• Library card</li><li>• Licence or card issued for fishing, trapping, or hunting</li><li>• Liquor identity card</li><li>• Métis card</li><li>• Old age security card</li><li>• Parolee card</li><li>• Property tax assessment or evaluation</li><li>• Public transportation card (not accepted for online registration)</li><li>• Social insurance number card (not accepted for online registration)</li><li>• Vehicle ownership</li><li>• Veterans Affairs health care identification card</li></ul>
<p>FROM A HEALTH CARE FACILITY OR ORGANIZATION (not accepted for online registration)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blood or donor card</li><li>• CNIB card</li><li>• Hospital card</li><li>• Label on a prescription container</li><li>• Identity bracelet issues by a hospital or long-term care facility</li><li>• Medical clinic card</li></ul>
<p>FROM ELECTIONS CANADA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Targeted revision form to residents of long-term care facilities</li><li>• Voter information card</li></ul>



<b>FROM A PRIVATE ORGANIZATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employee card</li><li>• Residential lease or sub-lease</li><li>• Utility bill (e.g., electricity, water, telecommunications services)</li><li>• Including telephone, cable, or satellite)</li></ul>
<b>FROM AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Correspondence issued by a school, college, or university</li><li>• Student identity card</li></ul>
<b>LETTERS OF CONFIRMATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letter from a public curator, public guardian, or public trustee</li><li>• Letter of confirmation of residence from a First Nations band or reserve or an Inuit local authority</li><li>• Letter of confirmation of resident, letter of stay, admission form or statement of benefits from one of the following designated establishments:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ student residence</li><li>◦ senior's residence or long-term care facility or shelter</li><li>◦ soup kitchen</li><li>◦ a community-based residential facility</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>FROM A FINANCIAL INSTITUTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bank statement</li><li>• Credit card (not accepted for online registration)</li><li>• Credit card statement</li><li>• Credit union statement</li><li>• Debit card (not accepted for online registration)</li><li>• Insurance certification, policy, or statement</li><li>• Mortgage contract or statement</li><li>• Pension plan statement</li><li>• Personal cheque (not accepted for online registration)</li></ul>





# Planning Your Vote – Q&As

Planning your vote and knowing how to exercise your democratic rights during an election is central to casting your vote. This section offers a wide array of information to help you cast your ballot. We want to support you in enacting your democratic right to vote.

## What are my voting rights?

In Canada, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms establishes the right of every Canadian citizen to vote in an election. Voting rights are further devolved through the *Canada Elections Act* (S.C. 2000, c.9), which establishes who can vote and the regulations on how an election is conducted. Specifically, the legislation asserts that every person who is a Canadian citizen aged 18 years of age or older can vote on election day. This also includes Canadian citizens who currently reside outside of Canada, incarcerated people, those with intellectual disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples. Further, the *Canada Elections Act* has several protections for voters to ensure they are protected from intimidation, undue influence, or interference when casting a ballot. In doing so, legislation in Canada entrenches the democratic right to vote and participate in deciding who will form government.

## What is a voter information card?

These are personalized voter information cards sent out to electors approximately three weeks before an election day. Voter information cards inform the elector that they are registered to vote, when and where to vote, and the different ways they can vote on election day. However, only electors



properly registered in the National Register of Electors will receive the voter information card.<sup>13</sup> To register to vote or update your voter information, see the sections on “How do I register to vote?” and “Is my voter information up to date?”

In 2018, the Government of Canada authorized electors to use the voter information card to prove their address.<sup>14</sup> If being used as proof of address, the voter information card must be used with a second piece of identification.

## What if I do not receive my voter information card?

Not receiving your voter information card in the mail could mean that you are not on the list of registered electors. In this case, follow the information provided in the section “How do I register to vote?” to make sure you are registered on election day.

## Is my voting information up to date?

If you have recently moved or changed your name, then you will have to update your voter information with Elections Canada.

13 Elections Canada. (2022). *Facts About Voter ID and the Voter Information Card*. Retrieved from Elections Canada.

14 Ibid.

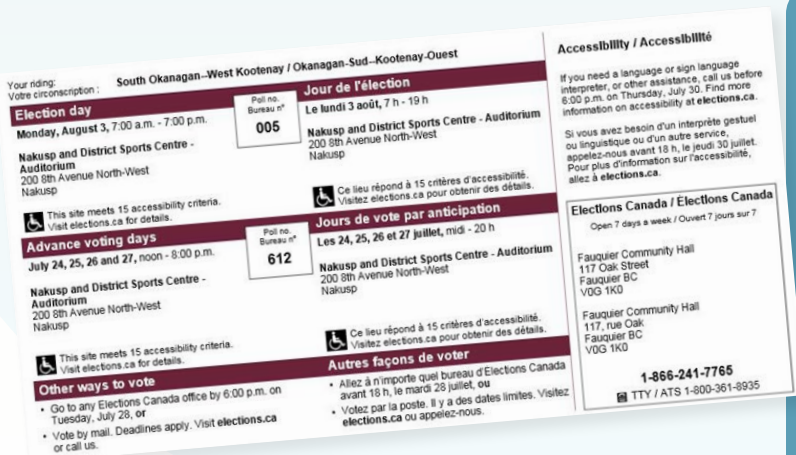


Addresses can be updated online using the [Online Voter Registration Service](#), while name changes or other kinds of registration updates must be completed by mail.

Using the online Voter Registration Service, check if you are registered under your previous information, and then check again using your current information. Call Elections Canada if the information is not current or if you find you are registered twice. Call Elections Canada at 1-800-463-6868.

### Where do I go to cast my vote on election day?

After receiving a voter information card, electors can use the card to determine their local polling station. On the back of the voter information card, you can find details about your riding, locations for voting on election day, location for advanced voting days, and information on other ways to vote. The voter information card also provides information on the polling station each elector will be reporting to. The following is an example of the back of a voter information card:<sup>15</sup>



### What happens when I go to vote?

- 1 When you enter a polling place, an election worker greets you and shows you to the right table.
- 2 At your table, show your proof of identity and address.
- 3 The election worker will initial, fold, and hand you a ballot.
- 4 Go behind the voting screen, mark and refold your ballot to keep it secret.
- 5 Return your ballot to the worker so they can tear off the tab.
- 6 Put your ballot in the box.

### What will my ballot look like? How do I properly mark my ballot?

Across Canada, Elections Canada provides the supplies and materials necessary for electors to cast their ballot on election day. After registering at your polling station and going behind the screen, your ballot follow this template:

**SPECIMENT/MODELE**

..... **DOE, John** .....

..... Independent/Indépendant .....

..... **DOE, Sandra** .....

..... Political Affiliation/Appartenance politique .....

..... **UNETELLE, Anne** .....

..... **UNTEL, Pierre** .....

..... Political Affiliation/Appartenance politique .....

15 Elections Canada. (2023). *Chapter 4 – Boundaries, Polling Places and the Voter Information Card (04/2023)*. Retrieved from Elections Canada.



As is evident from the example, each ballot will contain the names of all eligible candidates arranged in alphabetical order. Each candidate will also be accompanied with the name of the political party they are endorsed by (i.e., Liberal Party of Canada). In instances where the candidate has run independently, their name will be followed by "Independent" on the ballot.<sup>16</sup>

According to Elections Canada, properly marked ballots will be **ACCEPTED** if the:

- ballot is marked in only one circular space to the right of the candidate
- ballot is marked with an "X" or other mark made with any writing instrument (i.e., pen, pencil)
- counter is satisfied with the mark **or** any other writing on the ballot is not so distinctive that it could be used to identify an elector

Following these guidelines, marked ballots will be accepted and counted if they appear as below.

ACCEPTABLE MARKING

16 Ibid.

**ACROSS CANADA, ELECTIONS CANADA PROVIDES THE SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS NECESSARY FOR ELECTORS TO CAST THEIR BALLOT ON ELECTION DAY.**



Elections Canada will **REJECT** a ballot if it:

- is marked in more than one of the circular spaces
- is not marked in any of the circular spaces or
- contains writing or a mark that could be used to identify the elector<sup>17</sup>

Below are examples of marked ballots that would be rejected by Elections Canada when counting ballots.

NOT ACCEPTABLE MARKING

17 Ibid.





## How do I decide who to vote for?

Deciding on who to vote for can be tricky. Here are four steps to get you started.

### STEP 1

Gather information on political parties and compare their views on issues you care about. The current registered political parties in Canada<sup>18</sup> are:

- [Animal Protection Party of Canada](#)
- [Bloc Québécois](#)
- [Centrist Party of Canada](#)
- [Canadian Heritage Party of Canada](#)
- [Communist Party of Canada](#)
- [Conservative Party of Canada](#)
- [Free Party Canada](#)
- [Green Party of Canada](#)
- [Liberal Party of Canada](#)
- [Libertarian Party of Canada](#)
- [Marijuana Party](#)
- [Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada](#)
- [Maverick Party](#)
- [New Democratic Party](#)
- [Parti Rhinocéros Party](#)
- [People's Party of Canada](#)

### STEP 2

Find **your riding** to determine which candidates are running there. The list of candidates in your riding will be published 17 days after the election is called.

### STEP 3

Once you have chosen your preferred political party choice, learn about the candidate's leadership abilities,

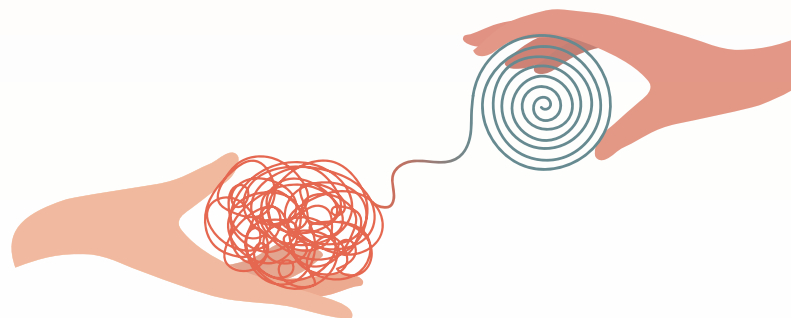
experience, and past actions. Have they been active on the issues you want addressed in your community? To help shape your opinion, find out what people you respect think about the candidates.

### STEP 4

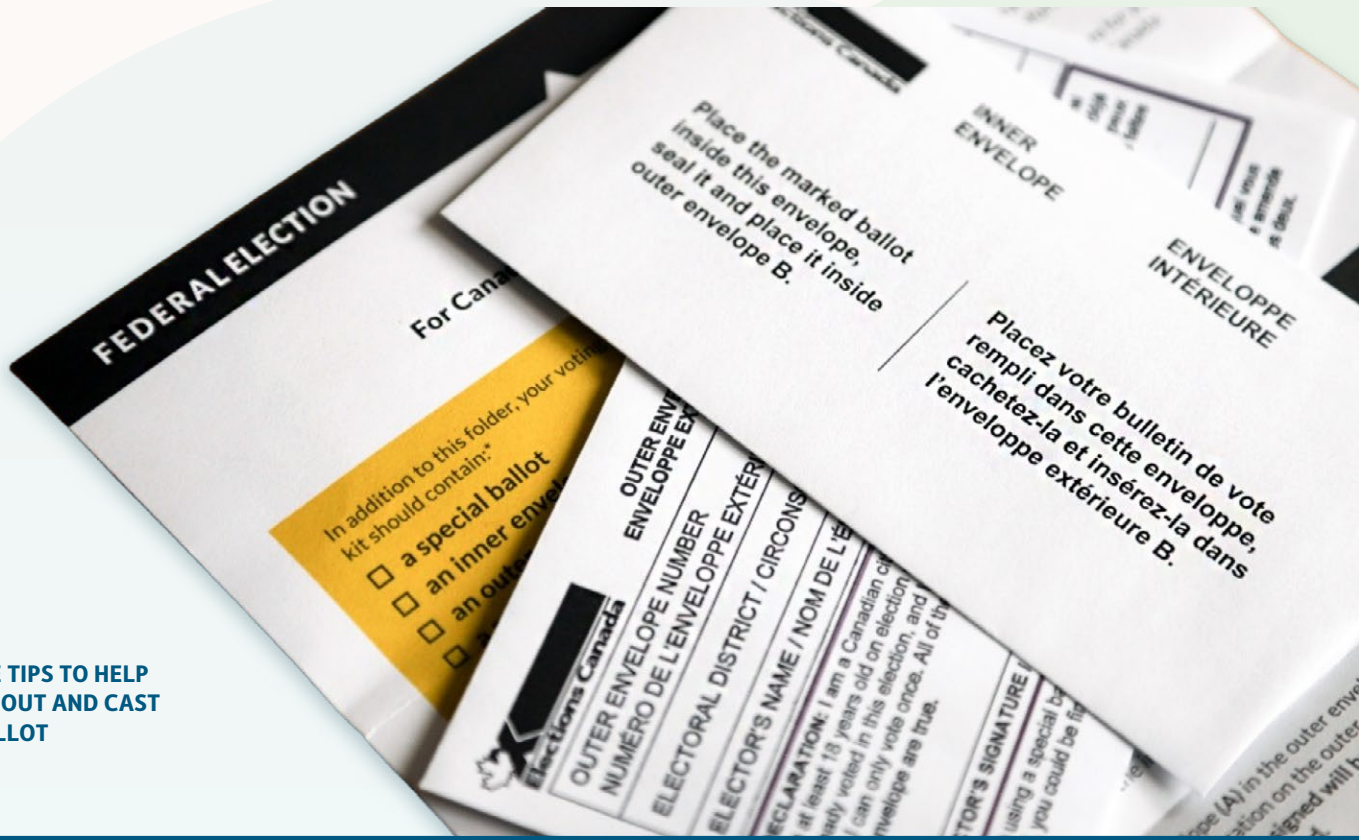
Make your judgement. Which political party and candidate will best represent you and your community?

## How do I vote by mail?

- 1 Complete and print the *Application for Registration and Special Ballot* form available on Elections Canada's website, at any Elections Canada office, or by calling Elections Canada at 1-800-463-6868. If you are outside of the country, you can also request the form at a Canadian embassy, consulate, or high commission.
- 2 Send Elections Canada your filled form with a copy of your proof of identity and address and you will be mailed a voting kit.
- 3 Ensure your marked ballot is received by Elections Canada before 6 p.m. on election day or it will not be counted.
- 4 Once your application for a voting kit has been accepted, it is the **only** way you can vote.



18 Elections Canada. (2023). *Registered Political Parties and Parties Eligible for Registration*. Retrieved from Elections Canada.



HERE ARE TIPS TO HELP  
YOU FILL OUT AND CAST  
YOUR BALLOT

### What does a special ballot look like?

Unlike regular ballots, special ballots do not feature a list of candidates to choose from. Instead, these ballots provide a space on the ballot for electors to print the name of their preferred candidate. Below is an illustration of what a special ballot will look like.

After receiving your special ballot from Elections Canada, here are tips to help you fill out and cast your ballot.

- 1 Choose your candidate (a list of candidates in your riding can be found using the Voter Information Service or by contacting [Elections Canada](#)).
- 2 Write the first and last name of the chosen candidate on your ballot.
- 3 Place your completed special ballot in the unmarked inner envelope, which is provided in the special ballot voting kit, and seal it.

- 4 Place the unmarked envelope inside the outer envelope showing your information and seal it.
- 5 Sign and date the declaration on the front of the outer envelope.
- 6 If you are voting at an Elections Canada office, drop your envelope in the ballot box. If you are voting by mail, follow the instructions on the voting kit and return your ballot using the pre-addressed envelope provided.
- 7 Make sure Elections Canada receives your ballot by election day at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time. This can be done by factoring in how long it will take for your ballot to arrive by mail to the [Elections Canada office](#).<sup>19</sup>

[Voting by mail](#)  
[Contact Elections Canada](#)



19 Elections Canada. (2023). *Special Ballot Voting*. Retrieved from Elections Canada.



### Can I vote if I live on a reserve?

Yes, polling stations are established on many reserves when the polling division is completely (or mostly) made up of a reserve. Where you vote will depend on whether the lands you live upon are included within a municipal or electoral area boundary. Contact the appropriate municipality or regional district to determine where you can vote. In most cases, the polling station is located at the band council office or the community centre. If the band council does not allow a polling station to be set up on the reserve, it will be in an area outside of the reserve.

### What should I do if I reside outside of Canada?

If you are living outside of Canada when an election is called, you may apply to be included on the *International Register of Electors*.<sup>20</sup> To be qualified to be included on the International Register of Electors, voters must be a Canadian citizen, at least 18 years old on election day, and have lived in Canada at any point in their life. Potential electors can submit an application for registration and special ballot (see “How do I vote using a special ballot?”), by contacting Elections Canada and requesting an application by mail, or by visiting a Canadian embassy, high commission, or consulate.<sup>21</sup>

The application for special ballot and the necessary supporting documents must be received by Elections Canada in Ottawa by 6 p.m. Eastern Time on the Tuesday before

election day. Once approved, Elections Canada will send out a special ballot voting kit that must be completed and returned to Elections Canada in Ottawa before 6 p.m. Eastern Time on election day.<sup>22</sup>

### What if I am travelling or studying outside of Canada?

If you are travelling or studying outside of Canada on election day, you can apply to vote by special ballot (see “How do I vote using a special ballot?”). This can be done by voting by mail, contacting Elections Canada, visiting an Elections Canada office, or contacting a Canadian embassy, high commission, or consulate outside Canada to get a special ballot application form.

Make sure to allow enough time for the special ballot voting kit to reach you and be sent to Elections Canada in Ottawa on election day.



20 Elections Canada. (2023). *Registration and Voting Processes for Canadians Who Live Abroad*. Retrieved from Elections Canada.

21 Government of Canada. (2023). *Voting in an Election While Outside Canada*. Retrieved from Government of Canada.

22 Ibid.



### *As a student, where and how do I vote?*

If you live in two places—one while at school, the other while away from school—choose which you consider home and use that address to register to vote. After registering to vote in the riding where you determined that your home address is located, you can then go and vote in a local polling station found on your voter information card or by using the [Voter Information Service](#). Remember that you will need to prove your identity and address after arriving at your polling station.

Some campuses have advance and/or election day polling places. If you consider your campus residence to be your home, you can vote at a polling place on campus. You will need ID proving your address on campus and to be assigned to that polling place. Note that home or away, you can vote at any Elections Canada office or by mail. Deadlines apply.

### *What are my employer's obligations on election day?*

According to the *Canada Elections Act*, every employee who is an elector has the right to cast their ballot. In doing so, employers must provide eligible employees with three consecutive hours for the purpose of casting their vote.<sup>23</sup> However, the employer has the right to decide **when** time off will be granted to the employee to vote. Below is an example of how the three consecutive hours may be provided to an employee.

<sup>23</sup> Government of Canada. (2023). *Canada Elections Act*. Retrieved from Justice Canada.

### EXAMPLE: EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE ELECTION DAY HOURS

Joyce lives in a riding where polls are open from 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and usually works from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. As a result, Joyce's work hours do not provide them with three consecutive hours off work to go and vote. In doing so, Joyce speaks to her employer to decide on the best time for them to vote. The three options decided on include:

#### THREE OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- 1 Joyce arrives to work at 11:30 a.m., 1.5 hours late, and casts their vote before going to work.
- 2 Joyce leaves work at 5:30 p.m., 30 minutes early, to cast their vote after work.
- 3 Joyce takes 3 hours off during the day, between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., to cast their vote.

*In this case, the employer would be more inclined to choose option 2. However, any of the options would be acceptable for allowing an elector to leave work and vote.*





**BE PREPARED TO  
TALK WITH YOUR  
EMPLOYER BY  
HAVING YOUR  
SCHEDULE**

Further, under the *Canada Elections Act*, employers cannot make any deduction in pay or impose a penalty on that employee when they do go to vote. Employers are also prohibited from intimidating, influencing, or interfering with the employee's ability to vote while they are voting.<sup>24</sup>

***How should I talk to my employer about going to vote?***

Discussing taking time off throughout the workday to vote with an employer may be challenging for some. However, as previously

mentioned, all employers are legally obligated to provide their employees with three consecutive hours off to cast their ballot. Below are some tips for talking to your employer about enacting your rights to vote:

- 1 Ask to speak to your employer to arrange a time for you to vote on election day.
- 2 Be prepared to talk with your employer by having your schedule, a copy of the *Canada Elections Act*, and options for voting on election day ready to discuss.
- 3 Be open to your employer's suggestions. The *Canada Elections Act* allows them to determine which three consecutive hours you as an employee can take to cast your ballot.

<sup>24</sup> Government of Canada. (2023). *Canada Elections Act*. Retrieved from *Justice Canada*.



# Beyond Voting in Federal Elections: What Else Can I Do?

Generally, there are two ways to engage in politics other than casting a vote. These include engaging from within **or** outside of the existing political structure. Some examples of participation include:

## PARTICIPATION FROM WITHIN

- **Become a candidate:** Become a candidate in a federal, provincial, territorial, or municipal election. It's a powerful way to make your voice heard.
- **Political party:** Assist a party during an election campaign; volunteer for a party or a candidate.
- **Chief and band council:** Run for band council elections in your community or promote a candidate in the community.
- **Other elections:** Vote in a band council election in your community; vote in provincial, territorial, or municipal elections.

## PARTICIPATION FROM OUTSIDE

- **Non-governmental organizations (NGOs):** Help with awareness campaigns; engage in social media activism.
- **Protest groups:** Advocate for certain issues or join a group that advocates for a cause that is close to your heart; boycott a product for ethical reasons; sign petitions; protest against new legislation.
- **Community groups:** Participate in a women's committee in the community to talk about issues of common interest; hold community meetings to educate community members; raise funds to support awareness; volunteer for events in the community.
- **Individual awareness:** Participate in the work of a committee in your community; follow the news.

### “ REPRESENTATION MATTERS: INSIGHT FROM MP LEAH GAZAN

“Representation matters. We currently do not have on trans person, never mind a trans woman, in the House of Commons. And at a time when we see growing transphobic hate and ongoing violence against Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+, representation matters. Our voices need to be taking up those seats.”







## HOW DO I RUN FOR OFFICE?

To run in a federal election in Canada, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- be a Canadian citizen.
- be at least 18 years of age on election day.
- not be excluded by the *Canada Elections Act* or any other legislation from participating.

It is also important to consider if you'd like to run as a member of a political party, as you will need to reach out early on to find out about their nomination process.

For more information, visit Elections Canada's [webpage](#) on running as a candidate or call them at 1-800-486-6563.



### “ CAMPAIGNING IN THE NORTH: INSIGHT FROM MP LORI IDLOUT

Running for candidacy is expensive as it is - but costs are even higher for those campaigning in the North. It can be harder to reach communities, with many being fly-in and carrying a high-ticket price. MP Idlout emphasized fundraising was essential to her campaign – especially when trying to reach as many Nunavut communities as possible. She noted being able to hire a charter (a plane and a pilot) with the help of fundraising was a significant accomplishment for her campaign that allowed her to reach more communities in the short time-frame of a campaign.

## AS AN INDIGENOUS WG2STGD+ PERSON, SHOULD I INCLUDE THIS IN MY CAMPAIGN?

Yes! Being an Indigenous WG2STGD+ person in politics can be extremely powerful and has the potential to empower and motivate others to participate in politics. Being forthcoming about your identify can also be influential in building trust with constituents.

## HOW SHOULD I PREPARE MY CAMPAIGN?

As a prospective candidate, there are several things you should think about when preparing your campaign. These include:

- **Build a comprehensive understanding** of the challenges and concerns within your community. This will likely cover specific issues affecting Indigenous communities, women's rights, 2SLGBTQQIA+ rights, and other important local matters.



- **Develop your leadership** and advocacy abilities so you can fervently champion your causes. This may include improving your public speaking, decision-making, problem-solving, and other leadership and advocacy skills.
  - **Understand the legal requirements** for campaigning, raising funds, and holding office. Adhering to a high ethical standard is crucial to holding public office.
  - **Be mindful of potential discrimination** or harassment that may occur when running for public office. Have a safety plan ready to handle and report incidents that may occur.
  - **Prepare a personal financial plan** and fundraising plans to handle the financial strain that may occur during a campaign.
  - **Create a robust support network** of family, friends, political mentors, community members, and advocates who can support you through challenging moments in your campaign.
  - **Remember** that campaigning is a strenuous process, so it's important to remain dedicated to the end goal.
- 3 Engage in regular physical activity
  - 4 Eat a well-balanced and nutritious diet, and when possible incorporating ancestral food into your diet
  - 5 Get sufficient rest each night to rejuvenate and prepare your body for the next day
  - 6 Interact with your community support network for emotional support and a sense of kinship
  - 7 Leave yourself time to be with your family to unwind and reconnect
  - 8 Depending on your cultural beliefs and practice, consider herbal treatments, purification rituals, sweat lodges, and guidance from Elders or Traditional Healers
  - 9 Access mental health experts and helplines, when necessary, as this can be an incredibly source for emotional support
  - 10 Take breaks from the news and social media to reduce extra unwanted stress

## WHAT ARE SOME WAYS I CAN LOOK AFTER MYSELF DURING A CAMPAIGN?

Being a political candidate can be extremely demanding on the mind and body. It is vital that you prioritize your health and well-being during a campaign. Here are a few ways this can be done:

- 1 Engage with the outdoors and grounding yourself through nature therapy
- 2 Incorporate traditional methods, meditation, or quiet moments throughout your day for peace of mind

### “ DOING THE INNER WORK: INSIGHT FROM MP BLAKE DESJARLAIS

Speaking with MP Desjarlais, he emphasized that it was important to really do the inner work to ask yourself why you want to participate in the political process, and if it is worth it for you, because these systems can be inherently violent and patriarchal. One essential approach mentioned by MP Desjarlais was *harm reduction*. By participating in these systems, you can reduce the harm and violence these systems can perpetuate. While this alone could be enough of a reason to get involved, reflecting on this key question is important when deciding to whether to run for candidate.



**REGULARLY CHECK  
ON A CANDIDATE'S  
EMOTIONAL HEALTH  
BY PROVIDING  
SUPPORT WHEN  
NECESSARY**



### **SOMEONE I KNOW IS RUNNING FOR OFFICE. HOW CAN I SUPPORT THEM?**

If you wish to offer support to a candidate, whether they be a family member, friend, or community member, there are several ways you can support them throughout their campaign:

- Donate your time and support campaign efforts such as making phone calls, distributing leaflets, or engaging with the community
- If possible, consider making a financial contribution to a campaign
- Leverage your network to amplify a candidate's platform on a wider scale
- Try to attend campaign functions and rallies when possible
- Regularly check on a candidate's emotional health by providing support when necessary
- Help with childcare, cooking meals, or other home tasks to help the candidate focus on their campaign
- Accommodate and respect any cultural or traditional self-care practices the candidate might have
- If you possess professional abilities (e.g., graphic design, public speaking, marketing), try and offer your skills to support the campaign
- Support safe community spaces to ensure that campaign and community events are welcoming to everyone in the community



## A NOTE ON INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN CANADIAN POLITICS:

Some Indigenous People choose not to vote in federal elections because of their views on Indigenous sovereignty. In some communities, the general view has been that they are a sovereign people, meaning that they are not Canadians. For this reason, many believe they should not interfere in Canada's elections and governance, and the Canadian government should not interfere in theirs.

However, with the growing recognition of a need for real reconciliation, NWAC encourages Indigenous communities to participate in elections at every level of government. The more that Indigenous women speak with their voices, the more their voices will be heard.

### **Identity is an obstacle to voting a reason to vote.**

Communities that live at the margins of society have too often been silenced when they try to raise their collective voices. Political access has too often been restricted, limiting the full participation of those who are marginalized.

To achieve the full inclusion of all Canadian citizens in the electoral process, we must be certain that social identity (e.g., race, gender, age, culture, accessibility, orientation) does not act as a barrier to voting. To that end, Elections Canada, in collaboration with key intervenors, offer all Canadians who wish to use them voting options that provide additional measures of privacy, discretion, flexibility, comfort, and ease.



### CREATING ROLE MODELS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: INSIGHT FROM MP YVONNE JONES

"For many decades, Indigenous women and Indigenous people, in general, didn't really see themselves in the political arena. I think the biggest obstacle we have to overcome is how Indigenous women see themselves in those offices. So, it's gradual, it's happening, but it's very gradual, and it's very slow. But every time I see a case where Indigenous people, especially women, are elected or lead initiatives, I know that there are girls out there that are going to look to them and see themselves. That's what's really going to change the generations that come."





# Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+: Q&As

## ***Gender Change or Gender Non-conforming Identity***

Fortunately, your vote does not depend on your sex, your gender identity, or your gender expression. You can vote whether your I.D. says “F”, “M”, or “X”. And, you can even mix and match those markers on different forms of identification, so long as the name and address remains the same. However, though gender is irrelevant, online or paper forms, as prescribed by law, still require you to choose your gender as “F”, “M”, or “X” when registering and voting in a federal election.

## ***Change of Appearance: I.D. Doesn’t Look Like You?***

You do not need to look like your I.D. to vote. However, a poll worker may ask you to explain why your photo doesn’t match your appearance.

## ***Have You Changed Your Name?***

Changing your name with other government agencies will not ensure that you have updated your name on the List of Registered Electors. If you haven’t contacted Elections Canada to change the name you are registered under, your registration will not match your I.D.

### **You can update your name by:**

- 1 Using a registration update form by mail/ fax or
- 1 During registration at the polling station when you go to vote (You will need to fill in a registration certificate, and you

may wish to go directly to the registration desk to complete the name change if you wish to avoid drawing any attention to yourself.)

To avoid these steps and any associated anxiety you might experience when dealing with your old name during the voting process, you can use an online document submission to create a new registration. However, this does not guarantee that your old record will be updated or made inactive. To be sure, you can contact Elections Canada directly, in advance, and inform them of any name changes by calling:

**ELECTIONS CANADA AT 1-800-463-6868**

## ***If You Have Concerns for Your Safety Because Your Home Address Is Made Public?***

If you are concerned for your safety because your name and address is made public on the List of Electors, you may apply to the local Elections Canada office to use another address when you vote by special ballot. For example, an elector, transitioning to another gender identity, fleeing an abusive spouse or a common-law partner, or hiding from a violent partner could request this process.

You must still show acceptable proof of identity and residence to the Returning Officer (RO) or the AARO (Additional Assistant Returning Officer), but this may be done in a private area of the office and the RO/AARO may not show your identification to a candidate or their representative. To protect your current location, the address appearing on the application for voting and mailing purposes must be a different address in the electoral district. Elections Canada will mail out your ballot to the different address, or you can pick it up at the RO office or AARO office.





## Voting Accessibility: Q&As

### *How can I get help accessing support in my community?*

The community relations officers are responsible for providing information and assistance to their target group on when, where, and how to register and vote. They also collaborate and work with local leaders to improve access to registration and voting for Indigenous communities. The officer can also provide information on the tools and services available to voters. Some other responsibilities of community relations officers include:

- increasing election awareness
- providing information on where, when, and how to register and vote
- explaining the importance of registering to vote
- making voting accessible, as much as possible<sup>25</sup>

There are also specific Indigenous community relations officer available at the request of the Returning Officer, who can assist the training officer and the recruitment officer with selecting, appointing, and training Indigenous poll workers. They can also provide translation, interpretation, and literacy services as necessary. Finally, they can also support the *Indigenous Elder and Youth Program* by helping the Returning Officer with recruiting and training program participants (this is only available to First Nations).<sup>26</sup>



The community relations officers collaborate and work with local leaders to improve access to registration and voting for Indigenous communities.

**THERE ARE ALSO SPECIFIC INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER AVAILABLE AT THE REQUEST OF THE RETURNING OFFICER.**

25 Government of Canada, *Information for Indigenous Electors*, 2023.

26 Government of Canada, *Community Relations Officer*, 2023.



### How can Elections Canada reduce barriers to voting for individuals living with disabilities?

Voters with disabilities face additional barriers during the electoral process. Elections Canada has built on the initiatives already in place and is continuing to improve the accessibility of the electoral process. Through **Elections Canada’s Inspire Democracy program**,<sup>27</sup> which seeks to reduce barriers to electoral processes, voters can connect with these networks made available through this program to access tools and information.<sup>28</sup>

### VOTING REGISTRATION FORMATS

For a general election, about 250,000 employees are hired to work across 338 ridings. All employees are trained in accessibility and sensitivity toward people with diverse abilities, and the tools available for voters. Key information about voting and registration is made available online, in print, and in the following formats:

- large print
- braille
- audio CD and files
- full transcriptions
- captioning
- ASL and LSQ videos<sup>29</sup>

During an election, as a voter, you can check if your polling place meets your personal accessibility needs:

- Use your postal code, you can check on **Voter Information Service**
- Call 1-800-463-6868 or 1-800-361-8935 (TTY) or
- Check your voter information card (see below)

ELECTIONS CANADA HAS BUILT ON THE INITIATIVES ALREADY IN PLACE AND IS CONTINUING TO IMPROVE THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.



27 Government of Canada, *Inspire Democracy Knowledge for Civic Action*.

28 Government of Canada, *Information for Electors with Disabilities, 2023*.

29 Ibid.



## INFORMATION FOR VOTERS

Elections Canada has made information available online, in print and in alternative formats including information that are provided in 12 Indigenous languages. There is also print, braille, audio, ASL/LSQ and language interpretation service by phone. The information is provided in plain language to make it easier to understand during the voting process.

To receive a publication in an accessible format voters can contact [Elections Canada](#).

## VOTER INFORMATION CARD

The voter information card will indicate the accessibility of your polling stations by:

- 1 showing the accessibility symbol and where to find more information
- 2 indicating whether the wheelchair is accessible (the card will show the accessibility symbol)
- 3 providing a phone number to call in case of additional accessibility inquiry

If the site is not wheelchair-accessible, the card will not show the accessibility symbol. Voters can call the number provided to inquire about options and different ways to vote that meets their individual accessibility needs.

If your polling station is wheelchair-accessible, there will either be an automatic door opener or an election employee will be there to assist you. Let this person know how they can help you. However, if the polling station assigned to you is not accessible or does not meet your individual needs, you can apply for a transfer certificate to vote at another polling station in the same riding.

## TOOLS AND SERVICES

Elections Canada provides a variety of tools and services to make voting accessible. The following tools and services offered are:

- magnifiers with light (4x)
- a tactile and braille voting template
- large-print list of candidates
- braille lists of candidates (only available on election day)
- language or sign language interpretation (must request ahead of time)
- assistance in marking the ballot
- voting screens that let in more light
- large pencils
- signature guide
- welcome to your polling place card (used to guide voters through the voting process)<sup>30</sup>

To learn more about the accessible tools and services, voters can contact [Elections Canada](#).

### *Can I bring my service animal to the polls?*

Elections Canada allows the use of service animals to assist voters with disabilities. However, in some cases, local laws may regulate the presence of service animals. If you think your service animal might not be permitted at your polling station, you can contact [Elections Canada](#).<sup>31</sup>

30 Government of Canada, *Accessibility Policy and Service Offering*, 2020.

31 Ibid.



### Are language and sign language translation services available at the polls?

Voters who are in need of language or sign language interpretation must contact Elections Canada as soon as an election is called to make the necessary arrangements. Elections Canada will make sure to have someone assigned to your polling station. The request for interpretation must be made no later than 6:00 p.m. on the sixth day before election day.<sup>32</sup>

### ELDER AND YOUTH PROGRAM

Through the Elder and Youth Program, Elections Canada also offers interpretation services that help explain the voting process and answer any general questions. However, this service is mainly offered at any polling stations that serve a high number of Indigenous voters.<sup>33</sup>

Note: The voter can also bring a language interpreter, but the interpreter will need to make a solemn declaration. The interpreter can assist more than one voter and does not have to be an eligible voter.

### Can I get assistance when voting?

If you need help marking your ballot, you can either bring someone to help you or an election officer at your riding will help you mark your ballot. In the case that you do bring your own helper, they will be required to make a solemn declaration to ensure they respect your secrecy of your vote. A relative, spouse or partner may assist more than

### INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Elections Canada offers language interpretation services at all of its offices during federal elections, including on-campus offices. Voters can call Elections Canada and request services in any of the Indigenous languages available for any questions they have on the electoral process. The [guide to the federal elections](#) and the voter card information sheet is offered in 16 Indigenous languages:

- |                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Atikamekw         | Mohawk      |
| Blackfoot         | Moose Cree  |
| Dene              | Nisga'a     |
| Gwich'in          | Ojibwe      |
| Inuktitut         | Oji-Cree    |
| Innu (Montagnais) | Plains Cree |
| Michif            | Saulteaux   |
| Mi'kmaq           | Stoney*     |

\* Government of Canada, *Information for Indigenous Electors, 2023.*

one voter, but a friend or helper may only assist one voter. If you choose to request the help of an election officer, they will mark the ballot on your behalf behind the voting screen, and then ask whether you would want to put the ballot in the box yourself or whether you prefer the election officer to do it on your behalf.<sup>34</sup>

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Government of Canada, *Accessibility Police and Service Offering, 2020.*



### ***Can I bring assistive devices to the polls?***

Voters may bring their own assistive devices when voting, such as their own pencil or a personal mobile device to read the ballot behind the voting screen. However, when using a mobile device, voters must bring their own earphones. Also note that Elections Canada does not guarantee the reliability of technology with your personal device, and any recordings made during the voting process must be deleted.<sup>35</sup>

### ***How can I vote while experiencing homelessness?***

Voters with no fixed address or who are experiencing homelessness are encouraged to register and vote. While we know there are additional barriers in place when someone who is unhoused or does not have a fixed address goes to vote, we hope the following information helps alleviate some of that stress and confusion.

Despite circumstances, everyone who votes must prove their identity and address. If you are in a shelter for food or lodging, you can ask an administrator at the shelter to provide you with an official letter called a **Letter of Confirmation of Residence** to prove your address. There are also a number of other ways to prove your identity and address at the polls. Please refer to page **17** for a full list of methods to prove your identity and address.

### ***How can I vote while living in a hospital or a long-term care facility?***

Elections Canada offers mobile polling stations in some residences and hospital wards to make voting possible to those living in hospitals or a long-term care facility.

It is mandatory to prove your identity, so you must show a piece of ID with your name on it. If you are in a long-term care facility, you can show an **Attestation of Residence** to prove your address. This is an official letter from the long-term care facility stating that you currently live there (or during the time of the election). A facility administrator can provide you with this letter, upon request.

Please see page **18** for additional ways to prove your identity and address.

### ***How to vote while serving a prison sentence in Canada?***

Incarcerated Canadians 18 years of age or older on the day of polling day who are in a correctional facility or a federal penitentiary in Canada can vote by special ballot in an election or referendum.

In a correctional facility, an employee in each facility is appointed liaison officer and facilitates the process of registering and voting. The liaison officer will also be able to answer questions about voting and help voters register.



Voters may bring their own assistive devices when voting, such as their own pencil or a personal mobile device to read the ballot behind the voting screen.

35 Ibid.





On the 12th day before polling day, incarcerated voters will have an opportunity to vote during a general election. The polling station is set up at 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and each polling station will have a complete list of candidates.

The voter will receive a voter's kit with a special ballot to complete their vote. Please refer to page 24 for information on how to vote using a special ballot.

Once the voting polls close at 8:00 p.m., the elections officer will return all ballots and materials to the liaison officer. The liaison officer is then responsible for returning all materials and ballots to Elections Canada to the designated courier of Elections Canada before voting day.

## FOR INCARCERATED YOUTH FACILITIES

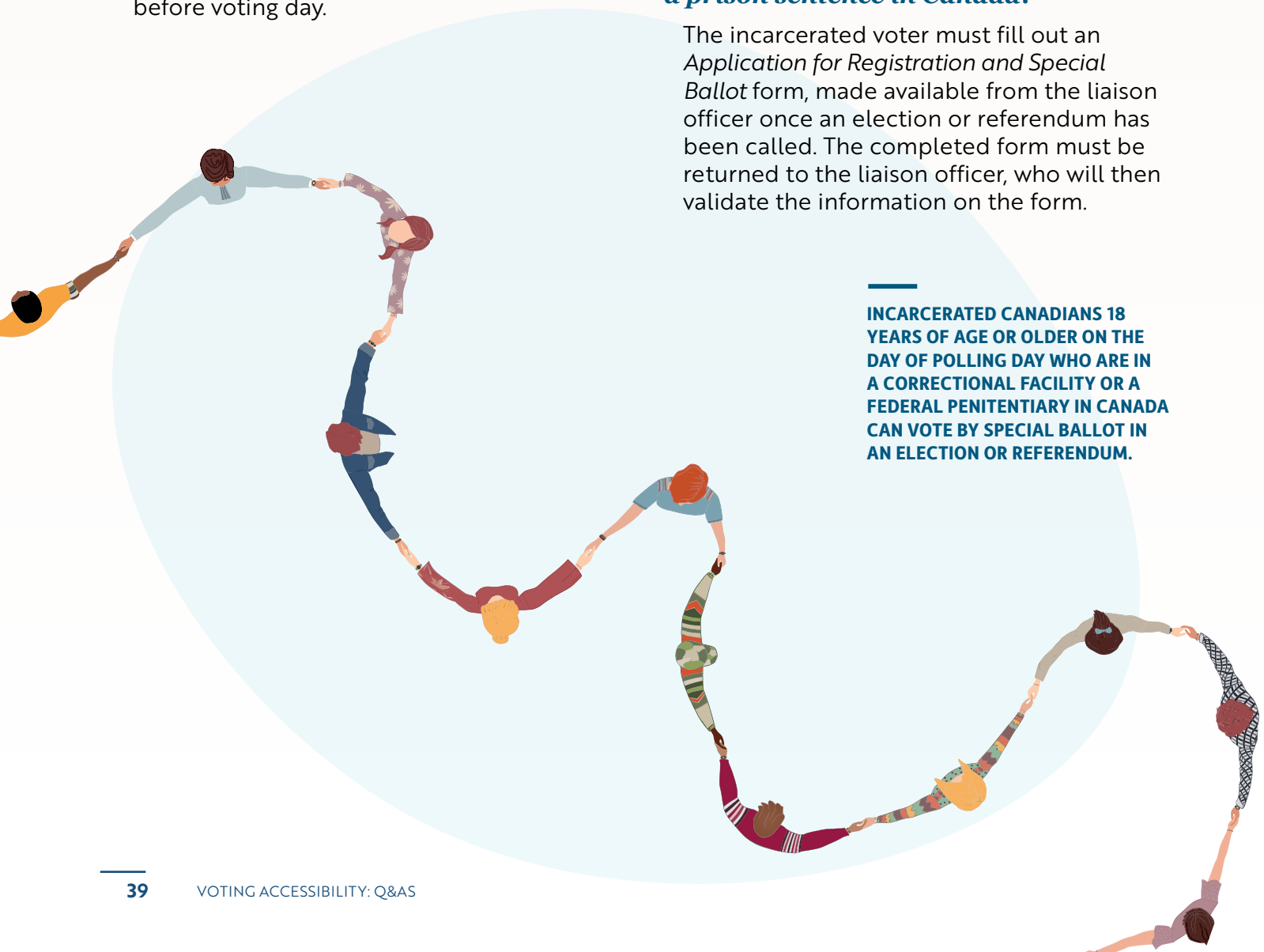
In a youth facility, a voter who is at least 18 years old on election day is eligible to vote under the special voting rules for incarcerated electors if the elector is:

- "a young adult serving the custodial portion of a custody and supervision order issued pursuant to the Youth Criminal Justice Act"; and
- facing a level of custody or specific custody conditions that would prevent the voter from voting at an advance polling station or at a polling station on polling day

### *How do I register to vote while serving a prison sentence in Canada?*

The incarcerated voter must fill out an *Application for Registration and Special Ballot* form, made available from the liaison officer once an election or referendum has been called. The completed form must be returned to the liaison officer, who will then validate the information on the form.

**INCARCERATED CANADIANS 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER ON THE DAY OF POLLING DAY WHO ARE IN A CORRECTIONAL FACILITY OR A FEDERAL PENITENTIARY IN CANADA CAN VOTE BY SPECIAL BALLOT IN AN ELECTION OR REFERENDUM.**





**IN A YOUTH FACILITY,  
A VOTER WHO IS AT  
LEAST 18 YEARS OLD  
ON ELECTION DAY IS  
ELIGIBLE TO VOTE  
UNDER THE SPECIAL  
VOTING RULES.**



### ***How are the ballots of incarcerated voters counted?***

The ballots of incarcerated voters are counted at the same time as those who voted by special ballot, including Canadian residents temporarily absent from their electoral district, Canadian citizens outside of Canada, and members of the Canadian Forces.

### ***What is my place of ordinary residence while serving a prison sentence in Canada?***

For electoral purposes, the voter's place of ordinary residence is not the facility or institution they are serving a sentence. The place of ordinary residence is the first of the following places for which the voter knows the civic and mailing addresses of the:

- residence before being incarcerated or
- residence of the spouse, common-law partner, a relative or dependent of the voters, a relative of the spouse,

common-law partner, or a person with whom the voter would live with if not incarcerated or

- place where they were arrested or
- last court where the elector was convicted or sentenced

### ***How do I vote in the case of a natural disaster?***

In the case of any natural disaster (severe weather conditions, wildfires, floods, storms), Elections Canada will continue to update polling stations on its website. It is important to continue to monitor the news and the Elections Canada website for up-to-date information. Voters could also use the mail-in options.

Take any essential documents in the case of an evacuation. However, if you were not able to take any essential documents, Elections Canada may offer some contingency options during an emergency.



# Useful Resources and Websites

Information on:

- [Registration](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Ways to vote](#)

List of IDs:

- [in English](#)
- [in several languages](#)

About federal elections :

- [Official election information \(including shareable tools and information\)](#)
- [The voter information campaign](#)
- [Find your poll information, riding and candidate](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Native Women's Association of Canada \(NWAC\)](#)
- [Apathy is boring](#)
- [National Association of Friendship Centres](#)
- [Nunavut Literacy Council](#)
- [Student vote](#)



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.



# Vote

HONOURING OUR PAST,  
SHAPING OUR TOMORROW



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**Native Women's Association of Canada**