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FEDERAL
ELECTION 2021

Election Organizing Ideas & Tips

Elections can be a great way to bring people in your community together, wherever they are on the political spectrum, whether they vote, or can't vote.

Election organizing is about engaging community members around the issues that matter to them and to organizations like yours. It's a chance to think BIG about the changes it will take to end food insecurity and poverty and to ask your local candidates how they'll make it happen.

It's also a chance to demystify the voting process and tackle the barriers so those who want to vote can.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

It can be as simple as having a conversation!

Not everybody votes. Some people can't vote. And others don't think voting matters. So why not bring people together for a conversation about voting? You just might be surprised where it leads!

- Check out the [videos and lesson plans](#) Elections Canada has designed for teachers. You don't have to be a student to engage with these conversations about democracy and voting.
- Elections Canada also has videos, photos and fact sheets you can use to have a discussion about the [history of voting](#) in Canada.
- And their [Inspire Democracy](#) site also has links to excellent practical resources to help community members learn about the political process and participate in elections.
- [Apathy is Boring](#), an English-only site designed to encourage young people to vote and actively participate in Canada's democratic process, also has short, fun [videos](#) explaining how the political process works.



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- Similarly, Ryerson University's Democratic Engagement Exchange, has created a [Democracy Talks](#) organizers' guide full of practical activities and tools to discuss the political process, democracy and elections with newcomers and marginalized communities.
- And the Native Women's Association of Canada created a [2019 Voting Guide for Indigenous Women, Two Spirit and LGBTQQIA voters](#) which is still relevant and has some great suggestions for having conversations in Indigenous communities.

A little help can Get out the Vote

Understanding the rules around the voting process can make voting seem overwhelming. In particular, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, youth, new Canadians and people who are homeless all face greater barriers to voting.

Here are some powerful ways to tackle barriers and let people know that their vote matters:

1. Share voter information such as who can vote, how to register, how to vote and when and where to go;
2. Help people get the necessary identification and proof of address they'll need to register;
3. Organize a time everyone can go together to vote; or,
4. Arrange volunteers to help people get to the polls

If you want to help get out the vote in your community, there are lots of great resources online.

- Start by [learning about the barriers to voting](#).
- [Elections Canada](#) covers [everything voters need to know](#), with lots of links to more detailed information and helpful resources.



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- The [Inspire Democracy](#) site, a program of Elections Canada, also has a [tool kit](#) with step-by-step instructions on how to help someone register and vote in a federal election.
- They also have ready-to-use [infographics and handouts](#), some tailored specifically to [Indigenous people](#), [people with disabilities](#), and [first-time voters](#).

Also, did you know voters who don't have ID or a fixed address can still vote if they bring along someone who can vouch for them?

First Nations bands or reserves, Inuit local authorities and community food organizations like yours can also write [letters of confirmation](#) that homeless voters can use as proof of residence. It's all in this handout of [acceptable IDs](#).

First time voters? Organize a Vote PopUp!

The [Vote PopUp kit](#) designed by the Democratic Engagement Exchange will help you demystify the voting process by creating a simulated voting experience right in your own space!

The tool kit contains everything you need to create a polling place, including ballot boxes, voting screens and sample ballots, as well as an organizer's guide and Youtube videos to help you plan!

Graduates from the North Grove Community Food Centre's Community Action Training program used the kit during their [Speak Up Show Up campaign](#) to encourage community members to vote in a municipal election.

They also organized a voting party and parade on election day — two other great organizing ideas!

If possible, try to organize a Vote PopUp during regularly scheduled programming so that people can check it out.



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Make food the focus

It's what we do, so put healthy, nutritious and delicious food at the centre of your organizing!

- Consider hosting an [all-candidates' event](#) over a meal, like the [Hamilton Community Food Centre](#) did during the last federal election in 2019.
- If that seems too formal, invite the candidates for a conversation over dinner, like The Alex Community Food Centre's [Youth Cooking Up Justice club](#) did in 2017.
- Or get a group together to walk over one of your scrumptious takeaway dinners or fresh produce from your community gardens and talk about the changes you want to see.
- You could also host a "stone soup" event where candidates can bring ingredients to contribute, along with answers to community member questions.

The possibilities are as endless as the array of foods you grow!

Keep it non-partisan

Registered charitable organizations do not need to register as a third party with Elections Canada as long as your election-related events and social media are non-partisan - you don't directly support or oppose a particular candidate or party and, if you visit candidates or invite them to an event, you invite all the parties.

Charitable organizations can also run paid advertising focusing on policy issues as long as you do not explicitly support or oppose a political party or candidate.

However, if you spend \$500 or more on election advertising during the election period, you must register as a third party with Elections Canada. Registering as a third party is subject to spending limits and reporting requirements but it will not put your charitable status at risk.

For more detailed information and specific examples of what charities and non-profits can and can't do during an election, check out these excellent resources:



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- Ontario Nonprofit Network: [Election Rules webinar recording and slidedeck](#) (English only)
- Imagine Canada:
 - [Election Rules for Charities and Nonprofits](#)
 - [Election Canada Rules for Charities](#)
- Canada Revenue Agency:
 - [Guidelines for Registered Charitable Organizations](#)
 - [Public Policy Dialogue and Development Activities by Charities](#)
- Carters Professional Corporation:
 - [Lobbying and Elections Legislation in Canada](#) (English only)