



ENGAGING WITH YOUR FEDERAL CANDIDATES

PREPARED BY
EVIDENCE FOR DEMOCRACY

ELECTION 2019

A CHANCE TO HAVE AN IMPACT



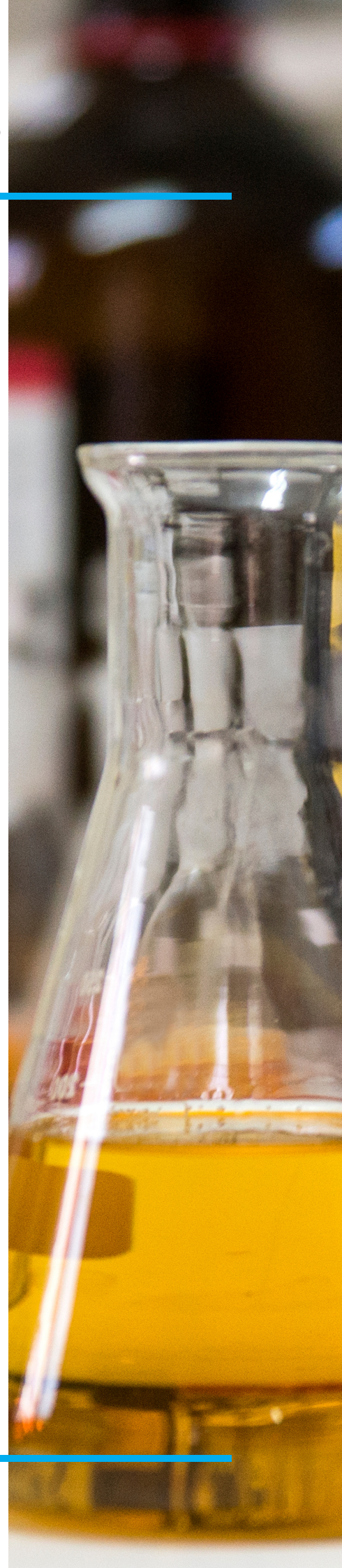
On October 21st 2019, Canada will have a federal election. In preparation, candidates across the country are campaigning in the hopes of winning a seat in the House of Commons. In the lead up to the election, federal candidates are engaging with their community to grow relationships, hear from voters, and build platforms that people care about. As a voter, you also want to find out what your candidates stand for and their stances on issues important to you, so you can make informed decisions when you head to the polls in October.



SCIENCE AND THE ELECTION

Science and research impact all of us. Advances in scientific research improve our health, the environment, the economy, and the safety and well-being of Canadians. In the same vein, building a foundation of transparent, evidence-informed decision-making in our government ensures that policy decisions are backed by sound and accurate information. This builds trust in our institutions and strengthens government integrity.

Unfortunately, science and evidence aren't always significant issues in federal election campaigns. However, as a supporter of science, you can help make science an election issue by engaging with your candidates and building long-term relationships with potential future decision-makers.



WHY ENGAGE WITH YOUR FEDERAL CANDIDATES?

FOR YOU

Engaging with your candidates can help you make your vote count. Knowing what your candidates stand for, their positions on particular issues, and their intentions should they get elected can help you make informed decisions and ensure that our government represents your needs. Relationships with your candidates may allow you to get important issues on the table, and can facilitate continued impact should those candidates become elected representatives. Candidate outreach can also help identify who will be champions for science and research in the next government.



WHY ENGAGE WITH YOUR FEDERAL CANDIDATES?

FOR YOUR CANDIDATES

Candidates want to win the election by ensuring their platform reflects the needs of their voters. Meeting with your candidate is an opportunity to impact their platform. By engaging directly with those running in the election, you can help identify issues that the candidate may not be aware of. Science doesn't often appear as a platform priority. We want candidates to understand the incredible impact research and science have on the lives of Canadians. We also want them to understand the needs of the research and science community — needs that, when fulfilled, allow researchers to make breakthroughs and discoveries that contribute to the well-being of Canadians.



WHO ARE YOUR CANDIDATES?

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

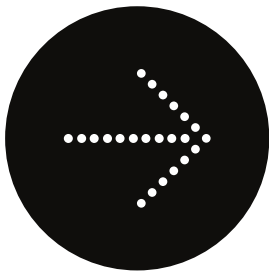
In the federal election, candidates are running to become Members of Parliament (MPs). MPs are the political representative for your federal riding. They serve on behalf of constituents at the House of Commons in Ottawa. They have one office in your riding (called a constituency office) and one office in Ottawa, in the Parliamentary Precinct.

HOW DO I FIND MY CANDIDATES?

To find your candidates, determine your federal riding. This can be done easily at [Elections Canada's](#) website by entering your postal code. As political candidates continue to be nominated in the lead up to the election, it can sometimes be difficult to find all candidates running in your riding. Thankfully, there are a few resources you can use to track candidates, including [Wikipedia](#) which regularly updates their list of candidates.

ENGAGING WITH YOUR CANDIDATES

There are many different ways that you can engage directly with your political candidates!



During the lead-up to the election, candidates will be campaigning door-to-door to talk directly to voters, and attending events in their communities. For example, many groups will hold all-candidate debates or meetings. Taking advantage of the campaign can be a great way to connect easily and organically with candidates by asking them questions when they come to your door or by approaching them at events. You can also take a more active role in engagement by arranging a one-on-one meeting or organizing an event.





RESPOND TO DOOR-KNOCKERS

Be prepared!
It can be disarming to have your candidate appear at your door, and easy to forget what you've been meaning to ask them. Think about what you care about, and write out some of the questions you have for candidates.

We've prepared a [list of questions for candidates](#) on some of the key issues regarding science and research that have been informed by our community. Keep these handy by your door!





APPROACH YOUR CANDIDATE AT EVENTS

During the campaign, candidates will be attending and holding events to share their platform with voters. Keep an eye out for posts on candidates' websites, social media, or flyers in your community to find out when and where these are happening. Don't be afraid to approach your candidate and introduce yourself! Tell them you're a voter in their riding, and a person who is invested in science and research. It can be helpful to bring along your list of questions to have a few talking points. You can also take this as an opportunity to set up a more formal meeting.





SET UP A MEETING

A more direct way for you to engage with your candidates is to arrange meetings with them individually.



FINDING CANDIDATE CONTACT INFORMATION

There is, unfortunately, no standard listing of candidates and their contact information, so finding information about candidates can vary from person to person. Start with a quick Google search. Most candidates will have a campaign webpage where their contact information will be listed. For newer candidates, this might not be true, and may require more searching. Candidates may also use social media platforms (like Twitter or Facebook) to connect with voters.



SEND THEM AN EMAIL

Keep the email brief. Say that you are a voter in their riding, and don't hesitate to use any titles (Dr., Professor, etc). Let them know you'd like to meet with them or invite them to your lab to talk about issues relating to science and research. If you plan on bringing other people with you, tell them who will be joining you.

ENGAGING WITH YOUR FEDERAL CANDIDATES



CALL THEIR OFFICES

Call your candidate's office within a day or two of sending the email.

- Let them know you sent an email and the day you sent it on.
- Make it clear that you'd like to meet with your candidate
- Get the name and title of the person you are speaking with - that way you can more easily follow-up with them later.
- Call again as needed. Be persistent AND polite. And be patient! Candidates are very busy - it may take a few calls before you secure a meeting.



STOP BY THEIR OFFICES

If you're unsuccessful in reaching your candidates in these ways, another option is to simply stop by their office. Sometimes during a busy campaign, phone calls and emails can fall through the cracks. Be polite, and let the campaign staff know you're hoping to arrange a phone call or meeting with the candidate. This can be a great way to connect as a last resort.





ORGANIZE A CANDIDATE EVENT

Another way you can engage your candidates and learn more about where they sit on different issues is by hosting an event with multiple candidates. This might sound daunting, but even a very simple event can be an effective way to get to know your candidates and the issues they care about. There will probably be candidates in your riding running from smaller or independent parties. To help manage the work of organizing a candidate event, we recommend inviting representatives only from parties that currently have elected members in the House of Commons (i.e. Liberals, Conservatives, NDPs and Greens) or candidates running for re-election.



Here are some ideas of events that you could hold with your local candidates:

- A debate with two or more candidates on an issue relating to science
- A moderated panel discussion where candidates can share their views on different campaign issues
- A coffee shop or pub night 'meet and greet' where the community can engage with candidates in a casual setting

A FEW TIPS

- Don't be discouraged if only a few of your candidates are available to participate! There are many ways to make the most of an event with even one or two candidates.
- Events don't need to be formal, expensive, or big. Sometimes intimate events are the most impactful.
- If you need help with ideas, or advice on how to hold a great event with your candidates, reach out to us at E4D! We are happy to help. You can also utilize local non-profit organizations in your area who work on issues you care about.



THINGS YOUR CANDIDATE WANTS AND NEEDS



A successful engagement is one that sets the groundwork for a long-term relationship between you and your representatives. Being cognizant of what your candidate's wants and needs are will help you build that relationship.



Here's what our representatives want:



OUTREACH AND PROMOTION

Candidates are trying to increase their exposure in the community. If you have a good meeting, tweet about it. Take a picture with them, and share it using the appropriate hashtags (some examples include #elxn43, #cdnpoli, #VoteScience or the hashtag for your riding). If you're a researcher, you can also invite them to your research facility - it gives them a bigger bang for their buck if they can meet several voters at once.



RESPECT

- Be prepared: know what you plan to say, and rehearse if needed.
- If you've scheduled a meeting, don't be late! Show up 10 minutes early, and be ready.
- Even if you're passionate about an issue, be respectful, and remember that your candidate is a human. Be courteous, even if you share differing points of view. This will make your meeting more productive.

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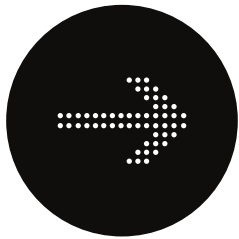
TO WIN A SEAT IN THE ELECTION!

Ultimately, your candidate wants to win the election and to implement policies that matter to them and their community. This means understanding what issues matter to their constituents. Particularly for new candidates, many are looking for an opportunity to learn about issues that their voters care about so they can shape their campaigns. Come prepared with well-sourced, well-thought out policy ideas. If you need some tips, [check out this document](#) we put together on suggested policies that support science and research.

For more experienced candidates, they may have a more fully formed platform, so review this. What are your candidate's personal motivations? Are there particular issues that matter to them? Is there a particular legacy they want to leave? Learn about what matters to them, and it can help to frame your ask in a context that will impact them.



GET INVOLVED!



If you engage with your candidate, and feel strongly about their platform and the issues they stand for, volunteer with their campaign!

Sometimes scientists are fearful about being involved in political campaigns, but volunteering for a candidate that you like in the election can be a great way for you to learn more about the political process and build long-lasting relationships with decision-makers.



You can also get involved by participating in our **#VoteScience** campaign. E4D, along with other science and research organizations, have put together a campaign to ensure science and research is an election issue. Check out the campaign [here](#).



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