



# Voter Toolkit

## Federal Election 2021





## Your vote is powerful

### Politicians know that older people hold the key to winning an election.

Year over year, seniors prove that they are Canada's most influential voters, hitting the polls with more force than any other age group.

As our population continues to age, it's caregivers and older adults who will continue to shape the political future of our country.

That's why exercising your right to vote is so important. Voting allows you to hold the government accountable, create change on the issues that matter to you, and use your influence for the greater good..

As Canada's National Seniors' Advocacy Organization, CanAge wants to make sure you have the information you need to vote with confidence. Your voice matters – let's make sure our federal leaders listen to what you have to say.

This toolkit answers some frequently asked questions about voting, walks you through the process and provides some advice on talking to your local candidates to get the answers you want.

**Happy voting!**

### In the 2019 federal election

Stats Canada reported that

**81%**  
of people  
between the ages  
of 55–65 voted

Elections Canada reported that

**79.1%**  
of people  
between the ages  
of 65–75 voted



# What Do I Need To Know?

## Answers to Frequently Asked Questions



### When to vote

You can vote on:

- **Election Day:**  
Monday, September 20, 2021
- **Advance polling days:**  
September 10, 11, 12, and 13

You can also vote by mail, which is discussed in more detail below.



### Where to vote

You can vote:

- **In person:**
  - Your designated polling station on Election Day or an advance polling day.
  - Any Elections Canada office
- **At home:**
  - Mail-in special ballot
  - If **you're a resident in long-term care**, you may also be able to vote at home using a mobile polling station. Check with your home first.

To find out where you can vote, enter your postal code on the Elections Canada website (<https://www.elections.ca/home.aspx>).



### What to bring

- Proof of identity and address. Eligible ID includes your driver's licence or any other card issued by any Canadian government with your photo, name and current address.
- If you don't have the above ID, you can use a combination of documents and identification to prove your identity. A full list can be found on the Elections Canada website under [Option 2](#).
- If you have no ID, you'll have to declare your identity and address in writing and have someone who knows you (assigned to the same polling station) vouch for your identity.

## How to vote from a long-term care home or hospital

If you're a resident in a long-term care home or in a hospital, you may have access to a mobile polling station or an individual voting kit. Check with your provider first.

If COVID protocols allow you to leave the home or hospital to visit in the community, you can vote at advance polling stations.

You can also vote by mail. Apply by **September 14, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. EDT**.

For more information, visit the [Elections Canada website](#) or call 1-800-463-6868.

## Voting from outside of Canada

Canadians living abroad can vote by mail. To vote by mail, you'll need to apply online [here](#) or contact Elections Canada by phone at 1-800-463-6868. The deadline to apply is **September 14, 2021 by 6:00 p.m. EDT**.

## Voting by mail

All Canadians, including those living abroad, can vote by mail. You'll need to apply with Elections Canada by **Tuesday, September 14, 2021 before 6:00 p.m. EDT**.

Ways to apply:

- **Online:**  
Apply on the [Elections Canada website](#)
- **Paper:**
  - Visit any Elections Canada office for a paper application form. [Find the office nearest to you.](#)
  - Call 1-800-463-6868 to request the form to be mailed to you

## Eligibility to vote

To vote in the federal election, you must be:

- A Canadian citizen;
- At least 18 years old on Election Day; and
- Able to prove your identity and address

## Choosing who to vote for

To find out who's running in your electoral district, visit Elections Canada and [input your postal code here](#). If you know the political parties and their platforms, you may have an idea of who you'd like to vote for.

If you're not sure where you stand on political issues, the CBC has created a survey called the [Vote Compass](#). The survey asks you a series of questions and provides you with input on where you stand on Canadian politicians and parties.

You can also find out what each party is promising older voters and caregivers at [CanAge.ca/Election21](#).

## Accommodations for individuals with disabilities

Accommodations are available to help with voting. These include:

- Large print ballots
- Braille lists of candidates
  - The Braille list of candidates is only available on Election Day at the polling station.
- Tactile and Braille voting templates
- Language and sign interpretation
- Magnifying glasses
- Big pencils with extra grip
- Assistance in the voting booth to mark your ballot

If you require extra assistance, we recommend contacting Elections Canada early to make sure they have appropriate accommodations available.

For language and sign language interpretation, it must be requested by September 14, 2021.

[Visit Elections Canada for more information.](#)

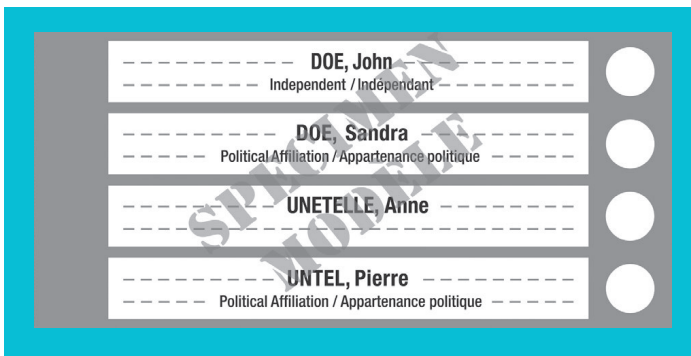
## Bringing someone with you to help you vote

Yes, you can bring someone into the voting booth to help you cast your ballot. The person you bring will have to swear an oath attesting that they understand your right to freely choose and to not violate your confidentiality.

## What the ballot looks like

The ballot is a piece of paper with candidate names and a box for you to check beside the person you want to vote for. This election, the ballots are larger and easier to read.

Here's a sample ballot:

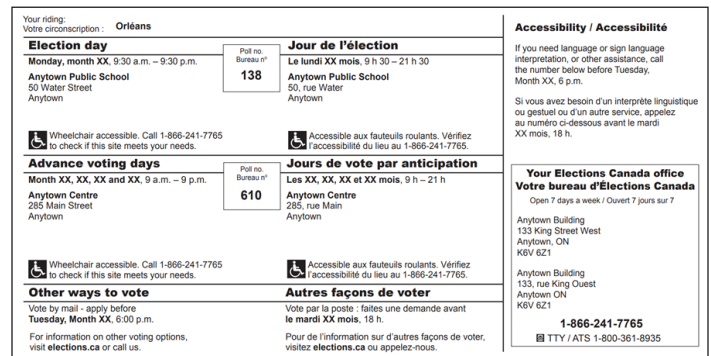


Source: Elections Canada

## Taking time off to vote

The law requires every eligible voter to be given three (3) consecutive hours to cast their vote on Election Day. If your job doesn't allow for this (i.e. you work during all of the election hours), then your employer must provide you with time off.

## Voter Information Card



Source: Elections Canada

Your Voter Information Card tells you when and where you can vote. It will also list the accessibility options available at your polling station, as well as how you can request additional information. Make sure you check your Voter Information Card carefully to make sure your name and address are correct.

If you have not received your Voter Information Card, [contact Elections Canada online](https://www.elections.ca) or at 1-800-463-6868 or 1-800-361-8935 (TTY).

# Reaching out to candidates

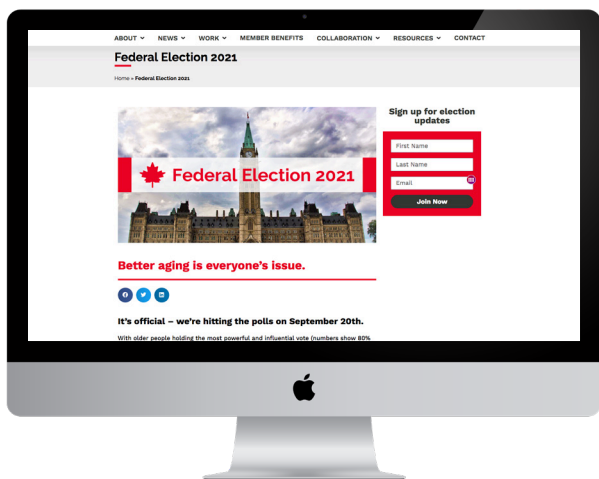


## Choose your issues

When determining the issues that matter to you, consider your core values. Do you feel strongly about health care? The environment? Are you in favour of lower or higher taxes? These are just a few examples of topics you may feel passionate about.

You may want to consider looking at advocacy groups who stand for the same issues as you. Groups of like-minded individuals will often have strong opinions about political parties and their platforms, and may help you become more informed.

In order to understand how parties tackle some of these issues, it can be helpful to read party platforms. CanAge has summarized each party's platform related to older adults and caregivers, to help you better understand what they're promising to do for you. You can read our federal party analysis at [www.CanAge.ca/Election21/](http://www.CanAge.ca/Election21/).



## Find your candidate

Figuring out who your local candidates are is an important part of being an informed voter. If you don't already know who your candidates are, there are a few easy ways to find out:

- **Use the Elections Canada website.** The [Voter Information Service found here](#) allows voters to do a search of their riding which will produce information about your electoral district, including the list of candidates, locations of advance and election day polling places, and the address of your local Elections Canada office.

### Enter your postal code...

### Get the info you need!

Source: Elections Canada

- During the election, candidates will be campaigning in their ridings. This may involve **door-to-door canvassing**, or holding **information sessions** or **webinars**. They could also advertise their candidacy on election signs (you may have noticed some around your neighbourhood already).



## Plan your questions

How you ask a question is often just as important in what it is that you're asking (especially when it comes to a candidate in an election)! Here are some ways you can prompt your local candidate to give you the answers you want.

- **Be direct with your questions and be specific!**  
For an example of detailed questions to ask, have a look at this news article from the 2019 election cycle: <https://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/columnists/segal-ten-questions-we-should-ask-all-party-leaders-in-canadas-federal-election>
- **Ask questions that focus on the issues that matter most to you.**  
For example, in 2019 the Canadian Association for Community Living created an action plan which became the foundation for many questions: <https://iamvoting.arts.ubc.ca/inclusion-bc-toolkit/10-questions-to-ask-every-politician/>
- **Ask for actionable items to be completed** by the candidate as well as the party.

Examples of questions to ask your candidates:

- *How will the party commit to increasing vaccination rates among seniors in rural Nova Scotia?*
- *I provide homecare for my dependent relative. What will your party do to increase the kind of support necessary for me to continue to provide care?*
- *I've spent the last 48 years of my life loyally working at the same company. I want to know that my pension savings will be protected in my retirement. What will your party do to ensure that?*



## Get in touch

Reaching out to your local candidate is beneficial to becoming an informed voter. You may have questions on specific issues that matter to you and that you'd like to see addressed. Here's a few ways to connect with your local candidate:

- Contact them by phone or email. Local candidates' contact information can be found on the [Elections Canada website](#). This website allows you to see the local candidates running in your riding, and provides their contact information below. Type the name of the candidate you're looking for into the search bar, or type in your postal code to find the candidates in your area. Once you have done so, there will be a contact section for that representative that lists their phone number, email and office address. From there you can choose how to contact them.
- Attend in person and or virtual public events. Candidates have busy schedules during the election, so the best way to reach them may be through attending an event they plan on speaking at. To find out where your local candidates are speaking, you can look online for upcoming events in your area. Additional information can be found at your local community centre. You can also keep a close eye on upcoming events by staying on top of your local news.

To find out dates and venues for the upcoming federal leaders debate, [this website](#) will keep you updated about the details. Watching the upcoming debates and other future events will help you stay informed on issues that are discussed and issues that matter to you.

# Tips for letter writing

## General tips:

- Keep a copy of the letter so you can refer to it when you get a reply back from a politician.
- Follow up and be persistent! If you do not hear back after sending a letter, consider resending the letter or reaching out to your MP using a different type of communication (e.g. email or telephone).
- Try to use friendly language even if you are upset. Rudeness is less likely to elicit help.
- You don't need postage when you write a letter to an MP.

## Writing tips:

- Address your candidate or MP with their proper title. For MPs, this information can be found here: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Members/en>
- Start your letter with your purpose or objective.
- Introduce yourself and let the recipient know that you're in their riding (political district).
- Try to focus on the issue you are discussing. Be concise and keep your letter to the point.
- Explain why this issue is important to you. This might be through sharing your own experiences, personal stories or credentials.
- Include questions that prompt a response, such as your candidate's position on an issue.
- Include a proposed solution and a call to action to address the issue.
- Thank them for any positive actions they've done in the past regarding the issue.
- Keep it short. Letters should not be longer than two pages.

## An example of a letter to send candidates

Date [Month/Day/Year]

Dear [local candidate name],

I am writing to address serious implications of the cuts to Guaranteed Income Supplement as a result of collecting the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit.

As a low-income senior in [your riding/district], I rely on and have appreciated the Guaranteed Income Supplement, which has allowed me to cover the costs of basic necessities including food, rent, transit and hygiene products.

I was also grateful for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), which helped many Canadians including myself cope with uncertain and difficult times.

**Like so many other vulnerable Canadians, I had increased costs this year and I do not have savings of any kind. Now I find out that collecting CERB was actually a costly mistake** – not financially helpful but hurtful – as the added income has resulted in my no longer qualifying for GIS or other low income supports. This leaves me unable to meet the costs of my carefully planned budget and in fact, leaves me faced with a life of poverty.

Now in much distress I wonder how I will pay for basic necessities, all because I took the helpful hand that the government extended during the pandemic. I regret collecting CERB, never expecting that I'd be worse off as a result.

I am writing to plead for urgent government intervention, to rectify this oversight which has left many low-income and vulnerable seniors in extremely precarious financial situations. One solution to this issue would be to calculate GIS recipients' income based on pre-COVID tax years.

I hope that this letter conveys the desperate situation that I and many seniors have found ourselves in due to the naive acceptance of the emergency benefit, the repercussions of which were never conveyed nor anticipated.

Kindly respond with your position on this matter. Please do what is right and reverse this unfair oversight.

Respectfully,  
[Your name]

Purpose for writing

Personal relevant experience

Your concern

Ask questions

Your proposed solution and call to action

Request a response

Thank the recipient





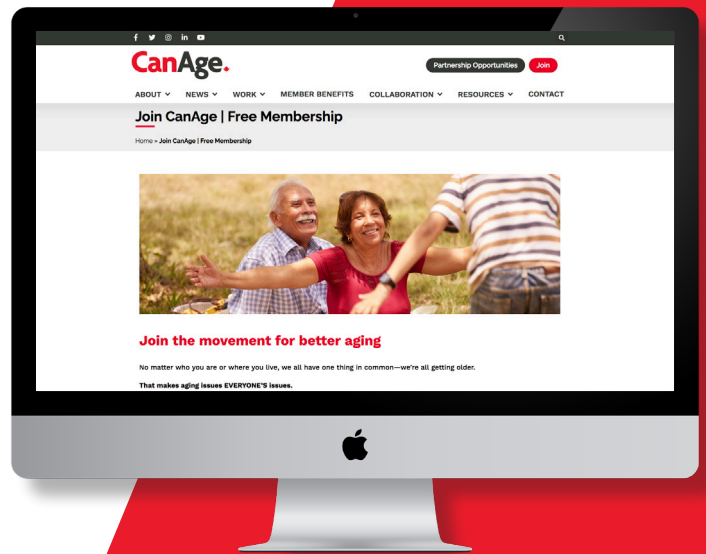
## Join the movement for better aging

You cast your vote – now what's next?

Becoming a free CanAge member helps us push the government to better represent the needs of caregivers and older Canadians all year round.

You'll also gain exclusive access to exciting **member benefits, offers, priority access to events** and our **monthly newsletter!**

Join today at [CanAge.ca/Join](https://www.CanAge.ca/Join)










Authored by CanAge.  
September 2021

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## Stay Connected with CanAge

- 1 Visit our website**  
[CanAge.ca](https://CanAge.ca)
- 2 CanAge Connections**  
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