



Youth VOTE Program

During an election, every vote counts. Yet, there are numerous examples of elections being won by only a handful of votes, while thousands of others chose to ignore their ballot. Moreover, of these thousands, it is worse knowing that youth were in the majority of those who chose not to vote. Elections Alberta wants to combat this apathy, break down barriers to voting, and promote voting as an important part of democratic engagement.

How are we doing this?

We are happy to announce our new *Youth VOTE Program (Voter Outreach Task e-Council)*, comprised of youth representatives from within the non-profit service sector.

We believe that, by involving these youth in the development of materials, information, and activities, we can better encourage participation, while also still representing a diversity of viewpoints within the youth demographic.

Our Council will be made up of 8 members, representing the following:

<i>Location / Perspective</i>	<i>Membership</i>
<i>Edmonton</i>	1 member
<i>Calgary</i>	1 member
<i>Other Municipalities</i>	2 members
<i>Rural Alberta</i>	2 members
<i>Indigenous Perspective</i>	1 member
<i>New Canadian Perspective</i>	1 member

What is the Time Commitment?

Each council member will be asked to commit to a 6-to-9-month term. This allows for important work to be completed, while also creating a rotating membership in the council, allowing for new perspectives as we transition into future activities.

Upon the expiration of the time commitment, the position can then be filled by another youth leader within the same agency or passed on to another agency that wishes to participate.

Each council member should be prepared to commit an average of 5 hours each month, to complete the following activities:

- 1-2 hours to attend a monthly council e-meeting. Council members will also be encouraged to occasionally bring a youth “guest” to the council, to allow for the youth that they work with to also share their perspective
- 1-2 hours reviewing and commenting on materials that are being discussed or developed by the council
- 1-2 hours developing or testing materials and activities for youth engagement

What are the Qualifications of Council Members?

Interested council members should be:

- Employed or volunteering with a non-profit agency providing services in Alberta
 - We want members to have first-hand knowledge of the needs of Albertan youth
- Politically Motivated or Politically Apathetic
 - We want to hear from both sides of the apathy curve and learn more about what we can do to help youth feel more comfortable participating in future elections
- Between the ages of 15 and 24
 - We want to ensure the information we are receiving is specific to the age cohort where apathy is present in Alberta
- Diverse
 - We want to hear from different kinds of youth, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, youth, New Canadians, LGBTQ+, and persons both rural and urban
- Adaptable
 - Comfortable working on tasks and with groups in an online setting
- Open
 - Comfortable networking and sharing with other youth

Will Council members be paid?

Council members will not be paid by Elections Alberta directly. We anticipate that many of the requested activities will be completed during normally scheduled work activity with the sponsoring agency. However, we also know that youth-serving agencies are pressed for resources, so Elections Alberta will provide each sponsoring agency with a stipend of \$150 per month to compensate for the time that their staff spends in conducting council activities.

Who is leading the Council?

The Council will be led by a facilitator contracted by Elections Alberta. Elections Alberta representatives will also participate regularly and provide support to the council.

The facilitator is responsible for:

- Scheduling and leading all council meetings
- Seeking feedback from Elections Alberta and council members in setting the agenda for each meeting
- Organizing council members in the development of materials, in providing feedback, and in testing new activities
- Capturing minutes from each meeting
- Organizing incoming and outgoing membership in the council
- Maintaining a contact list for the members of the council

What will the Council be working on?

Elections Alberta wants to supplement its school-based program with activities and information that can be accessed through community agencies, so youth are supported through multiple streams. This is because conversations are happening between youth and the people, they trust every day: whether in schools, with their family, or in the community; and, we heard from community leaders that they did not feel equipped to talk about democracy and voting. They did not have the information they needed to feel comfortable talking about these topics in an informed, non-biased manner.

Elections Alberta is striving to bridge this gap, by having a variety of informative materials, activities, and training available for youth group leaders to increase their knowledge and confidence.

These materials, however, can only be developed with the help of youth leaders who know the challenges and needs of their peers.

The council will be involved in setting the direction and priority of tasks. These may include:

- Creating a set of activities that could be used to encourage democratic participation
- Developing informational materials to assist youth in talking about democracy and voting in a non-partisan manner
- Creating a “Train-the-Trainer” program to allow youth leaders to attend training to learn more about elections, voting, and the activities and materials that have been developed
- Providing feedback on advertising campaigns developed by Elections Alberta
- Providing feedback on election processes developed by Elections Alberta
- Networking with other youth leaders to share materials and activities, while gathering feedback on the materials and what more may be required
- Developing contact lists to assist in the distribution of new information and materials
- Hosting sessions or events using the materials that have been developed

What is the timeline for these activities?

Date Range	Sample Activities
December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies express interest in the council
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council members selected and notified
February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First meeting occurs • Council discusses goals and creates an action plan
March – June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review activities in Building Future Voters • Test and modify activities, create new activities • Create materials for the October 2021 election
July 2021 – October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilize youth networks • Share information • Develop materials, social media postings, etc. • Review advertisements
November - December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit what worked • Create an Action Plan for 2023
January 2022 – December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop activities and materials for 2023 • Develop networks and contacts • Host events • Develop a “Train the Trainer” program • Determine a delivery mechanism • Review advertisements
2023 General Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilize networks • Share information • Host events

Apply to Join us!

Interested parties should complete the application form to express their interest in participating in the Youth VOTE Program.