
Chapter 6:

GET OUT THE VOTE AND JOIN #NONPROFITSVOTE

There is no more direct and powerful influence in an election cycle than casting a vote, and encouraging others to do so. Imagine the full force of the more than 26,000 nonprofits in Alberta, and 170,000 in Canada joining together in an exciting and fun campaign to get out the vote. CCVO has launched the nonpartisan #nonprofitsvote campaign to encourage nonprofits to not only vote and encourage others to do so as well – but to also talk about the issues that matter to nonprofits, get informed on the parties' positions on important issues, and have fun while doing it!

Imagine Canada has also put together a **federal election hub**, where you can find resources developed across Canada, to help prepare nonprofits to engage in the upcoming federal election.

Why don't people vote?

32% of eligible voters in Canada didn't vote in the last election.³⁹ That's pretty astonishing when you think about the fact that almost a third of eligible voters quite possibly:

- **didn't think it was important to vote.**

Apathy is often cited as a reason people don't vote, but at CCVO we believe that politicians and political candidates are not always talking about issues that people care about in a way that is deeply connected to their lives. So, it's up to all of us to ask the right questions and get our elected representatives talking publicly about the issues nonprofits care about, and that are important to our communities.

- **didn't think their vote would count.**

People might think that their vote doesn't count. We know that this isn't the case – for example, in the 2015 federal election, one riding in Manitoba was decided by just 51 votes.⁴⁰ **Every vote counts.**

- **didn't hear politicians address any issues important to them during the election campaign.**

There is an overwhelming amount of information that gets thrown at us during an election campaign, and sometimes it can be hard to know what is trustworthy and what is political spin. Nonprofits can help people find neutral and reliable information about the parties and candidates.

Why #nonprofitsvote?

With more than 26,000 nonprofits in Alberta and 170,000 in Canada, it's not a stretch to say that nonprofits touch the life of every single Albertan, whether it be as staff, volunteers, board members, or people who access nonprofits. We reach them through social supports, through the arts, through education, through sports, and so many other ways. We contribute to the economic engine of the province, the social and cultural fabric of our communities, and we strengthen civic and democratic engagement by amplifying the voices of those who might not otherwise be heard.

Nonprofits have a responsibility to speak up about the issues that matter to us and that drive us to make positive contributions to our communities. If we stay silent on these issues during an election campaign, we let other sectors drive the agenda and can mean that we won't see meaningful commitments from political parties on issues that matter to the nonprofit sector.

One of these parties will form federal government, which will have direct decision-making power over issues that impact all of us. If we use our collective voice to encourage #nonprofitsvote, we can make a difference.

Why should #nonprofitsvote?

Encouraging people to vote is a nonpartisan activity. We know from past research that when nonprofits encourage people to vote, we can make a difference in the voter turnout, particularly among the people we serve. Nonprofits that engaged their clients about voting were successful in driving up turnout among groups that historically vote with less frequency.⁴¹

There is nothing more empowering than marking your 'X' on a ballot and encouraging others to do so as well. It can be a fun organizational challenge to vote together and to talk openly about the importance of voting.

How can #nonprofitsvote?

CCVO has the sector covered in the upcoming federal election. We have more resources on our website, including the [Federal Election Vote Kit](#), specifically designed to provide tools to support #nonprofitsvote efforts.

CCVO's Vote Kit will help you:

1. Make a #nonprofitsvote plan with helpful templates for you to communicate in a nonpartisan way with your staff, boards, volunteers, and people who access your services.
2. Get easy access to information on how and where to vote. There are a lot of resources out there and we will make it easy to find so you can share.
3. Find information on issues important to the sector. CCVO will be creating a political platform analysis, a federal election policy brief, and providing resources to learn about election issues.
4. Join the #nonprofitsvote campaign to show the strength, breadth, and importance of the sector by publicly committing to vote.

The nonprofit sector is powerful and important and together we can make sure that the federal parties address issues that are crucial to all Canadians.

Together, we can make it known that #nonprofitsvote!