

MEET YOUR CANDIDATE TOOLKIT 2019

I WILL ADVOCATE

Meet with candidates in your riding, ask questions about their position on important issues, and share our recommendations for how to build a more equal Canada and a better world.



YOU ARE PART OF A COLLECTIVE FORCE

It's important to demonstrate that people across Canada care about ending the injustice of poverty and are standing up for women's rights, both at home and around the world. This election, we are calling on Oxfam supporters to speak with their local candidates to find out where they stand on these important issues.

This toolkit will provide you with tips and tricks on how to do just that.

Together, all across Canada, Oxfam supporters have the ability to reach and influence political candidates. You are part of that collective force.

WHO

KNOW WHO'S RUNNING: Visit [Elections Canada](#) to find out what riding you live in and which candidates are running.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THEM: Read up about candidates in your riding to find out about their backgrounds, their position on issues, statements made in speeches and their voting record if they have already held elected office.

MEET WITH CANDIDATES FROM ALL POLITICAL PARTIES: Part of the democratic process is to engage those we may not always agree with. Meeting with your candidates is an opportunity to challenge them and have critical discussions. Although you may disagree on certain issues, always maintain a level of respect when speaking to any political candidate.

WHAT

ASK YOUR CANDIDATES 3 QUESTIONS:

While many candidates will be eager to meet with you, the meetings might be brief. We recommend you stick to asking them questions on 3 issues to keep the conversation focused.

Below are some questions you could ask, but you should ask the questions that mean the most to you. That's why we created our [Guide to the Election](#).

Here you will find our policy recommendations on 10 themes, like women's representation and leadership, ending poverty, women's work, as well as climate change and natural resources. Each theme has three recommended questions you could ask.

Check them out, mix and match any of the questions you feel most passionate about, or just go with the three questions listed below.

- » If your party forms the next government, will you increase Canada's aid budget?
- » If your party forms the next government, will you suspend Canada's arms deal with Saudi Arabia?
- » Does your party have a plan to make childcare affordable for all families across Canada?

WHERE

Meet them where they're at:

One of the best things about engaging in a local election is there is so much happening. Your local candidates can be found at community events, BBQ's, debates, town halls and even at your front door. This makes having conversations with candidates much easier, and it means you don't always have to schedule a meeting at their campaign office.

If an in-person conversation isn't your thing, you can always call the candidates and have a conversation over the phone, or send them your recommendations by email or tweet at them.

If you want to set up a formal meeting in their office:

Call the candidate's campaign office and tell them you live in the riding and want to share your priorities. Always tell them the purpose of the meeting and how many people are going to attend. Feel free to go to the meeting with a friend. It adds to an easier flow of conversation when advocates can fill in each other's gaps. Having others with you can also boost your confidence!

WHEN

The 43rd Federal election is scheduled to take place on or before October 21, 2019. Elected hopefuls are already hitting the campaign trail and so should you. From now until Election Day, you'll be able to meet up with your local candidates and help put women's right on the map.

HOW

Speaking to political leaders and party candidates can feel intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. Here are a few tips. When in doubt just remember that candidates are just regular people looking to serve their community and you are part of that community.

Tips before you speak to your candidates:

- » **KNOW THE ISSUES:** take some time to read through our issue statements and policy recommendations connected to the 3 questions you decide to ask in our [Guide to the Election](#). Print them out too so you can have them on hand if needed.
- » **PRACTICE:** test out your messages and questions in front of the mirror or with a friend before speaking with a candidate.
- » **START WITH THE EASIER CANDIDATE:** if there is a candidate you feel would be easier to talk to or is more in line with your personal views, than talk to them first. You will likely feel more comfortable and it is a great way to practice.
- » **MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION:** first impressions are key! Always be courteous when speaking to any political candidate.
- » **GET PERSONAL:** bring up personal anecdotes that are memorable, important and persuasive. When you express how these issues affect you personally, it helps the candidate better understand the community they hope to represent.
- » **TELL THEM WHY THEY SHOULD CARE:** you are part of a large movement of people across Canada, and in their community, working to end the injustice of poverty and advance women's rights and gender equality.
- » **GET SPECIFIC:** before you go, clearly tell the candidate what you would like them to commit to doing, if elected. Refer to our [Guide to the Election](#) and select recommendations you feel strongly about.

Remember, meeting with you is their job, not an interruption:

Connecting with constituents gives candidates the opportunity to understand your views and they are usually grateful for input. It's their job to get to know their constituents and hear different perspectives.

Speak to the candidates, but also their teams:

Candidates run on their own, but they are backed by a team. Don't underestimate the importance of having a conversation with members of the team who are there to advise the candidate and shape their campaign. Speaking with campaign managers, event coordinators, media relations coordinators, volunteer coordinators and personal assistants can all help get your message across.

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NEED SUPPORT? WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

We know that meeting with candidates, or talking about politics in general, can be intimidating. If you need help, please reach out to Debbie Owusu-Akyeeah (she/her) in the Oxfam Canada campaigns team.

Email: deborah.owusu@oxfam.org

TELL US HOW IT WENT!

Let us know which candidates you met with and how those conversations went. Please make sure to [fill out this form](#). You can fill it out right after you meet with a candidate so that the points are fresh in your head, or fill it out after you have spoken to several candidates.

By sharing this information, you are helping Oxfam shape our advocacy strategies for the years to come. We couldn't do this without you.

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

ENDING THE INJUSTICE OF POVERTY IS POLITICAL, NOT PARTISAN.

Oxfam Canada is a registered charity and our work is always non-partisan. Being completely non-partisan is especially important during an election year.

If you personally gravitate towards a particular political party, please refrain from making that known when meeting with candidates in your riding. If your political preference does surface in the conversation, please make sure to note they are your personal opinions and do not represent the views of Oxfam Canada.