



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Your guide to hosting
a successful dialogue on Canadian federal

ELECTORAL REFORM



Canada

Contents

Note: Views and opinions expressed by the organizer or participants at events hosted using this guide do not reflect the official policy or position of the Government of Canada.

An electronic copy of this document can be accessed at canada.ca/electoral-reform-dialogue.

Additional information to supplement this document may be found at canada.ca/democracy.

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Need more information?

If you cannot find the answers to your question in this document, call us toll-free (Canada only) 1-844-690-8363, or (TTY) 1-800-465-7735 for TTY.

Introduction to federal electoral reform in Canada

The House of Commons has given the Special Committee on Electoral Reform the task of leading a national consultation process on Canadian federal electoral reform in 2016. Canadians have the opportunity to participate in this national dialogue and shape our future electoral system at the federal level.

Why Canadian federal electoral reform matters

Federal electoral reform is part of the Government's stronger democracy agenda.

Canadians expect greater inclusion, transparency, meaningful engagement and modernization from their public institutions.

Federal electoral reform is part of the Government's commitment to change. Canada has a strong and deeply rooted democracy. One way to protect our democratic values is by continuously seeking to improve the functioning of our democratic institutions—including our voting system.

The federal electoral system matters in the everyday lives of Canadians.

The electoral system is more than vote casting and counting—it is a way for Canadians to influence their future, give their consent to be governed, and hold their representatives accountable.

From the electoral process flow many debates, votes and laws that impact the everyday lives of Canadians. These debates, votes and laws affect the economy, the well-being of our families and children, and the health and vibrancy of our communities.

That's why Canadian federal electoral reform matters. This is your opportunity to participate in a historic national dialogue about our democracy.

Guiding principles for Canadian federal electoral reform

The following five guiding principles may help you think about what you want from federal elections, your Member of Parliament (MP) and your federal government. They can help you decide what is important to you when it comes to potential changes to our democracy at the federal level by considering how any proposed reforms might:

- Restore the **effectiveness and legitimacy** of voting, such as by reducing distortions and strengthening the link between voter intention and the electoral result
- Encourage greater **engagement** and participation in the democratic process, including by underrepresented groups
- Support **accessibility and inclusiveness** of all eligible voters, and avoiding undue complexity in the voting process
- Safeguard the **integrity** of our voting process
- Preserve the **accountability** of local representation

Why are these principles important?

The principles were identified as a means to encourage a thoughtful, substantive dialogue about what Canadians expect from their electoral system. Potential changes to Canada's federal electoral system can be assessed through questions such as:

- How could any proposed reforms strengthen effectiveness and legitimacy by better reflecting the democratic will of Canadians?
- How could any proposed reforms foster civility, cohesion and openness in politics that will help encourage Canadians to take part?
- How could any proposed reforms enhance the sense among Canadians that they can contribute to, participate in and influence politics?
- How could any proposed reforms support accessibility and inclusiveness for all Canadians in our diverse society?
- How could any proposed reforms ensure that Canadians can trust election results?
- How could any proposed reforms affect MPs' accountability to citizens?

Where did the principles come from?

Recognizing that there are no one-size-fits-all electoral systems, selecting an electoral system is about values. These principles were developed based on lessons from other jurisdictions, in Canada and abroad.

The Government is presenting a set of broad principles that are intended to spark debate

and deliberation among Canadians. Their purpose is to start the dialogue. The Special Committee on Electoral Reform has been asked to consider potential changes to our federal electoral system based on these principles. The consultation process will further shape and develop these principles based on feedback from Canadians like you.

Overview of Canada's current federal electoral system

About the House of Commons

The House of Commons plays an important role in Canada's system of government: it debates issues, votes on the passage of laws and ensures the Government is held accountable.

Members of Parliament (MPs) sit in the House of Commons to represent their local communities, known as electoral districts (also commonly referred to as constituencies or ridings).

Almost all Canadian MPs belong to a political party:

- Political parties help Canadians understand the views of local candidates and their elected MP by presenting voters with a set of priorities the political party will pursue, known as a “platform.”
- Platforms can indicate what Governments will do when they are in power, for example, what types of laws they will introduce and how they will handle certain issues.
- In Canada's system the Prime Minister and Cabinet sit in the House of Commons:
- This allows MPs to question the Prime Minister and Government ministers directly in the House of Commons on behalf of Canadians.
- To stay in power, the Government must have the support of a majority of MPs, also known as having the “confidence” of the House of Commons.

For more information about Canada's current federal electoral system, check out *How Canadians Govern Themselves* on the Library of Parliament website: <http://www.lpp.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/SenatorEugeneForsey/Home/Index-e.html>.

Elections and formation of Government under the current electoral system

Under the current voting system:

- There are 338 electoral districts in Canada,
- Every electoral district has one MP,
- Voting is voluntary.

Today, the candidate who gets the most votes in your electoral district wins, often with less than 50% of the votes. The winning candidate goes to represent you in the House of Commons. This is what we call the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system (for more information see [page 8](#)):

- You vote for your local MP by selecting one candidate on the ballot.
- While candidates may be a member of a political party, you don't vote directly for the political party but rather for the individual candidate.
- You also don't vote directly for the Prime Minister.
- The political party that wins the most seats in the House of Commons usually forms the Government:
- The leader of that political party becomes the Prime Minister.
- If the political party has more than half of the seats in the House of Commons, we call this a majority government.

Elections usually happen every four years, unless a majority of MPs in the House of Commons determine they no longer want to support the Government on a matter of 'confidence'.

For more information about the House of Commons and Canada's current electoral system, see the Library of Parliament website: <http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/GuideToHoC/index-e.htm>

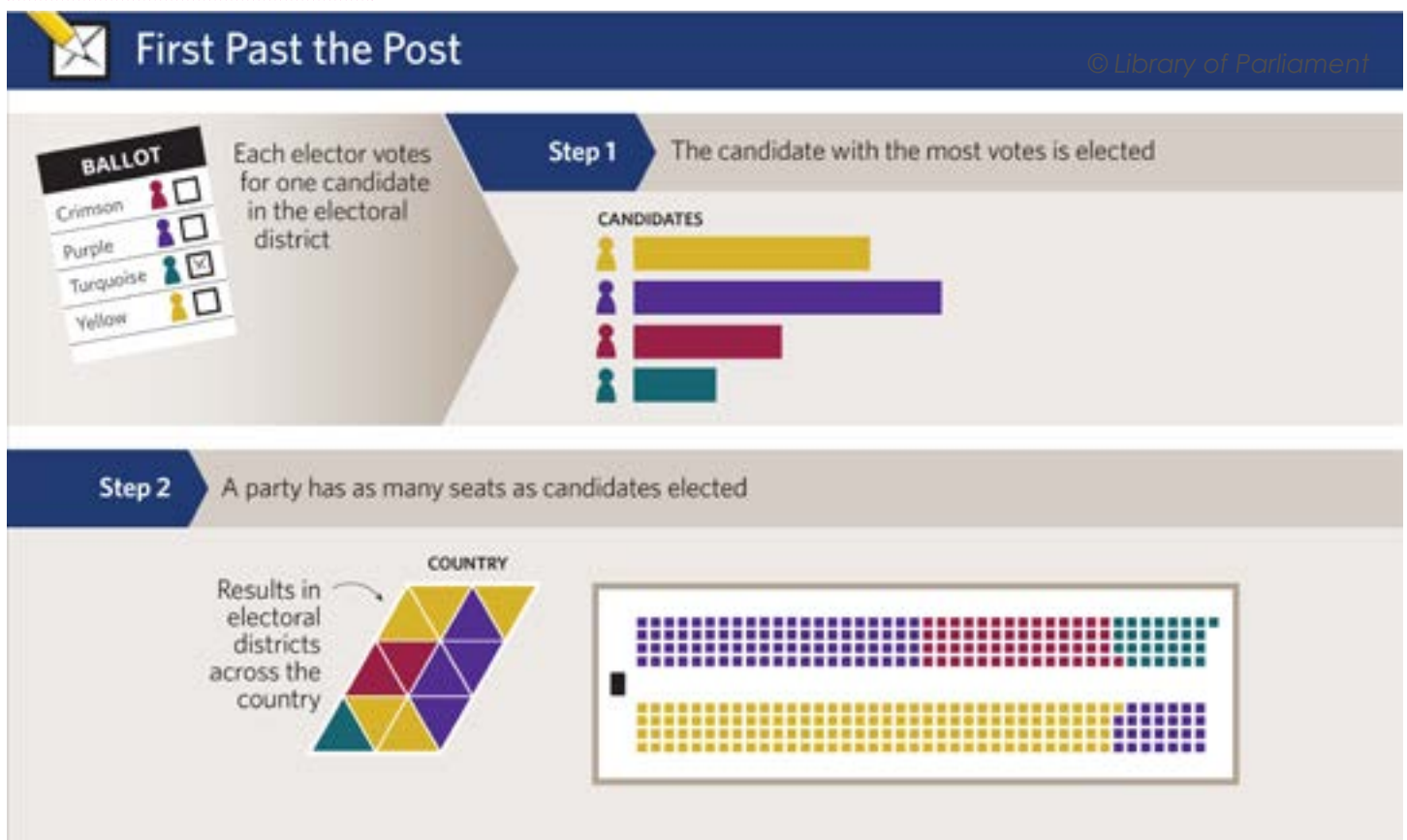
Electoral systems factsheet

Our current federal electoral system

Description: Our current electoral system at the federal level is First-Past-the-Post (FPTP). FPTP is a plurality system. Under FPTP, an elector casts a single vote for a candidate to represent the electoral district in which the voter resides. The winning candidate must win the most votes – though not necessarily a majority.

Current use examples: Current use example: The United Kingdom and the United States.

<http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/2016-06-e.html?cat=government#a8>



Alternative electoral systems

Alternative electoral systems to FPTP can be grouped into three broad families:

1. majority systems
2. proportional representation systems,
3. mixed electoral systems.

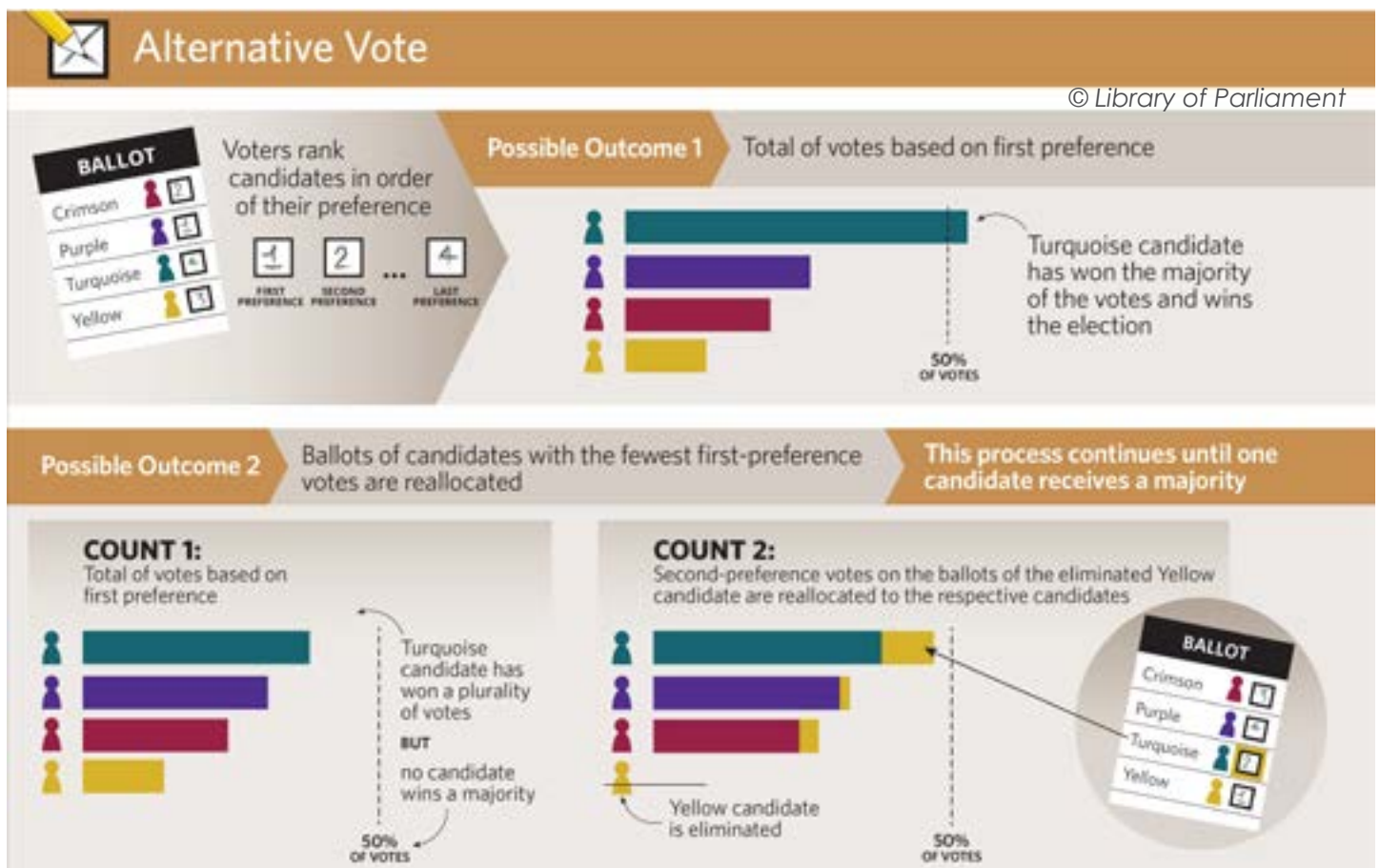
Majority systems

Description: In majority electoral systems, the winning candidate is the individual who gets a majority (over 50%) of the votes cast. This system can be designed in different ways. For example, the system could allow voters to rank the candidates running in their electoral district in order of their preference. If no candidate receives a majority of votes on the first count, the lowest candidate is dropped and the second-preference votes for that candidate are assigned to the respective remaining candidates. This process continues until one candidate receives the necessary majority. Another example is a system in which there are two election days, generally weeks apart. In this type of electoral system, if no candidate receives a majority of votes in the first round, there is a second election with only the top two candidates from the first election result. The candidate with the higher number of votes in the second round is elected.

Examples: Examples of majority systems include Alternative Vote (AV) and Run-off (or Two-Round) System.

Current use examples: Australia - lower house (AV) and France (Two-Round)

<http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/2016-06-e.html?cat=government#a8>



Proportional representation systems


Description: As its name suggests, proportional representation (PR) systems seek to closely match a political party's vote share with its seat allocation in the legislature. PR systems tend to vary and the method for calculating seat distribution can range from simple to complex. Proportional representation systems are not based on single-member constituencies. Citizens generally vote for more than one candidate or for a political party.

Examples: Examples of proportional representation systems include Single Transferable Vote (STV) and List Proportional Representation (List PR).


Current use examples: Australia – upper house (STV) and Sweden (List PR)

<http://www.lopparl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/images/2016-06-info1-e.png>

List Proportional Representation
© Library of Parliament



Closed List
Before election day, parties create ranked party lists
Citizens vote for a party, not a specific candidate

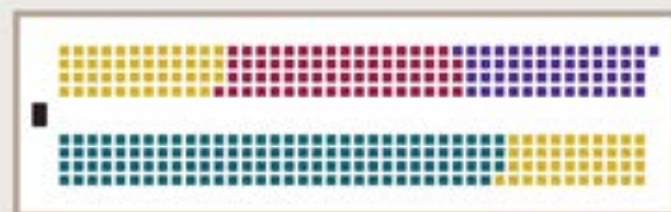


Open List
Before election day, parties create party lists
Citizens vote for preferred candidate(s) from a party list

OUTCOME
Turquoise party has won the greatest proportion of votes and thus is allotted the most seats

PARTY	NUMBER OF VOTES	% OF VOTES	% OF SEATS	NUMBER OF SEATS (OUT OF 338)
Turquoise	<div style="width: 38%; height: 15px; background-color: #008080;"></div>	38	38	128
Yellow	<div style="width: 26%; height: 15px; background-color: #ffff00;"></div>	26	26	88
Red	<div style="width: 20%; height: 15px; background-color: #c00000;"></div>	20	20	68
Purple	<div style="width: 16%; height: 15px; background-color: #6600cc;"></div>	16	16	54

Conclusion Each party's seat count is proportional to the share of votes it received in the election



Winning candidates are chosen according to their rank on the list, assigned by either the party (closed list) or the voters (open list)

Single Transferable Vote

© Library of Parliament

Election Is Called

The country has been divided into multi-member electoral districts. In this example, the district has three House of Commons seats.

RANKING

Five candidates run for the three seats in the electoral district

Voters rank them based on their preferences

1
FIRST PREFERENCE

2
SECOND PREFERENCE

...

5
LAST PREFERENCE

BALLOT

Count 1 To be elected, three candidates need to meet or exceed the vote quota. A vote quota is based on a formula involving votes cast and available seats.

Yellow candidate wins a seat by exceeding the quota

Extra Count: Step 1 Second-preference votes on the excess ballots of the elected Yellow candidate are reallocated to the respective candidates

BALLOT

ESTABLISHED VOTE QUOTA

Extra Count: Step 2 Second-preference votes on the ballots of the eliminated Turquoise candidate are reallocated to the respective candidates

This extra count process continues until three candidates are elected in the electoral district

Purple candidate wins a seat by exceeding the quota

Turquoise candidate has the least number of votes and is eliminated

ESTABLISHED VOTE QUOTA

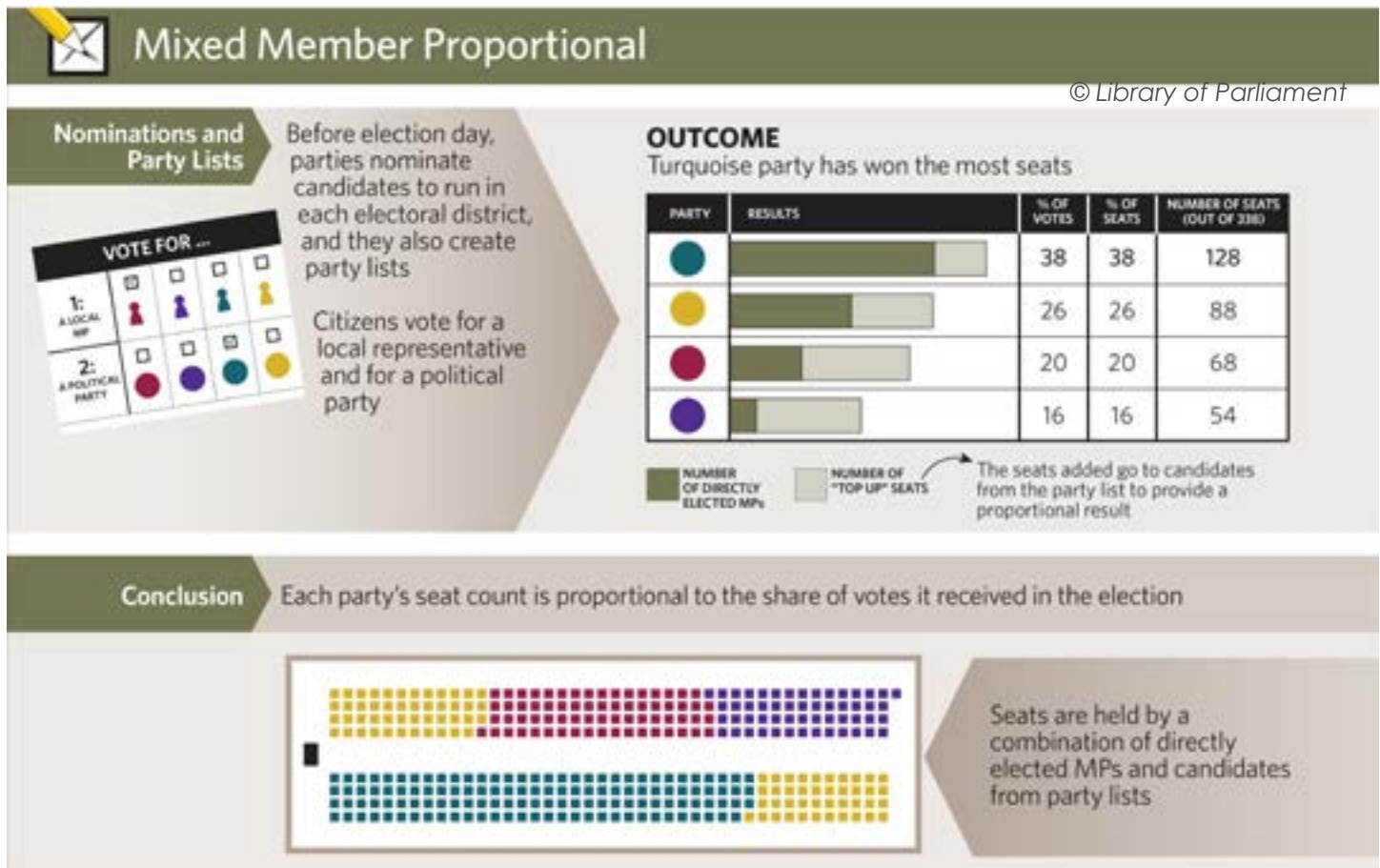
Mixed electoral systems

Description: Mixed electoral systems combine elements of a plurality or majority system with elements of proportional representation. Citizens in a riding cast two votes: one to directly elect an individual member to serve as their representative, and a second for a political party or parties to fill seats in the legislature allocated according to the proportion of the vote share they receive.

Examples: Examples of mixed electoral systems include Mixed Member Majoritarian (MMM), which is a semi-proportional system, and Mixed Member Proportional (MMP), which is a proportional system.

Current use examples: Japan (MMM) and New Zealand (MMP)

<http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/2016-06-e.html?cat=government#a8>



For further information, see the Library of Parliament website:

<http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/2016-06-e.html?cat=government%20-%20info>.

Changing Canada's federal electoral system

Changing Canada's federal electoral system would change how federal elections work and how our federal government works. For example, different reforms might change:

WHO YOU VOTE FOR

You could vote for:

- an individual candidate;
- a political party; or
- in some systems, both.

You could:

- pick just one candidate on the ballot, like we do now;
- rank the candidates—your 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and last choice; or
- choose multiple candidates without ranking them.

HOW YOU VOTE

Today, most of us vote in person by pencil and paper, either on election day itself or in the advance polls in the days beforehand. Many people also use special ballots, which are mailed in. Introducing new technologies at the polls could pave the way for online voting in the future.

WHO VOTES

Voting could be made compulsory, like in Australia.

HOW YOU ARE REPRESENTED

What and who a Member of Parliament represents could change:

- your electoral district could continue to have one Member of Parliament (MP); or
- you could have larger areas that are represented by multiple MPs.

HOW MUCH SUPPORT IS REQUIRED TO WIN A SEAT

The percentage of votes needed for a candidate or political party to win a seat could vary:

- certain systems require at least 50% support; or
- in other systems, the threshold for winning could be much lower.

HOW ELECTION OUTCOMES ARE DECIDED

How votes are counted and translated into seats could change. This could influence:

- The chances of having a majority government as some systems produce majorities more often while others produce minority or coalition governments more often.
- The number and range of political parties that hold seats in the House of Commons as some systems could permit smaller political parties to gain more seats, which could encourage the creation of more political parties.

Host a Canadian federal electoral reform dialogue in your community

Note: Views and opinions expressed by the organizer or participants at events hosted using this guide do not reflect the official policy or position of the Government of Canada.

Congratulations! You have decided to host a dialogue on Canadian federal electoral reform.

Now what?

You can use this step-by-step guide to help you host a successful dialogue.

Step 1: Plan your event [pages 15 to 23](#)

The first step is to think about and determine the kind of dialogue you want to host.

Step 2: Promote your event [pages 24 to 26](#)

Once you have decided on your planning details, you are ready to spread the word, invite participants and promote your community dialogue.

Step 3: Develop a dialogue plan for your event [pages 27 to 28](#)

In advance of your dialogue, review and confirm your dialogue plan.

Step 4: Set up your event [page 29](#)

The day has come for your community dialogue. Depending on the size of event, you will want to allow yourself 15-90 minutes to prepare in advance of the actual start time.

Step 5: Host your dialogue [pages 29 to 32](#)

Hosting a successful dialogue is both an art and a craft.

Step 6: Share the results from your event [pages 33 to 34](#)

It is vital for all Canadians to engage in meaningful dialogue about Canadian federal electoral reform and that the results of your dialogue are shared with the Special Committee on Electoral Reform.

Step 7: Spread the word [page 35](#)

Let the rest of Canada know you were a part of the dialogue!

Need more information?

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Step 1: Plan your Canadian federal electoral reform event

The first step is to think about and determine the kind of Canadian federal electoral reform dialogue you want to host

1. PREPARE

Read through this guide to help you make informed decisions about your participation.

2. CHOOSE

Pick the kind of event you want to host. Canadian federal electoral reform can be discussed in a variety of ways. Think about your goals, networks and resources when selecting the dialogue model that is the best fit for you (for more information see [page 16](#)). At this point you may want to explore the possibility of working with partners or groups. Think about how you might use digital tools and technologies to extend the impact of your event (for more information see). Consider how you might make your event as inclusive and accessible as possible (for more information see [page 32](#)).

3. DATE AND TIME

Select a date and time that will work for you and your intended audience. Think about how much time you will need to prepare for and promote your event when selecting a date. For example, a coffee dialogue with neighbours could happen next week, but a successful town-hall-style event may need three to four weeks of lead time.

4. BUDGET

Determine if you will have a budget for the event. Most dialogues can be hosted successfully with little to no cost. Be creative in taking advantage of local assets to keep costs low.

5. LOCATION

Select and confirm the location that is best suited to your event. There are many items to consider when choosing a location, such as:

- Facility accessibility for persons with disabilities
- Location accessibility by car (e.g. parking availability), public transit and foot
- Size/capacity
- Technology considerations (e.g. Internet access, audiovisual capacity)
- Flexibility to provide refreshments (if desired)

6. AGENDA AND DIALOGUE TOPICS

Based on the kind of dialogue you want to host, begin to develop the agenda for your dialogue. Think about whether you want to host a themed or open dialogue. You may want to review the sample agenda and facilitator guide (see [page 18](#)) and list of potential Canadian federal electoral reform dialogue topics and questions (see [page 22](#)) to help decide what you want to do.

7. SET UP REGISTRATION

Depending on the intended size of your event, you may want to ask people to register ahead of time. This can be as simple as asking people to email you ahead of time, or using a specialized online tool (such as Eventbrite, Universe, etc.).

Potential dialogue models for your Canadian federal electoral reform event

TYPE OF DIALOGUE	ADD-ON DIALOGUE <i>Include a dialogue in an existing meeting</i>	COFFEE DIALOGUE <i>A dialogue with a small group of friends or neighbours</i>	COMMUNITY DIALOGUE <i>A gathering intended to discuss Canadian federal electoral reform that could be for the public or for a specific group of people</i>		TOWN HALL <i>Large public gathering</i>
Number of participants	Less than 40	2 – 15	10 – 25	25 – 75	50 +
Potential types of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing members of your group or organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friends Neighbours Small groups/networks (e.g. book club) 	Members of small/ medium-sized groups/networks, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book clubs Neighborhood associations Community associations and organizations 	Members of medium-sized/large groups/networks, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighborhood associations Community associations and organizations 	Community members
Suggested invitation methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Via your organizational network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal, to those you know 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal, to those you know Via existing groups and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Via existing groups and networks Broader promotion/advertising 	Broad Community-wide invitation via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promotions/advertising Networks
Location examples	Current meeting space	Capacity: 15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living room Kitchen table Coffee shops 	Capacity: 30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board room/meeting room small workshop spaces 	Capacity: 100 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium-sized meeting room 	Capacity: minimum of 100 (recommended) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auditorium Community hall Conference centers

TYPE OF DIALOGUE	ADD-ON DIALOGUE <i>Include a dialogue in an existing meeting</i>	COFFEE DIALOGUE <i>A dialogue with a small group of friends or neighbours</i>	COMMUNITY DIALOGUE <i>A gathering intended to discuss Canadian federal electoral reform that could be for the public or for a specific group of people</i>	TOWN HALL <i>Large public gathering</i>	
Hosting/ facilitation methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated dialogue Small and large group discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-directed Small group dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated dialogue Small and large group discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Professional facilitator recommended Facilitator dialogue Small and large group discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Professional facilitator recommended Facilitated dialogue Small and large group discussion Possible question & answer period (maximum of 30 minutes at end of session)
Event length	15–30 minutes .25–.5 hours	60–90 minutes 1–1.5 hours	90–120 minutes 1.5–2 hours	90–120 minutes 1.5–2 hours	120–180 minutes 2–3hours
Audiovisual/ technical requirements	Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer, projector, and screen 	Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer, projector, and screen 	Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer, projector, and screen 	Suggested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer, projector, and screen Two microphones and a speaker system 	Recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer, projector, and screen At least two microphones and a speaker system
Suggested dialogue capture methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note-taker for the dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note-taker for the dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One or more note-takers for the dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple note-takers for the dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small group activities to capture answers with a note taker for each group Results digitally compiled by multiple note-takers

Sample Canadian federal electoral reform event agenda and facilitator guide

Note: This sample facilitator guide is intended for a group of about 30 people over two hours (not including set up time). You may adapt this guide for use with fewer or more people, less or more time, etc. though the activities and timings may need to be adjusted accordingly. You may wish to choose one or more questions per discussion from each of the suggested topics and/or make up your own. An electronic copy of this document can be accessed at: canada.ca/electoral-reform-dialogue.

ACTIVITY

SET UP

before participants arrive

15 – 30
minutes

FACILITATOR NOTES

- Place signage (if necessary)
- Set up room to be comfortable for both plenary (all-audience) and breakout (smaller group) discussion
- Establish distinct areas for registration and/or refreshments (if applicable)

ARRIVAL

15
minutes

- Greet participants as they arrive
- Ask participants to register (if applicable)
- Offer participants a name tag and/or relevant handouts and materials (if applicable)

OPENING

15
minutes

- Welcome participants
- Set the context (see [Section 1](#))
- Review housekeeping notes
- Review dialogue agreements, activities and other facilitation information (see [page 30](#))

ICEBREAKER

10
minutes

- Ask participants to break into small groups (4-6 people)
- Each person has one minute to answer the question: Why have you decided to join us today?

TOPIC 1:

General

15 – 30
minutes

- Ask participants to form a new group of three and select one participant in their group to be the notetaker
- Each person has three minutes to answer the question: *(Do you and/or the people you know usually vote in elections? Why or why not?)* (see [page 22](#))
- After 10 minutes, ask one person from each group to share with the rest of the participants a 30-second summary of what was discussed

TOPIC 2:

Democratic principles and values

15 – 30 minutes

- Ask participants to form a new group of three and select one participant in their group to be the notetaker
- Each person has three minutes to answer the question: *(Are there certain groups that you feel are excluded from the current electoral system? If so, why do you feel that they are excluded? What do you think could be done to help make Canada's electoral system more inclusive?)* (see [page 22](#))
- After 10 minutes, ask one person from each group to share with the rest of the participants a 30-second summary of what was discussed

TOPIC 3:

Canadian federal electoral reforms

20 – 25 minutes

- Ask participants to form a new group of three and select one participant in their group to be the notetaker
- Each person has three minutes to answer the question: *(How do you feel about electronic voting? Why?)* (see [page 22](#))
- After 10 minutes, ask one person from each group to share with the rest of the participants a 30-second summary of what was discussed

REFLECTION

20 minutes

- Ask participants to return and form into a circle (if possible)
- Give participants one minute to think about one sentence that answers the question: What are you taking away from today's dialogue on Canadian federal electoral reform?
- Starting with your own answer, go around the circle and ask each participant to give their one-sentence answer (no more than 30 seconds each)

CLOSING

10 minutes

- Thank participants
- Collect the discussion notes and/or provide instruction on where to submit the notes
- Encourage participants to keep the dialogue going beyond the event
- Explain what you are doing with the results

Tips on using digital technology and tools to support your Canadian federal electoral reform event

There are a number of ways to extend the impact and reach of your Canadian federal electoral reform dialogue using digital technology and tools. Below find some tips and suggestions on how you can use these before, during and after your event.

Before your event

- Search online to find out where members of your community participate on the web in order to help promote and improve the reach of your invitation process. Keep in mind that different communities use a variety of hashtags, online groups, and digital platforms to communicate. Be creative and respectful in how you use these to spread the word about your event. Check out some sample social media invitations you can adapt for your event (see [page 25](#)).
- Consider creating and promoting a special hashtag for your event. This enables you to easily build and track the buzz around your event. It also enables easy word of mouth promotion of the event. Good hashtags are short, unique (i.e. not already in use by another community) and memorable.
- You may wish to encourage participants to share questions, thoughts, ideas, etc. online ahead of the event for inclusion in your dialogue (e.g. by email, social media). This can be a great way for those who cannot attend the actual event to be able to participate.

During your event

- Encourage participants to share their thoughts during your event on social media. If you created a special hashtag for your event, be sure to mention it during the event and consider including it on any materials that are shared (e.g. posters in the room, printed agenda). If possible, you may wish to have a dedicated person at your event be the designated social media person who shares live updates online for those not at the event. You may also wish to encourage participation from those online via social media, such as asking your dialogue questions on Twitter and sharing any answers received live at the event and/or in your notes from the event.
- You may wish to consider live streaming your event over the Internet for those who cannot attend in person. Often, all it takes to successfully stream an event is a device with a camera (such as a smartphone or

tablet computer), Internet connection and an online streaming service such as Facebook Live, Periscope, YouTube On Air, etc. If your budget allows, you may wish to consider hiring a professional team to help you live stream and/or record your event for sharing afterwards.

- Think about how you might encourage participants to continue the dialogue beyond your event. You may wish to direct participants to an online group, hashtag, etc. so they can continue connecting and discussing with each other once the event itself is over.

After your event

- Consider creating a social media summary of your event featuring some of the posts, photos, etc. from the day and publishing it online for others to see. This can be a helpful recap for those who could not attend the event as well as providing a digital record of your event for posterity.
- If you took photos and/or videos of your event, think about how you might share them online along with the results of your dialogue. There are several services, many of which are free, that enable you to quickly post a collection of media, text, etc. such as Medium and Storify that can be easily found and shared by others.
- Encourage participants to join the national dialogue on Canadian federal electoral reform online (see [page 36](#)).

Potential Canadian federal electoral reform event dialogue topics and questions

Asking questions is a great way to start your dialogue, or to keep it going when participants seem to have run out of ideas. Try to think about the interests, needs and knowledge of your dialogue participants when selecting the number and type of questions you will feature in your Canadian federal electoral reform dialogue.

Feel free to pick and choose from the list below, or develop your own. You may wish to focus on one topic area or pick one or more questions from each topic.

Note: for a 90–120 minute dialogue you will want to select 3–4 questions.

An electronic copy of this document can be accessed at

canada.ca/electoral-reform-dialogue.

General

1. What do you think could be done to help more Canadians feel more interested and involved in democracy?
2. Do you and/or the people you know usually vote in elections? Why or why not?
3. Have you and/or the people you know faced barriers or challenges when voting in the past?
 - a. If so, what were those barriers or challenges?
 - b. What do you think could be done to overcome barriers people might face when voting?
4. Do you feel the House of Commons represents Canadians effectively? Why or why not?
5. How do you think we can measure the health of Canada's democracy? What do you think we could use as indicators of its health?
6. What are some leadership qualities that you want from your elected representative?
 - a. Do you think that there are certain qualities and attributes that are overvalued/undervalued in our diverse society? If so, what?
7. What do you feel the relationship between an elected Member of Parliament and citizens in his or her electoral district should look like?

Democratic principles and values

1. Of the guiding principles for Canadian federal electoral reform (effectiveness and legitimacy, engagement, accessibility and inclusiveness, integrity and local representation):
 - a. What principle or principles are most important to you? Why?
 - b. What principle or principles are least important to you? Why?
 - c. Are there any principle(s) that you feel are missing? Why?
2. Are there certain groups that you feel are excluded from the current electoral system?
 - a. If so, why do you feel that they are excluded?
 - b. What do you think could be done to help make Canada's electoral system more inclusive?

Canadian federal electoral reforms

1. What do you think are some strengths of our current federal electoral system? What are some of the weaknesses?
2. Are there electoral systems other than our current federal electoral system that you have heard about?
 - a. If so, what have you heard?
 - b. Are there things that you like about these alternatives? If so, what?
 - c. Are there concerns you have about these alternatives? If so, what?
3. How do you feel about electronic voting? Why?
4. How do you feel about online voting? Why?
5. How do you feel about mandatory voting? Why?
6. What other changes, if any, to the methods and procedures we use to vote might you like to see? Why?

Step 2: Promote your Canadian federal electoral reform event

Once you have decided on your planning details, you are ready to spread the word, invite participants and promote your community dialogue:

Invitation

A high turnout at an event is often directly related to how people were invited. Some people you hope will attend may have a scheduling conflict—but overall participation rates increase with a good invitation process. Feel free to use these sample invitation templates (see [page 25](#)) or develop your own invitation, which should include:

- A clear statement on the purpose of the gathering
- Themes or topics to be discussed
- All details regarding when, where and for how long the event will take place
- What is expected of those attending the event

Promotion

If yours is a larger public event, you may want to promote it widely. Consider one or more of the following options (see also sample templates you may use or adapt):

- Media advisory
- Social media
- Community event boards
- Posters/flyers
- Interviews with local media (e.g. TV, radio)
- Advertising

List your event on our calendar of events

Let us—and the rest of Canada—know you are taking part in the national dialogue on Canadian federal electoral reform. Submit your event to the Canadian federal electoral reform calendar of events available at canada.ca/democracy and it will be listed with other events taking place across the country.

Sample invitations for your Canadian federal electoral reform event

Note: An electronic copy of this document can be accessed at canada.ca/electoral-reform-dialogue.

A high turnout at an event is often directly related to how people were invited. Some people you hope will attend may have a scheduling conflict—but overall participation rates usually increase with a good invitation process. In addition to a welcoming, inclusive invitation process, providing sufficient advance notice will increase the likelihood that more participants can join in your event.

Email, community event board, etc. invitation

Hello,

You are invited to join in a community dialogue at INSERT TIME on INSERT DATE at INSERT LOCATION to discuss and share ideas about the future of Canada's federal electoral system and democracy.

Hosted by INSERT EVENT HOST NAME, the dialogue will:

- INSERT OVERVIEW OF TOPICS, ACTIVITIES, ETC.

The event will last about INSERT LENGTH OF EVENT. The results of the dialogue will be INSERT WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING WITH THE RESULTS HERE. IF DESIRED, INSERT INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO REGISTER.

I hope that you can join us at INSERT TIME on INSERT DATE at INSERT LOCATION! Please feel free to pass along this invitation to others who may be interested.

INSERT HOST NAME



Social media invitations

Twitter

- Have your say on the future of #CdnDemocracy. Join our community dialogue at INSERT LINK OR DATE/LOCATION INFORMATION
- INSERT HOST NAME is hosting a #CdnDemocracy community dialogue. Join us at: INSERT LINK OR DATE/LOCATION INFORMATION
- Come discuss #CdnDemocracy together in INSERT COMMUNITY NAME on INSERT DATE.
- Check out our #CdnDemocracy community dialogue on INSERT DATE at INSERT LOCATION.

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Facebook

Facebook is one of the most widely used social media platforms in Canada. You may wish to not only promote your event on your page or in messages, but also to create a Facebook event. In this way, you can invite participants to your event and keep track of who has indicated they would like to join you. You may also wish to adapt or use language from other sample invitations for your Facebook posts.

- Join our community dialogue on #CdnDemocracy and the future of Canada's federal electoral system at *INSERT LINK OR DATE/LOCATION INFORMATION. IF DESIRED, INSERT INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO REGISTER*
- *INSERT HOST NAME* is hosting a #CdnDemocracy community dialogue on *INSERT DATE/TIME* at *INSERT LOCATION. IF DESIRED, INSERT INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO REGISTER*
- Help shape the future of #CdnDemocracy at our community dialogue in (INSERT COMMUNITY NAME). *IF DESIRED, INSERT INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO REGISTER*
- All voices matter when it comes to #CdnDemocracy – come have your say at our community dialogue on *INSERT DATE/TIME* at *INSERT LOCATION. IF DESIRED, INSERT INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO REGISTER*

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Media advisory sample

City, Province – Date (*one business day before event date*) – Media representatives are advised that *INSERT HOST NAME* will hold a community dialogue about the principles and values that underlie Canada's federal electoral system and democracy. The purpose is to raise awareness of potential changes to our federal electoral system and provide an opportunity for community members to discuss and share their views on this issue with each other.

Event: Community dialogue on Canadian federal electoral reform

Date: [Weekday], [Month] [Day of Month], 2016

Time: 00:00 a.m. or p.m. [Time zone]

Location: [actual street address of event]

Step 3: Develop a dialogue plan for your Canadian federal electoral reform event

In advance of your dialogue, review and confirm your Canadian federal electoral reform dialogue plan. A successful dialogue will offer participants a variety of ways to contribute. Recognizing that when a group of people come together you will have many different personalities and learning types in the room, you may want to include activities in your agenda that meet a variety of needs. Think about creative ways to make your dialogue engaging, interactive and dynamic.

In developing your dialogue plan, you should:

1. Identify realistic expectations about how many dialogue questions you can cover given the length of your event.
2. Determine how much time you will need to welcome participants, review any housekeeping items, provide background info, etc.
3. Consider how you might make your event as inclusive and accessible as possible (for more information see [page 32](#)).
4. Choose the type of dialogue model (see [page 16](#)) you want to use and how people will participate. Think about using different dialogue formats (see [page 30](#)) that will help all participants have an opportunity to engage in the dialogue.
5. Think about including activities in the agenda that will increase interactivity and engagement.
6. Make a list of any supplies you will need (see sample supply checklist [page 28](#)).
7. Plan how you will capture the results of your dialogue (for more information see [page 33](#)). Will you take notes throughout the event? Will you have participants write down their answers themselves? Will you do a recap after the event? Can you document the event using photo, video or other creative means?
8. Think about how you might use digital tools and technologies to extend the impact of your event (for more information see [page 20](#))

Sample supply checklist for your Canadian federal electoral reform event

The amount and type of supplies required for your event will vary depending on a number of factors. Below is a basic event checklist that you can adapt or use as a reference in planning and preparing your event.

Note: An electronic copy of this document can be accessed at canada.ca/electoral-reform-dialogue.

Welcome and registration

- Registration sign-in forms (and pencils/pens) (if desired)
- Event guest list (if you asked people to register)
- Handouts / background information (if desired)

Refreshments (if desired)

- Drinks (and cups)
- Treats/snacks (and serving instruments if necessary)
- Napkins and/or plates

Audiovisual (if desired)

- Computer
- Projector and/or screen
- Adaptor cable(s)
- Extension cord
- Any necessary software
- Speaker(s) and/or microphone(s)

Facilitator/hosting supplies

- Agenda
- Facilitator guide
- Phone and/or timer

Activity supplies (if desired)

- Cue cards
- Pens and/or pencils
- Markers
- Tape (painter's tape, masking, etc.)
- Exercise-specific supplies

Step 4: Set up your Canadian federal electoral reform event

The day has come for your community dialogue on Canadian federal electoral reform. Depending on the size of event, you will want to allow yourself 15-90 minutes to prepare in advance of the actual start time. When setting up, you may wish to consider the following:

- Prepare the room/space. Think about how the set-up of the space may influence how inclusive and safe participants feel.
- Consider how you might make your event as inclusive and accessible as possible (for more information see [page 32](#)).
- Set up a sign-in/registration table (if desired).
- Set up and test all audiovisual equipment (if needed).
- Prepare materials for any activities (e.g. paper, pens).
- Prepare/set up refreshments.

Find additional tips and suggestions for successfully setting up and hosting dialogues in the Canadian federal electoral reform dialogue hosting guide on [page 30](#).

Step 5: Host your Canadian federal electoral reform dialogue

Hosting a successful dialogue is both an art and a craft. To ensure your attendees have a meaningful experience that gives everyone the opportunity to participate, think about the following in how you host and facilitate the dialogue:

- Setting the tone of the dialogue
- Establishing dialogue agreements (see [page 31](#))
- Being clear in intention and direction
- Being prepared to deal with conflict
- Creating space for additional ideas to emerge
- Wrapping up the dialogue
- Thanking people for their participation

Be sure to capture the results from your dialogue (for more information see [page 33](#)) and share them with the Special Committee on Electoral Reform (see <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Committees/en/ERRE> for more information).

Canadian federal electoral reform dialogue hosting guide

Congratulations on deciding to host a Canadian federal electoral reform dialogue in your community. The goal of this national initiative is to help create a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for all Canadians to come together to discuss and contribute to dialogue on Canadian federal electoral reform.

Below are some tips and considerations for facilitating your dialogue.

Physical space and room set-up

An important factor in your conversation's success is the physical space in which you gather. Most gathering spaces are set up with all of the chairs facing a speaker at the front of the room. To have a healthy dialogue, you should try to create an environment where people can participate easily and feel connected. You may choose to:

- Select a room/facility that is easy to access for people with a wide range of abilities. The ideal room is an open, bright, welcoming space, and allows for the space and seating to be arranged in different ways.
- If possible, arrange chairs in a circle (or rings of circles) so that participants feel included and equal.
- Use wall space or whiteboards, if available, to share information or capture ideas and thoughts.
- You may wish to have separate areas for registration, refreshments or questions. Consider having these areas away from the main space so they do not create a distraction.
- If you can, have the host or facilitator speak from the circle, not standing behind a lectern at the front of the room.
- Encourage participants to move around the room, forming new groups for each of the questions. This encourages people to get to know each other and exposes

participants to new perspectives.

- Use a wireless microphone if you are hosting a large gathering and need to use a microphone. This will allow you to move around the room and go to the person who wishes to speak. Some participants may find it intimidating to have to line up at a microphone in the centre of the room or aisle. This may also create a barrier for people who have accessibility concerns.

Dialogue formats

There are many ways to host a dialogue. Depending on how many people are participating and how much time you have, you may choose to have people gather in a variety of ways to ensure everyone gets the opportunity to contribute. Be sure to check out the sample event agenda and facilitator guide on [page 18](#) for an idea of what this might look like.

Lecture style

This common communication style is very useful to share information, and as a host you will likely use this technique to welcome participants, review the reasons you have come together and provide direction. You may want to limit the time one person is speaking to the whole group as the purpose of the dialogue is to give everyone a chance to share their ideas.

Whole group

Engaging a whole group in dialogue can be challenging for a number of reasons, particularly if the group is large. For example, some participants may not get a chance to speak if the group is very large, or there may be a few voices that dominate the discussion. If you have more than 10 participants, you may want to break into smaller groups to encourage meaningful dialogue.

Small group

Breaking the larger group into smaller groups of five or six is a good way to encourage participants to speak. Other potential dialogue formats include:

- Groups of three

A group of three works well for exploring a particular question because it gives participants more opportunity to both share their own and listen to others' opinions.

- Pairs

Pairing participants together gives them the opportunity to have closer dialogues and explore topics in greater depth.

Reflections

After the allotted time for dialogue, consider building in time for groups and/or individuals to share their thoughts with the whole group. For example, you could have one person from each smaller group briefly share the ideas and thoughts that came up.

When the total number of participants is really high, it may be difficult to allow reflections from all of the smaller groups on all of the questions. You may wish to take four or five comments, totalling 10 minutes, per question. You can make sure all groups have the chance to contribute by working your way through different parts of the room for each question.

Dialogue agreements

You can set the tone of the gathering by establishing a set of dialogue agreements. These clarify how everyone should conduct themselves. You can also remind participants of the agreements if the dialogue gets away from its original intention.

If time allows, you could do a group activity to develop your own list, or you may want to use the following list as a starting point and ask participants to contribute any additional ideas:

- Listen carefully and with respect.
- Give everyone the opportunity to speak.
- Speak for yourself and participate as equals.
- Respect others' opinions.
- Agree to disagree—with ideas, not people.
- Silence cell phones.

General facilitation tips

- As best you can, know your audience and work to create an environment that is welcoming and supportive.
- Design your agenda and questions to generate ideas and capture peoples' thoughts.
- Set the tone.
- Before someone speaks, have them identify themselves by name.
- Acknowledge speakers by name if possible.
- Thank each person for their contribution.
- Encourage people who do not know each other to sit together.

Accessibility and inclusiveness considerations for your Canadian federal electoral reform event

Before the event

- If possible, include a diverse group of community members in your planning process who may be able to advise you on the differing needs of your participants.
 - Try to think about the needs and schedules of your participants when selecting a date and time. Does the date or time provide potential conflict for members of your community (e.g. religious holidays, school exams)?
 - Be aware that the choice of venue may influence the level of comfort of community members. Think about who may feel more or less welcome depending on the choice of venue (e.g. bars, places of worship).
 - If you plan to ask participants to register ahead of time, consider asking them to mention any special accommodations they may require, such as dietary restrictions or accessibility needs. This can help you plan a more inclusive, welcoming event for all participants.
 - While it is ideal to use only fully accessible venues, you may need to host an event in a building that has some limitations in terms of accessibility. If this is the case, you may wish to post information publicly about the venue's accessibility ahead of time to help participants decide whether or not to attend. For example, are there stairs required? Are elevators or ramps available? Will participants need to stand? Are washrooms available to those with limited mobility?
- Think about the different barriers that participants might face in attending or participating in your event. For example, offering transit passes or on-site childcare may enable more participants to join in your event.

During the event

- If your event is taking place in a venue that is located on traditional territory or treaty lands of Indigenous peoples, as a sign of respect, open your event by acknowledging this.
- If possible, consider having a sign-language interpreter available during the event for participants who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. For videos, consider showing subtitles and/or closed captioning.
- If possible, you may want to produce print materials with larger format text and/or Braille for participants.
- Do your best to have your event start and end on time to accommodate participants with stricter schedules.
- Provide breaks throughout the event, particularly for longer events.

Step 6: Share the results from your Canadian federal electoral reform

Note: An electronic copy of this document can be accessed at canada.ca/electoral-reform-dialogue.

It is vital for all Canadians to engage in meaningful dialogue about Canadian federal electoral reform and that the results of your dialogue are shared with the Special Committee on Electoral Reform (see <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Committees/en/ERRE> for more information).

You may wish to use or adapt the sample template on [page 33](#) for structuring your submission to the Special Committee on Electoral Reform.

You may also wish to check out other information on how to participate in parliamentary special committees on the Library of Parliament website: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Committees/en/Participate>.

Canadians who choose to submit a brief to the Committee must meet the following criteria/conditions:

- Only one (1) brief can be submitted per person;
- The deadline for the submission of briefs is 11:59 p.m. (EST) on Friday, October 7, 2016;
- Briefs must not exceed 3,000 words (including the summary page and footnotes);
- Briefs that are longer than 1,500 words must be accompanied by a summary; and,
- It is recommended that within the brief the author present a list of recommendations and their relationship with the principles set out in the motion adopted by the House of Commons on Tuesday, June 7, 2016, outlining the mandate of the Committee.

If you wish to reach the Minister you can email her at CDNdemocracy-democratieCDN@pco-bcp.gc.ca or by mail:

Privy Council Office
General Enquiries
c/o Minister Monsef
Room 1000
85 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0A3

Sample template for submitting the results of your Canadian federal electoral reform event to the Special Committee on Electoral Reform

Find below a sample structure you may wish to use to help you take notes during your event and share the results of your event with the Special Committee on Electoral Reform (see <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Committees/en/ERRE> for more information). Feel free to adapt it to fit your circumstances.

You may also wish to review some information from the Library of Parliament about how to submit a brief to a special parliamentary committee: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/House/WitnessesGuides/guide-brief-e.htm>.

1. What was the nature of the event: (select one)

- Add-on Dialogue
- Coffee Dialogue
- Community Dialogue
- Town Hall
- Other

2. What date was the event held? _____

3. Where was the event held? _____

4. Who hosted the event? _____

5. Approximately how many people attended the event? _____

6. Brief description of the event:

General

1. Did you have a dialogue about electoral and democratic reform in general? Yes / No

a. If yes, what were the highlights of the dialogue? (open field)

Democratic principles and values

1. Did you have a dialogue about the principles and values that underpin Canada's democracy? Yes / No
 - a. If yes, what were the highlights of the dialogue?

- b. What principle(s) did participants identify as most important?

- c. What principle(s) did participants identify as least important?

Canadian federal electoral reforms

1. Did you have a dialogue about different potential Canadian federal electoral reforms? Yes / No
 - a. If yes, what were the highlights of the dialogue?

Additional feedback

1. Did the dialogue yield additional thoughts you would like to share? Yes / No
 - a. If yes, what were those additional thoughts?

Step 7: Spread the word about Canadian federal electoral reform

You have just participated in one of the most important citizen engagement events in Canadian history, what's next?

The dialogue on Canadian federal electoral reform is for everyone. Now is the time to spread the word! Encourage your friends and family to participate in the dialogue on electoral reform.

Consider using the following hashtags to spread the word on social media:

#EngagedinER #Insert-town-city

- For example:
#EngagedinER #Calgary or #YYZ
- For example:
I #EngagedinER and shared my thoughts about online voting

Appendices

Note: Additional information to supplement this document may be found at canada.ca/democracy

Appendix A – Frequently asked questions (FAQ) about Canadian federal electoral reform

What is the purpose of Canadian federal electoral reform community dialogues?

The Government, other political parties in the House of Commons, academics and many Canadians have recognized that Canada's federal electoral system needs to be modernized.

Events, such as town halls and community dialogues, offer an opportunity for people to get involved and share their views on what principles and values are important to them in modernizing Canada's federal electoral system.

How do these events fit with the Government's federal electoral reform plan?

Although Canada has a strong and deeply rooted democracy, we must continuously seek to improve the functioning of our democratic institutions—including modernizing our federal electoral system.

A Special Committee on Electoral Reform was established with a mandate to study workable alternate voting options, including preferential ballots and proportional representation, and mandatory and online voting at the federal level. All Members of Parliament have been invited by the Special Committee on Electoral Reform to conduct a town hall in their respective constituencies and provide the committee with a written report of the input received from their

constituents. The Special Committee on Electoral Reform is required to submit its report to Parliament by December 1, 2016.

In addition to the work of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, individuals and community groups are encouraged to host their own dialogues on Canadian federal electoral reform and provide this feedback to the committee.

The feedback from Canadians, through the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, MPs, community dialogues and other engagement tools, will contribute to the Government's approach on Canadian federal electoral reform.

What kinds of ideas can be discussed in Canadian federal electoral reform dialogues?

Canadians who participate in town halls and/or community dialogues will have an opportunity to express the values and principles that are important to them in modernizing Canada's federal electoral system. These include how electoral reform options advance the following principles:

- Effectiveness and legitimacy
- Engagement
- Accessibility and inclusiveness
- Integrity
- Local representation

Find out more about the guiding principles for Canadian federal electoral reform on

[page 5](#). You may also wish to check out this list of potential topics and questions for hosting a dialogue about Canadian federal electoral reform on [page 30](#)

How can the discussions from these events be shared with the Special Committee on Electoral Reform?

Any individual or organization may submit a brief to a committee of the House of Commons (for more information see: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/House/WitnessesGuides/guide-brief-e.htm>). Briefs submitted to committees become part of their public archives and therefore, may be posted on the committee's website. A list of names of the organizations and individuals who have submitted briefs will appear as an appendix to the report. General information on participating in parliamentary committees can be found on the Library of Parliament website: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Committees/en/Participate>.

Further information on submitting materials can be found on the Special Committee on Electoral Reform website:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Committees/en/ERRE>

Need more information?

If you cannot find the answers to your question in this document, call us toll-free (Canada only) 1-844-690-8363, or (TTY) 1-800-465-7735 for TTY.