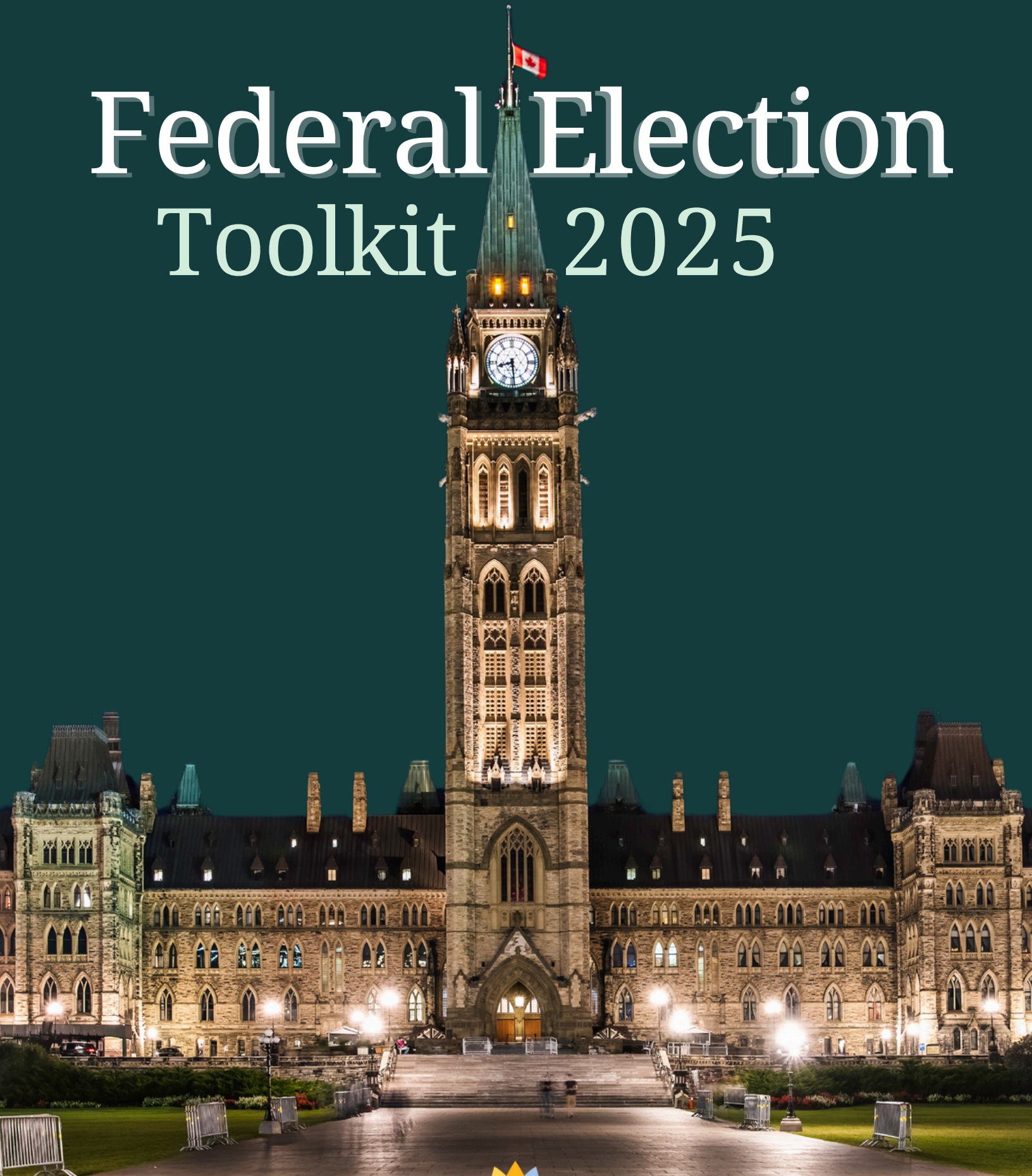


# Federal Election Toolkit 2025



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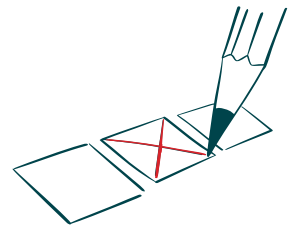
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*Feminist issues  
=  
Election issues*



# ELECTION 2025 & NON-PARTISANSHIP

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Canadians are going to the polls on April 28, 2025.

**CFUW is a non-partisan organization.** This means that, at all levels, we do not support or oppose a particular political party or candidate. CFUW cannot endorse, campaign for, or donate to any party or candidate. If a CFUW member is engaged in campaign activities, it must be as an individual, fully removed from Club spaces and their role with CFUW.

**But non-partisan does *not* mean non-political.**

CFUW Clubs and members are deeply involved in their communities, and routinely engage in advocacy on political issues. Political decisions have a profound impact on our mission and vision for Canada. CFUW National and Clubs can express our support for or opposition to *policies, laws, and actions*, where we have an Adopted Resolution that supports that position, or where it is directly related to CFUW's mission and values.

**The key is to *focus on the issues, not the individuals or parties.***

Federal elections are an opportunity for CFUW to remind political parties and politicians that gender equality, education, and social justice are crucial to a prosperous, sustainable future. It is a pivotal time for us to **get the issues that matter most to us on the debate floor** and advocate for change.

Child care, gender-based violence, climate change, Indigenous rights, healthy ageing, and poverty are all major, nation-wide issues on which CFUW advocates. This package provides CFUW Clubs, members, and allies with the tools needed to ensure these ***feminist issues are election issues*** in 2025!

# NON-PARTISANSHIP DO'S & DON'T'S

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## DO ✓

- Meet with candidates from your riding, ask them questions related to CFUW's priorities, and let them know your Club's stance on the issues (*Club Presidents and designated representatives only*).
- Organize an All-Candidates Meeting/Debate, with all local candidates invited.
- Share neutral information about the election, such as all party platforms and guides on where and how to vote.
- Encourage people to vote.
- Publish op-eds about issues.

## DON'T ✗

- Post commentary about any local candidate or federal party leader on social media.
- Invite only one candidate to speak at a Club or public event.
- Solicit donations or support for a candidate at Club meetings and events, or on Club email lists.
- Link any of the issues on which CFUW advocates to one party or candidate.
- Publish op-eds about any party or candidate.





# GET INFORMED

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- Research your electoral district, list of candidates, and election polling places [here](#).
- Track each of the parties' and their local candidates' stances on issues using official party websites, candidate websites, or their social media platforms.
- Contact candidates' campaign offices to learn where they stand on issues not covered in their campaign materials.
- Check out CBC's Vote Compass tool to explore how your views align with those of the parties.
- Check out your current MP's [voting track record](#) if they are running for re-election.
- Review the [CFUW Adopted Resolutions Book](#) to familiarize yourself with CFUW's positions on issues and ideas for ways to address them.
- Review "[Realizing Potential: Advocacy Action Using CFUW Adopted Resolutions](#)", a document that provides a useful summary of CFUW Adopted Resolutions that require action.
- Pages 9-16 of this toolkit contain briefing materials and questions to ask candidates on CFUW's national priorities. You can print a one-pager with all questions (found on page 17) so that you have them ready for when you meet with candidates or they knock on your door.
- Create your own questions to ask candidates based on your community's local concerns and priorities!

# GET INVOLVED

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## Meet with Candidates

- Meeting with candidates is an effective way to raise CFUW issues as election issues.
- Meetings also raise your Club's profile as a source of informed opinions and accountability. If elected, politicians are more likely to listen and take meetings in the future if previously approached.

## Host an All-Candidates Meeting

- All-candidates meetings are an opportunity for residents, political candidates, and local media to connect and raise concern for the issues they care about.
- See pages 18-21 for a detailed guide to hosting your own All-Candidates Meeting.

## Talk to Others About Voting

- High voter turnout across all demographics ensures democratic health, legitimacy, and equitable representation.
- Talk to your community members about the importance of voting: Voting is a simple way to express political opinions and is central to the democratic process. It is also an empowering opportunity to directly influence the direction of our country.
- Share useful election resources with community members.
- Offer to drive community members to polling stations, if able.



# GET CRITICAL

## COMBATting DISINFORMATION

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**Disinformation is rampant during elections, especially online.** It's important to stay aware, identify disinformation, and report it. This requires being critical of what you see on social media—never share information without first verifying that it is true.

### What is Disinformation?

Disinformation is “false information that is deliberately intended to mislead the reader” ([Government of Canada, 2025](#)). It may come from foreign actors seeking to influence the election, or it may come from your own Facebook friends, for example. Misinformation, which is false information that is shared *inadvertently*, is also commonly shared on social media, even by people we trust.

### What to Look Out For:

- **DeepFakes:** These are videos or images that have been created using artificial intelligence, to make it seem like a person is saying or doing something that they never really said or did. They are increasingly difficult to spot, but there are often signs that just don't look “right”.
- **Items taken out of context:** Sometimes accounts will post videos, photos, or quotes from political candidates that have been taken out of context. Old news stories may also be passed off as recent ones. Look for the full source before jumping to conclusions.
- **News from unofficial sources:** Do not trust any election-related news that comes from social media accounts or websites you do not recognize. Get your news from reputable news organizations and stations, like CBC.
- **Bots:** Bots, or fake accounts, can be used to spread disinformation or to falsely make it seem that there is widespread support for or opposition to a policy or candidate. They may pose as real people. “Trolls” may try to engage people in debates about political issues to sway beliefs or sow distrust in the electoral system.

# RESOURCES TO COMBAT ONLINE DISINFORMATION:

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- Fact-checking tools like [AFP-Canada](#), [MediaSmarts fact search](#), [FactCheck.org](#), and [Snopes](#).
- [MediaSmarts' video](#) with three questions to ask yourself to check if you are thinking critically.
- [MIT Media Lab's article](#) about how to spot DeepFakes.
- [Government of Canada factsheet](#) about resisting disinformation during an election.
- [CTRL-F free online course](#) that teaches the skills needed to evaluate information online.
- [Facebook's guidance](#) on how to mark a Facebook post as “false news”.





**ELECTION 2025  
KEY ISSUE  
BRIEFING MATERIALS  
&  
QUESTIONS FOR  
CANDIDATES**





# EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE

## Key Message

**Progress towards a universal child care system must continue**, to create jobs, alleviate poverty, support children's skill development, and boost workforce participation among women, all of which contribute to achieving equality and economic prosperity.

## About the Issue

- The government introduced the Canada-wide early learning and child care (ELCC) system in 2021.
- By 2023, all jurisdictions achieved, or came close to achieving, an average 50% fee reduction, and by mid-2024, fees in six provinces/territories were set at \$10 a day ([Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2024, p. 2](#)).
- Among women aged 25-54, labour force participation has increased by 1.4 percentage points (110,000 additional workers) since 2019, and incidence of part-time work has declined by over two percentage points ([Stanford, 2024, p. 5](#)).
- Bill C-35, passed in March 2024, established a “permanent, legislated commitment to federal funding” for ELCC (read CFUW’s brief on the bill [here](#)). *The bill passed the House unanimously.*
- Despite advances, child care is far from universally accessible, and access is inequitably distributed. Improvements to staff working conditions and compensation, and increased capital funding, are needed to expand supply and ensure *all* families have access to high-quality child care.

## Questions for Candidates

- Do you support a national, publicly funded, non-profit child care system?
- What steps will your party take and how much has your party budgeted to expand access to high-quality, affordable child care?
- How will your party ensure that access to child care is equitable and inclusive for all families, particularly marginalized families?



## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

### Key Message

**Gender-based violence is an epidemic everywhere in Canada:** in homes, on campuses, on streets, in workplaces, in politics. To prevent violence and femicide, shelters and crisis services need more reliable funding, strict gun control must be enforced, and the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry Calls for Justice must be implemented.

### About the Issue

- 44% of women who have been in a relationship have experienced a form of intimate partner violence since the age of 15. This increases to 61% for Indigenous women, and 67% for LGB+ women ([Cotter, 2021](#)).
- From 2009-2021, the homicide rate against Indigenous women and girls was six times higher than the rate against their non-Indigenous counterparts ([Burczycka and Cotter, 2023](#)).
- 1 in 3 women have been sexually assaulted since the age of 15 ([Cotter, 2021](#)).
- Firearms are the most common method used to kill an intimate partner or child in rural areas, and a disproportionate portion of femicides take place in rural areas ([Sutton, 2023](#)). Firearms are also used as tools to coerce and control. Read CFUW's brief on femicide and guns [here](#).
- The federal government launched the National Action Plan to End GBV in 2022, but there is a lack of oversight and monitoring of provinces' and territories' implementation.
- Women's shelters and crisis centres are struggling to meet the growing demand for services brought on by the pandemic and intersecting housing, opioid, and cost-of-living crises.

### Questions for Candidates

- Will your party implement a National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence and if so, what will it contain? Will it contain a commitment to long-term funding for shelters and crisis services?
- How will your party respond to the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry Calls for Justice, to address the national crisis of MMIWG?
- Do you support the ban on assault-style firearms?
- What steps will your party take to ensure individuals who commit intimate partner violence do not have access to firearms?



# CLIMATE CHANGE & THE ENVIRONMENT

## Key Message

Climate change is a national emergency that demands ambitious, nation-wide action *now*. Canada needs to significantly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, protect our natural resources and ecosystems, and mitigate the devastating impacts that climate change has on communities.

## About the Issue

- 2024 was the hottest year on record, with a global average temperature 1.54 °C above the pre-industrial average between Jan-Sept 2024 ([World Meteorological Organization, 2024](#)).
- The [International Panel on Climate Change \(2021\)](#) reports that between 1.5°C and 2°C of warming will be catastrophic for ecological systems and human health.
- Canada has the 10th highest greenhouse gas emissions globally ([European Commission, 2024](#)).
- Climate change disproportionately impacts the world's most vulnerable people. Women constitute the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent on resources threatened by climate change for their livelihood. The adverse effects of climate change also disproportionately impact Indigenous Peoples and threaten their ability to exercise their rights.
- Climate action can prevent innumerable deaths from air pollution, food insecurity, and extreme weather events, while creating jobs, improving biodiversity, and shifting behaviours to be more sustainable.

## Questions for Candidates

- What will your party do to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, and when will Canada achieve net-zero emissions under your party's leadership?
- What steps will your party take to uphold the right to a healthy environment recognized in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act?
- Will your party implement a carbon tax, and if so, what kind?
- How will your party address the needs of communities adversely affected by environmental degradation and climate change, particularly Indigenous communities?



# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

## Key Message

**The federal government must act to fulfill the Calls to Action and Calls for Justice** recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, as a matter of top priority.

## About the Issue

- “The negative legacies of colonization and racial discrimination continue to cause displacement of Indigenous Peoples and dispossession of their lands and resources, creating situations of homelessness, low educational achievement, unemployment, poverty, poor health and well-being outcomes, addiction, depression, and suicide” (UN Human Rights Council, 2023).
- 23.7% of Indigenous children lived in poverty in 2021, including 37.4% of First Nations children living on reserve (Campaign2000, 2024).
- The rate of violent victimization among Indigenous people aged 15+ was more than double that of non-Indigenous people in 2019, and Indigenous people continue to be over-represented in the criminal justice system (Government of Canada, 2024).
- 35 long-term drinking water advisories are still in effect in First Nations communities (Government of Canada, 2024).
- Resource extraction projects continue across the country in the absence of the free, prior, and informed consent of the Indigenous Peoples affected (UN Human Rights Council, 2023).
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission produced 94 Calls to Action in 2015, but most of them remain uncompleted (Jewell and Mosby, 2023).

## Questions for Candidates

- How will your party address the root causes of poverty and violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls?
- What specific actions will your party take to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
- Does your party commit to obtaining and respecting the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples on all matters affecting them and their lands?
- As an MP, how would you advance reconciliation (or how have you?)





# LONG-TERM CARE & HEALTHY AGEING

## Key Message

People aged 65+ are the fastest-growing demographic in Canada, and it is expected that one in four Canadians will be 65+ by the end of the 2030s. **Significant investments to improve long-term care home conditions and to expand access to ageing at home services are urgently needed to support the growing ageing population.**

## About the Issue

- The COVID-19 pandemic revealed systemic and tragic deficiencies in Canada's long-term care (LTC) homes, particularly in for-profit homes owned by private equity firms and large chains, which had the highest mortality rates ([August, 2021](#)).
- In response, the Health Standards Organization created national [Long-Term Care Service Standards](#), but they are not currently mandatory.
- Ageing in place refers to “the ability to live safely, independently, and comfortably in one's own home and community, regardless of age, income, or capacity” ([National Seniors Council, 2024](#)).
- A 2023 survey found 90% of Canadians aged 45 and above would prefer in-home care over moving to a long-term care facility ([Byers, 2023](#)).
- In addition to being the overwhelming preference of the public, in-home care is also more cost-effective ([National Institute on Ageing, 2022](#)).
- According to an OECD study, while countries such as Denmark and Norway spend about 50% of their total LTC budget on home care, Canada spent only 18% in 2019 ([National Seniors Council, 2024](#)).

## Questions for Candidates

- What are your party's priorities when it comes to supporting Canada's ageing population?
- What, in your view, is the role of the federal government in improving the standards of care in long-term care homes?
- How does your party plan to improve working conditions in long-term care facilities and address the staffing crisis?
- How will your party support Canadians to age at home?



## POVERTY & HOUSING

### Key Message

Poverty rates in Canada are increasing, and the lack of affordable housing is at a crisis point. **A universal basic income program, increased benefits for low-income families and people with disabilities, and significant investments in community/social housing projects are needed to lift millions from poverty and precarity.**

### About the Issue

- The poverty rate in Canada was 9.9% in 2022 (3.8 million people), up from 6.4% in 2020 ([National Advisory Council on Poverty, 2024](#)).
- Many more individuals live in “hidden poverty,” which is when an individual earns above the poverty line, but cannot afford necessities like food, bills, child care, and healthcare services.
- Using a Material Deprivation Index, [Food Banks Canada \(2024\)](#) found that 25% of Canadians are experiencing a poverty standard of living.
- People living in female-led lone parent households had the highest rates of food insecurity in 2022, at 36.5% ([National Advisory Council on Poverty, 2024](#)).
- A universal basic income program could lift 3.2 million families out of poverty, while also creating jobs and giving a boost to businesses and the economy ([Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis, 2021](#)).
- 10.1% of Canadians are living in core housing need, and more than 235,000 people in Canada experience a form of homelessness in any given year ([CMHC, 2021](#)), ([Gaetz et. al, 2016](#)).
- Social housing makes up just 3.5% of Canada’s housing stock, compared to the OECD average of 7% ([Young, 2023](#)).

### Questions for Candidates

- What poverty reduction initiatives does your party plan to implement?
- Does your party support a universal basic income program? If so, how should such a program be implemented?
- What is your party’s plan for the current national pharmacare and dental care programs?
- What will your party do to increase the stock of affordable and social housing?



# MINISTER FOR WOMEN & GENDER EQUALITY

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## Key Message

A dedicated Minister for Women and Gender Equality is critical for ensuring there is a voice for feminist issues at the Cabinet table.

## About the Issue

- Before the election was called, the new Cabinet appointed by Prime Minister Mark Carney did not include a dedicated Minister for Women and Gender Equality.
- This position has existed in some form or another since 1971.
- With femicide on the rise in Canada, the ongoing housing crisis that deeply impacts women and their families, and a broader international backlash on women's rights, there needs to be continued attention and Ministerial leadership on this portfolio.
- CFUW joined hundreds of organizations in signing on to a statement condemning the decision to eliminate the position; read it [here](#).

## Questions for Candidates

- Do you support there being a dedicated Minister for Women and Gender Equality in Cabinet?

# ALL QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

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## Early Learning & Child Care

- Do you support a national, publicly funded, non-profit child care system?
- What steps will your party take and how much has your party budgeted to expand access to high-quality, affordable child care?
- How will your party ensure that access to child care is equitable and inclusive for all families, particularly marginalized families?

## Gender-Based Violence

- Will your party implement a National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence and if so, what will it contain? Will it contain a commitment to long-term funding for shelters and crisis services?
- How will your party respond to the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry's Calls for Justice, to address the national crisis of MMIWG?
- Do you support the ban on assault-style firearms?
- What steps will your party take to ensure individuals who commit intimate partner violence do not have access to firearms?

## Climate Change & the Environment

- What will your party do to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, and when will Canada achieve net-zero emissions under your party's leadership?
- What steps will your party take to uphold the right to a healthy environment recognized in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act?
- Will your party implement a carbon tax, and if so, what kind?
- How will your party address the needs of communities adversely affected by environmental degradation and climate change, particularly Indigenous communities?

## Indigenous Peoples' Rights

- How will your party address the root causes of poverty and violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls?
- What specific actions will your party take to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
- Does your party commit to obtaining and respecting the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples on all matters affecting them and their lands?
- As an MP, how would you advance reconciliation (or how have you?)

## Long-Term Care/Healthy Ageing

- What are your party's priorities when it comes to supporting Canada's growing ageing population?
- What, in your view, is the role of the federal government in improving the standards of care in long-term care homes?
- How does your party plan to improve working conditions in long-term care facilities and address the staffing crisis?
- How will your party support Canadians to age at home?

## Poverty & Housing

- What poverty reduction initiatives does your party plan to implement?
- Does your party support a universal basic income program? If so, how should such a program be implemented?
- What will your party do to increase the stock of affordable and social housing?

## WAGE Minister

- Do you support there being a dedicated Minister for Women and Gender Equality in Cabinet?

# HOSTING AN ALL-CANDIDATES MEETING





## What is an All-Candidates Meeting?

- An opportunity for political candidates and residents to connect before an election. They can follow a variety of formats, but generally an all-candidates meeting gives residents a chance to learn more about the candidates and their political platforms, and to ask questions about the issues they care about.

## Why Should Your Club Host an All-Candidates Meeting?

- To foster interest in civic engagement and political affairs;
- To provide a public service that is central to the democratic process;
- To provide an opportunity for politicians to connect with the voting public;
- To enhance your Club's visibility and profile, both in the community and with political representatives.

## Getting Started

- Find out if any other local groups intend to organize a debate / meeting. If so, you could offer to partner with them or organize your own on a different date, with a different format and in another part of your community.
- Assemble a committee of at least five people, ideally including members who are experienced in publicity and members who are active in the community.
- Develop a budget. Include costs for printing, publicity, venue fees, refreshments, and other expenditures.
- Select two alternate dates for your meeting; a few weeks before Election Day is ideal. A week day evening or during the day on a Saturday are good times to organize the meeting.
- Determine the duration (most all-candidates meetings are no more than 2 hours).
- Choose an accessible venue. Possible locations include schools, university/college campuses, libraries, senior centres, and community centres. Make sure to book the space for a sufficient duration to allow for set up and tear down.

## Contact the Candidates

- As soon as possible, call campaign headquarters of all the candidates. Ask to speak to the Campaign Manager or Scheduling Assistant. If the candidate is not available on the first date of your choice, propose an alternative date.
- Follow-up with an invitation in writing confirming the date, location, and format. If you do not have the format confirmed yet, let them know you will follow-up with these details later.

## Develop your Meeting Format and Questions

- There are many ways to develop the questions you ask candidates: you can use the questions from this toolkit, develop questions by committee, collect questions from residents, or allow attendees to submit questions as they enter.
- You can build in time for questions from the floor, and for voter education, including how and where to vote.
- Your event can also be organized as a more informal meet and greet, allowing candidates and residents to mingle and ask/respond to questions on a more individual basis.
- Your meeting could also be organized around a specific theme (e.g. women's issues), or aim to cover a number of key issue areas including the economy, the environment, human rights, and more.
- Remember that the purpose is to give the audience information about the issues so they can make informed choices on voting day. All questions should be designed to elicit that information in a neutral, non-partisan way—your questions should not be leading/leaning towards one political party's position.

## Select a Moderator and Timekeeper

- Select an experienced moderator. A local prominent person will increase attendance. They should be a good public speaker, familiar with politics, and neutral (i.e., no political affiliation). Local journalists make good moderators.
- Appoint a timekeeper who can be firm. Use a stopwatch and timecards of 1 minute and 30 seconds to flash at candidates. Responses from candidates should be kept to 1 minute each.

## Publicize the Event

- Design posters including the date, place, time, and the candidates' and moderator's names. Include your Club's logo and a contact person.
- Send a press release to your local paper(s) and TV and radio stations.
- List the event in local newspaper calendars.
- Send out posters and email invitations to schools, libraries, community groups, and institutions.
- Set up a Facebook event page and promote the event on social media.
- Prepare CFUW materials to advertise your Club and have someone host a table at entrance to the meeting.

## Equipment Requirements

- A sound system which can accommodate multiple microphones for the candidates, moderator, and questions from the floor (be sure to do a sound check before the event).
- A podium or lectern for the moderator.
- Notepads and pens for the candidates.
- Tables and chairs on the 'stage' for the candidates, plus additional tables for promotional materials in the lobby.
- Time placards (one minute, 30 seconds).
- CFUW banner (to be placed at the entrance).
- Large place names for each candidate.
- Glasses and water pitchers for candidates.
- Refreshments are not required for the audience.

## Program for the Meeting

- Give candidates a table to display election materials outside the door. Do not allow election posters/signs.
- Have someone greet candidates and the moderator and lead them to assigned seats on stage.
- Begin with a welcome and land acknowledgement by your Club's President or another CFUW member who excels at public speaking. Outline the purpose of the event, and give a very brief introduction to CFUW (e.g., aims and objectives of the organization, scholarships awarded locally).
- Have the moderator introduce themselves, state their neutrality, and review the event's format.
- Allow one minute opening statements from each candidate.
- Have the moderator ask questions addressed to all candidates, giving them one minute each to answer. Begin with your most pressing/important questions. Candidates should respond in a rotating order.
- For questions from the audience, limit the time allotted to ask each question, to avoid speeches.
- At the end of the event, have the moderator hand over the meeting to CFUW. Make sure to thank the candidates, moderator, volunteers, and residents for their participation.

## Evaluate and Acknowledge

- Following the meeting, send thank you notes to the moderator, volunteers, and candidates.
- You can have audience members fill out evaluation sheets, if you would like to learn how to improve for future events.



Realizing potential. For all women.  
Le pouvoir par le savoir.

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