

This Election **WE DECIDE**

Our future with a Green New Deal

ORGANIZING TOOLKIT

www.canadians.org/election

#GreenNewDealCanada

#Elxn43

#Vote4aGND

THE
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INTRODUCTION

Our climate is in crisis.

Floods, heat waves, wildfires, and other disasters all point to the fact that we're in a climate emergency. As student activist Greta Thunberg says, ***“the house is on fire and we need to act like it.”***

This federal election, we need to light a fire under candidates so they feel – and act on – the urgency of the crisis.

The stakes are high in the upcoming federal election. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned we have until 2030 to reduce climate pollution by at least 50 per cent to prevent the climate crisis from becoming climate catastrophe. In Western countries like Canada, which have had a disproportionate impact on the crisis, the emissions reductions needed are likely even more significant.

If this federal election results in a majority government, it will likely be in power for four of the 11 years we have left to take urgent climate action.

By building a movement of committed climate voters we can create a path to a different future. If we want to ensure a Green New Deal is a deciding issue this election, thousands of us from coast-to-coast-to-coast need to speak up and show up.

This Green New Deal election toolkit will give you ideas of things you can do to put climate justice front and centre in your community this election.

Calling on candidates and parties to adopt a Green New Deal and getting out the vote for it can help build the grassroots power we need to win a Green New Deal after the election, whichever party (or parties) end up forming government.

We decide our future with a Green New Deal. And we can win it by turning up the heat on the parties in the lead-up to the election.



GETTING OUT THE VOTE FOR A GREEN NEW DEAL

ORGANIZING VOTER OUTREACH AND CANVASSING

The most time-tested way of increasing voter turnout is direct face-to-face engagement with potential voters. It's also a great way of talking with people we wouldn't usually talk to about the importance of climate action and a Green New Deal.

Tips for building your local canvassing team and campaign:

- Develop a local canvassing calendar.
- Canvassing is best done in two or three hour shifts and in pairs, during evenings between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. or between 12 p.m. and 4 p.m. on weekends.
- The best option for door canvassing is in high density urban or suburban residential neighbourhoods, since the objective is to talk to as many people as you can.
- In addition to door-to-door canvassing and voter outreach at pedestrian hubs (main intersections, malls, farmers markets, etc.), try to get to local festivals and concerts with your canvassing team.
- Make recruiting and cultivating local anchors (neighbourhood captains and street captains) through in-person training an ongoing part of your local organizing.
- Build in fun with music and a festive atmosphere.
- Encourage people to organize kitchen parties, BBQs, neighbourhood block parties and gatherings, front yard outreach, etc.
- Encourage members of your team to each call 10-20 people they know and invite them to volunteer on the campaign.

SAMPLE CANVASSING SCRIPT

Hi! My name is _____ and I am a volunteer with the Council of Canadians. What's been concerning you most about the climate crisis?

[Discuss what's concerning them. You can also ask some open-ended questions about local climate crisis impacts and what needs to be done about it.]

Did you know that voters from across the country are demanding a Green New Deal? We're expecting high voter turnout, with millions of people demanding federal parties commit to implementing a Green New Deal that creates at least a million jobs, respects Indigenous rights, and addresses rising inequality and racism.

This election, you've got the power to help make sure that happens, by demanding it and voting for it.

Can we count on you to vote for a Green New Deal and bold action for climate justice?

Supplemental questions:

- Will you be a first-time voter?
- What's your plan for getting to the polling station on Election Day? Will you need help getting there? We may follow-up after the election to discuss your voting experience and plans for winning a Green New Deal, whichever party or parties form government.

Thanks so much!

FAQ

Q. Why do you need my email?

A. To follow up with information about the climate crisis and the election, as well as to share Council of Canadians campaign updates.

Q. Who should I vote for?

A. The Council of Canadians is a non-partisan organization. We do not endorse any party or candidate. You'll be able to read our Voter's Guide to see where the parties stand on key issues.

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR TRAINING AND CANVASSING

Here is an agenda for a canvassing training that you can use or adapt. The times on the agenda are based on a weekday evening. Ideal times to canvass are between 6 and 9 p.m. on weekday evenings, or between 12 and 4 p.m. on weekends.

6:00 - 6:40 p.m. — Training

6:00 - 6:10 p.m. — Introductions

- Welcome people and provide an Indigenous territorial acknowledgement.
- Do introductions and pass around a sign-in sheet.
- Ask: How many people have done canvassing?
- Canvassing FAQs – is this the best use of our time? Yes! According to CTV, in the 2015 federal election, “there were 128 seats where the margin of victory was less than 10 per cent between the winner and the runner-up.” According to CBC, “In 22 ridings, the margin of victory was 1.5 per cent or less.” Every vote can make a difference.

6:10 - 6:15 p.m. — Overview of current moment

- Challenge: Why should we care? The planet is on fire.
- Opportunity: The more of us that vote for a Green New Deal, and speak up for it during the election, the more pressure we can apply to the next government to make sure it implements one.
- Overview of riding:
 - Margin of victory in this riding from last election: _____
 - Share other relevant local political factors

6:15 - 6:25 p.m. — Tips for canvassing

Three tips for good canvassing:

1. Connect with people. Be yourself, smile, and be genuine.
2. Get good information. Make sure people print their name and contact information clearly. Ask for their riding and how they intend to vote as well.
3. Watch the time. Don't spend half an hour with one person, aim for a few minutes so you can see more people.

6:25 - 6:30 p.m. — Materials, role play, and photo (for sharing on social media)

Sample script: Hi, my name is _____ and I am with the Council of Canadians. We are encouraging people to vote for a Green New Deal this election. It's time for a change and we can get that change if more people vote. We want a government that will address the climate crisis by creating a million good jobs, respecting Indigenous rights, and fighting inequality and racism. Will you pledge to vote in the election?

Role play with three types of people you may encounter while canvassing

1. Positive: agrees to vote.
2. Negative: leaning against a Green New Deal or may not vote.
3. On the fence: tell them that every vote matters!

Quick review of materials: maps, canvassing sheet, etc.

Don't forget to take a group photo and send it to greennewdeal@canadians.org and/or tweet it with the hashtag #Vote4aGND so we can post it on our website and social media and inspire others.

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. — Head out in the community for voter outreach and canvassing!

7:30 - 8:00 p.m. — Return, debrief, and wrap up

Materials checklist

- ✓ Signs to direct people to the room where the training is taking place
- ✓ Clipboards
- ✓ Canvass sheets
- ✓ Scripts
- ✓ Sign-in sheet - Name, email, phone, how did you hear about the training?
- ✓ Pens
- ✓ Agenda
- ✓ Maps for where people should canvass

You can generate maps for printing at www.maps.google.ca. Be sure to compare your selected canvassing areas to the riding maps at www.elections.ca (the link at the top left of the main page) to double-check the location of riding boundaries.

CREATIVE ELECTION ORGANIZING IDEAS

There is no limit to the options for engaging people in creative ways to win support for a Green New Deal in this election.

Community organizing during elections can include door-to-door canvassing, outreach at local festivals, organizing a table at local events or a busy street corner, reaching out to progressive musicians and asking them to promote the campaign from the stage at upcoming concerts, and taking voter selfies and sharing them on social media. Some of these ideas are expanded on in this guide.

Be sure to check out the resources available on the Council of Canadians' website including our 2019 Voter's Guide, window signs, and Green New Deal Voter's Pledge.



Image by Skeeze on Pixabay.

GRILL THE PARTIES NOT THE PLANET

June 2019 was the hottest month in recorded history. In Canada and around the world, the climate crisis is pushing us into uncharted heatwave territory.

While the wildfires burn, federal election candidates from coast-to-coast-to-coast will be at local events canvassing for votes.

To put a Green New Deal on the menu, it's time to grill the parties, not the planet.

Grill the Candidates

You can turn up the heat on the candidates by organizing a creative action at one or more of these events.

Organizing a visible presence at candidate events with signs and songs about climate justice that send a strong message to candidates and federal parties. By sharing photos and videos of your actions on social media, it can also build momentum and support for a Green New Deal.

How to take action:

- Organize a group, meet ahead of time, prepare signs, and show up together.
- We suggest a combination of singing climate justice songs, which will get everyone's attention, and asking questions of the candidate about a Green New Deal.

Goals:

- Put pressure on all parties to answer to the Green New Deal principles and the future we want.
- Make a Green New Deal with a just transition an election issue.
- Shape the way the story of this election is told.
- Have fun!

Broad objectives:

- Demonstrate the growing, diverse, and collective power of the climate justice movement.
- Shift the narrative from what we're against to what we're for: we're calling for a Green New Deal, are the candidates on board?
- Get media coverage with demands for bold climate action and critical questioning of party platforms.

Tactics:

- Actions at candidate events, bring signs, sing songs, ask questions, hand out Green New Deal materials.
- Take pictures and videos of your actions and share them on social media.

Together, let's grill the parties to demand a Green New Deal before they grill the planet. Visit www.canadians.org/election for downloadable signs.

How to get media attention

Sending a short press advisory to journalists in your riding who are covering the election can help you get media attention. Make sure you include the basics of your action: who, what, where, why, and when, as well as contact information for one or two participants.

Try also reaching out to journalists through social media before your action, and send photos afterwards!

GRILL THE LEADERS

An effective way to highlight issues during an election campaign is through last-minute protests during the federal party leaders' tours.

This type of action, known as “bird-dogging,” is meant to capture some media attention – including from journalists that are accompanying the leaders' tour to cover it – and to highlight your issues.

Effective bird-dogging, when carried out in multiple communities during an election campaign, can play a role in defining the narrative of what people will vote for on Election Day.

You will usually not get much advance notice – you might only find out about a leader's visit to your community 4 or 5 hours ahead of time, so you'll need to put the pieces in place ahead of time and be ready to go at a moment's notice. This means having materials on hand (including any banners, flyers, and press releases) and having your team prepped, including rehearsing songs and/or chants in advance.

One of the most reliable ways to find out when the leaders' tours are arriving in your community is to follow the journalists in the [Parliamentary Press Gallery](#), many of whom will be assigned to the various leaders tours. You can bookmark this link (or follow the list on Twitter): www.twitter.com/DylanPenner/lists/press-gallery. You can also monitor the parties' websites and social media accounts for event announcements.

Some Sample Questions for Candidates and Party Leaders

1. What will you do to take bold action for the climate that ensures a just transition for workers, fights inequality and racism, and respects Indigenous rights and treaties?
2. What will you commit to that addresses the need for affordable, accessible, and safe transportation that protects and expands good, unionized jobs for manufacturing and transit workers?
3. If your party forms government, what will you do in your first 100 days in office to put in place a plan on the scale of a Green New Deal to address the urgency of the climate emergency?
4. What will you do to implement a Green New Deal with a just transition at its core to minimize the impacts on affected workers as we transition to a fossil fuel-free future, including prioritizing the creation of good unionized jobs, public services, and workers' rights?
5. What will you do to implement a Green New Deal that centres on Indigenous self-determination, including the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Calls to Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and respects Free, Prior, and Informed Consent?

ORGANIZING AN ALL-CANDIDATES MEETING

Hosting an all-candidates climate debate as a local group or together with other groups is a great way to ensure climate justice and a Green New Deal is front and centre in your community during the federal election. Organizing the event will take some time and logistical management. Below is a step-by-step checklist to help make your job easier.

BUILDING A TEAM

Develop a network with other activist groups and organize a planning meeting. Possible allies could include climate justice groups, parent/teacher organizations, faith groups, unions, service clubs, social justice coalitions, anti-racism and migrant justice groups, Indigenous peoples, student groups, environmental organizations, and cultural groups.

Remember that successful partnerships are based on:

- Building trust and mutual respect for one another.
- Shared objectives and responsibilities.
- Clearly defined roles and realistic expectations.
- Having a sense of ownership for the issues.
- Perceiving positive benefits from participation.
- Group consensus in decisions for action.

Determine how much money you will have to spend and draw up a budget that includes ideas for funding.

Delegate responsibilities and duties by assigning people to:

- Send invitations, recruit moderators, prepare questions for candidates, and arrange for refreshments.
- Locate a venue, arrange for any special equipment needed, and look after transportation needs.
- Coordinate publicity, prepare posters, organize telephone trees, prepare hand-outs and inform the local media.

CHOOSING A VENUE

Pick a venue that is accessible, centrally located, on a public transportation route, is wheelchair accessible, and has space for childcare needs.

Plan for transportation for the elderly and recruit volunteer drivers.

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

Invite candidates at least two weeks in advance.

Choose a moderator who is non-partisan, diplomatic, and firm – it's a good idea to have a backup chosen too.

Come up with questions for candidates.

Decide which questions you want to ensure are asked from the floor and have people attend who are prepared to ask them.

Determine a format for the meeting. It shouldn't last longer than two hours.

MAKING SURE PEOPLE HEAR ABOUT THE MEETING

Let people know about the all-candidates meeting by phoning friends and neighbours, informing other groups, asking your local media to run a public service announcement, putting up posters, and sharing your event on social media.

Let the media know about the meeting one week ahead of time and send out a press release after the meeting is over.

Ask people to write post-meeting letters to the editor.



Image by Skeeze on Pixabay.

OTHER CREATIVE IDEAS

ORGANIZE A “SOULS TO THE POLLS” VOTING DRIVE

Are you part of a faith community? Here's a great way to mobilize the vote for a Green New Deal in your local congregation!

A few weeks before election day, organize buses and/or carpooling from your place of worship to the local voter registration / Elections Canada office. If it coincides with one of the advance polling dates, you can also bring people to the advance poll.

Visit [elections.ca](https://www.elections.ca) for voting options in advance of election day. Specific approaches may vary from faith to faith (for example, many adherents of the Jewish faith do not use vehicles during Shabat – most of Friday and Saturday). Consult with members of your faith community about what approach and timing will work best to coordinate people voting.

CHALK THE VOTE FOR A GREEN NEW DEAL

A great family-friendly way to involve the whole community is to “Chalk the Vote.”

The simple act of using sidewalk chalk to promote voting can be a fun way for kids to take part in the campaign. A great example of this is the creative work done in a recent municipal election by the North York Community House.

According to the Maytree Foundation: “On election day, children in the community drew chalk arrows, footsteps, and election symbols like check marks and ballot papers on pathways leading to the polling station.”

During the election you can chalk the vote by promoting the campaign with [canadians.org/election](https://www.canadians.org/election) website, #Vote4aGND twitter hashtag, why you're voting, etc.

For advance polls and election day, you can chalk the vote with large arrows and voting hours and location to remind people when and where to vote. Be sure to confirm the location of your local polling station with Elections Canada at www.elections.ca.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Obtaining local media coverage for your event or action is a great way to bring more attention to your efforts to increase voter turnout and will help amplify our coast to coast efforts. Below, you will find tips and sample templates that you can use to help promote your actions, events, and local organizing.

KEY COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

Messaging:

- A public service announcement (PSA) is essentially a short audio or video ad distributed to media outlets for use in promoting your event to the public.
- A letter to the editor is a short written piece submitted for publication to the relevant contact in the local newsroom (usually a comment or opinions editor). They are usually 100-250 words in length, although newspapers in smaller communities will sometimes run longer letters.
- A media advisory is a brief written announcement intended to get media out to your event (press conference, canvassing blitz, candidates' debate, rally, public forum, information leafleting, etc.) by highlighting why the event is newsworthy and providing sufficient advance notice.
- A press release is intended to give reporters the information they need to write a story (and ideally an incentive to call you for more information and/or interviews).
- Outreach. The act of reaching out to different people, organizations and communities is a central feature of any successful event. Outreach methods include posters and flyers, word of mouth through your networks, distribution of information to email lists, etc.
- Social media is an increasingly important part of any communications and outreach strategy. It can be used to engage journalists, elected officials and the general public – including people in your community. Social media shouldn't be used to replace other forms of communication in your strategy, but when used well, social media can significantly amplify and enrich your overall effort.

TIPS FOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor have the best chance of being published when they respond directly to a recent article in the newspaper (within a day or so of the story's publication) and are written in your own words.

Check the website of the paper you are submitting a letter to for writing guidelines. Many papers will indicate their preferred letter length, format, deadlines, etc.

- Letters to the editor are usually 100-200 words long (although some smaller community newspapers publish longer letters). Shorter letters often have a better chance of being published. Even if your letter is not published, the more letters an editor gets on a given topic, the better the chances are that the newspaper will cover that topic, or at least include a representative sample of letters on the issue.
- You can send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper by emailing it to the appropriate contact or by using the Council Canadians' online form at www.canadians.org/action/letter-editor.

TIPS FOR MEDIA ADVISORIES

If you choose to notify the media about an upcoming event you are organizing, a media advisory is an important tool to provide journalists with advance notice.

Sample Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Date]

Momentum growing this election in [your community/riding] for a Green New Deal, local [event] planned

The [your organization/chapter] is [holding an event] as part of the growing movement to demand a Green New Deal in the upcoming federal election.

WHO: [your organization/chapter] and [any allies involved]. [Include short bios or titles of speakers or musicians if applicable]

WHAT: The groups will be organizing for a Green New Deal this election by [door-to-door canvassing/candidates' debate/block party/etc].

WHEN: [time and date]

WHERE: [location, including address]

WHY: We are in a climate emergency and Canada is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world. A clear majority of Canadians want a Green New Deal that addresses inequality. It's time for our political parties to listen and take action to address the climate crisis.

This event is part of a growing effort from coast-to-coast-to-coast demanding federal parties commit to implementing a Green New Deal after the election.

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For more information, or to arrange an interview in advance, contact [insert contact information, phone #, email address and website] – www.canadians.org/election | Twitter: #Vote4aGND

TIPS FOR PRESS RELEASES

When you write your press release keep in mind what makes a story newsworthy: dramatic human interest, controversy, striking visual images, local angles, tie-ins to current and upcoming major events or anniversaries, to name a few. As with media advisories, be sure to include a contact person.

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Date]

**[Event] in [your community/riding] part of growing movement for a Green New Deal
in federal election**

People are organizing in ridings from coast to coast to coast for a Green New Deal this election.

“The Green New Deal is capturing people’s imaginations and reframing the climate debate, building a groundswell of support for a major social and economic shift,” says _____. “We can start building a Green New Deal, right now, in ridings across the country.”

“Will corporations decide our climate future, or will it be people and communities?” says _____.
“We decide our future with a Green New Deal. We can weave a Green New Deal together by winning commitments from federal candidates from coast to coast to coast.”

“Adopting a Green New Deal is also the next natural step now that Parliament has declared a climate emergency,” says _____. “Now that the recognition of the urgency of the climate crisis is widespread, it’s time to take the next step.”

A Green New Deal for all will ensure the transformation needed to tackle the climate crisis is carried out equitably, that it is rooted in climate justice, that it respects the rights of Indigenous peoples, and that it creates over a million jobs in the process.

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For more information, or to arrange an interview, contact **[insert contact information, phone #, email address and website]** – www.canadians.org/election | Twitter: #Vote4aGND

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook

- Create a local group or page if you don't have one yet.
- Set up an event. Invite everyone you know and ask them to do the same.
- Share news and updates to the event page to engage people considering attending.

Twitter

- Tweeting
 - Sign up at www.twitter.com and tweet regularly – at least a couple times a day in the lead up to events you are organizing.
 - Include links to interesting facts and news reports related to your event, and include the link to information about the event whenever possible (whether it's a link to the Facebook event or www.canadians.org/election).
- You can also take a “voter selfie” – tweet a picture of yourself with a sign about why you're voting for a Green New Deal. For example: “I'm voting for a Green New Deal to fight the climate crisis and inequality #Vote4aGND” NOTE: Ballot selfies – photos of marked ballots - taken at the polling station are currently illegal under Canadian election law.
- Hashtags: Try to use a variety of twitter hashtags (keywords preceded by the # symbol, which help sort information on Twitter by topic and location), including national and local ones. It's best to use no more than two hashtags in a given tweet.
- Key national hashtags people are using to discuss politics and the upcoming election are #cdnpoli and #elxn43 (a reference to the 43rd federal election in Canada).
- Local hashtags will vary widely, depending where you are. Provinces, cities, and communities, generally have local political hashtags in use. Many ridings will have hashtags of their own to discuss local politics during the election. Look for those and use them regularly to reach people engaged in local politics and activism. For example, in Ottawa #ott and #ottpoli are used, as is #onpoli for Ontario-related political tweeting. For campus and student-related tweets, there are hashtags like #uottawa (University of Ottawa).
- Sample tweets:
 - This election let's grill the parties, not the planet. Join us to call on the local candidate to commit to a Green New Deal at their upcoming BBQ. 12-4 p.m. Saturday at [location]. | #topoli #elxn43
 - From coast to coast to coast, people demanding a Green New Deal. Learn more and take action at <https://canadians.org/election> | #cdnpoli #Vote4aGND

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Community members are organizing locally to win progress toward a Green New Deal this election and beyond. Contact us to join the network of Council of Canadian supporters, chapter activists, students, workers, and others taking action for climate justice. Send an email and update us on your progress, or call us toll-free at 1-800-387-7177.

We would love to feature your work on our website and share your stories and ideas with other communities in Canada. Visit our website to find out more about this ongoing campaign. For more information about the Council of Canadians' election campaign visit our website at www.canadians.org/election or call us toll-free at 1-800-387-7177.

Voting is one of the truest acts of democracy – by putting pencil to paper you will join people across Canada to vote for the candidate and the political party you think will best address the climate and other crises we're facing. This is a critical time in our history when the world's leading scientists say climate change must be urgently addressed.

Thank you for taking action to get out the vote for a Green New Deal!

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