



**APATHY  
IS BORING.™**

Connect, Educate  
and Activate.



# ELECTION READINESS TOOLKIT



# INTRODUCTION

**This manual has been developed to help **community organizations**, like yours support youth engagement and involvement when an election is called. This is because youth 18-30 have the lowest voter turnout when compared to all other aged persons and we believe this is the result of youth not being asked to participate in their community or in electoral events.**

We're interested in what young Albertans have to contribute. Youth have a unique perspective on policy, primarily because the concerns they have can be different from older citizens, but also because policies may affect them differently than they might affect older Canadians.

This means that younger people have important, policy-relevant viewpoints that are typically excluded from the democratic process. This exclusion can weaken policy as a result, especially given the significant youth population in Alberta.

A first, feasible step in this engagement process is to encourage young people outside of the post-secondary school system to vote. This manual will therefore provide you with all the basic information you need to support the youth in your area during an election. We hope that organizations like yours will use this manual as a resource to start the conversation.

# THE CURRENT SITUATION

**The 2015 federal election saw an impressive rebound in youth voter engagement following decades of decline in turnout. We want to build on this momentum in coming elections.**

Just because youth turnout has been low doesn't mean they don't care about particular issues. Surveys have found they're far from apathetic and they actually engage in some form of politics more often than those in older generations. That includes conversations about political issues, participating in protests or signing petitions, just to name a few (Samara Centre for Democracy, 2015). Because the connection isn't always so obvious, it's helpful to remind them to take that next step to vote.

**ALBERTA** routinely has some of the lowest voter turnout rates in Canada. Recent data indicates that Alberta's youth are the least likely to cast a ballot federally or provincially (Statistics Canada, 2015; Elections Canada, 2012). In the 2015 provincial election, overall voter turnout was 53%; youth voter turnout was much lower, at only 25% (Elections Alberta, 2015).

## WHY AREN'T YOUNG ALBERTANS VOTING?

There are a number of reasons that might explain this. Alberta has the youngest average population amongst the provinces. For a while it also had the highest dropout rate for both university and college, and the lowest rates of participation in post-secondary education. Because education and environment are such key factors in explaining rates of voter turnout and civic engagement, dropout rates may be important signifiers in exploring Alberta's voter turnout. This further indicates the need for resources and alternative spaces for education when it comes to democratic participation.

What's central is that youth see a connection between politics and their daily lives, are regularly reminded of upcoming elections, and invited to take part.

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

### KEEP YOUTH ENGAGED IN THEIR COMMUNITY

Make time to talk about issues they might care about and policy changes that might impact them. Find opportunities for them to serve others, building a sense of pride and caring for the communities they live in.

*- Youth Central in Calgary provides a range of volunteer opportunities that young people can sign up for at their convenience and interest. They also encourage civic engagement through participation in the Mayor's Youth Council.*

### ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY, CONVERSATION, AND DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

Foster an environment where youth can express themselves without fear. Take into account the reality of different cultures, demographics, and lifestyles. Regardless of appearance or personal style and skills, everyone needs to be respected for their abilities, knowledge, and the diversity they bring to the table.

*- Edmonton's iHuman Youth Society serves youth living through all sorts of different social issues. They provide care and healing through the arts, as well as opportunities for healthy youth activism.*

### GOOD COMMUNICATION

This means being patient and listening to all of what someone has to say, even if you don't agree. People must feel that their opinions and contributions count. Good communication also includes following up after the fact. This helps everyone understand the link between input and outcomes.

*- The Alex Community Food Centre in Calgary opens their weekly youth gatherings with a sharing circle, where participants can talk about themselves in a fun, open environment.*

## WORK TOGETHER

Promote civic engagement as a fun group-based activity, rather than a lonely chore. People respond better when they're asked by friends. Allowing them to volunteer and participate together, results in more resilient and longer-term commitments.

*- The Local Good in Edmonton is famous for their cash mobs, where large groups of people encourage support for local businesses by shopping there together.*

## BE FLEXIBLE AND DON'T FORCE IT

Encourage youth to vote but don't shame them. Not everyone is comfortable with participating in the electoral system so let them set the pace. They should feel invited to act without feeling guilty for not fulfilling a duty.

*- This is what we do! Apathy is Boring goes to where youth are, invite them to talk to us, and show them why voting is cool, rather than preaching to them.*

## MAKE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN GENERATIONS

Partnerships work well when connections are made between different generations who have parallel experiences, interests, resources, and networks to share. Youth and adults have different skills, and it's important that the two recognize the assets in each other. Once youth and adults are engaged in a true partnership, understanding and empathy develops.

*- Pathways Community Services Association in Calgary hosts nights for youth to hang out and have fun but parents and elders also attend to provide their own perspectives.*

# VOTING: THE BASICS

## + Am I eligible to vote?

To vote in the Alberta provincial election you must be:

- 18 years old
- A Canadian citizen
- Resident of Alberta

## + When do I vote?

Alberta's election laws say an election normally must take place for years after the last election on a day between March 1 and May 31. Since the last Alberta election was in 2015, that means the next election will be in 2019.

## + Advance Polls

If you can't make it on Election Day, you can vote at Advance Polls. These are special voting stations where you can vote for a candidate in your home riding while at another location. Advance Polls are open for a number of days the week before Election Day.

## + Where do I vote?

You vote at a polling station, often a school or community center, which is close to where you live. It's easy to find out where to vote.

- Find out where to vote at the Elections Alberta website
- Find out where to vote by phone: 1-877-422-8683

If you have already voted in an election then you will be sent a Where-to-Vote card in the mail.

## + Who am I voting for?

You are voting for one of 87 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) to represent your local community. The party that elects the most MLAs forms the next government, and that party's leader becomes Premier of Alberta.

Go here to see who your current MLA is and what riding you live in: <http://streetkey.elections.ab.ca/>

### + Am I registered to vote?

If you have voted in the past, you will already be registered. If you moved at any point over the past four years, you'll need to update that information. You can do that at [voterlink.ab.ca](https://voterlink.ab.ca). You can also use this website to double check if you're registered.

### + How do I register to vote?

There are a couple of ways to register your name on the List of Electors:

- Register to vote online at Voterlink .
- Voterlink service ends a few days before the election.
- Register by contacting Elections Alberta:

**Email:** [info@elections.ab.ca](mailto:info@elections.ab.ca)

**Phone:** (780) 427-7191

**Toll Free:** 310-0000 then dial (780) 427-7191

### + What ID do I need to vote?

If you're already registered:

- You'll receive a voting card in the mail before Election Day. All you need to do is bring that.

If you're not registered

- Register right before voting with a piece of government ID (Driver's License or Alberta ID) that shows:
  1. Your picture
  2. Your name
  3. Your current address

If you don't have a Driver's License or Alberta ID:

- On Election Day or at Advance Polls bring TWO pieces of ID
- Both pieces of ID must show your name and ONE must have your current address
- Visit the Elections Alberta website to see a full list of what works as ID

For more answers about special circumstances around voting check out the FAQ at the Elections Alberta website: <https://www.elections.ab.ca/voters/faq/>

# 2019 STREET TEAM MANUAL QUICK REFERENCE

## What is Apathy is Boring (A is B)?

Apathy is Boring is a non-partisan, charitable organization that supports and educates youth to be active and contributing citizens in Canada's democracy.

## What does “apathy” mean?

n. Lack of interest or concern, especially regarding matters of general importance or appeal; indifference.

## What does it mean when you say “non-partisan”?

Apathy is Boring is a non-partisan organization, which means we don't support or oppose any given party, candidate, campaign, or policy. It means that our content and programming are balanced and impartial.

## The Vote Program

During elections, the Vote Program activates Apathy is Boring's network of community partners to encourage less engaged youth to vote in municipal, provincial, territorial and federal elections through evidence-based interventions.

## Outreach Tips

### (Improvisation recommended!)

- + The first thing you say after 'hello' is key to opening up the conversation.
- + Try to come up with your own way of saying things with the same messaging.
- + Your posture and positioning conveys a lot to the person you are speaking with.
- + Every situation will need a slightly different approach.
- + Remind yourself of the environment that you are doing outreach and design your approach to suit it.
- + Get to the point if people are in a rush.
- + Take your time with people if they have the time.
- + Learn the basic things about registration, and voting.
- + Remember it is very important to stay non-partisan as you are representing Elections Alberta and A is B, both of which cannot influence voting choices.

### 1- Greetings:

- + Hey there! - Have you heard that there is an Alberta provincial election next year?
- + We are talking to folks about voting in the next provincial election...
- + Did you know there is /have you thought about the upcoming election?
- + Would you like tips on how to register to vote?

### 2- Who are we?

- + (My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and) I'm with "Apathy is Boring" a non-partisan organization working with Elections Alberta to connect with people our age about the provincial election, with the aim of improving youth voter turnout.
- + If they are in a rush, or decline offer them materials with info about how to vote.

### 3- What am I doing here?

- + "I'm here today/tonight because we think it's important for young people to have their voice heard in the upcoming election and to be represented.

### 4- Election Materials and Survey?

- + Have you registered/voted before?
- + If Yes: Terrific! We need more people like you.
- + If No: Offer elections materials pointing out how easy it is to register, how to find out where to vote and when to vote.

### 5- Once they have registered, ask them if they want to receive updates from A is B.

#### WHAT IF SOMEONE IS AGAINST VOTING?

- + "I don't vote." Ask them – "why not"
- + "Voting won't make a difference." Ask them – "why is that?" Add – Voting is just one aspect of Democratic participation, Apathy is Boring tries to encourage people to make a difference in any way. Sign up to stay in touch/give them flyer.
- + "All politicians are the same – you can't trust them"
- + Ask them – "what issues are important to you?" Encourage them to register and to vote, tell them they can get information and register later if they change their mind, or stay in touch with A is B.

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