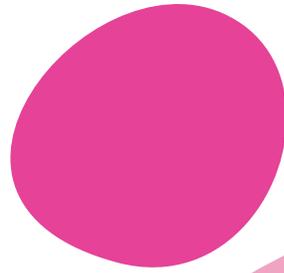




inclusionBC



Municipal Election Guide 2022

A Toolkit for Voters

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A toolkit for voters

This guide provides tips on how to get involved in the elections, raises issues of concern for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and outlines how to vote.



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What Local Elections are About

General local elections in British Columbia are held every four years on the third Saturday in October.

The next general local election will be held on Saturday, October 15, 2022.

Local elections are held for the municipalities, regional districts, boards of education, local community commissions, and trust areas (Islands Trust).

On October 15, voters will elect school trustees, mayors, and councillors for their local communities. These elected leaders make important decisions that affect inclusion in our schools and communities.

Local Elections are a good time to raise visibility on disability rights and inclusion to help people understand why these issues are important and to grow support for our movement. In this guide, we focus on two main issues: education and housing.

School trustees and their boards of education are responsible for creating policies, setting budgets and priorities for the school district, talking with the government, hiring staff, and approving courses.

We need School Trustees who will stand up for the rights of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be educated in inclusive classrooms at their schools.

Mayors and Councillors are responsible for creating and evaluating policies, bylaws, programs, and services in a community.

We need municipal leadership who will act on the current housing crisis and ensure that everyone is able to live with dignity in their community.

Local elections offer a great opportunity to influence local governments and educate both candidates and the public about inclusion. To raise questions in the upcoming election, you can attend all-candidates meetings and ask questions or contact candidates directly.

What We Hope to Achieve

- People with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families are present on the municipal election agenda.
- People with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families have the tools they need to meet with candidates to share issues affecting their lives.
- The voices of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families are heard in all-candidates forums and in the local media.
- People with intellectual and developmental disabilities exercise their right to vote.



- School trustee candidates commit to improving the education system for all students by committing to policies and practices that further inclusive education. **#AllStudentsBelong**
- School trustees and the public are aware of and committed to ending the use of restraints and seclusions in BC schools. **#StopHurtingKids**
- School trustees and the public are aware of how current practices are excluding students and are committed to ensuring their right to full-time education.



- Mayors and Councillors are invested in creating inclusive housing options by committing to develop sustainable plans for inclusive housing developments, policies, and programs. **#KeyToHome**
- Mayors, Councillors, and the public are educated and aware of the effect that the current economic climate and affordability gap has on housing options for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.
- Mayors, Councillors, and the public are aware of and committed to helping people with intellectual and developmental disabilities live with dignity in their communities. **#InclusiveHousing**

Issues of Concern and Recommendations

a. Inclusive Education

How Municipal Elections Influence Inclusive Education

Every school-age child in British Columbia has the right to inclusive education. This means that students with intellectual and developmental disabilities or any student who needs additional support must have access to the accommodations and resources they need to learn, be part of all school activities, and socialize with their peers.

When children of all backgrounds and abilities grow and learn together in schools, they see that inclusion benefits everyone. Inclusive schools help us build a world where everyone is welcomed and celebrated. This helps to create strong and peaceful communities.

School trustees decide school board policies and budgets that apply to all schools in their district. Their decisions affect if students are welcomed and well supported so they can enjoy the same benefits as other students without discrimination. Their leadership and commitment to inclusion can impact a culture of inclusion within school districts.

There are still significant barriers to inclusive education for many students, and our communities need school trustees who will be willing and ready to learn about the issues and take action to improve them.



Recommendations for Candidates

Inclusion BC recommends school districts act on the following areas to improve access to education for all students:

Access

Create policies and budgets that guarantee support and accommodations so that students with intellectual and developmental disabilities can fully access inclusive education without discrimination.

Safety

Stop the use of physical restraints and seclusion by creating strong reporting processes of these harmful practices and offer training to staff on the use of positive behaviour support approaches, prevention, and de-escalation.

Learning

Fully support school staff to use research-based inclusive education approaches such as Universal Design for Learning so that they can better support all learners' needs and ensure all students receive quality education in inclusive classrooms.

Full-day education

Create reporting processes to track how many students attend school on reduced schedules and create solid plans with enough support to make sure all students can attend school for the full day.

b. Inclusive and Affordable Housing

How Municipal Elections Influence Inclusive Housing

More than **5,000** people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are looking for homes in British Columbia. Mayors and City Councilors decide on regulations, policies, and the types of housing being built locally. Municipalities investing in inclusive housing and working with community partners is essential for increasing accessible housing across the province.

In preparation for the upcoming election, we would like to share two pledge campaigns to raise the issues of access to inclusive and affordable housing for people with your local candidates. We have also provided a shareable film to help center the voice of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in these important conversations.





Make Housing Central Pledge

To support votes in the upcoming election the [BC Non-Profit Housing Association \(BCNPHA\)](#), the [Co-operative Housing Federation of BC \(CHF BC\)](#), and the [Aboriginal Housing Management Association \(AHMA\)](#) — have joined efforts on an interactive database that will support voter and candidates to understand the needs of their community. The pledge outlines five commitments:

1. Include safe, affordable, and culturally supportive housing targets to meet the unique needs of Indigenous people in housing needs reports
2. Streamline municipal permitting and rezoning processes to fast-track development of rental housing, with a specific focus on affordable rental housing
3. Waive development cost charges (DCCs) for non-profit and co-op housing development
4. Contribute public land to non-profit and co-op housing developments for new affordable homes
5. Delegate approvals of non-profit and co-op housing developments that are consistent with Official Community Plans to municipal staff

To learn more about this pledge and access additional resources, visit makehousingcentral.ca

Accessible Housing Pledge Project

A small, grassroots group of disabled people dedicated to improving equity and quality developed this project and are asking for people's help in 3 ways:

1. That they use this site to learn more about the urgent need for accessible housing
2. That they send an email to their local candidates and ask them to sign the pledge
3. That they share this pledge with their contacts across the province, asking them to do the same

To learn more about the accessible housing pledge project, visit accessiblehousingpledge.ca

The Changes that will Change Lives.

Inclusion BC and our members make three recommendations that can be implemented immediately to strengthen our communities and support inclusive housing options for all.



Share this short film (<https://youtu.be/4lD9qBVhZM4>) with your candidates.

In addition to the elements of the pledges we have shared above, Inclusion BC urges you to ask your candidates how they will include people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in housing developments and community housing plans.



Important Planning Considerations for Inclusive Housing

Inclusive housing should provide people with a sense of home and belonging within their community and includes the following planning considerations:

Choice and Control over living space is fundamental to the concept of home and quality of life. Do people have choice and control within their homes and the same rights and responsibilities as others?

Accessibility & Affordability: Housing must meet basic requirements that give people access to both their homes and their community.

The number of people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities is important when designing inclusive housing. Do housing plans and developments reflect the natural and diverse proportion of the community?

Diversity: Is the housing accessible to everyone? Is the housing specialized to meet the support needs of all people?

Sustainability: Housing needs to provide stability and a sense of security to ensure a strong foundation for an inclusive and healthy life in the community.



How to get Involved with the Elections

We can all help to advance inclusion by:

Learning about inclusion barriers and solutions through resources

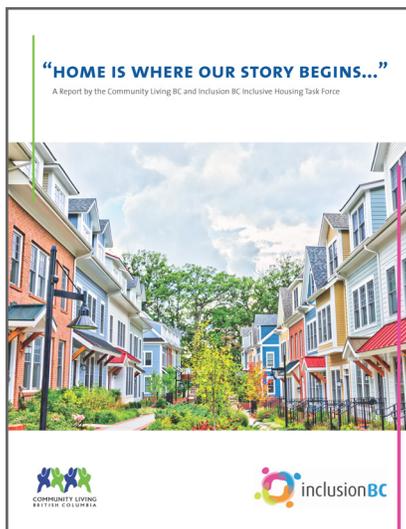
Getting involved in elections

Voting for candidates who support inclusion

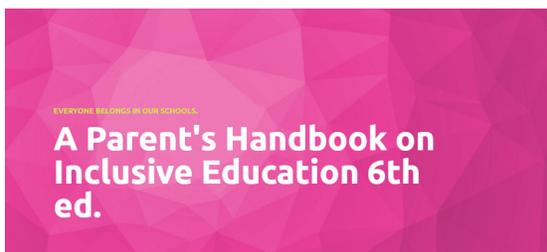
Spreading the word of the elections

Learning

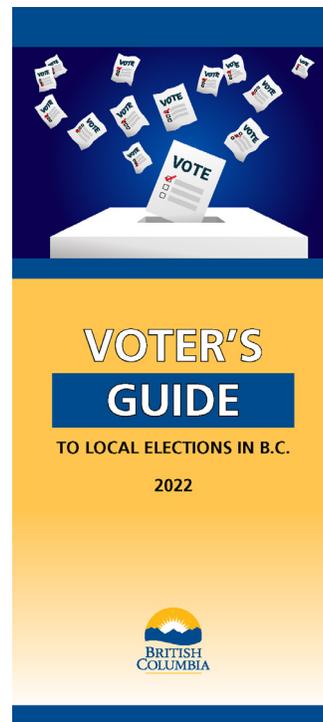
Learning about barriers and solutions is key to an inclusive understanding. Resources with best practices are available on inclusionbc.org



[A report on Inclusive Housing](#)



[A parent's handbook on Inclusive Education](#)



Learn more about B.C.'s 2022 Local Elections by reading the B.C. Voter's Guide: <https://inclusionbc.org/bcvotersguide/>

Getting Involved in Elections Activities

Running as a Candidate

If you are thinking of running as a candidate, information can be found at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/governance-powers/general-local-elections/thinking-of-running>

If you're not ready to be a candidate, you can also volunteer to help candidates who are committed to inclusion.

Getting to Know the Candidates

Meeting with or contacting candidates in your area is a civil right and a good starting point to raise concerns and talk about rights or social changes you would like to see.

All contact information about candidates can be found online at <https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/> Let them know who you are and how they can advance inclusion in education and housing by using data highlighted in our guide.

Attend **all-candidates meetings** in your community.

All-candidates meetings are events where candidates from all parties present their ideas and proposals. Attending one of these meetings in your community is a powerful way to promote the citizenship of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Asking questions in this public forum increases the visibility of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and invites the community to understand and support our issues.

All-candidates forums may also be held on-air by local television and radio stations. If they welcome callers, phone in with questions. If the forum will not have an open question period, contact the station ahead of time and request the host to ask a question on an issue that's important to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in your community.

Hear what the candidates have to say. Find out what they identify as their priorities and ask them questions about inclusion. Will they commit to upholding inclusion rights as a top priority? What will they do to advance inclusion?

Vote!

Voting is an important right. It allows you to choose who you think will best represent you and your community.

Local government mailing addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and websites are available online from CivicInfoBC at: civicinfo.bc.ca/directories

To Vote on October 15th, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older on October 15, 2022
- Be A Canadian citizen
- Have lived in BC for at least six months
- Have lived in the local community where you plan to vote for at least 30 days

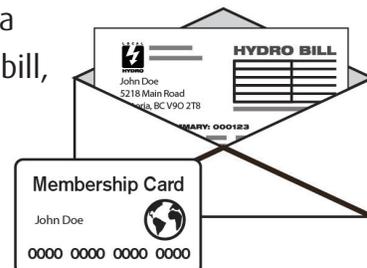
How do I get on the Voters' List?

Register to vote online at <https://elections.bc.ca/voting/register-to-vote/>
If you are already on the Voters' list, you will receive a voting card in the mail.

If I am not on the Voters' List, can I still Vote?

If you are not on the Voters List, or if you live in a community that does not use the Voters List, you can register to vote at a voting place (polling station). However, there may be line-ups and you will need one piece of government ID to register. This government ID must include your name, photo, and address (like a Driver's licence, BC ID or BC Services Card). If you don't have ID that shows your address, you can also bring a document that shows your address and name (utility bill, phone bill, bank statement, prescription container, etc).

Visit the Elections B.C. website for more information on ID:
<https://elections.bc.ca/voting/what-you-need-to-vote/voter-id/>



When can I vote?

Advance voting: Find out when advance voting is happening in your community if you don't want to wait until October 15th. Every BC community will have at least one Advance Voting opportunity on Wednesday, October 5th.

Special voting opportunities are also held in some hospitals and care facilities for people who can't travel to a voting place.

Mail-in Ballots are another option for people who can't get to a voting place. Contact your local government office to find out how to vote by mail.

General Voting Day: Anyone can vote at a voting place between 8 am and 8 pm on **Saturday, October 15th**.

Where do I vote on Election Day?

On Election Day you vote at a voting place or "polling station." The address of the voting place will be sent to you in the mail along with your voters' card. Voting places can be schools, town halls or other places in your community where people gather. If you don't get this information, call your municipal government office and ask them where to vote, or visit their website to find where to vote.

What if someone asks who I voted for?

Your vote belongs to you. Your vote is a secret that you can keep to yourself unless you want to share it with others.

What if I need help to vote?

If you get to a voting place but find it difficult to get into the building or room where voting is happening, you can ask an election official to bring you a ballot (this is called "curb-side" voting). Once you are at the voting place, you can also ask the staff, a friend or relative to help you vote.

To read more about voting accessibility, visit:

<https://elections.bc.ca/voting/what-you-need-to-vote/voting-accessibility/>



Help Spread the Word

Send this toolkit and any other material to families and volunteers in your community, network or in your organization. If you work for an organization, link it from your website and post it where you can.

Encourage and support others to speak to their candidates. This could be on their doorsteps, in individual meetings, on social media or at all-candidates meetings.

- Follow news stories about the elections and the candidates
- Write letters to news media editors or submit comments online talking about the importance of inclusion
- Talk to friends and neighbours about the elections
- Talk about the importance of inclusion in local elections
- Encourage your friends and neighbours to get involved and to vote for candidates who support inclusion
- Remind them that **October 15** is Election Day and encourage them to get out and vote
- Join us on social media (@InclusionBC) and share our messages about the elections and the importance of inclusion issues





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