

Your Guide to Hosting an All-Candidates Meeting

**(That is inclusive, engaging, and
actually interesting to attend !)**



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1. Organizing an All Candidates Meeting

In Canada, the next federal election will take place on October 21, 2019. On, or before (at pre-polls), this day, Canadians will elect Members of Parliament (MP's) across the country who will represent the views and interests of their constituents in the legislative assembly. [The Elections Canada](#) website contains the information you need to vote, including your electoral district, checking or updating your registration, [student voting](#), [accessible polling stations](#), [information for Indigenous voters](#), and voting by mail.

What is an All-Candidates Meeting?

At an All-Candidates Meeting, residents have a chance to hear from the candidates, evaluate political platforms, and ask questions about current issues. All nominees running for MP in a particular district are invited to gather and share their views. These events are non-partisan, meaning all political parties are invited and attendees get to hear about the issues from many different perspectives. The focus may be broad and cover a range of issues, or be focused on an issue of particular importance to the hosting group. Examples include, but are not limited to, poverty, women's rights, climate change, business, Indigenous rights, and immigration. Local media often cover and even moderate these events. Typically, All-Candidates Meetings take place in locations like community centres, town halls, and school auditoriums which are shared community spaces and feel welcoming to people from all walks of life.

Why host an All-Candidates Meeting?

Hosting an All-Candidates Meeting is an ideal way to understand where your local candidates stand on issues that matter to you, your organization, and your community. These meetings offer your community an interactive way to learn about the issues and form an opinion about those running for office. When you host a meeting you play an important part in local democracy. If done in a way that is engaging, inclusive, and interesting you could foster an interest in civic engagement and political affairs. For groups with particular issues that are important to them, it is an opportunity to invite the broader community to learn about that issue from a non-partisan perspective.

In recent years there has been a trend towards “us and them” politics in Canada, the United States, and abroad. This has contributed to a culture where respect for difference is waning alongside constructive inquiry and non-partisan debate. More than ever we need to make space for honest conversations that allow people to better understand each other's lived experiences while searching for solutions that address the environmental, economic, social, and cultural challenges of our time . If thoughtfully organized, with a diversity of perspectives represented, an All-Candidates Meeting has the potential to be such a space.

2. Fostering Inclusion, Accessibility and Engagement

When engaging in this public service, it is so important to seek out the voices and interests of your community's diverse members during planning, hosting, and communicating about your meeting. It is important to note that these types of meetings are notoriously under-attended compared to the number of eligible voters. Before you begin planning, take a few minutes to consider why this may be and what could be done to engage a diversity of people. When planning the culture of your event (the way you speak, interact and structure things) here are some points to consider:

- **Bring in new energy.** The culture of an All-Candidates Meetings is usually quite formal and tends to attract an older (often Caucasian) demographic. To attract new attendees, you will need to do things differently. Sounds simple, right? This may require getting different people, energy, and ideas on board and letting go of the belief that things need to be done in a certain way in order to be acceptable.
- **Have a diverse planning committee.** If your meeting is open to the general public, your planning committee should reflect the diversity of your community (for example, all genders, ethnic groups, new Canadians and refugees, youth and young adults, parents with small children, seniors, people with different physical abilities, socio-economic groups, Indigenous peoples). Even more important, be open to the ideas and energy that emerge from this diverse group, recognizing that their input may result in an All-Candidates Meeting that is different than the typical format. That's okay- in fact that may be exactly what is needed to get people excited about attending!
- **Consider transportation.** To ensure that lower income people, seniors, or people without transportation can attend choose a location in their neighbourhood(s) or provide free transportation. Events are often held in places that are considered central for those with vehicles but not necessarily for those who take public transit, walk, cycle, or have no means of transportation.
- **Consider childcare.** To create an event that is welcoming to parents with young children consider having a room where their children can play while parents watch the event on a screen. As long as there is an internet connection this can be done through programs such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Facebook Live, or Skype. These also provide features so people can ask questions remotely. Even better, offer childcare so parents of young children can participate in the main meeting hall. Keep in mind that the bedtimes of small children are often between 7-9pm and nap time is between 1-3pm.

- **Engage youth.** To engage youth and young adults, invite representatives to join the planning committee as they will infuse new ideas about how to connect with their demographic, how to use technology to enhance the meeting, and how to structure the event so it is engaging for a larger range of people. Remember that youth will have different perspectives influenced by their race, gender, income and other characteristics. They will also have a range of issues that interest them. Take this into consideration when assembling diverse youth representation.
- **Reaching people who can not attend.** To reach people who can not attend in person consider broadcasting the event using the local television station (if you have one), or livestream the event on Facebook or other online platform. Invite the local newspaper to attend as they will often write really great articles on the event or publish answers candidates give to certain questions.
- **Create a community environment.** Providing food and/or refreshments is a great way to create a community feel and entice people to attend. Consider other ways you could create a community feel such as door prizes, online single question surveys, and ways for people to share their perspectives about what they are hearing (such as having a hashtag for the event or facebook group).
- **Ensure building is accessible.** Ensure the venue you choose is accessible for everyone including people who use a cane, wheelchair, or walker, and people who do not have access to private transportation. Consider reaching out to organizations such as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and Community Living for their input.
- **Ensure location feels welcoming.** The location should feel neutral and inviting, for this reason it may be wise to avoid places that could have strong negative associations for some people such as places of worship.
- **Include assistive technologies.** Plan for the use of assistive technologies (such as microphones, speakers, and internet) regardless of the size of the room.
- **Be language inclusive.** Consider the languages spoken in your area and let this inform your planning:
 - a) Will you provide interpreters (i.e. American Sign Language, verbal language)?
 - b) Will you host more than one debate in order to accomodate language needs?
 - c) Will you use multiple languages when advertising your event?

- **Increase attendee participation.** Allowing for attendees to interact with candidates can help shift the culture of the meeting from “observational” to “participatory”, which can be more engaging for some people. How participatory do you want your meeting to be? Here are some questions to consider:
 - a) Will you allow the audience to respond to show agreement or disagreement? What rules will govern this?
 - b) Will you host a meet-and-greet?
 - c) Will you do something fun such as a round of “Hot Seat” questions where candidates answer many questions briefly in a short amount of time? Will these questions help the audience learn about the candidate personally or their platform (or both)? Will they all be serious or will some be lighthearted? Will you show these questions to the candidates in advance or leave it as a surprise?

3. Getting started

- **Assemble a committee or working group** which includes members who are good at publicity, interested in current issues, and are active in your community. Remember to consider diversity and representation. All residents of your riding should be welcome to participate in the committee.
 - **Finding Members may be challenging.** Consider looking in the following places:
 - Family/friends
 - Local organizations (social service, unions, environmental, youth, Indigenous, women’s, older adults, LGBTQ+, religious, new Canadians)
 - Local clubs & groups (service clubs, sports & recreation, cultural and arts)
 - Neighbourhood associations
 - Business associations
 - Professional associations
 - Volunteer pool/lists
 - Online groups
 - Schools (highschool & post-secondary)
- **Decide dates.** Determine where, when and who else is sponsoring community debates. Decide on your first and second choice of dates for your event. Schedule all committee planning meetings so people can plan ahead.
- **Assign roles.** By assigning roles you can reduce confusion, ensure work load is evenly distributed and increase the likelihood that people will agree to be involved as they see the scope of their commitment. The following roles may be taken on by one or more people:
 - **Group Coordinator**
 - Schedules meeting dates
 - Creates agendas & facilitates meetings
 - Group spokesperson
 - Tracks tasks and due dates
 - Assists other committee members as needed

- **Secretary**

- Take minutes of meetings and circulate
- Record All-Candidates Meeting (record or work with Outreach Coordinator to ensure media is coming), and/or take notes)
- Coordinate the development of candidate questions in whatever way is determined by the Planning Committee

- **Outreach Coordinator**

- Design advertisements (print & online)
- Coordinate online engagement (including getting ideas, potential questions and feedback from the public)
- Coordinate media coverage via newspaper, TV, and social media

- **Candidate Coordinator**

- Research who is running in each riding and contact them
- Sends all information and corresponds as needed answering questions, providing direction, and giving reminders
- Meet Candidates on the day of the event and introduce them to the Moderator

- **Logistic Coordinator**

- Book a suitable venue
- Organize materials and equipment required for the event
- Organize technology
- Develop and distribute the itinerary for the event
- Secure the Moderator & guests giving welcoming remarks and/or Land Acknowledgement
- Organize a clean up team for after the event

- **Seek Indigenous participation.** Contact your neighbouring Indigenous communities/governments/organizations to ask for their consent/blessing to host the event on their traditional lands. Consider inviting the Chief (or other representative) to provide a short greeting at the event. Taking these steps will add relational accountability and local relevance to the Territorial Acknowledgement at the beginning of the meeting. See sample Territorial Acknowledgements included in this package. Also invite their participation in the event. For example, on the steering committee, as a Moderator, and/or to write a question to ask candidates.
- **Collaborate with other local organizations.** This can be an effective way to share costs and to broaden the demographics of those who attend. Asking each organization to contribute a question may also be an effective way of crafting some thoughtful questions for the debate.

- **Connect with Candidates.** Find out who is running in your electoral district. Contact each candidate and their manager as soon as possible to establish their willingness to participate and their availability. Follow up in writing with details, format, rules, and type of campaign materials that can be distributed. Inform them how many tables they have to display material, where the table(s) will be located, and if they need to bring a sign to fasten on the table in front of their candidate during the debate. Ask each candidate for a short biography if you would like to use it to advertise or introduce the candidate. Be specific about the desired length. If you don't hear back, follow up with a phone call as candidates receive hundreds of emails during campaign time.
- **Develop a budget.** Include costs of printing, publicity, assistive technologies (i.e. microphones, speakers), venue fees, and refreshments. Consider what things you can use for free, or purchase at a reduced/economical rate. Some cost saving tips include, using social media for advertisement instead of only posters or radio/newspaper adds, asking for donations of food for refreshments, and securing a low cost/free location with a sound system included.
- **Raise necessary funds.** The event itself should be free to attendees to ensure that all can attend. That said, it will likely cost something to host. Effective and time efficient fundraising might include asking people to make modest contributions and/or sharing the cost between two or more organizations. For example: If the cost of the event is \$500, and there are three organizations co-hosting, the cost for each organization would be \$167. If being covered by one organization you could ask 25 people to donate \$20/each.
- **Choose a date and time.** Early evening during the week or mid-day on a Saturday seems to work well. Select two alternate dates as well. A few weeks before election day is ideal for maximum impact.
- **Choose a venue.** Ensure the meeting space is appropriately sized, has good acoustics, is conveniently located, and physically accessible to all members of your community. See section on Inclusion, Accessibility and Engagement.
- **Determine the duration.** Most meetings are no more than two hours. See the sample schedule below.

4. Develop your Meeting Format

Give careful consideration to how you will structure your meeting. Will it be a formal meeting, an informal meeting, or some combination of the two? In formal meetings the questions are prepared in advance and each Candidate has the same amount of time to answer. In informal meetings there is typically more audience engagement which could include taking audience questions, having a meeting-and-greet, or a round of “speed dating”. Regardless, ensure that there is time for Candidates to introduce themselves, provide an overview of their platform, and answer voters’ questions.

Choose any of the components below and customize your own event!

Welcome & Introductions	Moderator welcomes everyone and thanks them for attending. They also review format for the event and expectations (and consequences) for conduct.	4-5 mins
Land Acknowledgement	Moderator, committee member or guest provides Territorial Land Acknowledgement (see samples)	3-4 mins
Candidate Introductions	Moderator introduces each Candidate using a biography submitted by the candidate. Alternatively, you could do another form of introduction that allows candidates to be more personable with the audience, such as a “Hot Seat” where a mixture of questions are asked and answered within a short amount of time. See sample Hot Seat questions below. Another option is to combine personal introduction (1-2 minutes) with platform introductions (2-3 minutes).	1-2 mins each

<p>Overview of political system and parties</p>	<p>Moderator or guest speaker provides an overview of the responsibilities for the level of government the election relates to. This could include a non-partisan overview of the parties, their areas of focus and key issues of interest for this election (and why). Could be wise to have the organizing committee review the presentation to ensure non-partisanship.</p> <p>Pros: Providing context can be very helpful for people to understand the basics before listening to debate and discussion. Especially for new voters.</p> <p>Cons: This must be done in a non-partisan way or it could be a negative rather than helpful.</p>	<p>5 mins</p>
<p>Candidate Platforms</p>	<p>Candidates are given the same amount of time to make an opening statement and introduce their platform in the order they were drawn.</p> <p>Pros: Candidates can focus on issues they feel are important.</p> <p>Cons: Candidates will not necessarily focus on the issues of importance to the community but rather highlight their strengths and/or pre-approved party “talking points”.</p>	<p>2-3 mins</p>

<p>Interview Panel: Preselected Questions</p>	<p>Panelists asks the candidates pre-selected questions that are decided by the community or organizing committee. Community involvement could include online submission of questions as well as approaching specific community groups.</p> <p>Pro: Questions are likely to be thoughtful, concise, discussion provoking, and cover a range of topics of importance to the community.</p> <p>Con: Audience engagement during the event is limited.</p>	<p>2 minutes per person</p> <p>(Each question would take 8 minutes for a 4 Candidate panel)</p>
<p>Interview Panel: Submitted Questions</p>	<p>Community members submit their questions before and during the event. Panelists randomly choose questions, screen them to ensure it is not on a topic already addressed, are appropriate, non-partisan, open-ended, and on issues that affect the community as a whole (rather than a subgroup).</p> <p>Pros: Increases audience participation without losing control over the event. Allows shy people to ask questions.</p> <p>Cons: Being unable to plan ahead or modify wording may result in some important topics being missed. Also, questions may not be concise.</p>	<p>2 minutes per person</p> <p>(Each question would take 8 minutes for a 4 Candidate panel)</p>

<p>Audience Questions</p>	<p>Moderator asks for questions from the audience. These questions are not preselected or previewed by the organizers. Moderator ensures questions are asked without preamble and are kept to a time limit.</p> <p>Pros: Voters can ask questions they feel are important.</p> <p>Cons: Questions may be long winded, repetitive, partisan, closed (vs. open-ended), and/or worded poorly. Some issues may be overlooked. Moderator's job is more challenging.</p>	<p>30 seconds to ask</p> <p>1-2 minutes per candidate to answer</p>
<p>Rebuttals</p>	<p>You might want to allow candidates to respond to each other after they take turns answering each question. If you allow rebuttals, give a specific amount of time.</p> <p>Pros: Allows for lively, critical conversation about contentious issues and allows candidates to press if another candidate is not answering a question or is not providing detail.</p> <p>Cons: Candidates may get rowdy, point fingers, and move away from issue-based discussion. The Moderator and Timekeepers will need to be firm and keep control of the meeting. For non-contentious issues candidates may not have anything new to add but will try to use this time to talk about other things that matter to them.</p>	<p>1-2 minutes per person after each round of questions</p>

<p>Wild Cards</p>	<p>Wild cards allow candidates to rebut in a controlled way. Each candidate receives the same number of wild cards (3-5). Each card is worth the same number of minutes (1-2). Candidates can use their cards whenever they like to respond to another candidate. While it is possible some cards will not be used, organizers should budget enough time for all.</p> <p>Pros: Candidates can respond if another candidate is not answering, being vague, or attacking them. The debate is lively, spontaneous, yet controlled.</p> <p>Cons: Similar to rebuttals, candidates can use this time to behave poorly, point fingers, or move away from issue-based discussion. Toward the end of the debate candidates could use these cards to get more air time to discuss things that are unrelated to the most recent question.</p>	<p>30 seconds to ask</p> <p>1-2 minutes per candidate to answer</p>
<p>Meet & Greet</p>	<p>This is more of an “informal” All-Candidates Meeting where people can walk around the room, meeting the candidates and talk about issues that matter to them.</p> <p>Pros: Allows community members to interact directly with candidates.</p> <p>Cons: Some people may be too shy to approach candidates or feel like they do not know enough to challenge them. Participants may not be exposed to a range of ideas, platforms, candidates and issues.</p>	<p>30-60 minutes</p>

<p>Speed Dating</p>	<p>This is slightly more formal than a meet & greet. For this event format, round tables with chairs are placed around the room. Community members are assigned to a table and are given a list of questions they can ask the candidates if they do not have one of their own. They can also work as a group to generate a list of questions. Candidates will have 10-15 minutes to speak with candidates at each table. When time is up the bell rings and candidates move to the next table.</p> <p>Pros: Allows voters to get to know candidates in a less formal environment. Voters can talk about issues of importance to them and directly challenge candidates.</p> <p>Cons: May be intimidating for some voters. Candidates may take over the time with issues that matter to them but not the voters. Discussion time could get hijacked by certain people. It could help to have an moderator at each table to assist as needed. This format is best suited for group of about 40 people.</p>	<p>10-15 minutes each</p> <p>About 40-60 minutes if there are 4 candidates</p>
<p>Voter Education</p>	<p>It is important to remind people about where, when and how to vote. Be sure to cover how they should vote if they have not received a voter card, options for students to vote, and options for voting for those without a permanent address.</p>	<p>5-10 minutes</p>

<p>Candidate Closing Remarks</p>	<p>If the candidates have been speaking to the group as a whole it is good to give them each a few minutes to say some closing remarks.</p> <p>Pros: Allows candidates to clarify, respond, highlight and provide closure. Reminds voters of each parties positions.</p> <p>Cons: Some candidates can use this to repeat their parties talking points or to do their final finger pointing.</p>	<p>2-3 minutes</p>
<p>Closing Remarks</p>	<p>Moderator's closing remarks (for example, meet and greet with candidates will be held immediately following in the hall; fill out evaluation form). You may also want to give thank you notes to candidates, and acknowledgements or small token gifts to the moderator and volunteers. Be sure to thank the audience for their participation.</p>	<p>2 minutes</p>

5. Question Asking/Answering

- **Prepare a slate of short, concise, non-partisan questions for the candidates.** Decide if the moderator will ask pre-crafted questions or if particular groups or people will share the responsibility of reading them. Give each candidate 1-2 minutes to respond. You may want to give them an additional minute to follow up, respond or refute. Participants should rotate through a pre-set order to ensure each person takes a turn answering first.
 - Will your focus be on a specific theme or will it cover key issues?
 - Will you provide time for the candidate to provide an overview of their platform before questions begin?
 - Will there be a formal question and answer time, or will it be an informal meet-and-greet allowing candidates and residents to ask/respond to questions on a more individual basis?
 - Will you have a combination of these two things?
 - Will you prepare the questions in advance, have residents ask questions from the floor, or have a combination of both?
- If you prepare the questions in advance, who will write these questions?
 - Will the general public be involved in submitting questions? If so, how? Will key organizations or interests groups prepare questions? If so, what guidelines will you give?
 - Who will decide what the final list of questions will be?
- The following resource, created by [KAIROS](#), provides background information on issues and sample questions to ask candidates.
- **Select a strong moderator(s).** Ideally this person should be good public speaker, be politically aware, be seen as politically neutral, and have a public profile. They will have to maintain order while being personable and ensuring the meeting is run efficiently.
- **Appoint a timekeeper who can be firm.** Use a stopwatch and timecards of 1 minute and 30 seconds to flash at candidates. A quiet bell can be an effective way of showing that time is up.
- **Create Rules and Procedures that will govern the meeting.** A sample is included at the end of this package.
- **Designate a “bouncer”.** It may become necessary to ask some members of the audience to leave the meeting. Decide in advance what behaviours are un/acceptable and how you will address infractions tactfully and appropriately. Include these in the “Rules and Procedures” and share with all involved. If you anticipate the event could be particularly unruly try to anticipate issues that may arise and plan for how they will be addressed to ensure safety for all.

6. Publicize the Event

- **Posters:** include date, place, time as well as candidates' and moderator's names. Include logos of sponsoring organizations. Send to schools, libraries, community groups, contact lists, and social media.
- **Social Media:** Set up a Facebook event page, and consider creating a hashtag for the event. You could use your social media presence prior to the event as a way to engage the public in generating questions for the candidates and discussing issues of interest. Many people (especially young people) are very active online, so taking the time to engage on other platforms, such as Twitter and Instagram, may help you reach different demographics. Consider putting paid advertisements on Facebook as an inexpensive way to share your event widely.
- **Press:** Send a press release to local newspapers, online media, radios and community calendars. Look up media deadlines in advance and plan when you will release things and where.

7. Equipment

The following equipment list will help you prepare for your event.

Stop watch	To keep track of the time
One yellow & one red piece of paper	To indicate to the speakers and candidates how much time they have left to speak Yellow: 1 minute left Red: 20 seconds left
Small bell	To ring when time is up
Podium	For opening/closing remarks and for Moderator
3-4 Tables & Chairs (on stage)	Seating for candidates (2); Seating for Timekeeper, Moderator (1-2)
3-4 Tablecloths w skirting (on stage)	For tables that are on the stage
2 Pitchers of water	On the table in front of candidates

4-5 Glasses	One glass per candidate (avoid bottled water)
4-5 pads of paper and pens	One for each candidate
Strong tape	To fasten a sign in front of each candidate (can use their party lawn signs if tape is strong enough)
4-5 Tables (in entrance or hall)	1 table per candidate for signs and materials, additional for host organizations
50-100 Chairs	For audience
Wireless Microphone(s)	Ideally would have 1 for Moderator, at least 1 for candidates, and at least 1 for audience questions. Alternatively, corded microphones can be used at podium and on stands in the aisles.
Speaker(s)	Enough speakers to ensure presenters are heard through auditorium; ensure candidates have a speaker so they can hear audience and Moderator questions.

8. Set-Up on the Day of the Meeting

- **Tables & chairs.** Arrange tables and chairs so that audience can get to microphones on floor if needed. On the stage have two or more tables covered in table cloths and/or skirting, with chairs for each candidate. You may also want to have a lectern for opening and closing remarks.
- **Make space for each candidate.** Place a sign for each candidate in front of their place at the table (using each candidates lawn sign often works well). As people arrive have a member of the organizing committee greet candidates and moderator(s) and lead them to assigned seats on stage.
- **Cups & water jugs.** Put a couple jugs of ice water on the candidates table along with glasses for each candidate. Avoid bottled water and disposable cups.
- **Tables for displays.** Give candidates a table to display election materials outside the door. Do not allow election posters from candidates on property other than at designated tables.

- **Do a sound check to make sure all equipment is working.** Try to have one corded stationary microphone for each speaker, one microphone for the moderator, and multiple (e.g. 2-4) in the aisles. Alternatively you could use a cordless microphone for candidates which they could pass between themselves. It is best to avoid passing a corded microphone between candidates as it can become tangled and cause distractions. Regardless of the size of room ensure there is at least one microphone.
- **Begin on time and end on time.** Depending on your audience, you may want to have a 10 minute break mid way through.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Sample All-Candidates Meeting Schedule

A well run meeting will have a defined schedule which is known by all in attendance. The schedule is meant to ensure that all candidates have equal time, and that expectations for conduct are understood and followed by all involved.

- 6:30** Doors open
- 6:45** Candidates present themselves to the moderator. Order of speaking is drawn and rotation order established. Rules of conduct and procedures reviewed.
- 7:00** Call to order. A member of the hosting organization or planning committee welcomes the audience, provides a Territorial Acknowledgement (sample provided), reviews the focus/purpose of the event and introduces the moderator. The moderator introduces themselves and states their neutrality, reviews the event format, order of questions, time lines, and outline procedures for audience questions, and expectations (and consequences) for conduct.
- 7:10** Moderator introduces candidates in alphabetical order using the brief biography provided.
- 7:15** Candidates make opening statements and platform introductions (3-5 minutes) in order they were drawn. Alternatively, you could do another form of introduction that allows candidates to be more personable with the audience.
- 7:40** Question & Answer Period: Pre-written questions read by moderator or selected spokespeople. Each candidate given 2 minutes to answer, followed by an additional minute for follow up.
- 8:20** Audience Questions: Each candidate has 1 minute to answer the question or respond to other candidates remarks.
- 8:45** Candidates' closing remarks (2-3 minutes)
- 8:55** Moderator's closing remarks (for example, meet and greet with candidates will be held immediately following in the hall; fill out evaluation form). You may also want to give thank you notes to candidates, and acknowledgements or small token gifts to the moderator and volunteers. Be sure to thank the audience for their participation.
- 9:00** Adjourn. Refreshments and meet- and-greet with candidates

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is becoming more common to open events by acknowledging the Indigenous peoples on whose land the meeting is taking place. While it is not always possible, it is ideal to make this acknowledgement specific to the area and relationally connected to the Indigenous communities nearby. Asking the neighbouring First Nations for their blessing to host the All Candidates Meeting on their traditional land is a great way to demonstrate a way of interacting based on honour, consent and respect. Inviting a leader of their choosing to share a greeting is also a great practice. Note that the examples below are meant to give you a starting place to work from. Some Indigenous communities and/or organizations (such as Friendship Centres) have their own guidance to give to groups who wish to do an acknowledgment. Where those exist, work with those peoples to craft the wording you will use. Here's a link to a video discussing the [Land Acknowledgement](#).

Local and Relational: We acknowledge today that we are hosting this meeting on the traditional territory of the (Insert names of Nations or Peoples) First Nation(s)/peoples. For many thousands of years, these peoples have sought to walk gently on this land. They offered assistance to the first European travelers to this territory and shared their knowledge for survival in what was, at times, a harsh climate. As settlers, we have not always been honourable or consensual in our interactions, and understand this has, and continues to, cause much harm to them, the earth, and ourselves. We admit we have much learning to do.

As we strive to do better our committee has reached out to _____ and received the blessing of _____ to hold this event today on their traditional territory. We hope this brings us one step closer to building a new relationship with the Original Peoples of this area, one based in honour, consent, and deep respect.

We are pleased to have _____ from _____ here today to provide a blessing for our time together.

Local: We acknowledge today that we are hosting this meeting on the traditional territory of the (Insert names of Nations or Peoples) First Nation(s)/peoples. For many thousands of years, these peoples have sought to walk gently on this land. They offered assistance to the first European travelers to this territory and shared their knowledge for survival in what was at times a harsh climate. As settlers, we have not always been honourable or consensual in our interactions, and understand this has, and continues to, cause much harm to them, the earth, and ourselves. We admit we have much learning to do to build a new relationship with the Original Peoples of this area, one based in honour, consent, and deep respect.

Broad: For many thousands of years, the Indigenous peoples have sought to walk gently on this land. They offered assistance to the first European travelers to this territory and shared their knowledge for survival in what was, at times, a harsh climate. As settlers, we have not always been honourable or consensual in our interactions, and understand this has, and continues to, cause much harm to them, the earth, and ourselves. We understand we have much learning to do to build a new relationship with the Original Peoples of this area, one based in honour, consent, and deep respect.

SUGGESTED CANDIDATES MEETING RULES

1. Substitutes or stand-ins for the candidate (will be/will not be) allowed.
2. To preserve a non-partisan atmosphere during the (forum/meeting), campaign banners, signs or other campaign paraphernalia will only be allowed in designated areas. Each candidate will be provided with a table to display materials and is asked to bring a small lawn sign to display on the stage in front of the place they are seated.
3. Candidates should arrive 15 minutes before the meeting starts in order to review last minute details, draw speaking order, review of the format and for microphone instructions or adjustments.
4. A moderator will conduct the meeting and has the responsibility to interrupt the proceedings to enforce the ground rules and format. Candidates must respect the authority of the moderator.
5. Candidates are expected to speak with a courteous and professional tone, and are only permitted to speak when it is their turn. Candidates must also refrain from making any sounds or gestures that may be considered distracting while others are speaking. Failure to behave appropriately will result in a warning. Continued infractions may result in removal of that candidate from participation in the meeting. No other substitute will be permitted.
6. Time limits are as follows: (Make a list of the time limits as decided by the committee and enter the information here.) A timekeeper will keep track of the time allotted to candidates as they speak and/or respond. The timekeeper will hold up signs “60 seconds left” and “30 seconds left. A bell or whistle will be used to indicate time is up.
7. Questions from the audience (will be/will not be) screened. They will be asked by (the moderator/directly from the audience).
Remember the rules you set are to ensure absolute fairness for everyone. Other rules may be added to this list as needed.

SUGGESTED AUDIENCE RULES

1. To preserve a non-partisan atmosphere during the (forum/meeting), campaign banners, signs or other campaign paraphernalia are not permitted in the auditorium.
2. A moderator will conduct the meeting and has the responsibility to interrupt the proceedings to enforce the ground rules and format. Candidates and audience members must respect the authority of the moderator.
3. All are expected to speak with a courteous tone, are to avoid inflammatory statements and name calling, and are only permitted to speak when it is their turn. Please refrain from making any sounds or gestures that may be considered distracting while others are speaking. Failure to behave appropriately will result in a warning. Continued infractions will result in that person(s) being asked to leave the meeting.
4. Sounds and gestures to show agreement or disagreement (i.e. clapping) are permitted however they must be very brief so as not to cut into the time the candidates have and must only happen when the candidates are not speaking. If it becomes disruptive the moderator reserves the right to ask the audience to refrain from certain behaviours.
5. If an audience member is asking a candidate a question they must be brief and focussed. They are not allowed to provide context, stories, opinions or anecdotes.

SAMPLE “HOT SEAT” Questions

These questions should ideally be a combination of personal, professional and policy. Some can be serious, while others could be more light hearted.

1. A top issue you're dedicated to addressing?
2. Type of animal that characterizes your leadership approach?
3. What you enjoy most about politics?
4. What you hate most about politics?
5. Something in your party's platform that you disagree with?
6. Greatest achievement?
7. Demographic in our community you most easily connect with?
8. Demographic in our community you wish you had a stronger connection with?
9. Number one challenge facing our country/province/region?
10. Favorite hobby?
11. Something that is true about you, however surprising to some?
Something you're passionate about?

Notes: [CFUW FCFDU](#) | [Ontario Municipal & School Board Elections](#) | [Ontario Public School Boards' Association](#) | [Scarborough Civic Action Network](#)