

Canvassing for Candidates that Support Strong Public Education

There are many ways to get involved in supporting candidates and political parties that support public education, and canvassing is one of them.

As the provincial election in June approaches, you may have the opportunity to join a canvass for the candidate in your riding, or to join a group of Teachers and Education Workers canvassing for public education. One of the most effective tools for getting out the vote in elections is talking to our neighbours and residents; this is called canvassing. Canvassing is often done in person, and this means going door-to-door to talk with residents and potential voters about the issues that matter in the election. The objective of canvassing is to make a convincing argument about the importance of voting and how they can advocate for a strong public education system in Ontario by voting for a particular candidate. Canvassing sometimes is done by phone and this action consists of calling voters directly to have the same discussions; a phone system is set up from the election campaign to do this or you might do a call through of your co-workers, friends and family to hold these discussions.

In this tip sheet, we share why canvassing is an effective tool for creating electoral change, what to expect when you join an organized canvass and how you can get involved.

Why canvass in your community?

Canvassing in our communities is an essential element of making sure voters head to the ballot box, and vote for a party that will enhance public education in our province.

In an election, having a sense of how people are planning to vote is very important. During the conversations that are held at canvassing helps identify how people are planning to vote and builds community connections, increasing voter turnout. It helps candidates gain support, get feedback, and recruit new volunteers. For canvassers, it builds a sense of community and an opportunity to get involved.

Are there different types of canvassing?

There are four types of canvassing styles. Organizers will evaluate what will be most effective and arrange them. For instance, in an area where dwellings are far apart, a phone canvass might be the most efficient way to reach out to voters; in a densely populated area, door-to-door canvassing will work best.

Types of Canvassing:

- 1. One-to-one canvassing:** In a one-to-one canvass, canvassers will speak in person to voters in the area they are canvassing. The goal is to have an in-depth conversation about the issues that matter to them. When you do this type of canvass, you will be provided with information that you can use in your conversations.
- 2. Flyer or literature distribution:** This action is a type of outreach; it is fast paced and more about awareness. Canvassers will distribute information at well-travelled public locations such as grocery stores, transit stops, or shopping plazas. During this action, you will have many short interactions with passers-by as you will give them information to help influence their voting decisions and encourage them to vote.
- 3. Phone Banking:** When you participate in a phone bank, you are provided with numbers to call voters by phone to discuss election issues. Phone banks are sometimes conducted with everyone calling from a central location, but they are also sometimes conducted with canvassers calling from home.
- 4. Get out the vote canvassing:** This type of canvass happens on a designated day for advance voting or on election day and the aim is to persuade individuals who have indicated that they would vote to go to the poll and vote before the poll closes. In a get out the vote action, canvassers are stationed in specific communities and have a list of households to engage with and remind the resident to vote at their voting locations. This type of canvass is intended to secure previously identified the voter turnout.

Tips for Canvassing

When you choose to join an organized canvass, remember that the designated Candidate Campaign staff are there to support you and make sure you have what you need. The Campaign staff will provide you with a brief orientation and training on messaging, supply the materials you need, answer your questions, and at the end of your canvass you will be asked to provide your feedback on interactions that you had during the canvass. Below are some tips that will help you prepare for canvassing.

- Wear comfortable clothing and footwear, and always wear a campaign button/sticker.
- Work with your partner and take turns leading the conversation.
- Be friendly, smile and make eye contact and introduce yourself as a volunteer of the campaign. This is a reminder that you don't need to know or answer every question because you are a volunteer!
- Listen to the resident you are talking to 80 per cent and talk only 20 per cent of the time because you want to hear their concerns, issues, and if they will vote.
- Ask open-ended questions to learn more about the concerns of voters.
- Always have extra materials with you, whether in a car or a backpack.
- Be polite and do not enter an argument.
- Be flexible with all you encounter.
- Most importantly, have fun!

Safety

- When you are canvassing be sure to wear a mask and follow COVID-19 precautions.
- Pair up with a partner and work as a team.
- Stay in communication with the canvass organizer as needed.
- Do not enter homes.

With these tips in mind, you can be an effective and successful canvass volunteer and help elect a government that will support public education in Ontario. For further information please contact ETFO by calling **416-962-3836**, or toll free **1-888-838-3836**, and ask to speak to the organizing team, or email organizers@etfo.org. To get information on canvasses in your region, follow local candidates on social media.