



# The VOICE of Albertans with Disabilities

Special Election Edition

## SPECIAL EDITION - ELECTION READINESS

The federal election was called for October 21, 2019. VAD's Government Relations Working Group wants to make sure issues of importance to persons with disabilities and the disability service sector are part of the election discussions.

This special edition of the VOICE is to get voters informed about the issues and the accessible accommodation that is available to them.

Alberta is at a time of transition. As the federal election approaches, those individuals with disabilities need a voice to showcase the issues that are coming to the forefront of people's lives. Voice of Albertans with Disabilities is a key player in making sure that Albertans have a say in the federal election that is happening this October.

There are many items to bring to the attention of candidates and political parties. With a broad membership base, VAD can connect many voters and bring forth topics with individuals and organizations to get them talking about the issues with their political party candidates.

VADS members have united to speak with one voice about how Albertans, and all Canadians, can secure solutions to their future. Non-partisan election priorities outline a pathway to contribute to the determination that individuals with disabilities face on a day to day basis. VAD's election readiness platform includes recommendations for all parties to consider and can be found on our website: <https://vadsociety.ca/social-action>

### Accessibility of the Electoral System [www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca)

Elections Canada has improved many services in recent decades to meet the needs of the electorate, particularly persons with disabilities.

- ☑ There are now three ways to vote: by special ballot, at an advance poll, or on polling day.
- ☑ The special ballot allows Canadians to vote by mail or in person at the office of their returning officer. (See "Voting by Special Ballot")
- ☑ All revisal offices, polling stations and other premises used during an election must have level access.
- ☑ In the rare cases where election day polling stations do not provide level access, transfer certificates are available so that electors with disabilities may use a different polling station that does have level access.

☑ The voter information card sent to every registered elector after an election is called indicates whether there is level access to the elector's polling station.

☑ Mobile polling stations are provided for institutions where elderly or disabled persons reside.

☑ A ballot box is transported from room to room to facilitate voting in hospitals and certain residential institutions.

☑ At the advance and election day polls, any person with a visual disability may obtain a cardboard voting template to assist in marking the ballot.

☑ Interpreters may accompany voters to assist them at the polls.

☑ At the request of the elector, assistance in marking the ballot is available at the advance and election day polls.

Voters may also bring a friend or relative who may assist them, after taking an oath.

☑ "Permitted personal expenses" for a candidate with a disability or one who cares for a person with a disability include expenses directly related to that disability.

Information services provided by Elections Canada that assist persons with disabilities include:

☑ a toll-free enquiries line for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing: TTY 1 800 361-8935

☑ information in alternative formats, such as large print, Braille, audio-cassette and diskette

☑ plain language publications for persons who have difficulty reading

☑ information, e-mail access, and special ballot registration forms available on the Internet

([www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca))

### How to vote with a disability

☑ Special ballots allowing Canadians to vote by mail or in person at the offices of their returning officers (replacing proxy voting)

☑ Level access at polling stations and other premises used during an election, combined with transfer certificates to allow voting at a different polling station that has level access, if the elector's own poll is not accessible

☑ Mobile polling stations for institutions where persons with disabilities reside

☑ Public education and information programs for those with special needs, including the use of alternative formats such as Braille, large print and audio-cassettes

☑ Accessibility training and awareness sessions for returning officers

### Am I registered to vote?

Most Canadians who are eligible to vote are already registered in the National Register of Electors. If you are



[www.vadsociety.ca](http://www.vadsociety.ca); [vad@vadsociety.ca](mailto:vad@vadsociety.ca)  
 Follow us on Facebook and Twitter: @VADisabilities

registered and checked off both Elections Canada boxes on your tax return this year, your registration will be updated with your current home address. To check if you are registered, update your address information or register to vote, use the Online Voter Registration Service or call us at 1-800-463-6868.

If you do not receive a voter information card, it may mean that you are not registered on the list of electors. You can also register at the polling station during advance polls or on election day, but to save time, register ahead of election day. For more information on how to register to vote: call Elections Canada at 1-800-463-6868. **Remember, to vote you must prove your identity and address.**

## iVAD Town Hall Meeting - OCT 10

iVAD, individual Voice of Albertans with Disabilities members are a network of people with lived experiences who are interested in increasing awareness of existing barriers to inclusion and developing capacity around solutions to accessibility: accessible and affordable housing; employment; transportation and social isolation.

**Election Readiness:** This is a public event, open to all Canadians and we look forward to seeing you there. Have your voice heard! Voice of Albertans with Disabilities (VAD) is pleased to invite you to an iVAD Town Hall meeting about the Federal Election. It will be held at the Buchanan Centre, October 10, 2019, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. This event is to allow individuals with disabilities to learn about party platforms and how they affect the disability community.

### **Buchanan Centre**

**11209 86 St NW, Edmonton**

**October 10, 2019 at 6:30 pm**

**ASL, Captioning & Loop System on site**  
**Mobility accessible location**

In the spirit of the United Nations call to action, Nothing About Us, Without Us, we invite you to join us in a conversation about the Federal Election. Party representatives have been invited to speak to the attendees

at this event. Outcomes of this conversation will inform the next steps toward coordinated action. RSVP on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/ivad-town-hall-meeting-election-readiness-tickets-72982276955>

**Can't attend the event in person - join us on**

**A National Disability Action Plan must:**

**Promote Health and Well-being**  
 A National Action Disability Plan will address barriers to health and well-being, ensuring quality medical care for persons with disabilities free from discrimination by actioning the following three priorities:  
 i. Promote access to palliative care for all Canadians including those with an intellectual disability  
 ii. Address Canada's gaps in mental health services for children and adults with an intellectual disability  
 iii. Preserve equality through the end of life criterion for Medical Assistance in Dying

**Tackle Poverty Through Employment & Economic Security**  
 People with disabilities are twice as likely as Canada's general population to live in poverty. A National Disability Action Plan must address the gaps in employment and economic security through the following measures:  
 i. Adopt a targeted Disability Employment Strategy  
 ii. Amend the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)  
 iii. Make the Disability Tax Credit refundable

**Make Good on a Right to Inclusive Housing**  
 A National Disability Action Plan should continue to support and build upon the work of Canada's current National Housing Strategy. To ensure that persons with an intellectual disability are a part of the solution to Canada's housing crisis the plan must:  
 i. Stand behind a right to housing  
 ii. Fund affordable and inclusive housing  
 iii. Make use of inclusive housing indicators

**Move Beyond the Accessible Canada Act**  
 Persons with disabilities and their families continue to fight for equal citizenship and opportunity in Canada; however, advancing their interests tends to remain an afterthought. To include persons with disabilities in the electoral process, a National Disability Action Plan must:  
 i. Make the 2019 election the most accessible yet  
 ii. Mandate accessible elections

**Be Intersectional**  
 In pursuing a National Disability Action Plan, Canada must remember that the population of persons with disabilities is not homogeneous. Needs and experiences differ between and within the disability community; all must be engaged. In designing a National Disability Action Plan, your party should respectfully and meaningfully include marginalized populations with disabilities who are under-served and face intersectional discrimination due to gender and sexuality (LGBTQ2S+), incarceration, indigeneity, mental illness, migrant status, poverty, and/or race added to their disability.

**ZOOM.** <https://zoom.us/j/542804862>

Check out the VAD website (<https://vadsociety.ca/social-action/government-advocacy>) for more election links:

- List of Federal Candidates by riding in Alberta
- Federal Election 2019 - CACL Calls for a National Disability Action Plan
- Accessible Voting Video



**It's Election Time...  
 People With Disabilities  
 COUNT!**

*Together, We Hold the Power!*

**Full Participation - Accessibility - Equity**