



VOTE POP UP

A Kit for
Community Groups to
Demystify Voting

Vote PopUp:

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Vote PopUp is generously funded in part by:



Thanks to their support, more British Columbians are informed about when, where and how to register and vote, so they can exercise their right to vote and have a voice in their democracy.

This guide was made possible thanks to the vision and commitment of Samara Canada. Vote PopUp was initially created and incubated by Samara Canada. Ryerson University and the Democratic Engagement Exchange (The Exchange) are deeply grateful to Samara Canada for these contributions and for their continued commitment to building a stronger democracy for all Canadians.

The Democratic Engagement Exchange drives engagement by building partnerships with academic institutions, community organizations and government agencies to create tools, and champion policies and programs that promote a more inclusive democracy.

For more information visit <http://www.ryerson.ca/arts/about-arts/democratic-engagement-exchange/>



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⊗ What Is Vote PopUp?

This free toolkit prepares you to conduct a Vote PopUp, which uses a simulated voting station to engage community members in the electoral process. Vote PopUp flips traditional voter engagement efforts on their head. Instead of telling people why they should vote, Vote PopUp gives people the experience of voting and asks them why they think voting is important.

For civic leaders and non-partisan organizations, Vote PopUp is a tool to increase community members' involvement in Canada's democracy and ensure that all voices are heard in the electoral process.

For first-time, infrequent and future voters, Vote PopUp is an opportunity for people to connect their concerns to voting, practice casting a ballot, and affirm their commitment to political participation.

⊗ Why Use this Kit?

While Canadians are frustrated with politics, they value democracy. Yet if some voices are not heard, our democracy suffers. Everyone's participation in the political process is important.

For first-time or infrequent voters, the mechanics of voting can be a barrier to participation. Vote PopUps demystify the process and provide participants information about how, when and where to vote.

- **Strengthen and Celebrate Community.** By inviting participants to consider the issues that affect them, Vote PopUps serve to inspire greater involvement in community.
- **Based on Local Leadership** Vote PopUps are hosted by trusted local organizations and leaders with the local knowledge and relationships required to reach community members.

⊗ Vote PopUp - Overview

Vote PopUps are typically hosted and run by community organizations. They provide a hands-on opportunity for community members to practice voting and affirm their commitment to Canada's democracy.

A Vote PopUp has three components:

- **An invitation to participate** – staff and/or volunteers from the organization invite community members to share views about issues that matter to them. This serves as a powerful reminder that voting is an opportunity to have a say in what they care about.



Create an inviting non-partisan space:

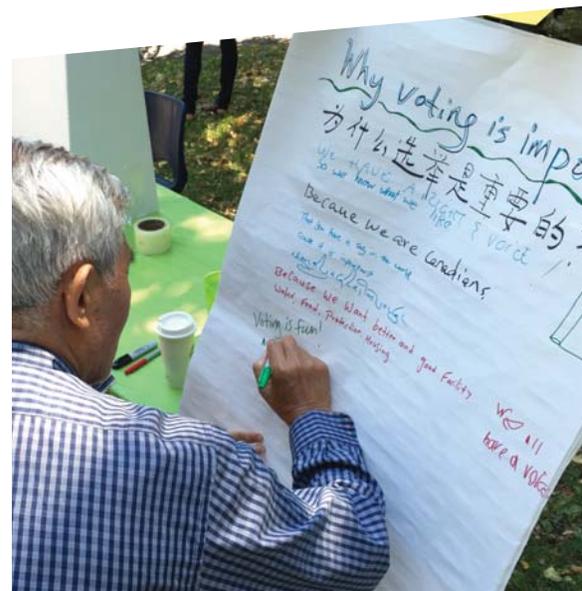
Vote PopUps create an inviting space for people to engage with the political process and consider what matters to them.

While organizers may hold strong views about political parties or an upcoming election, it is critical to refrain from making partisan comments during the activity.

Need help?

If you have any questions about using the kit or organizing your Vote PopUp, we're here to help!

Email The Exchange at john.beebe@arts.ryerson.ca or go to the FAQ section on our website for more information.



- **Simulation of the voting process** – by simulating the experience of voting at a voting station, participants can ask questions and practice voting in a safe and supportive environment. Even experienced voters appreciate the opportunity to hear when and where to vote, and to learn about changes to voting rules.

- **Affirmation of the importance of voting** – participants can contribute to a poster explaining why voting is important to them. This poster is then used to promote voting throughout the election period, providing many reasons to vote.

As they conduct a Vote PopUp, many community organizations learn about their members' priorities and concerns. Vote PopUp is an excellent way to get to know your community better as you involve them in the democratic process.

1. Plan Your Vote PopUp

Step 1: When and Where

Choose a time and place to hold your Vote PopUp, keeping in mind the event will last between 1-4 hours. Find a place accessible to the public, like malls, libraries, or community centres, or host a Vote PopUp in cooperation with an existing community service provider or at a community event, such as a drop-in centre, language program, community festival, or health clinic.

Step 2: Assemble Team

The next step is to organize a team. The number of people needed to run a Vote PopUp will depend on the location and duration of the event.

At a public event (i.e. library or community picnic) each voting station can be run by 3-4 people. At an existing community event (i.e. a language class or youth program) a Vote PopUp can be run with as few as 2-3 people.

The team can be composed of staff from community groups and/or volunteers.

A PopUp team includes:

- **Team Leader** – recruits and trains the PopUp Team and oversees the activity on voting day.
- **Outreach Officers** – encourage people to participate and directs participants to election officials (public events only; not necessary at an existing community event).
- **Election Officials** – carry out the voting procedures and answer questions about when, where and how to vote.



Vote PopUps at Public Events

At a public location: secure enough space to have two tables at your voting station.

Too much of a good thing: While a busy location is good, a too-busy location (like a big concert or sporting event) may be overwhelming. It is difficult to interact with more than 30 people an hour per voting station.

For public spaces like malls or libraries, which may be reluctant to get involved with a “political” activity, remind them this is a strictly non-partisan activity.

Need help?

Having trouble assembling a Vote PopUp team?

Contact The Exchange at john.beebe@arts.ryerson.ca. We can provide advice and may be able to help find team members or even send teams to help.

Step 3: Prepare Materials

See page 12 for a comprehensive planning checklist.

Before the Vote PopUp:

- Order Vote PopUp Kit (see appendix for ordering information)
- Print sample ballots with voting choices
- Create signage
- Day of the Vote PopUp: secure one or more computers with Internet connection (recommended) for voting information and for online voter registration
- Prepare educational materials (see appendix for materials)
- Set aside large tables and some chairs
- Get markers, pens and pencils
- Create signs leading participants to the PopUp space in locally-used languages
- Create or arrange for incentives, decorations, activities or entertainment

Preparing Ballots

There are two options:

- Participants vote on the issue that is most important to them. Ask community groups and/or members to identify the 5-6 issues to place on the ballot (i.e. health care, education, immigration). Always leave a write-in spot for participants to write their own answer.
- Participants vote on something related to an activity in which they are involved (i.e. their favourite fruit or vegetable at a farmers' market or favourite animal at an event for children).



2. Running the Vote PopUp

Team Meeting

Before holding your Vote PopUp, meet with your team.

When conducting a Vote PopUp at a public event, hold a orientation session 2 to 3 days before the Vote PopUp. During training, team members will familiarize themselves with voting procedures and practice outreach techniques. This is also a good time to hand out T-shirts, nametags or other items that will identify the team.

When conducting a Vote PopUp during an existing program, provide team members with training materials ahead of time and allow one hour prior to the event to review materials and walk through the process prior to the activity.

Review guidelines with all team members:

- **Remain politically neutral** – team members can answer questions about who is running for office or the mechanics of voting but **not** who to vote for.
- **Everyone can participate** – Even people not eligible to vote in the upcoming election or who lack the proper identification should be allowed to participate in the activity as a way to practice and experience voting.
- **It is not *only* about voting** – Participants who don't want to vote can also check their voter registration, get information about their electoral district or voting place, learn about different identification and voting options, or simply make a pledge to vote in the upcoming election.
- **Make it fun** – Your attitude will set the tone. If participants are nervous or reluctant, say things like, “I had the same feeling when I first voted.”

Go through these five steps to make sure your team is well-prepared for “voting” day:

- **Step 1. Review** – Hand out the guides to the various roles and review the responsibilities.
- **Step 2. Review** – Look over the official educational materials. Make sure everyone on your team is familiar with voter ID requirements and different options for voting.
- **Step 3. Practice** – If you are using a computer to confirm voting locations or complete on-line registration, have each team member use the system.



When people say “No”

People may say “voting is a waste of time” or “they’re all crooks” or “I don’t have time.”

A great first response is “I understand” or “I have felt that way.” Explain that Vote PopUp is an opportunity to vote on the chosen subject. If there are other incentives for participating, mention them.

Another way to engage them is to ask, “What matters to you and why?” Listen carefully to their response. Being listened to may be enough to change their mind.

For people who say they don’t have time, offer them information or a chance to take the Vote Pledge.

If they still don’t want to participate, thank them and politely urge them to consider voting on Election Day.

- ♦ **Step 4. Practice** – Have someone play the role of participant and walk through a variety of scenarios, including the following:

<p>Scenario 1: Nervous first-time voter who has a driver’s license with their current address.</p>	<p>Approach: Empathize with their nervousness and explain they have everything they need to vote.</p>
<p>Scenario 2: Experienced voter who has received their notice from about where and when to vote.</p>	<p>Approach: Encourage participant to get information specific to this election and/or to skip directly to “WHY VOTE” activity.</p>
<p>Scenario 3: Resident who, because of age or citizenship, is not eligible to vote.</p>	<p>Approach: Encourage them to participate as a way to learn about voting and/or to model engagement for those currently able to vote.</p>
<p>Scenario 4: Voter who has recently moved within the province and does not have official identification with current address.</p>	<p>Approach: Remind participant that they can still vote. Review materials from electoral agency to understand options and/or call electoral agency to explore best options for voting.</p>

- ♦ **Step 5. Remind** – Make sure the team knows where the Vote PopUp is taking place and when they need to be there and how to reach the election agency with any questions they cannot answer.

Five things you may not know about voting places and General Voting Day:

1. If you make a mistake on your ballot, you can return it to the election official and they will give you a new one.
2. Partisan or electioneering signs are not permitted in voting places.
3. Photos are not allowed behind the voting screen. However, photos are allowed outside the voting place, so selfies with the sign outside the voting place are just fine.
4. You can register when you vote (bring your ID).
5. Want a job? Election agencies hire poll workers to work at advance voting and on General Voting Day.

Roles and Responsibilities



Outreach Officers

During a public event, the Outreach Officer's job is to encourage people to participate in the Vote PopUp and then direct them to an election official. This is the most important job because it is the first point of contact for the general public. Here are some basic guidelines.

DO:

- Stand in a prominent spot and approach **everyone**
- Introduce yourself by name
- Invite people to share their opinion about the subject of the Vote PopUp (e.g., "What matters to you?" or "What's your favourite band?")
- Offer them an incentive, if available
- Explain the process will take just a few minutes
- Be friendly. Smile!

AVOID:

- Asking people if they plan on voting in the upcoming election
- Starting by asking people to take part in a mock vote
- Discussing partisan issues

Potential participants have four possible responses when invited to participate:

1. They want to participate. Direct them to an election official.
2. They are eligible to vote but do not want to check their registration or cast a ballot. Explain that some electoral districts and voting places have changed. If voting locations have been announced, direct them to an election official to confirm their voting place. If locations haven't been announced, give them information about how to find their voting place. Invite them to add to the WHY VOTE poster.
3. They know their voting place. Invite them to add to the WHY VOTE poster.
4. They do not wish to participate. Thank them and remind them to vote.

Providing incentives

Giveaways can increase engagement in places where participants are just passing by.

When using incentives, be sure to give participants this reality check: to avoid any undue influence, incentives are not used at actual voting opportunities.

Ideas for incentives include:

1. Food or drinks
2. A chance to win: enter participants in a draw to win a prize such as concert tickets or gift certificates.
3. Stickers or buttons
4. Swag from election agency

Election Officials

Election officials demystify the voting process by explaining how, when and where to vote. If specific voting locations or voting dates and times have not been announced, they explain how to find this information when it is available.

REVIEW:

- ID requirements and options for voting without current ID.
- Advance voting dates, times and locations
- General voting times and locations

DEMONSTRATE:

- How to mark ballot
- How to place ballot in ballot box

EXPLAIN:

- Who is running for what office
- How to reach the election agency for any other questions about voting
- How to find more information about candidates and political parties

NOW HAVE PARTICIPANTS VOTE!

1. Fold the ballot. Once it's folded, initial the outside and hand to participant (this can be done ahead of time to save time).
2. Remind participants what they are voting about and instruct them to go behind the voting screen to mark their choice. Warn them that marking more than one choice will result in a rejected ballot (and that if they make a mistake - also known as spoiling their ballot - they can request a new one from the voting officer).
3. When the participant has finished marking their choice, check the ballot for your initials and instruct them to place their folded ballot in the ballot box.

Team Leader

The Team Leader keeps everything flowing smoothly by supporting the other team members. In addition the Team Leader:

- Congratulates participants
- Invites everyone to add to a "Why Vote" poster
- Takes lots of pictures
- Updates social media using #VotePopUp
- Hands out stickers or other incentives
- Invites participants to take a voting pledge and/or post a picture on social media
- Explains how and when the results of the vote will be shared

Setting Up Your Vote PopUp

The layout of the PopUp space is important to the success of the activity.

At each voting station, have a **processing table** where election officials interact with participants and a **voting table** where participants mark their ballots.

Set up one voting station per group of 20 to 30 participants per hour.

The voting station should be large enough to accommodate a ballot box, the ballots, elections materials and a computer. Have chairs for the election officials. The voting table should be behind or next to the voting station and have space for voting screens and pencils but nothing else.

See page 13 for a *Voting Day checklist to keep you on-track as you hold the event.*

Announcing the Results

The polls have closed and the votes have been counted – it's now time to announce the winner! Use this moment to extend the conversation about voting and why it's important to your community. Spread the word during community events and programs and through newsletters and social media.

3. Social Media

Social media is an excellent way to promote your Vote PopUp before, during and after the event.

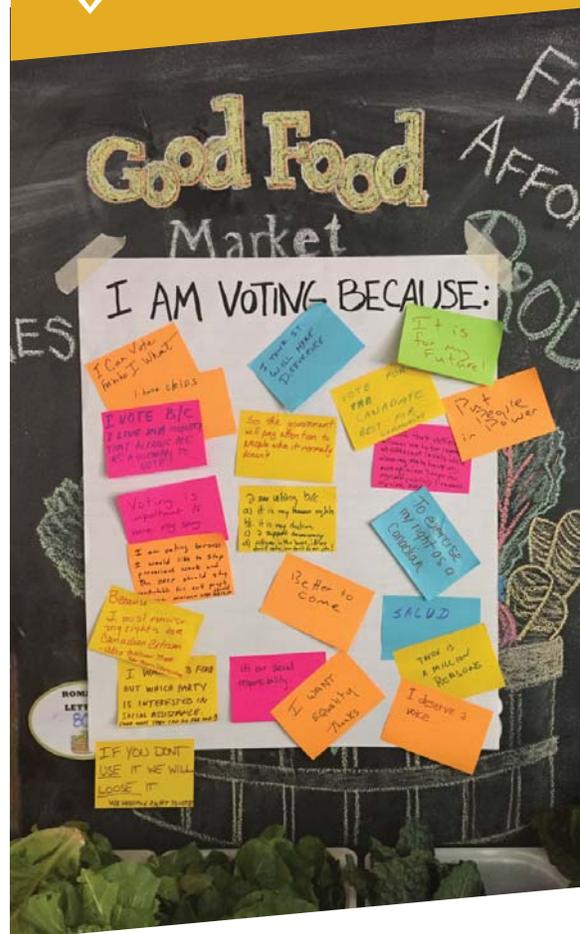
- Use #VotePopUp
- Set up a “I am a voter” selfie booth
- Share results on social media

Encourages others to run their own Vote PopUps.

4. Beyond Your Vote PopUp

The Vote PopUp may be over, but democratic engagement has just begun. Your event sparked interest in the election, and you can build on that interest if you:

- Organize or attend an all-candidates night. Invite a wide range of advocacy organizations to share their views about the election.
- Start an “I vote because I care about...” social media campaign.
- Nominate everyone on your PopUp Team for Samara's Everyday Political Citizen contest: <http://www.samaracanada.com/everyday-political-citizen>
- Consider making The Exchange's Democracy Talks an ongoing part of your community programming: <http://www.ryerson.ca/arts/about-arts/democratic-engagement-exchange/>



WHY I VOTE . . .

Invite everyone to add to a “WHY VOTE” poster:



Tools and Materials

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Vote PopUp: Planning Checklist

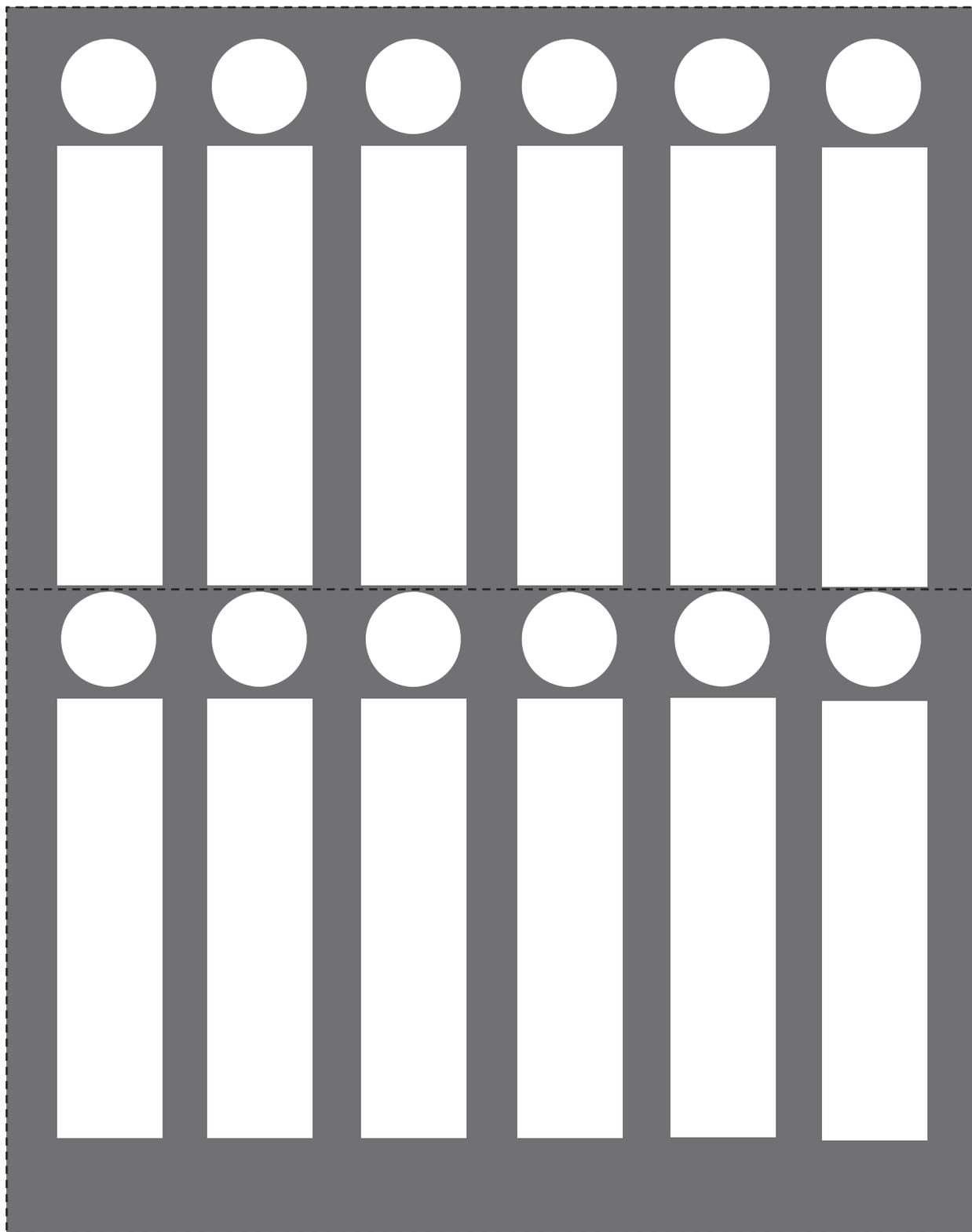
- Choose a time and place
- Find a PopUp space
- Recruit a PopUp team
- Order a ballot box and voting screens
- Print and prepare ballots (allowing at least 10% extra for spoiled ballots)
- Print (or pull from the kit) identification requirements for voting
- Secure one or more computers and Internet access – recommended
- Secure processing and voting tables and chairs for Voting Officers
- Get T-shirts, lanyards or other items to identify team members
- Obtain sponsorship for food or other incentives
- Create signs directing people to the Vote PopUp in locally used languages
- Create “WHY VOTE“ poster to be filled out by participants, social media backdrop, signs and other decorations

Vote PopUp: Voting Day Checklist

- Ballot box
- Voting screens
- Ballots
- Identification requirements for voting (brochure)
- Computer(s) – with adequate power supply
- Internet access
- Map of local electoral district(s)
- Tables and chairs
- Materials for “WHY VOTE” (e.g. large sticky notes or butcher paper)
- Social media backdrop and/or signs
- Markers, pens and pencils
- Stickers, buttons and bookmarks, etc.

Sample ballots

Print, fill in choices and photocopy as many as needed.



The image shows a template for sample ballots. It consists of a large dark gray rectangular area enclosed by a dashed line. Inside this area, there are two identical rows of six ballots each. Each ballot is a white vertical rectangle with a white circle at the top, positioned within the gray background. The rows are separated by a horizontal dashed line.

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I hold a Vote PopUp?

Vote PopUps can be held any time before advance voting starts. Ideally, Vote PopUps should be held far enough in advance of General Voting Day so as to allow participants enough time to prepare for voting such as by securing proof of identification and planning how to get to their voting place. Vote PopUps can be held months before an election, but you will want to make sure that participants remember when General Voting Day is and what they need to bring. If they're registered and up-to-date, they will receive a Where to Vote card in the mail informing them of the election date and their voting place and its hours.

How many people do I need to run a Vote PopUp?

The size of your PopUp Team will depend on where you are running the activity and how many participants you expect. Generally speaking, if you have at least 20 to 30 participants per hour, you will want to have at least 2-3 people running the vote. If your Vote PopUp is open to the public, you may want to another 1 or 2 people to do outreach and increase participation.

Does it cost anything to run a Vote PopUp?

No, it does not cost anything to run a Vote PopUp. Most of the materials you'll need to run a Vote PopUp are free or easily acquired. The ballot box and voting screens can be ordered free of charge from The Exchange, and the educational materials can be downloaded for free. You likely already have access to basic supplies like tables, chairs, pens and paper. The only additional costs are if you plan to provide food, refreshments or other incentives. Consider seeking event sponsors or donations to cover these costs – or think creatively about how to get (or make) them for free!

What if I am missing some of the items on the checklist?

Not to worry! If you're unable to obtain any of the items on the checklist, use your own initiative and creativity to make the activity work. The most essential items are the ballots, ballot box and voting screens – and even these can be improvised if necessary.

Who can participate in a Vote PopUp?

One of the best things about Vote PopUp is that anyone can participate! You should invite everyone to take part in the activity, regardless of their age, citizenship status or political interest. Vote PopUp allows anyone to experience the voting process, even if they are not eligible to vote because of age or citizenship status.

Why is it important for Vote PopUp to remain non-partisan?

While Participants are encouraged to have and express their political opinions, the purpose of Vote PopUp isn't to endorse or identify with a specific political party or candidate. Vote PopUp is designed to allow everyone in your community to learn about and experience the voting process. By remaining nonpartisan, everyone will feel welcome to participate and you will avoid alienating or distracting people from the voting process. Using real-life political parties or candidates may also create the false impression that Vote PopUp is in fact an official election.

What if I don't have a computer or Internet access?

Although Internet access is recommended, it isn't required. If you're unable to connect to the Internet during the activity, provide participants with a website to check election times and locations.

How do I fill in the choices on the sample ballots?

Print out the sample ballots page, write down the choices with a marker, and then photocopy the ballot as many times as you need. Remember to make an additional 10% for spoiled ballots.



To order your Vote PopUp Toolkit Contact:
John.beebe@arts.ryerson.ca