



Office of the  
Chief Electoral Officer  
of Canada

# Report on the 43rd General Election of October 21, 2019



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## Le directeur général des élections • The Chief Electoral Officer

February 11, 2020

The Honourable Anthony Rota, M.P.  
Speaker of the House of Commons  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am pleased to provide my report following the 43rd general election, held on October 21, 2019. I have prepared the report in accordance with subsection 534(1) of the *Canada Elections Act*, S.C. 2000, c. 9. Under section 536 of the Act, the Speaker shall submit this report to the House of Commons without delay.

The official voting results will be published in the coming months, in accordance with section 533 of the Act.

Yours truly,

Stéphane Perrault  
Chief Electoral Officer



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## Foreword

I am pleased to present Elections Canada's first of three reports on the 2019 general election. This report provides a description of how the 43rd general election was administered. While the agency continues to finalize work related to closing the 2019 general election, this report describes key aspects of the preparation and delivery of the election. In so doing, it also identifies issues requiring further analysis to be discussed in a second, retrospective report to Parliament in the fall of 2020.

This election saw some 18.3 million Canadians cast a ballot, or 67 percent of registered electors, with more than 2,100 candidates running. The 2019 general election took place in a new legislative and evolving electoral security environment. In addition to implementing a wide range of changes made to the *Canada Elections Act*, Elections Canada's objectives for the 43rd general election were to offer more accessible, convenient and inclusive services to electors and political entities, and to maintain the trust Canadians have in the electoral process.

Heading into the election, Elections Canada put in place a comprehensive security strategy to address anticipated attempts at electoral interference, whether through influence campaigns, cyberattacks or disinformation. I am pleased to say there were no cybersecurity threats of significance during this election on Elections Canada's infrastructure beyond those faced daily by any federal government organization. The agency monitored the information environment for inaccurate information about the electoral process, and on some occasions contacted social media platforms or websites to bring inaccurate information or inauthentic accounts to their attention. None of these instances were concerning in terms of their scope.

Elections Canada also enhanced its voter registration services and the quality of the data in the National Register of Electors in the lead-up to the general election. Outreach and promotional efforts focused on registering Canadians who recently turned 18 and Indigenous electors, as their registration rates are significantly lower than the general population. We achieved the most up-to-date voters list since the introduction of the Register in 1997.

Significant efforts were made to offer inclusive, streamlined and convenient voting services. As anticipated, Canadians continued to increasingly take advantage of early voting services with more than 4.7 million electors voting at advance polls, nearly a 30 percent increase from the 2015 general election. Early information indicates that, during this election, wait times were reduced especially at advance polls and that travel time to advance polls in remote electoral districts was reduced.

Many electors face barriers to voting due to their own unique circumstances. The agency offered and promoted a wide range of voting options to meet these needs, such as more voting services offered in acute care hospitals, long-term care facilities and on campuses. The agency also made significant efforts to reach out to Indigenous communities to work with them in planning appropriate voting and registration services to meet their needs ahead of the election.

While early indications are that Canadians were satisfied with the voting services offered by Elections Canada, the agency did experience staffing problems and some electoral districts did not have the required number of poll workers. At the same time, Canadians are increasingly expecting services to be tailored to their personal or local circumstances, or even to unforeseen

circumstances such as disruptive weather events. These expectations, along with the staffing challenges, require further study.

Elections Canada also modernized services to candidates and political entities, offering a range of services through a new online portal. Online registration for candidates was one of the services offered. While it was less popular than we would have hoped, it is something to build on for the future.

There were two significant changes to the regulation of political entities: a pre-election period with spending limits for third parties and registered parties, and a more comprehensive third-party regime. While these changes resulted in a number of positive steps, such as increased transparency for third-party activities and improved reporting requirements for regulated political entities, a full assessment will take time.

There is still much work to be done to close out this election. The agency is in the process of collecting feedback and processing financial returns and other data. I intend to present a retrospective report in September 2020 that will provide a thorough analysis of the administration of the election informed by a variety of surveys with electors, candidates and regulated entities as well as stakeholder feedback sessions.

Later, in the fall of 2020, a final report will provide parliamentarians with recommended legislative changes. I look forward to working with the 43rd Parliament as we strive to constantly improve services to electors and political entities.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank the more than 250,000 election workers, returning officers and field liaison officers who worked to ensure that their fellow Canadians could exercise their democratic right to vote or run for office in the 2019 general election.

Stéphane Perrault  
Chief Electoral Officer of Canada

# 1. Context: Towards the 43rd General Election

This report describes the key aspects of the administration of the 43rd general election, from pre-election preparations by Elections Canada (“the agency”) to the return of the writs and final results. The report also identifies a number of events and areas where there is a need for closer review and assessment. To that purpose, the agency continues to finalize work related to the 2019 general election and will publish a retrospective report in fall 2020 which will provide further analysis of the election based on surveys of electors, candidates, and regulated entities, as well as stakeholder feedback. Finally, a recommendations report focused on suggested legislative changes will be presented to parliamentarians in the fall of 2020.

In order to plan for the 2019 general election, Elections Canada took into account several factors including the challenges faced during the 2015 election, the new legislative landscape and the evolving electoral security environment.

## A look back at the challenges of the 2015 general election

### Voter experience

The 2015 general election had the highest voter turnout in 20 years. The agency also continued to see an upward trend of more electors voting prior to election day. Advance poll voting increased by 74 percent, with some 3 million more electors using that voting option than in the 2011 election. This high turnout combined with complex administrative requirements at advance polls resulted in electors in many urban ridings experiencing long lineups and delays.

Historic voter turnout among Indigenous electors also marked the 2015 general election with 62 percent of electors living on reserve voting, a 14 percent increase from the 2011 general election. There were some challenges. Following reports of ballot shortages in some Indigenous communities on election day, the agency conducted a full administrative review. It concluded that 5 out of 14 polling places experienced a voting service interruption due to ballot shortages, which ultimately resulted in 13 electors in one polling place being unable to vote. The review also found that a combination of low registration rates and high turnout rates in these communities, and the formula used to allocate ballots to polling locations, all contributed to the ballot shortages.

While data suggests that 99 percent of electors were satisfied with the location of their polling place in 2015, the agency was aware, through the feedback it received, that some polling places, particularly in certain rural ridings, could have been more conveniently located.

### Field worker experience

Feedback provided by returning officers and field liaison officers following the 2015 general election indicated that improvements to the collaboration between personnel at Elections Canada headquarters and those working in the field in each of the country’s 338 electoral districts were required. Returning officers and field liaison officers recommended that more experienced headquarters staff be assigned to support them during elections, that communications to field workers be improved and better coordinated and that business processes and systems be better integrated and updated to reduce the administrative burden.

Returning officers and field liaison officers also suggested streamlining services to electors, especially procedures at advance polls, improving support to ease recruitment challenges, offering more and simpler hands-on and practical training to field workers, simplifying election materials to help improve compliance with procedures at the polls, and improving working conditions.

Many of the recommendations made by field staff were supported by the evidence gathered through the first independent audit of poll workers' performance that followed the 2015 election. The audit report recommended a number of administrative and legislative changes to improve compliance with procedures, including:

- modernizing the electoral process and some of its automated aspects
- exploring opportunities for streamlining procedures at advance polls and special procedures
- enhancing the existing training program for field workers so that enough time is spent on special procedures

## A new legislative landscape

Based on the experience of the 2015 election, the former Chief Electoral Officer made recommendations for changes to the *Canada Elections Act* in September 2016. Many of these proposed changes were included in Bill C-76, which ultimately received royal assent on December 13, 2018. Given the closeness to the fixed election date, while all provisions of the Act came into force no later than June 13, 2019, the Chief Electoral Officer brought some provisions of the new legislation into force as soon as the agency was operationally ready to do so in early 2019.

In particular, several significant changes affecting political entities and electors had to be implemented.

### Changes impacting political entities

- new regulated pre-election period
- expanded third-party regime to capture a broader range of activities
- requirement for digital platforms to maintain a registry for political advertising
- requirement for parties to adopt and publish a privacy policy

### Changes related to services to electors

- Canadians living abroad could vote regardless of how long they have been living abroad as a result of a Supreme Court of Canada decision and of legislative changes brought by Bill C-76
- modified rules for members of the Canadian Armed Forces
- modified voter identification rules, including the use of the voter information card as a proof of address when used with another accepted piece of identification

Most of these changes are discussed throughout this report.

## A changing electoral security environment

The 2019 general election took place in a security environment that had changed considerably since the 42nd general election in 2015. Canadians witnessed instances of electoral interference in other countries, whether through influence campaigns, disinformation, or cyberattacks perpetrated by foreign and domestic actors. Malicious actors targeted various aspects of the electoral process in other democracies: the digital information ecosystem, political entities, election management bodies and others. Several experts warned that Canada was not immune to these threats in the lead-up to the 2019 election.

In preparation for the 2019 election, Elections Canada made significant investments in its information technology infrastructure and improved its security. In doing so Elections Canada collaborated with a number of partners, in particular the Communications Security Establishment.

In January 2018, the Government of Canada announced a number of measures to safeguard the 2019 general election, reflecting a whole-of-government approach involving the Privy Council Office, national security agencies, the National Security and Intelligence Advisor, Global Affairs Canada, Public Safety Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage. New measures included the creation of the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force and of the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol, a group of five senior civil servants who would notify Canadians of serious electoral interference during the elections period.

Because of its independence from government, Elections Canada was not part of the task force, but in parallel to the government-led initiatives, the agency took several measures to strengthen its security posture, notably through improved information technology infrastructure and security awareness training. Elections Canada worked with the Commissioner of Canada Elections, national security agencies and other government departments to share information and plan incident response. For Elections Canada, this represented an unprecedented level of collaboration with other departments and agencies.

Canada's federal electoral process is robust, protected by several safeguards, and relies on paper ballots marked and counted by hand in front of witnesses. Canadians' trust in Elections Canada and the electoral process has historically remained high, though some groups—youth, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, people with less knowledge of the electoral process—have lower levels of trust. Overall trust cannot be taken for granted. Serious interference could affect election administration and results, and actual or perceived threats to election security could erode trust. Inaccurate information about the electoral process, regardless of where it originated, could affect public participation and confidence.

## Priorities for the 2019 General Election

With the benefit of a fixed election date, Elections Canada was able to undertake early planning and engagement ahead of the 2019 general election. Based on the context outlined above, Elections Canada had established a number of priorities in preparing for the election:

- Streamlining and optimizing the voting process to improve compliance and to reduce wait times, especially at advance polls.
- Reducing electors' travel time to polling locations, particularly in rural areas.

- Improving the quality of the National Register of Electors with a particular focus on increasing registration rates among some elector groups, most notably youth and Indigenous electors.
- Offering better support to returning officers by engaging them on an ongoing basis between electoral events and providing them with better tools and support.
- Improving the agency's security posture by:
  - strengthening election systems
  - offering security training for headquarters and field staff
  - positioning Elections Canada as the authoritative source of information on registration and voting
  - combatting disinformation and misinformation around the electoral process

The agency's work in these areas will be further explained throughout this report.

## 2. Preparing for the Election

While Elections Canada headquarters staff plays a large role in the planning and execution of events, it is mainly the returning officers in Canada's 338 electoral districts who deliver the election to Canadians. Extensive efforts are made at the local level to prepare and carry out the election.

### 2.1 Recruitment of Returning Officers

Under section 24 of the *Canada Elections Act*, the Chief Electoral Officer is required to appoint a returning officer for each electoral district for a period of 10 years. The Chief Electoral Officer specifies the qualifications required for the position and establishes an external, merit-based appointment process. Between 2016 and 2019, the Chief Electoral Officer appointed 146 returning officers.



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Returning officer recruitment advertisement

## 2.2 Preparatory Work by Returning Officers

Taking advantage of a fixed election date, returning officers were engaged much earlier and more extensively in preparing for the 2019 general election. The Chief Electoral Officer provided all 338 returning officers mandates with specific tasks to allow them to prepare in advance of the 43rd general election.

Pre-election activities were launched in April 2018 and carried out over 18 months. A new methodology was developed to help select polling places. In addition, returning officers began their outreach activities much earlier than during previous general elections. These new activities are described below.

On June 3, 2019, the Chief Electoral Officer authorized all returning officers to secure and sign leases effective September 1 for returning offices, additional assistant returning offices, polling places, and external service points. Elections Canada set June 30 as the deadline for business processes, systems, and instruction and training packages to be ready.

### Selecting polling places and defining polling divisions

After the 42nd general election, Elections Canada developed its *Policy on Selecting Suitable Polling Places* as part of an effort to improve the voting experience. According to this new policy, a suitable polling place balances the key principles of accessibility, familiarity, and proximity to an elector's residence. In the summer of 2018, the agency asked returning officers to identify polling locations that met the first two criteria. Returning officers were then provided with new software to help them design polling divisions around the selected polling locations. Returning officers were also tasked to reach out to every First Nations reserve in Canada to plan the appropriate number of advance and election day polling places to meet community needs.

For the first time in a federal election, returning officers were able to use routing data and geographic information with automated software that suggested alternative assignment of electors to a selected polling location, to further reduce electors' travel distance to the polls. Following the completion of these preparatory activities, 95 percent of electors in urban areas were within 3.5 kilometres of their polling day places, and within 13.9 kilometres in rural areas. In 2015, the figures were 3.7 kilometres (urban) and 14.8 kilometres (rural).

Elections Canada also expanded its *Polling Place Suitability Checklist*, used for evaluating the accessibility of potential polling places. In consultation with the agency's Advisory Group for Disability Issues, the 35 accessibility criteria increased to 37. Fifteen of these criteria are mandatory; the new criteria involved specifications on the pathway from a parking lot to a building's entrance and for the distance from public transit stops. The accessibility of each polling location was published on the voter information card, with more detailed information available on the Elections Canada website.

When voter information cards were produced, 94.3 percent of polling places met all 15 mandatory criteria, while 3 percent provided level access but did not meet some or all of the other 14 criteria and could not be modified. This is down from 96 percent of polling places meeting all mandatory criteria in the 2015 general election. Further analysis will be provided in the retrospective report.

## **Local community relations and outreach**

As part of their pre-election preparations, returning officers were tasked with several local outreach activities that are normally done at the call of the election.

As in the past, returning officers were asked to evaluate, within their electoral districts, the needs of electors known to face barriers when participating in the electoral process. These include students, seniors, electors with disabilities, and Indigenous, homeless, and ethnocultural electors (including official language minority and Jewish electors). The returning officer would then decide on the appointment of the appropriate number of community relations officers to liaise with electors in these groups. The returning officer would also create an action plan for the community relations officers to complete. The plan included activities such as presentations, setting up kiosks and information distribution.

Elections Canada carried out the Elector Services in Remote Indigenous Communities (ESRIC) pilot project over the 18 months leading up to the election. This project encouraged communication between returning officers and Indigenous leaders from remote communities at several points in the electoral cycle. The role of community relations officers and the ESRIC pilot are further discussed in Section 4.2.

Returning officers reviewed addresses in high-mobility neighbourhoods, new housing developments, First Nations reserves, long-term care facilities, and post-secondary residences. They then developed plans for targeted revision, including setting up public desks where electors could register or update their information.

Returning officers contacted correctional facilities to confirm the numbers of inmates and discuss security, recruitment, and training of election officers to deliver the vote to these electors.

Finally, returning officers in electoral districts with electors working in isolated areas (such as lighthouses or remote work sites) contacted administrators at those locations to provide information on voting options for these electors.

## **2.3 Stakeholder Mobilization**

Elections Canada significantly expanded the network of national and regional stakeholders who shared information with electors who face barriers to voting, such as Indigenous electors, new electors and people with disabilities. Work with these organizations leveraged Elections Canada's new online learning modules and event toolkits developed for the Inspire Democracy program. These tools explained the steps and choices related to registration, voting and other ways to participate in elections, such as working at an election and running for office.

To share this content, Elections Canada staff conducted face-to-face outreach events across the country designed to equip stakeholders



with the tools and knowledge necessary to conduct their own outreach efforts in advance of the general election. The primary focus was on early registration and closing registration gaps among Indigenous and youth electors.

## 2.4 Gender-inclusive Services

In the lead-up to the 2015 general election, the agency became aware of issues arising from services to electors with non-traditional gender expressions. Some of the issues arose from identity verification at the polls, despite the fact that electors are not required to prove sex or gender as part of their identity. In collaboration with the Canadian Human Rights Commission and gender advocacy organizations, Elections Canada adapted its 2015 communications materials along with its instructions and training to election workers in order to address concerns expressed by the transgender community. These concerns involved potential difficulties in proving identity and address. There were also concerns about how Elections Canada collected gender information on its various forms and certificates—specifically, by requiring electors to state whether they are male or female when they may not identify as either. After the 42nd general election, the agency began to update its approaches to the collection of gender data.

By the fall of 2018, Elections Canada decided to offer three gender options on its public forms and systems, including the online registration service prior to the 2019 general election: male, female and gender X. This decision was in line with both removing all references to “sex” and replacing them with “gender” in accordance with Bill C-76; and with the Government of Canada’s policy direction to modernize sex and gender information practices, which was introduced in April 2019. The agency also broadened the approach taken in 2015 and worked with community groups to include a specific set of frequently asked questions on its website about identification guidelines for transgender electors. Despite these efforts, some issues still surfaced in the 2019 general election: for instance, voter information cards displayed the previous names of electors due to processing times. Elections Canada will continue to update its data collection practices and work with the community to ensure it is using gender-inclusive practices in all aspects of the electoral process.

## 2.5 Simulation 2019

Returning officers faced a much-changed environment for the 43rd general election, with a new security environment, systems, partners, procedures, and legislation. Above all, large numbers of staff in both headquarters and the field were new, and even seasoned staff had not administered a general election since 2015. To assist with the volume of changes, build election reflexes and test newly developed tools, procedures or refinements including those required for Bill C-76 implementation, the agency conducted a structured election simulation in April 2019.

The simulation took place over three weeks and involved headquarters personnel and the offices of five electoral districts that reflected the diversity of ridings across the country. The objective was to test new information technology systems, updated business processes, manuals and training material in a setting that closely resembled an actual election. The simulation involved scenario-based exercises that helped returning officers and staff use the new business process, systems, and training materials—and react to unforeseen circumstances. The simulation helped build confidence in the agency’s state of readiness and the new tools developed to deliver the election. After the

simulation, final adjustments were made to deal with communicational or operational gaps. Updated system procedures and materials were rolled out in time for the call of the election in each of the 338 electoral districts.

## 2.6 Recruitment of Election Workers

Amendments to the *Canada Elections Act* enabled returning officers to begin recruiting as soon as the election was called. Returning officers aimed to hire more than 248,000 election workers assigned to voting locations. This recruiting target aimed at improving early voting services and working conditions for election workers by introducing scheduled breaks and a shift-work option, in response to feedback from the 2015 general election.

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Election worker recruitment advertisement

Returning officers were encouraged to increase the representation among election workers of people with disabilities, new Canadians, Indigenous people, linguistic minorities, and young people. All electoral districts were permitted to hire 16- and 17 year-old workers. The agency also launched its first national digital recruitment campaign. A series of advertisements increased awareness of various local job opportunities and encouraged Canadians to apply online. The agency also

developed communication tools to support and empower returning officers and stakeholders in helping recruit election workers. As a result, returning officers received nearly 550,000 applications through the Elections Canada website, compared with 243,934 for the 2015 election and 130,427 for the 2011 election, when people were first able to apply online. In addition, political parties referred nearly 30,000 potential workers to returning officers. For the 43rd general election, returning officers retained about 232,000 workers, including about 18,000 office staff working in Elections Canada offices and about 214,000 electoral workers assigned to polling sites. Roughly 10,000 trained workers did not show up for work at their polling station (about 5 percent). Table 1 in the Appendix provides more details.

Several returning officers encountered difficulties recruiting and retaining enough poll workers. An initial assessment indicates that this was the case in 89 of the 338 electoral districts. In 20 electoral districts, the percentage of trained workers who did not show up for work at their polling station was about 15 percent. These no-shows affected operations, especially where returning officers had not been notified ahead of time. In such cases, returning officers had to dispatch replacement staff, if any were available, and materials. If no replacement staff were available, central poll supervisors had no other option but to merge polls (i.e. have one team of election officers and one ballot box serving two polling divisions). The impact of these challenges on the service to electors and their root causes will be further discussed in the retrospective report, along with the level of satisfaction of election workers and their new working conditions.

## 2.7 Action on Official Languages

The agency made significant efforts before and during the 43rd general election to implement measures that responded to the audit reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages, which were released in July 2015 and in May 2019. Elections Canada developed directives, policies and user-friendly operational tools to help returning officers plan the delivery of services and activities in accordance with the agency's official languages obligations. These tools were distributed in June 2019, which coincided with preparations for the election worker recruitment campaign. Returning officers and election workers were also responsible for ensuring that all reasonable efforts were made to provide high-quality communications and services in both official languages at polling stations across the country. That point was emphasized during election workers' training.

To better understand the linguistic realities of each electoral district, Elections Canada and returning officers analyzed data from the 2016 Census. This exercise enabled field administrators to focus their efforts and allocation of resources (e.g. recruitment, training, communications and information) to better serve linguistic minorities.

Elections Canada has implemented a rapid management process intended to quickly adjust services and respond to official languages complaints filed with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and with Elections Canada. As of January 8, 2020, Elections Canada had received 115 complaints related to the 43rd general election through the Commissioner of Official Languages, 57 of which were received during the election period. All complaints brought to the attention of the agency were quickly acted upon in concert with the relevant returning officer. These follow-ups allowed returning officers to address issues in a timely manner and prevent similar situations from reoccurring.

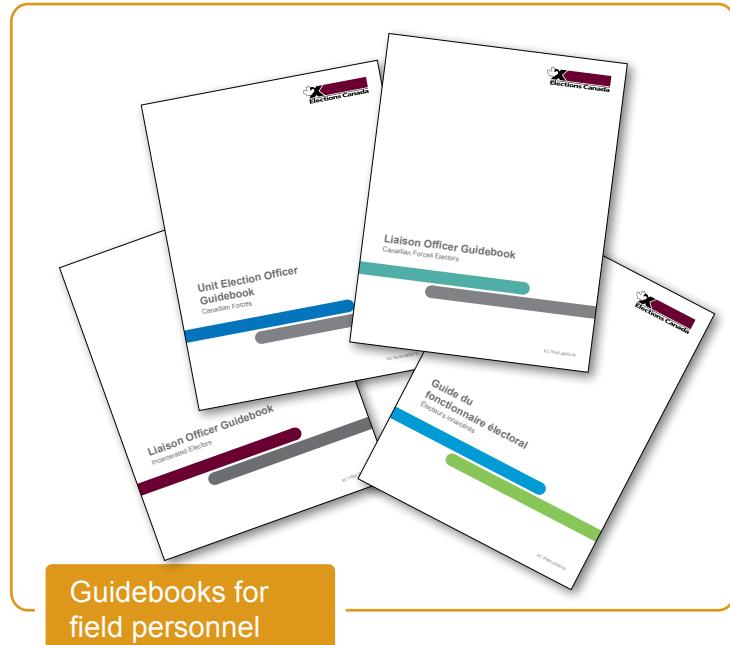
Elections Canada is undertaking a thorough analysis of the official languages file. The conclusions and recommendations of that analysis will be presented in the retrospective report.

## 2.8 New Training and Guidebooks for Field Personnel

The *Canada Elections Act* requires that an independent assessment of the compliance of poll workers with the prescriptions of the Act must be carried out after an election. Following the audit conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers in October 2015, Elections Canada overhauled its guidebooks for election workers as part of its efforts to optimize the voting process, as detailed in Section 3, and improve compliance with procedures. Virtually all tools and documents used at the polls were redeveloped with a user-friendly design and to account for the legislative changes brought by Bill C-76. The agency set out to create final products that were consistent, easy to use, and written in plain language.

The guidebooks are a cornerstone of the agency's training program for election workers. The in-class portion of this program involved hands-on practice with simulated election materials. Election workers became more self-reliant, leveraging the guidebooks to resolve various situations at the polls. The program also expanded the use of multimedia, with engaging new videos and animations on key subjects.

In addition to in-class improvements, the agency also deployed online training materials to a range of key office personnel, including election administrators, training officers, recruitment officers, and financial officers. The online training materials made use of interactive e-learning modules, videos, quizzes, reading activities, and other multimedia assets to provide a larger volume and variety of preparatory material. A full assessment of these changes will be available in the retrospective report.



Guidebooks for field personnel

## 2.9 More Support for Returning Officers

With a majority government in place and a fixed election date, Elections Canada was able to better support returning officers by providing improvements to outdated systems, offering more integrated systems and business processes. To that end, the agency made three new major improvements to help returning officers fulfill their responsibilities and connect with headquarters.

First, Elections Canada rolled out VoIP (voice over Internet Protocol) technology for the phone systems in all 338 returning offices and 165 additional assistant returning offices—a first for the agency. This allowed for a rapid deployment of a full-featured office phone system across the country.

Second, in response to returning officers' concerns about having many different communication channels and inadequate support on specialized topics, the agency instituted a new field support model with agents trained on specific topics and improved training to better assist returning officers. This was combined with a new web-based tool called Event +. This tool served as a single access point for all regular communications between the field and headquarters, including election-related and electoral district-specific communications. Event + also included the election calendar, together with a series of electronic checklists for the returning officer, the service point supervisor, the financial officer and the automation coordinator. These workers now had easy-to-use lists of tasks for each day of the election calendar, along with supporting documents.

Finally, the agency introduced EC Connex, a new online case management system. EC Connex is a shared tool for all headquarters employees who provide support and services to the field and the agency's contact centres. With EC Connex, all staff had access to Elections Canada's knowledge base, where staff and contact centre employees were able to find the needed content and procedures to resolve enquiries, complaints or requests for support from field staff. EC Connex also allowed for more efficient routing and near real-time monitoring of records in the system as they were processed.

Elections Canada has received post-election reports from returning officers, including feedback on the contact centre agent support, material, and technological support offered to them by Elections Canada headquarters. Their perspective on the 43rd general election will be included in the retrospective report.

## 2.10 Accommodating Electors Observing Jewish Holidays

In the summer of 2018, Elections Canada examined the implications of having the date of the 43rd general election and most of the advance polling dates coincide with Jewish High Holy Days. The rules governing fixed date elections allow the Chief Electoral Officer to make a recommendation to the Governor in Council that the date be moved due to a conflict with religious or cultural holidays. While a similar situation occurred in 2008, recommending a change of date was not an option since it was not a fixed date election. In August 2018, following exchanges with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), Elections Canada determined that it would be in a position to offer a broad range of early voting opportunities that could meet the needs of the Jewish community. Elections Canada and CIJA began to work together to ensure effective communication about early and alternative voting options.

In the spring of 2019, Jewish community members raised concerns about the date of the general election through letters and public enquiries. Among this correspondence was a letter from a recently nominated Orthodox Jewish candidate, Ms. Chani Aryeh-Bain, noting the effect of the fixed election date on her Charter rights as a candidate. She and others requested that the Chief Electoral Officer exercise his discretion to recommend to the Governor in Council that

election day be moved. The Chief Electoral Officer declined to do so, on the basis that the impact of changing the date of the election at that point in the electoral cycle would limit access to voting opportunities for the electorate as a whole, given the work completed at that point to select convenient and accessible polling locations, including agreements made with schools and school boards regarding the timing of professional development days.

Ms. Aryeh-Bain and Mr. Ira Walfish, a community activist, then brought an application in the Federal Court of Canada to review the Chief Electoral Officer's decision. On July 23, 2019, the court directed the Chief Electoral Officer to reconsider his decision and to provide reasons that reflected a proportionate balancing of the rights of the applicants under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* with his mandate. The Chief Electoral Officer did so in a detailed statement released on July 29, 2019, indicating that it would not be advisable to recommend changing the date of the election at that late stage of the electoral cycle. It also featured an action plan, which is further discussed in Section 3.3 of the report, to ensure voting opportunities for electors observing Jewish holidays.

Elections Canada recognizes the need to better consult, early in its election planning stage, religious and cultural communities. As part of its analysis of the election and recommendations to Parliament, Elections Canada will consult with the Jewish and other communities and examine ways to better address the needs of observant electors in the future, with a view to avoiding conflicts between important religious holidays and election days whenever possible.

## 2.11 New Voter Identification Requirements

Voter identification requirements in the *Canada Elections Act* were amended in 2018. Some of these changes allowed the Chief Electoral Officer to authorize the voter information card (VIC) as a proof of address, along with another piece of accepted ID bearing the same name, as proof of identity. The changes also allowed an elector to establish their identity and address by making a solemn declaration and being vouched for by another elector. This replaced the previous process whereby an elector with two pieces of ID bearing their name could take an oath and have their address attested to by another elector who lives in the same polling district.

For the 43rd general election, electors had three options to prove their identity and address:

1. Show one piece of government-issued identification with their photo, name and current address, such as a driver's licence, or provincial or territorial identification card.
2. Show two pieces of identification from the list of authorized pieces of identification. Both pieces must contain the elector's name and one must include their current address.
3. Declare their identity and address in writing and have another elector—whose name appears on the list of electors for the same polling station—vouch for them. Both electors must make a solemn declaration and the voucher must have proved their identity and address using one of the first two options. A person can vouch for only one person (except in long-term care institutions).

## Have your ID ready to vote

Three options to prove your identity and address

### Option 1



#### Show one of these pieces of ID

- your driver's licence
- any other card issued by a Canadian government (federal, provincial/territorial or local) with your photo, name and current address

or

### Option 2



+



#### Show two pieces of ID

Both must have your name and at least one must have your current address

#### Examples:

- voter information card and bank statement
- utility bill and student ID card

#### Don't have these? No problem!

There are other pieces of accepted ID

Check out the full list at [elections.ca](http://elections.ca)

or

### Option 3



+



#### If you don't have ID

You can still vote if you declare your identity and address in writing and have someone who knows you and who is assigned to your polling station vouch for you.

The voucher must be able to prove their identity and address. A person can vouch for only one person (except in long-term care institutions).



Visit [elections.ca](http://elections.ca) for the official information you need to vote

1-800-463-6868 | [elections.ca](http://elections.ca) | TTY 1-800-361-8935



Voter identification infographic

Following an internal review and online testing of mock VICs and the list of authorized pieces of ID, Elections Canada made several changes, including administrative changes, to assist electors in proving their identity and address. These included:

- Improvements to the VIC to signal that it is addressed only to the elector whose name is on the card, to encourage electors to visit the Elections Canada website to verify that their registration information is up to date, and to clarify where electors can find more information on accessibility services and ways to vote.
- Enhancements to the list of accepted pieces of ID, such as the addition of pictures and categories, to make voter ID options and the list of accepted ID clearer for electors and election workers.
- Expanding the scope of the *Policy on Voter Identification when Registering and Voting in Person in Federal Electoral Events* to include all in-person voting and registration contexts. The update to the Policy also added precision to the criteria by which the Chief Electoral Officer authorizes pieces of ID, and employed the use of plain language wherever possible.

The Chief Electoral Officer also authorized new pieces on the list of ID to increase electors' access while continuing to protect the integrity of the vote. These included the temporary confirmation of registration, issued by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. In addition, the Chief Electoral Officer added community-based residential facilities to the list of establishments approved to provide a letter of confirmation of residence.

Post-election studies will examine the impact and application of the voter identification requirements in this election, and details will be included in the retrospective report.

## 2.12 Opening Elections Canada Offices

Returning officers opened 338 returning offices and 165 additional assistant returning offices in 91 of the geographically largest electoral districts in the country. The fixed election date, the new 51-day limit on the election period and instructions from the Chief Electoral Officer allowed returning officers to prepare farther in advance. Therefore, at the start of the election period on September 11, 2019, all 503 Elections Canada offices were open to the public during regular business hours for special ballot and voter registration services.



## Issue of the writs

On September 11, 2019, the Governor General dissolved the 42nd Parliament at the request of the Prime Minister, and writs of election were issued for all 338 federal electoral districts. The date for the 43rd general election was set by proclamation of the Governor General as October 21. Advance polls were held one week before election day from October 11 to 14. The election period lasted 41 days.



### 3. Services to Electors

For this general election, the agency carried out several initiatives to improve services to electors and make it even easier for them to exercise their democratic right to vote.

#### 3.1 Voter Registration

Elections Canada maintains the National Register of Electors, a database of Canadians who are 18 years or older. The Register is regularly updated between and during elections, using data received directly from electors, administrative data received through agreements with federal, provincial, and territorial agencies, and data received from other sources, in accordance with the *Canada Elections Act*. This administrative data comes from well-known sources including the Canada Revenue Agency, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, most provincial and territorial agencies responsible for driver licencing and vital statistics, and provincial and territorial electoral management bodies. While Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is a long-standing Register data source for the identity of new Canadian citizens, the passage of Bill C-76 also allowed this department to provide Elections Canada with data on foreign nationals and permanent residents in Canada in order to better ensure the integrity of the Register. New Bill C-76 provisions also authorized the Canadian Armed Forces to provide Elections Canada with data on its members who are electors.

When an election is called, the agency uses data from the Register to produce the preliminary lists of electors, which are provided to registered and eligible political parties and to the returning officers. Returning officers then provide the lists to local confirmed candidates as required by the *Canada Elections Act*. The preliminary lists are also used to produce voter information cards (VICs), and as a basis for the revised lists of electors (with elector information added during the revision period) and the official lists of electors (the lists used on election day). Under a new provision brought about by the passage of Bill C-76, the revised and official lists—which were already available to candidates during previous elections—were also made available to registered political parties during the election period.

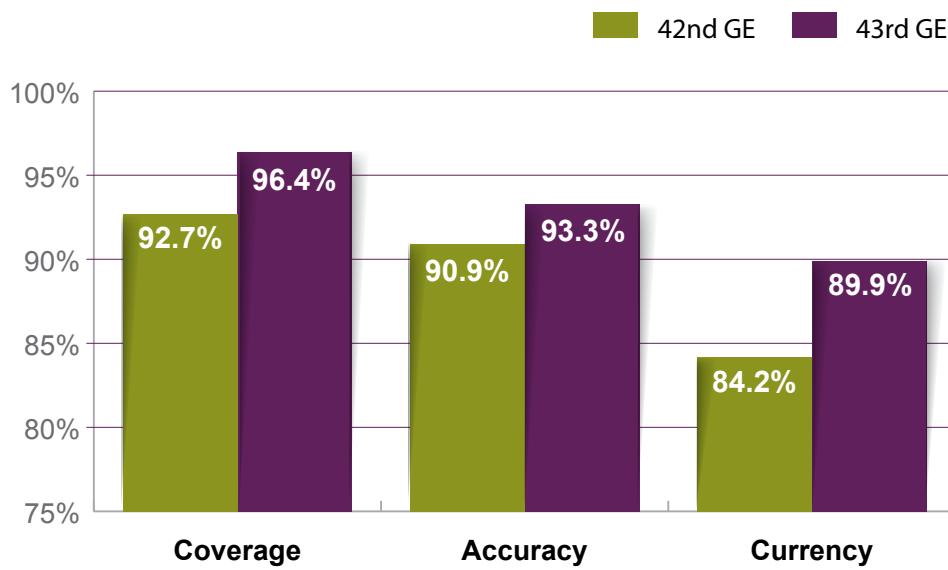
Statistical figures in this report related to revision, registration counts, or voter turnout are the ones that were available at publishing time. Final numbers will be available upon publication of the Official Voting Results on the Elections Canada website by the end of March 2020.

#### Coverage, accuracy and currency

The quality of the information held in the Register is key to ensuring that electors receive a VIC at their current address. It is also important to political parties and candidates wanting to engage with electors. There are three parameters of quality to the Register:

- **Coverage** is the proportion of all eligible electors (that is, Canadian citizens who are 18 or older) who are registered to vote. It has historically varied between 91 and 94 percent, but was at 96.4 percent at the start of the 2019 general election when the preliminary lists of electors were issued. The proportion of eligible electors between 18 and 24 years old who were on the lists remained significantly lower, at 77 percent, although there was an increase of 5 percent from 2015.

- **Accuracy** is the proportion of registered electors whose address is current. These electors are correctly registered at their current address and would have received their voter information card. It has historically varied between 88 and 91 percent, but was at 93.3 percent at the start of the 2019 general election when the preliminary lists of electors were issued. This is compared with 91 percent in 2015 and 90 percent in 2011.
- **Currency** is the proportion of all eligible electors who are registered at their current address, historically varying between 81 and 86 percent, but which was at 89.9 percent at the start of the 2019 general election when the preliminary lists of electors were issued.



Quality of the preliminary lists of electors

### Initiatives to improve the accuracy of the Register

Many factors can affect the quality of the data on the Register, including demographic changes and the timely availability of data. To maximize the accuracy of the list of electors before the general election, Elections Canada undertook several special initiatives earlier in 2019, beyond the processing of its regular data sources:

- In January and September of 2019, the agency mailed letters to potential new electors (between 18 and 27 years old) directing them to its online platform to complete their registration and verify their eligibility. More than 41,000 new electors were added to the Register as a result of this initiative.
- In the spring of 2019, Elections Canada sent verification letters to 250,000 electors who were in the Register, but whose records had not been updated through our various data sources since before the 2015 general election As required by law prior to removing

them from the Register, the agency wrote to these electors and asked them to confirm the accuracy of their information. As a result, some 223,000 elector records were removed from the Register.

- The passage of Bill C-76 gave Elections Canada the authority to obtain information on foreign nationals and permanent residents in Canada from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). In June 2019, the agency mailed letters to people who were potentially not qualified to vote based on this new information. The letter informed them that they would be removed from the Register unless they confirmed that they were qualified to vote. Over 74,000 persons did not respond and were removed from the Register in August 2019.
- As a result of cross-referencing administrative data, including the new IRCC data, with individual records of potential electors who had previously consented and stated that they were qualified to vote, the agency was able to add more than 900,000 electors to the Register before the call of the election.

All of these activities allowed Elections Canada to greatly improve the accuracy of the Register, leading to the highest quality ever recorded in the preliminary lists since its creation 20 years ago. The retrospective report will include more analysis on the quality of the lists, comparisons to previous years, and the effectiveness of the quality improvements.

### **Revision period and election day registrations**

The purpose of revision is to update the preliminary lists of electors for use at advance polls and on election day. The revision period ran from September 11 to October 15, 2019.

When the writs were issued on September 11, there were 26,927,849 electors on the preliminary lists, or 96.4 percent of the estimated 27,310,979 eligible electors across Canada. An estimated 89.9 percent of registered electors were listed at their current addresses. Elections Canada provided the preliminary lists to the registered and eligible political parties that requested them, and returning officers provided the lists to candidates for their electoral districts.

Over the course of the revision period, some 957,405 Canadians were added to the lists or had their information updated (in 2015, this number was 1.75 million). Of the 957,405 revisions, 157,828 resulted from data supplied by Elections Canada's partners (compared with 948,000 in 2015), 537,049 were completed at Elections Canada offices or through targeted revisions in certain neighbourhoods. The remaining 262,528 were completed online (compared with 301,000 in 2015). There are two reasons for the 45 percent overall decrease in revisions since 2015. First, the election was called earlier than anticipated. Also, there was a higher than average number of revisions based on data supplied by Elections Canada partners. This data was applied during the election period rather than before it. However, this is an area in which analysis is ongoing and the results will be provided in the retrospective report.

For the 2019 election, 638,097 electors registered at their polling place on election day; this represents 5 percent of all election day electors, a decrease from 5.8 percent in 2015.

In all, the final lists of electors include 27,372,715 names, representing a net increase of 444,866 over the preliminary lists.

## **Online registration**

Before the election, Elections Canada's online voter registration service allowed eligible electors to check if they were registered to vote, register or update their voter information. This was the second general election in which online registration was available during the election period. For this election, the agency made the online voter registration service more user-friendly and accessible, and enabled secure uploading of identity documents for registration, rather than through a paper process. This new feature led to more than 33,000 new electors being added to the lists before election day.

Elections Canada actively promoted online registration during both the new pre-election and election periods. More than two million users accessed the online voter registration service during the election period to check whether they were registered to vote, and more than 80,000 successfully added themselves to the lists. Of these, 75 percent (60,000 electors) were between the ages of 18 and 24. A further 200,000 electors updated their voter information online (typically address changes or corrections).

## **3.2 Ways to Vote**

Elections Canada strives to provide as many opportunities as possible for electors to exercise their right to vote. More and more Canadians are choosing alternatives to voting on election day, including advance polling, voting at an Elections Canada office or on a post-secondary campus, voting by mail or other special ballot methods. As mentioned in Section 2.2, special efforts were also made during preparations for the general election to increase the number of advance and election day polling places on First Nations reserves. As a result of these efforts, Elections Canada was able to increase the number of on-reserve polling places for the 2019 general election to 389 (from 366 in 2015).

With 67 percent of registered electors casting ballots in the 43rd general election, voter turnout declined slightly from the 20-year peak of 68.3 percent in 2015. Table 2 in the Appendix provides further details on voter turnout.

## Ways you can vote in the federal election



### On election day

Check your voter information card or visit [elections.ca](#) to find out where your assigned polling station is located.



### On advance polling days

Can't vote on election day? You can vote in advance at your assigned polling station.

Check your voter information card or visit [elections.ca](#) to find out where to go.



### At any Elections Canada office across Canada

Visit [elections.ca](#) to find the Elections Canada office nearest you.

You will vote using the special ballot process. Deadlines apply.



### By mail

Visit [elections.ca](#) to find out more. Deadlines apply.



It's Our Vote

Visit [elections.ca](#) for the official information you need to vote

1-800-463-6868 | [elections.ca](#) | TTY 1-800-361-8935



Voting options infographic

## Optimizing the voting process

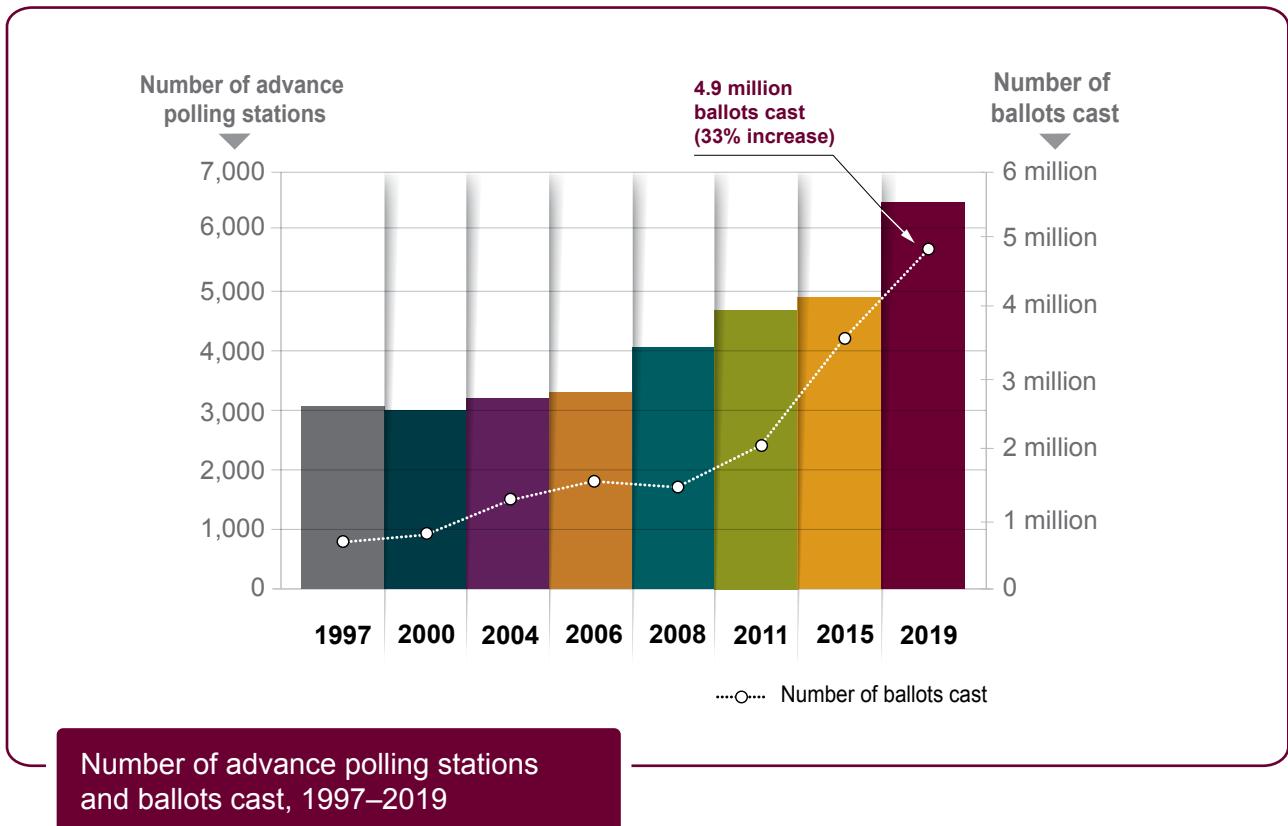
In 2016, Elections Canada launched a multi-year project to transform voting operations at advance and election day polls. Its goals are to reduce wait times, ease the administrative burden on election officers and improve record keeping to incrementally introduce a new service model that takes advantage of information technology. In the 43rd general election, the service model was optimized but not radically transformed, and legislative changes from the passing of Bill C-76 were incorporated. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that Elections Canada's service model at polling stations remains labour-intensive and complex to administer for election day workers. This is an area where Elections Canada must continue to make improvements within the framework imposed by the *Canada Elections Act*.

As noted later in this section, there were also improvements to the special ballot voting process in Elections Canada offices. In previous general elections, registration services were separate from special ballot voting services. This meant, for example, that an elector wanting to update their registration and to register to vote at their Elections Canada office would have to meet with two election workers separately. The new service model integrated these services, which were performed by a single service agent. To accommodate this change, and add flexibility to their service offerings, election officers were trained on all procedures offered in an Elections Canada office, rather than for a specific function. Time and motion studies conducted before the election suggested that total transaction times would be reduced from 12–15 minutes to 4–7 minutes per elector.

## Voting at assigned polling stations during advance polling days

Bill C-76 extended advance polling hours to 12 hours on each day of advance polling, a measure applied for the first time during a general election. To accommodate an expected higher voter turnout on advance polling days and to reduce the distances to polling places for electors, the Chief Electoral Officer instructed returning officers to increase the number of advance polling stations. Over the Thanksgiving weekend, a total of 6,166 advance polls were set up from October 11 to 14, which represents an increase of 1,220 polls (24.7 percent) from the 42nd general election.

The upward trend of Canadians voting at advance polls continued in the 43rd general election. In 2019, more than 26 percent of electors who cast a ballot did so at their assigned polling station during advance polling days. This proportion was slightly under 21 percent in 2015 and slightly above 14 percent in 2011. For the 43rd general election, a total of 4,879,312 electors cast ballots at advance polls. This is a 32.7 percent increase over the 42nd general election, in which 3,677,217 electors cast ballots at advance polls, and a 131.1 percent increase over the 41st general election. Preliminary indications are that there were no systemic issues with long lineups (as was the case in 2015 at many advance polls) even though more electors cast a ballot during advance polls this time than during the last general election.



## Voting at assigned polling stations on election day

Anticipating that a greater number of electors would choose to vote in advance rather than on election day, the agency increased the average size of polling divisions. On election day, returning officers set up 64,672 stationary polls, representing a decrease of 1,352 (2.1 percent) over the 42nd general election. These polls were located at 15,482 polling places, which is comparable to the 42nd general election.

Moreover, 1,981 mobile polls visited 5,334 establishments, an increase of 94 polls (5 percent) over the 42nd general election.

With nearly 70 percent of all ballots cast—corresponding to about 12.8 million Canadians—on election day, this method of voting continues to be the preference of the vast majority of Canadians. This figure is nonetheless the lowest percentage ever recorded in Canadian federal elections and attests to the rise of the popularity of advance voting.

## Voting by special ballot

Under the Special Voting Rules provisions of the *Canada Elections Act*, electors can register to vote by special ballot from the first day of the election period up until six days before election day. Electors can vote at any Elections Canada office or by mail. Incarcerated electors, Canadian Forces electors, and electors temporarily in acute care facilities are also able to vote by special ballot on specific days during the election period. In the 2019 general election, the agency also established additional special ballot service points under exceptional circumstances. These are discussed in Section 3.3.

For the 2019 general election, a total of approximately 660,000 electors voted by special ballot, compared with about 619,000 electors in the 42nd general election, a 6.7 percent increase. This represents 3.6 percent of electors who voted. Further analysis of changes to the special voting rules, the convenience of the special ballot process and the public's response to these voting options will be included in the retrospective report.

Table 3 in the Appendix provides a breakdown of special ballot voting by category.

### Voting at Elections Canada offices

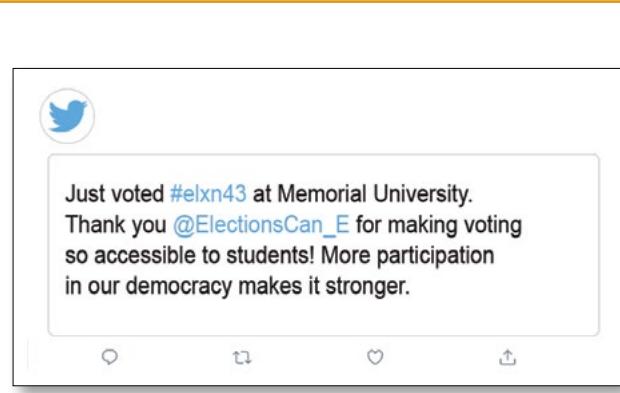
As in past general elections, electors could vote by special ballot at any Elections Canada office across the country. This was the first general election during which office staff could fully process local and national electors (that is, electors voting outside of their own electoral districts) at Election Canada offices. This improvement, combined with the newly streamlined paperwork and voting processes, improved processing times and service to electors.

### Vote on Campus offices

After a successful pilot at dozens of post-secondary campuses, Friendship Centres and YMCAs during the 42nd general election, Elections Canada made Vote on Campus a national program in the 43rd general election, this time focusing exclusively on post-secondary campuses. This involved 119 external service point offices at 98 institutions in 86 electoral districts. The agency expanded

the program to five days, October 5 to 9, compared to four days in the previous election. While any elector could vote at these offices, most were students. More than three quarters of electors who voted at external service point offices were from outside their home electoral district.

The turnout increased every day that Vote on Campus was available, peaking at around 48,000 on October 9. In all, more than 110,000 electors voted at these locations, compared with about 70,000 in 2015. Further analysis will be provided in the retrospective report.



Vote on Campus feedback

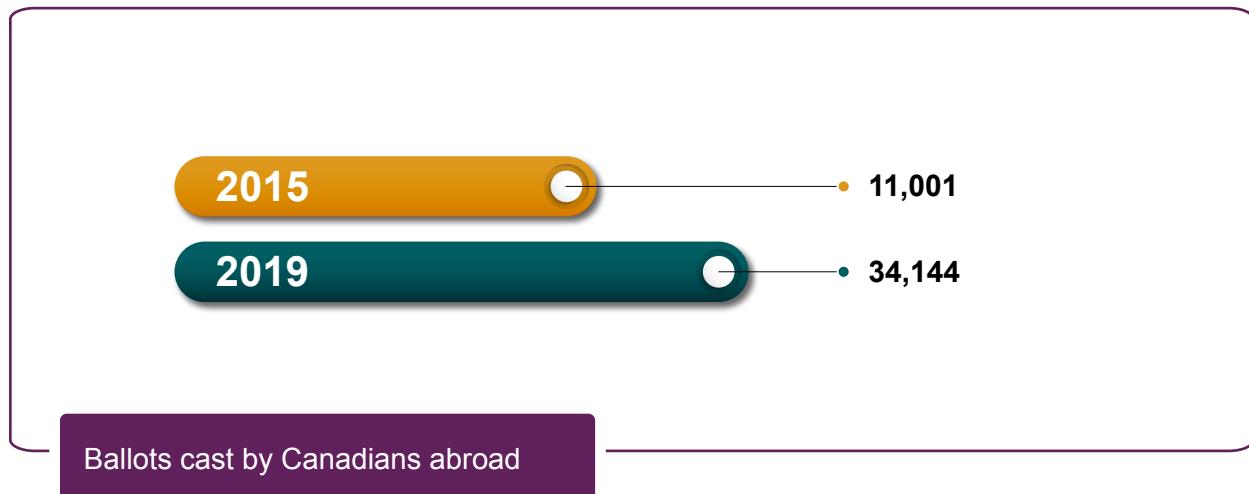
### Voting by mail

All Canadian electors, whether in Canada or abroad, can apply online or by mail for special ballot voting kits to be mailed to them.

### International

On January 11, 2019, the Supreme Court of Canada declared paragraphs 222(1)(b) and (c), 223(1)(f) and 226(f) of the *Canada Elections Act* to be of no force or effect. These provisions, which prevented Canadians living abroad for more than five years from voting by special ballot,

were repealed by Bill C-76. The repeal led to a surge in Canadians registering on the International Register of Electors (55,000 compared to 16,000 in 2015) and ballots received from electors living abroad, with 34,144 international electors casting ballots (compared to 11,001 in 2015). The top five jurisdictions where ballots were requested were the United States (43%), the United Kingdom (11%), China and Hong Kong (5%), Australia (4%) and Germany (4%).



#### ***Technical challenges related to special ballot registration***

Approximately 80,000 electors registered online to vote by mail (domestic and international combined) in this election. To register to vote by mail, electors must submit a complete application for approval by 6 p.m. on the sixth day before voting day. Due to a technical issue, 118 of those online applications submitted close to the deadline were received by the agency after the deadline. Unfortunately those electors did not receive a voting kit. An administrative review is underway to identify the root cause of this issue and address it before the next election.

#### **Other special ballot voting**

##### ***Canadian Armed Forces members***

The passage of Bill C-76 brought about changes to the Canadian Forces voting program. Elections Canada liaises closely with the Canadian Armed Forces to facilitate voting at military polling locations between 14 and 9 days before election day. In 2015, about 29,000 military personnel voted at these polling locations. However, since the passage of Bill C-76, Canadian Forces electors can now also choose any available voting method: at an Elections Canada office, by mail, or at their assigned polling station on advance polling days or election day. As a result, about 19,000 military personnel voted at military polls in 2019, a 34 percent decrease.

##### ***Voting in acute care facilities***

During the 42nd general election, the agency facilitated voting in 760 acute care facilities. In 2019, Elections Canada facilitated voting in 794 acute care facilities on October 13, 14, and 15. Hospitalized electors were notified on October 12 that election officers would visit on those days to give them the opportunity to vote by special ballot. They were also advised to call their Elections Canada office if they preferred to schedule a visit.

Depending on the institution, an election officer would visit each room or meet electors by appointment. The officer used paper forms to register electors and leveraged the Voter Information Service on Elections Canada's website to confirm the elector's correct electoral district. Officers later entered the data from the forms at the Elections Canada office.

#### ***Incarcerated electors***

Voting by special ballot took place in 52 federal, 104 provincial adult, and 57 youth correctional facilities on October 9. This was two days earlier in the electoral calendar than in previous elections, as a result of Bill C-76 coming into force. The incarcerated voting program also facilitated the vote for electors residing in 209 halfway houses (community correctional facilities and community residential facilities) across Canada.

### **3.3 Adapting Services**

#### **Accommodation of religious observances**

As noted in Section 2.10 above, Elections Canada developed an action plan to accommodate electors observing Jewish holidays. Returning officers worked with Jewish community leaders in 54 of 338 federal ridings (where adjusted 2016 Census data showed the Jewish population to be over 1 percent) to design local solutions to meet community needs. The goals of this work were to enhance election services to facilitate voting during times that observant Jews were not restricted from voting, and to raise awareness in the Jewish community about these enhanced services and options. Based on a diverse range of community needs and as determined in consultation with local community members, the agency set up 27 special voting kiosks (open to all eligible electors) for one to four days in 15 electoral districts, serving 7,221 electors who took advantage of the offering. Some 19 long-term care facilities with primarily Jewish residents where mobile polls had been established in previous general elections could not accommodate mobile polls on election day during the 43rd general election. Electors residing at those 19 long-term care facilities were served through the acute care voting model mentioned above. In some cases Elections Canada offices increased their capacity and service hours to accommodate the needs of these communities. Relevant voting service options were actively promoted through an information campaign and engagement with national organizations (CIJA and B'nai Brith), Jewish media and community leaders.

The agency's accommodation of religious observances will be revisited in future reports.

#### **Response to storms in Manitoba**

Severe storms caused considerable snow accumulations and major power outages in parts of Manitoba, triggering a state of emergency. This disrupted plans for advance polls in several electoral districts. Some communities were evacuated and polls did not open as planned, while others opened on a reduced schedule due to intermittent power outages. The Chief Electoral Officer authorized the closing of advance polling places affected by the winter



conditions and outages. Some electoral districts continued to experience power outages, road closures, and flooding through election day.

Elections Canada implemented a series of extraordinary measures to accommodate electors who did not have the opportunity to vote at advance polls because of evacuations or power outages.

The agency set up an additional polling place at the University of Winnipeg's Convocation Hall for evacuees from 14 communities in four affected electoral districts: Churchill–Keewatinook Aski, Dauphin–Swan River–Neepawa, Portage–Lisgar, and Selkirk–Interlake–Eastman. Elections Canada worked with the Canadian Red Cross to transport evacuees to the polls. About 270 electors used this voting option, and ballots were counted on site at the end of election day.

The agency also accommodated emergency workers—mostly from Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba—who had been deployed in Manitoba to restore power and telecommunications services and who were unable to make it to their assigned polling station on election day. The agency opened two additional service points, one in the community of Lundar and the other in Portage la Prairie, where workers could vote by special ballot.

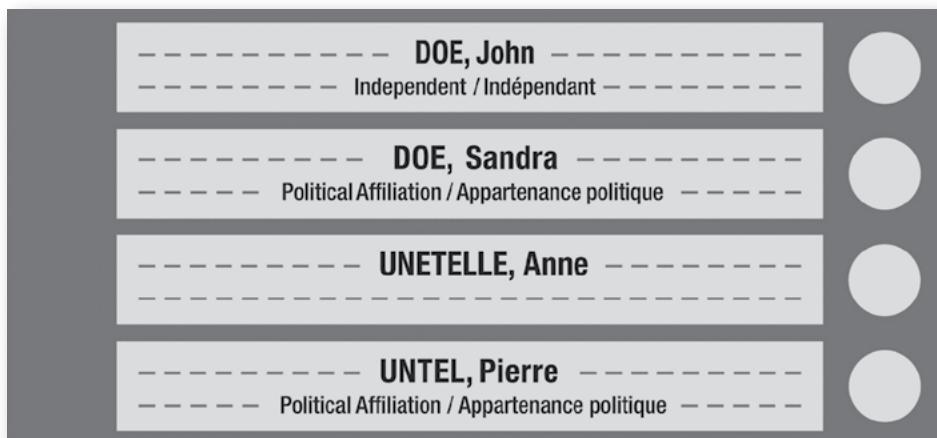
These offices were mainly staffed with volunteer headquarters employees, as most field resources were needed elsewhere. Elections Canada closely collaborated with Manitoba Hydro, coordinating voting times to prevent long lines and accommodate workers' schedules. In all, 592 workers used these additional service points.



### 3.4 New Paper Ballots

In 2018, Elections Canada piloted a new paper ballot in several by-elections. The new front design was developed in consultation with political parties and stakeholder groups, such as disability communities, and focus-tested with a cross-section of Canadians. The new, larger ballot features larger font sizes and displays candidates' surnames in upper-case letters only, to increase legibility. An assessment is needed to determine whether the change in design of the ballot or other factors contributed to an increase in the number of rejected ballots. This examination will be included in the upcoming retrospective report.

Several changes to ballot production improved efficiency and reduced the time needed for printing. Furthermore, Elections Canada developed a new ballot planning and distribution tool to assist the returning officers with the various aspects of ballot planning and production. The tool automated the calculation of the number of ballots required for each electoral district, incorporating factors such as potential high registration, higher advance poll turnouts, and the field office's ability to replenish the ballot supply during the vote. The tool ensured that enough ballots were printed and that they were more appropriately distributed, and that no polling place ran out of ballots.



New ballot design

## 4. Communicating with Electors

Recent elections in western democracies have taken place in an evolving communications environment that includes increasing concerns about online disinformation and misinformation.

During the 43rd general election, Elections Canada used its various communication channels to share accurate information about the electoral process. The agency's approach emphasized providing electors with all the information they needed to register and vote. Additional efforts were made to reach audiences who faced known barriers to participating in elections: specifically, Indigenous electors, youth, new Canadians, and people with disabilities.

Underlying Elections Canada's communications efforts was an aim to build and maintain the trust of Canadians, and to position the agency as the official source of information about registering and voting.

### 4.1 Voter Information Campaign

Elections Canada's 2019 Voter Information Campaign was the central element of the agency's efforts to communicate with electors about the general election. Part of Elections Canada's mandate is to make sure that all eligible electors can exercise their democratic right to vote. To achieve this, Elections Canada ran a national multimedia information campaign before and during the election, to provide Canadians with all the information they needed on when, where, and ways to register and vote.

#### Multimedia campaign

The completely revamped campaign, which started on June 15, 2019, was designed to align with the new pre-election period, which began on June 30.

The pre-election component of the campaign was delivered exclusively through digital platforms and focused on ways to participate in the federal election, including working at the election and registering to vote.

One of the key objectives of the pre-election campaign was to reduce the registration gap for electors aged 18–24. In 2015, 72 percent of electors in that age group were on the preliminary lists of electors, compared to 92.7 percent of all eligible electors (overall coverage). This means that a significant number of young electors did not receive a voter information card providing them with the same basic voting information provided to other electors.

One of the ways that the agency attempted to address this issue was through the use of social media influencers. This had been known to be an effective promotional tactic to reach youth and has been used in many other Canadian jurisdictions by election management bodies. In February 2019, the plan to produce a video featuring social media influencers as part of the pre-election campaign was presented to the Advisory Committee of Political Parties. As social media influencers were being considered for use in the video, regular vetting was performed to rule out those who were not appropriate based on their past activities, including evidence of partisan statements or activities. After some criticism related to the initiative, the agency performed a final vetting process. This final vetting revealed that some past activities of

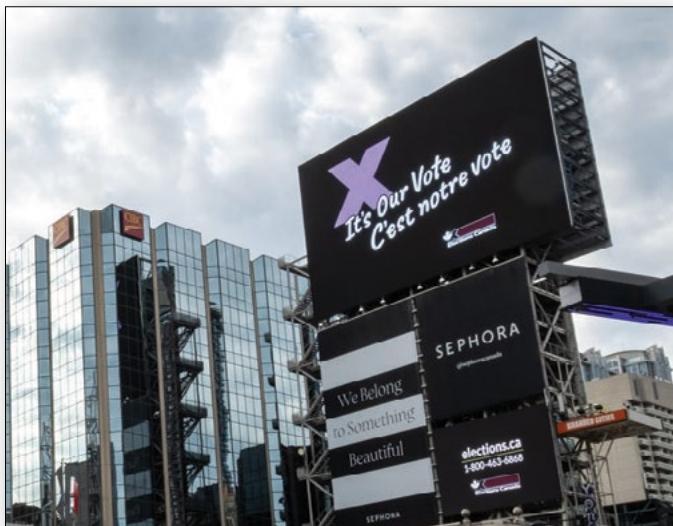
influencers that were not captured previously, could be perceived as partisan. The video therefore posed an unacceptable risk to the agency's core pillars of nonpartisanship and neutrality, and the Chief Electoral Officer decided to remove it from the pre-election campaign.

The election period campaign had four phases with distinct focuses: registration, voter information card awareness, early voting options, and election day.

Overall, the pre-election and the elections period campaigns included advertisements on 28 English and 27 French mainstream television stations, nine ethnic and two Indigenous television stations, in more than 500 daily and weekly publications, on 723 mainstream radio stations, and more than 100 ethnic and Indigenous radio stations. There were also out-of-home elements to the campaign, including advertisements on 3,000 digital public transit screens (e.g. at bus and subway stations) and 2,250 movie screens.

The Voter Information Campaign was also highly visible on several digital platforms, including social media platforms such as Facebook/Instagram, Snapchat, Google/YouTube, and Twitter, and multiple websites.

The multimedia campaign positioned Elections Canada as the official source of information on registering and voting, and directed electors to elections.ca and to the agency's toll-free number for additional information.



Digital campaign billboards  
in downtown Toronto

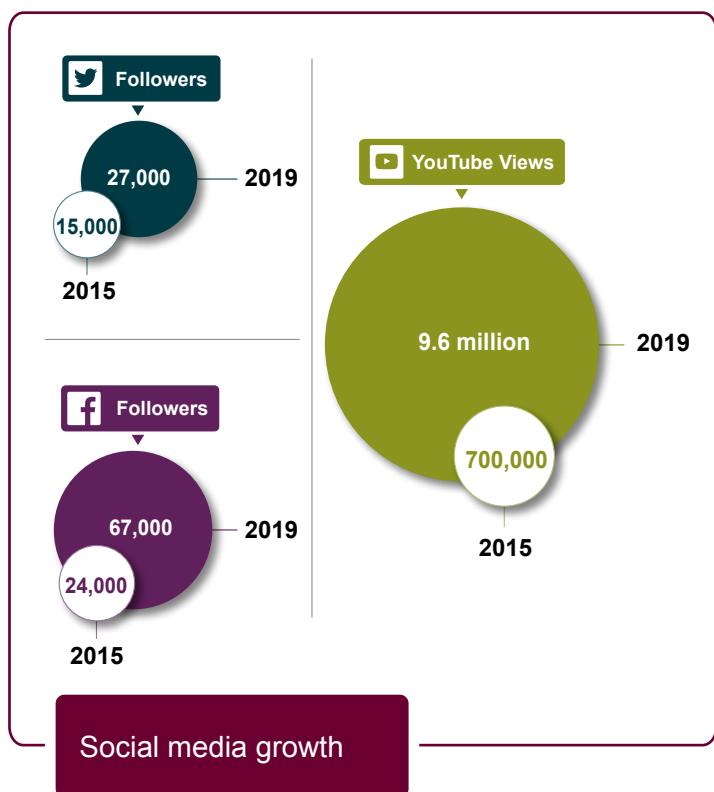
## General election website

Elections Canada provided election information on its website ([elections.ca](http://elections.ca)) earlier than it had in past elections, to align it with the new pre-election period. On September 11, the agency's homepage adopted the look and feel of the Voter Information Campaign and put essential information for electors up front. The online voter registration service and the Voter Information Service were prominently visible, to allow electors to use the registration service and use their postal codes to find out when and where they could vote, and obtain information on the accessibility of their polling places. The Voter Information Service received five million visits during the election period.

The website aimed to provide information on when, where, and ways to register and vote. It received a record 16.4 million visits during the election period, with 4.1 million visits on election day alone. Increasingly, electors are using their mobile devices to access the Elections Canada website. On advance polling days and election day, mobile users accounted for 77 percent of visits to the website, compared with 61 percent in 2015. Live election results were published online, starting at 7:00 p.m. Eastern time on October 21, with the results page on Elections Canada's website receiving more than 780,000 visits over two days.

## Social media and collaboration with digital platforms

As part of its overall communications efforts, Elections Canada worked with digital platforms Google/YouTube, Facebook/Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter to produce more than a dozen online initiatives with the goal of driving electors to [elections.ca](http://elections.ca) and online registration. The Facebook registration reminder (September 16 to 21) generated 988,222 visits to the online registration service. Registration activity that originated from Facebook led to 474,495 confirmations, additions, and updates. Facebook's reminder on election day and the night before made Facebook the top referrer to Elections Canada's home page on October 21, surpassing Google as the agency's top driver of election-day traffic.



Elections Canada also collaborated with Google to make sure that people searching for voting information on that search engine were directed to [elections.ca](http://elections.ca). During the election period, up-to-date information about when and ways to register and vote appeared directly on [google.ca](http://google.ca).

Elections Canada also leveraged its work with social media platforms to address instances of incorrect information.

Elections Canada also used its corporate social media accounts to interact with the public. Between September 11 and October 22, Elections Canada received 44,667 messages through its accounts and responded to 2,696 enquiries.

## Direct mail

As in past elections, the voter information card (VIC) played a crucial role in providing information about the electoral process. A VIC was mailed to each registered elector to provide personalized information on when and where to vote, the accessibility of the polling place, and how to contact the nearest Elections Canada office. The agency mailed 26.2 million VICs by September 27 to electors whose names appeared on the preliminary lists of electors. It subsequently mailed about 209,000 revised VICs to advise electors of changes to polling place information and about 1.1 million VICs to electors who were newly registered or had updated their names or addresses.

The image shows the front cover of the 'Guide to the federal election' booklet. At the top, it says 'FEDERAL ELECTION / MONDAY, OCTOBER 21' and includes social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn, along with the hashtag '#ItsOurVote'. Below this is the title 'Guide to the federal election'. The central part of the cover features a collage of five photographs showing diverse Canadians (a man in a wheelchair, a woman with glasses, a group of people outdoors, two young women, and a couple). Overlaid on this collage is a large purple 'X' and the slogan 'It's Our Vote' in purple script. At the bottom, there is text encouraging people to visit elections.ca for official information, along with the phone number 1-800-463-6868, the website elections.ca, and the TTY number 1-800-361-8935. The Elections Canada logo is also present. A purple banner at the bottom left states 'Guide mailed to every Canadian household'.

A week after sending the VICs, Elections Canada distributed the *Guide to the federal election* to every household in Canada. The brochure provided information about voter eligibility, registration, ways to vote, identification requirements (including information about accepted pieces of identification), accessibility of polling locations, and voting assistance tools and services available on election day. It also prompted electors to contact Elections Canada if they had not received a VIC. The agency distributed 15,424,443 bilingual brochures across Canada and an additional 10,073 trilingual brochures in Nunavut.



## Media relations

Elections Canada organized a technical briefing for journalists on June 11, before the new pre-election period began, to provide information and answer questions about the changes to the *Canada Elections Act* that were brought about by the passage of Bill C-76.

During the pre-election period and the election period, the media relations team answered 4,317 requests from journalists. During the pre-election period, they answered 488 requests. The remaining 3,829 requests were answered during the election period, which is comparable to past general elections.

Once the writs were issued, Elections Canada used its network of 12 regional media advisors and its permanent media relations advisors to provide information about all aspects of the electoral process to local, national, and international media. The Chief Electoral Officer also held a press conference on September 17 to answer questions from journalists and raise awareness about the electoral process.

The vast majority of the 3,829 queries from journalists during the election period concerned routine matters of election administration, such as candidate nominations, ways to vote, identification requirements, advance polls, voter turnout, and the *Canada Elections Act*. More specific to this election were questions about recent modifications to the Act, including changes for international electors.

Elections Canada also initiated calls to the media to provide information on the electoral process. It issued 18 news releases and advisories in both official languages. The media relations team also proactively reached out to media to increase awareness of the agency's efforts to hire election workers.



Elections Canada delivered its national multimedia campaign through a series of advertising and communication products targeting the general population and priority groups such as new voters (youth and new Canadian citizens), Indigenous electors and electors with disabilities. The campaign provided them with all the information they needed on when, where and ways to register and vote in the federal election.

## Advertising


**TV Stations**

**28 English**   **9 ethnic**  
**27 French**   **2 Indigenous**


**Out-of-home**

**3,000 transit screens**  
**2,250 movie screens**


**Radio Stations**

**723 mainstream**  
**100+ ethnic and Indigenous**


**Digital and Social Platforms**

**483+ million** impressions  
**4+ million** clicks  
**28+ million** complete video views


**Print Publications**

**500+** dailies and weeklies

## Communications


**Website**  
**16.4 million** visits
 
**Guide to the federal election**  
**15.4 million** sent to households across Canada
 
**Public Enquiries**  
**1.5 million** calls  
**39,650** written enquiries
 
**Shareable Tools**  
**Over 45** infographics, videos and downloadable information products
 
**Voter Information Card**  
**26.2 million** sent to registered electors
 
**Media Relations**  
**3,829** requests  
**18** news releases and media advisories
 
**Social Media**  
**30.4 million** Twitter impressions  
**2.8 million** Facebook reach  
**9.6 million** YouTube views
 
**Community Relations Officers**  
**1,529** working with priority groups
 
**Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement**  
**121** partner organizations
 

## Overview of the Voter Information Campaign

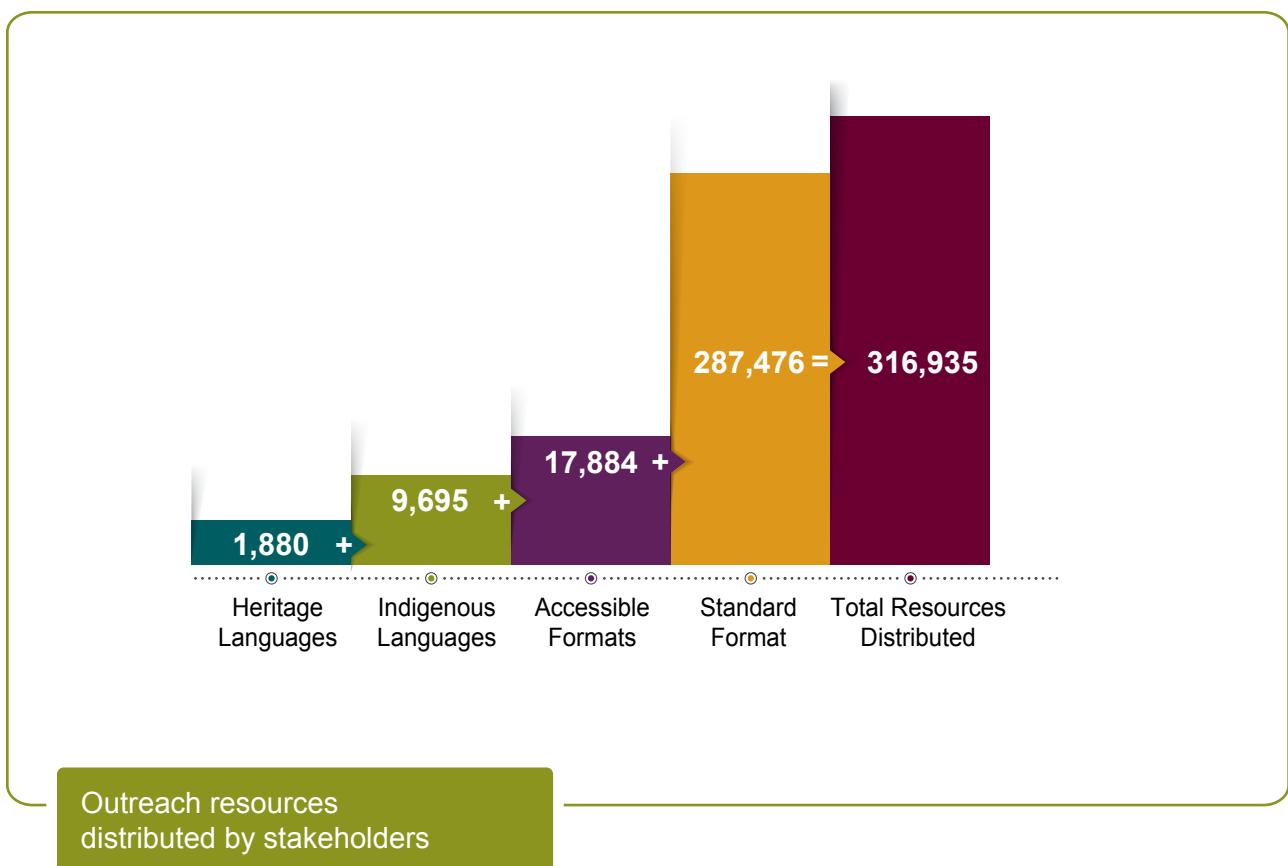
## 4.2 Outreach and Stakeholder Mobilization

### National outreach

In advance of the election, the Inspire Democracy program at Elections Canada negotiated 30 contracts and 91 informal agreements with stakeholder groups. These organizations had the capacity and reach to share information with elector groups that face barriers to registering and voting. These included organizations representing Indigenous electors, youth, new Canadians, and electors with disabilities.

The organizations distributed Inspire Democracy learning materials and shared Voter Information Campaign materials in print, digital, and alternative formats such as braille and large print. They also leveraged Elections Canada's translation of these materials into Indigenous and other languages by delivering these products to communities that would use them.

Contractors and organizations that had informal agreements with Elections Canada also assisted with coordinating or hosting face-to-face outreach events with target groups. Elections Canada head office staff delivered presentations to target groups at 51 stakeholder events across the country. These organizations in turn delivered similar presentations at 195 community outreach events.



## Local outreach

### Community relations officers

This election saw new opportunities for community relations officers to serve additional elector groups that might also face barriers to registering and voting. These new groups included Métis communities, minority official language communities, and, in light of the fact that election day and some advance polling days coincided in 2019 with holidays during which observant members of the Jewish community could be prevented from voting, communities with significant Jewish populations.

Community relations officers delivered information to these and other target groups locally. Approximately 23,385 electors visited kiosks set up by community relations officers and an estimated 7,572 electors attended presentations. Community relations officers also hosted discussion groups, distributed information products, and liaised with administrators of relevant organizations or facilities.

During the planning for this general election, returning officers were given the opportunity to hire community relations officers to conduct outreach activities with Indigenous communities within their electoral districts, whether on a First Nations reserve or in an urban area with a large Indigenous population. Appointing a community relations officer was also encouraged if there were Inuit or Métis communities within the electoral district.

Returning officers hired a total of 1,529 community relations officers for the 2019 general election, compared with 1,201 for the previous general election. They hired more community relations officers, with the exception of those working with electors with disabilities and those working with homeless electors. This will be further discussed in upcoming reports.

Table 4 in the Appendix lists the number of community relations officers hired by category.

### Further outreach to Indigenous communities

As in the past, returning officers hired elders and Indigenous youth to work at polling places on election day to help explain the voting process, answer general questions, and provide interpretation services.

Elections Canada also launched the Elector Services in Remote Indigenous Communities (ESRIC) pilot project over the 18 months leading up to the election. Based on specific criteria, certain remote Indigenous communities in 26 electoral districts were identified to participate in this pilot project. This project focused on building stronger relationships to better understand and respond to the needs of electors in these communities.



Returning officers were provided with resources to conduct pre-election outreach to these Indigenous communities. The returning officers' outreach depended on local context; activities included attending local events, presentations to chiefs and councils on voting options, visits to band administrators, election information booths at community events, and outreach tailored to each community.

Once the election was called, all returning officers with Indigenous communities in their electoral district were sent Voter Information Campaign products for their community relations officers' outreach efforts, including selected products in local Indigenous languages.

All outreach activities to Indigenous communities will be analyzed in the upcoming retrospective report.

### Civic education

The 2019 general election presented an important opportunity for Elections Canada to fulfill its role of educating elementary and secondary students. To increase future electors' understanding of the electoral process, Elections Canada engaged the registered charity CIVIX to deliver a parallel election, called Student Vote Canada 2019. This program, which has been offered during federal elections since 2004, achieved its highest level of participation ever. More than 1.1 million students in all electoral districts cast ballots, a 29 percent increase over 2015.



Though Student Vote Canada 2019 was the main educational focus during the election period, Elections Canada also made its own learning resources available to teachers. Over 3,000 educators requested these curriculum-linked resources, an increase of 64 percent over 2015.

### 4.3 Complaints

Elections Canada always welcomes feedback from Canadians on all aspects of the electoral process. Complaints can be lodged through a newly redesigned online form, by telephone, by email, or by regular mail. During the election, electors could also file a complaint at an Elections Canada office or at their polling place.

A total of approximately 19,000 complaints were received from members of the public, election day workers, political entities, suppliers, election administrators and field office staff from June 30, 2019, to December 1, 2019, a period that covers the pre-election period, the general election period, and the immediate post-election period.

Complaints received from the start of the election period on September 11 through to December 1 totalled about 11,100, down from 17,000 in the comparable period for the 42nd general election.

## **Complaints by category**

### **Freedom of expression and climate change**

Elections Canada received about 6,700 complaints related to issues around freedom of expression and climate change in the context of third-party advertising rules (further described in Section 5.1 of the report). Nearly all of those complaints were submitted during the pre-election period (June 30 to September 10).

### **Voter experience and services to electors**

Elections Canada received nearly 5,000 complaints about the voter experience or services to electors, whether at the polls, online, or through any other service channel.

These complaints touch on many Elections Canada products and services, particularly the experience at the polls (e.g. wait times, election worker conduct, official languages, voting procedure, and accessibility of services), experience using online tools (e.g. registration or finding a polling place) and experience receiving services by mail (e.g. voter information card or special ballot).

### **Accessibility**

As of January 8, the agency received about 2,400 complaints about the accessibility of polling locations and Elections Canada offices. The top four issues identified in these complaints are related to parking, location of the polling station inside a building, signage and level access entrances. Table 5 in the Appendix provides a detailed breakdown of complaints.

### **Candidates and political entities**

The agency received approximately 1,500 complaints about candidates and political entities. These included cases where a candidate or political entity was the subject of the complaint, or where products, services or rules related to candidates and political entities were the subject of the complaint.

Most complaints were from members of the public, and were related to campaign and political advertising activities such as campaign sign posting, campaign phone calls, campaign text messages and online media (including social media).

### **Polling day worker or election administrator experience**

The agency received 1,400 complaints about the experiences of individuals applying to work for Elections Canada during the general election or employed as election day workers or election administrators. About half of these complaints were about pay. The remaining complaints mostly referred to working conditions (e.g. working without breaks, quality of training) and to hiring (e.g. complaints about the application process or not being hired).

### **Canada Elections Act and policies**

Elections Canada received approximately 1,300 complaints related to the Act and its policies. This excludes complaints related to free expression and climate change which were counted separately due to their high volume in the 2019 general election.

The complaints in this category were typically questions related to voter eligibility and proof of identity, acceptable conduct for election workers, candidates and electors, and laws and regulations on advertising and media.

## Other

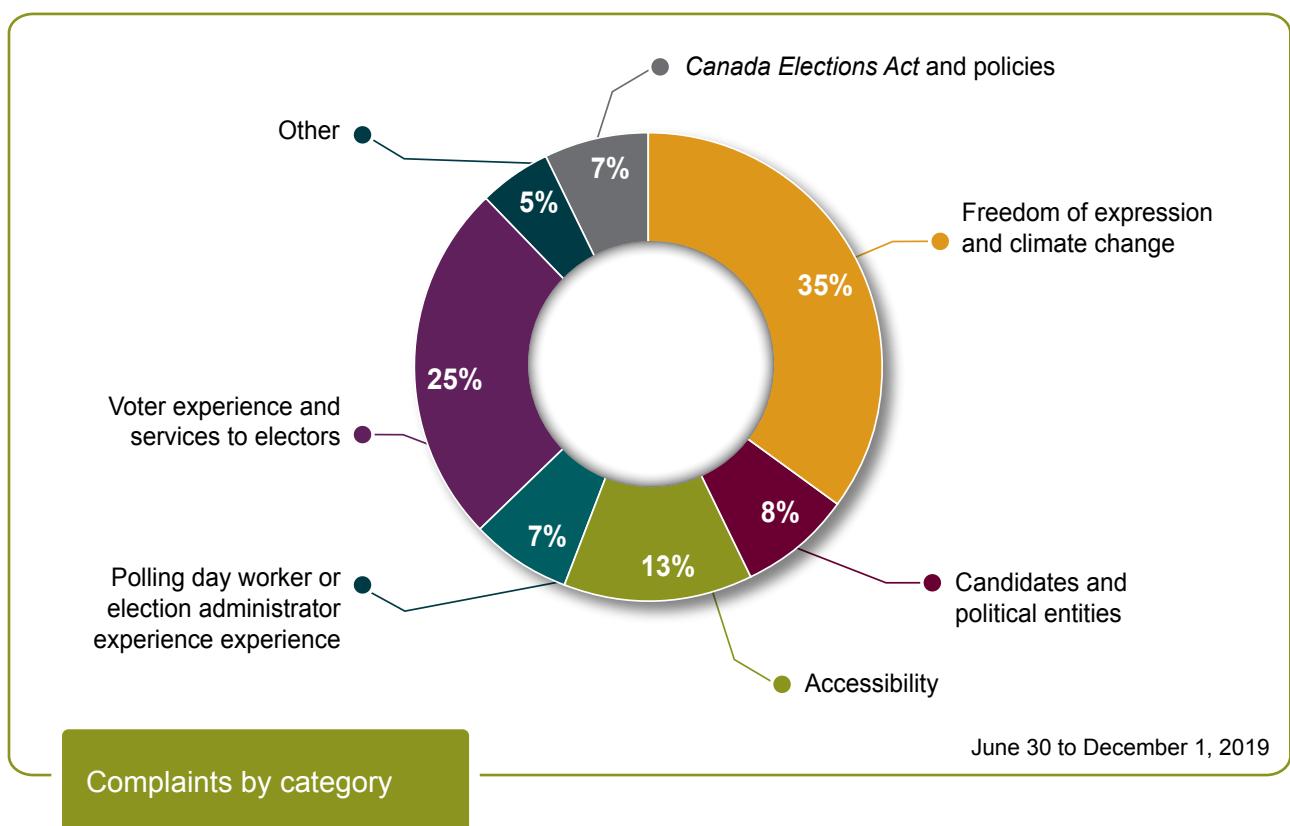
An additional 955 complaints were too generic or did not contain enough data to be categorized.

## Complaint management

Complaints were given the highest priority when an individual's right to vote was at stake. Complainants whose right to vote may have been affected were often dealt with immediately by providing the address of the polling place or the telephone number for the returning officer.

Complaints related to a potential offence under the *Canada Elections Act* were referred to the Commissioner of Canada Elections for further investigation. Complaints related to potential offences involving robocalls or other voter contact services were referred to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

As was the case in 2015, it is expected to take approximately five months to respond to all complaints from the 2019 general election. As complaints are closed, their categorization or the number of complaints may change once more details about each complaint are understood. Further analysis will be provided in the retrospective report.





## 5. Working with Candidates, Political Parties, and Third Parties

The *Canada Elections Act* includes many provisions and requirements for candidates, political parties, and third parties to follow.

The agency communicates with these groups, by providing information sessions and handbooks, to ensure that they understand and are equipped to comply with the rules. For this election the agency also introduced the online portal, with the goal of serving candidates and parties more efficiently and effectively.

For the 43rd general election, 21 political parties ran candidates. By comparison, 23 political parties ran candidates in the 42nd general election. A total of 2,146 candidates ran in the 43rd general election, compared with 1,792 in the 42nd general election. This increase in candidates is largely attributed to a new party that ran candidates in 315 of 338 ridings. There were 147 registered third parties compared with 115 in 2015.

### 5.1 New Rules for Political Entities

#### Pre-election period

The *Canada Elections Act* now includes a pre-election period with spending limits for third parties and registered parties. The period starts on June 30 in the year of a fixed-date general election and ends on the day before the election period begins. In 2019, the spending limit for partisan advertising by political parties was \$2.05 million; the limit for all regulated activities of third parties was \$1.02 million.

#### Regulation of third parties

Under the new legislation, more third-party activities are regulated. It is no longer just election advertising in the election period that is covered under the Act, but also partisan advertising in the pre-election period, partisan activities, and election surveys. An important feature of the new legislation is the increased transparency for third-party activities. The new rules required third parties to submit up to four interim financial returns once they reached \$10,000 in contributions or expenses for regulated activities since the previous general election, in addition to a final campaign return.

The legislation now completely bans foreign third parties from incurring any expenses for regulated activities; they were previously limited to \$500 in expenses. Also, foreign third parties cannot be sold election advertising space. In addition, all third parties are prohibited at all times from using foreign funds for their regulated activities under the *Canada Elections Act*.

Third parties represent a diverse collection of individuals, groups and corporations that want to participate in the democratic process but do not seek election themselves. They are not usually known to Elections Canada before they register. As a result, any outreach activity is particularly challenging.

Elections Canada prepared and disseminated, through its website and social media accounts, several new tools to raise awareness and assist third parties in the application of the new rules, given the extensive changes. These included frequent information sessions, a roadmap for the pre-election and election periods, several videos, and a handbook. The agency reached out to previously registered third parties in federal, provincial, and territorial elections to provide the information that was available and proactively informed potential third parties through a social media campaign. Elections Canada also organized online conferencing sessions to inform third parties of the new rules. Third parties could also contact Elections Canada directly with their questions.

Despite the outreach efforts, some confusion remained on third-party obligations, particularly in the context of advertising about climate change during the election period. The Chief Electoral Officer issued a statement on August 20, 2019, to clarify third-party requirements on issue advertising and invited third parties to contact Elections Canada with their questions.

### Political financing: candidates and parties

The *Canada Elections Act* sets separate limits on the election expenses of candidates and registered political parties. The election expenses limit for candidates is based on several factors, including the number of names appearing on either the preliminary or revised list of electors for an electoral district. These limits are adjusted for inflation.

The election expenses limit for candidates ranged from \$86,542.92 in the Charlottetown (Prince Edward Island) electoral district to \$145,436.06 in Kootenay–Columbia (British Columbia). The average expenses limit for candidates was \$113,175.08, compared with \$218,837.62 for the 42nd general election. The limits for that election were increased because of the length of the election period. Since the coming into force of Bill C-76, election expenses limits are no longer increased in accordance with the length of the election period.

The election expenses limit for political parties ranged from \$192,436.15 (for a party that endorsed candidates in two electoral districts) to \$29,060,308.97 (for the four parties that endorsed candidates in all 338 electoral districts).

Table 6 in the Appendix lists each party's number of confirmed candidates and final expenses limits.



Social media awareness campaign

The system governing expenses for nomination contestants and candidates changed as well for this general election. There are new categories and subcategories of personal expenses, travel and living expenses, and litigation expenses. For candidates, certain personal expenses are now reimbursed at higher rates. There is also a new category of accessibility expenses for registered parties and candidates, aimed at improving access for persons with disabilities to campaign events, work, and information. Accessibility expenses do not count as election expenses and are reimbursed at 90 percent, up to a limit.

To ease the regulatory and financial burden, candidates and registered electoral district associations now require an audit only if they reach a threshold of \$10,000 in contributions or expenses, or (for candidates only) 10 percent of valid votes cast. There is now an audit subsidy for nomination contestants, and the audit subsidies payable to electoral district associations, nomination contestants and candidates are now tied to inflation. Moreover, independent candidates who had to remit surplus funds to the Receiver General after an election can apply to have the funds repaid if they run again in the subsequent election held in their electoral district.

### **Privacy policy for political parties**

Bill C-76 amended the *Canada Elections Act* to require each political party to adopt a policy for the protection of personal information and to publish the policy on its website. These provisions were brought into force by the Chief Electoral Officer on April 1, 2019.

Registered and eligible parties, and parties that had applied for registration before the provisions came into force, were required to submit a policy by July 2. Any party that had applied for registration after the coming into force was required to include a policy as part of its application.

The Act details six requirements that must be addressed in the policy. Broadly speaking, parties must indicate:

- the type of personal information collected and how it is collected
- how the party protects the personal information under its control
- how it uses the information collected
- the type of training provided to employees who collect and use the data
- how it collects and uses personal information created from online activity and how it uses cookies
- the name and contact information of a person to whom questions on the party's policy can be directed

In addition, parties must provide the URL of the page on their website where the privacy policy is located.

As of the publication of this report, all registered parties have provided a compliant policy for the protection of personal information. Links to the various policies can be found at [elections.ca](http://elections.ca), under Political Participants > List of Political Parties. Analysis of this new requirement and the policies will be provided in the retrospective report.

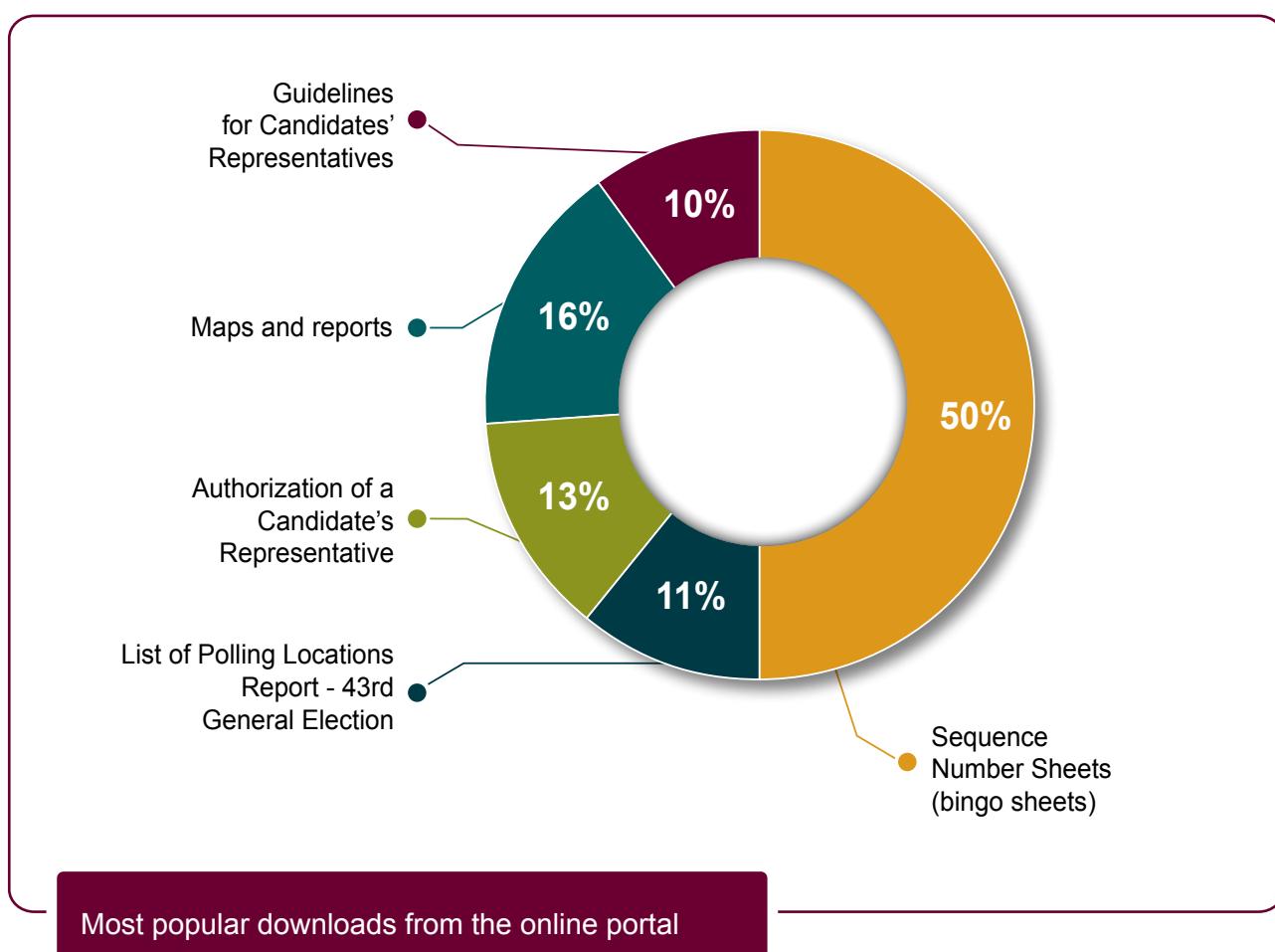
## Post-election audits of campaign returns

After the election, Elections Canada undertakes the audit of campaign returns for candidates, political parties and third parties. Candidates and third parties have until February 21, 2020, to file their returns; the deadline for parties is June 22, 2020. Files will be selected for an audit on the basis of risk criteria. Elections Canada is aiming to complete the audit of candidate returns within 12 months after the filing deadline, in comparison to an 18 month target in 2015 with fewer candidates.

## 5.2 Services and Initiatives

### Online portal

The agency launched its online portal nationally for the 43rd general election. This secure online portal offered political entities and prospective candidates an alternative way to access electoral products and submit candidate nominations electronically. Of the total 2,146 confirmed candidates, 183 resulted from e-nominations. The portal also allowed for distribution of 85 different electoral products. By far the most popular product downloaded was sequence number sheets, commonly known as bingo sheets, a tool that indicates to candidates which electors have already voted, allowing campaigns to better focus their get-out-the-vote activities.



## **Resources and information sessions for candidates and campaigns**

A total of 561 campaign representatives attended Getting Started training sessions, held by Elections Canada staff in 21 cities from May 6 to June 25, 2019. Topics included starting the campaign, contributions, loans, transfers, fundraising activities, and electoral campaign expenses.

Returning officers met with confirmed candidates or their representatives between October 2 and 4. Some of the most common topics discussed were polling place hours, election worker recruitment, revision of the lists of electors, access to the online portal, procedures for advance voting and voter registration, polling locations, and guidelines for candidates and their representatives at the polls.

Elections Canada also provided candidates with updated electronic filing software that could be used to issue contribution receipts and prepare an electoral campaign return. The software update was available through the online portal.

After the election, 434 campaign representatives attended Closing the Campaign sessions that Elections Canada staff held from November 7 to December 7 in 21 cities. Topics included electoral campaign financing, completing the reporting requirements with the electronic filing software, filing deadlines, and closing the campaign. Combined with the attendees of the Getting Started sessions, 995 individuals participated, compared with 785 for the 42nd general election.

## **Accessibility expenses**

Changes to the *Canada Elections Act* in Bill C-76 included provisions to support accessibility expenses incurred by political parties and candidates, as well as disability expenses for candidates. Elections Canada prepared an *Accessibility Info Sheet for Political Parties and Candidates* as a way of promoting an accessible and inclusive electoral system. This document had been suggested by persons with disabilities who sought to ensure that parties' campaign materials and other information would be accessible to all electors. The info sheet describes the importance of accessibility and the barriers that many people face, how political entities can make their activities more accessible, and a list of information resources. Elections Canada also published an interpretation note on accessibility expenses and disability-related personal expenses (see "Official guidance and interpretation" below). The agency will not know the full extent of these expenses until it receives and analyzes all campaign returns. An analysis will be provided in the retrospective report.

## **Official guidance and interpretation**

Elections Canada issues written opinions, guidelines and interpretation notes to political parties on the application of the *Canada Elections Act*. This is a legislated process involving prescribed consultation with political parties and the Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections. Eight of these were finalized for the 43rd general election, on topics such as accessibility expenses and disability-related personal expenses, volunteer labour, and guidelines for candidates' representatives. Elections Canada also issued new versions of the handbooks for nomination contestants, candidates, registered parties, and electoral district associations to reflect the legislative changes brought about through the passage of Bill C-76.

# Accessibility Info Sheet for Political Parties and Candidates

To promote accessibility in every aspect of the electoral process, Elections Canada has developed this info sheet to guide political parties and candidates in making their campaigns more accessible to Canadians of all abilities.

## Why does accessibility matter?



According to Statistics Canada, nearly 6.2 million adult Canadians reported having a disability – that's close to 1 in 5 Canadians.



Voting is a right, guaranteed by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Canadians with disabilities share this right equally.



Accessibility benefits everyone – using plain language, providing information in accessible formats and ensuring the physical accessibility of public meeting sites will help you reach more Canadians.

## What kinds of barriers do people face?

### Physical



when the features of buildings or spaces cause problems:

- stairs or high doorway thresholds
- doorknobs that are difficult to grasp; doors with no automatic openers
- parking spaces or hallways that are too narrow

### Informational



when a person cannot easily read or understand the information:

- print that is too small to read or not clear
- websites that are not compatible with screen magnification or screen reader technology
- information that is too complex and not in plain language

### Attitudinal



between people, when communicating, such as:

- thinking that people with disabilities are inferior and always need assistance
- assuming that a person with a disability is automatically unable to do a job or make decisions for themselves, including voting
- thinking that people with a similar disability have the same needs
- not recognizing that people with invisible disabilities might still face barriers



Guide provided to  
parties and candidates

### **5.3 Broadcasting Time for Political Entities**

The independent Broadcasting Arbitrator allocates paid and free broadcasting time to parties in accordance with the *Canada Elections Act* and arbitrates disputes between political parties and broadcasters about the application of the Act. The Broadcasting Arbitrator also issues guidelines on the entitlement to and allocation of broadcasting time under the Act, and the procedures for booking broadcasting time by registered and eligible parties, as well as the obligations of broadcasters during a general election.

During a general election, the *Canada Elections Act* requires every broadcaster in Canada to make at least 390 minutes of broadcasting time available for purchase by registered and eligible parties. The time must be provided during prime time at the lowest rate that would be charged to any other purchaser for equivalent time.

On June 28, 2019, the Broadcasting Arbitrator issued his latest order on the allocation of paid broadcasting time. This allocation was in effect for the 43rd general election.

The Act also requires all network operators that provided free broadcasting time in the previous general election to provide as much free broadcasting time to registered and eligible parties during the election that follows. Free broadcasting time must be provided to parties in the same proportion as the allocation of paid broadcasting time. Only three network operators in Canada are still required to offer free broadcasting time: CBC/Radio-Canada, TVA and V Télé. Only one of these broadcasts in English.

Table 7 in the Appendix details the paid and free broadcasting time that broadcasters and network operators were required to provide to parties during the 43rd general election.



## 6. Maintaining Security and Integrity

The electoral environment is changing. Experts continue to identify potential threats to Canada's democracy, ranging from attempted foreign interference and influence to cyberattacks and disinformation. These threats are complex, reaching beyond our borders and the realm of election management—and there is no simple solution that eliminates them while also allowing Canadians to maintain their freedom of expression.

Though the federal electoral process is protected by many legal, procedural, and technological safeguards, Elections Canada paid careful attention to these threats to democracy by putting in place a comprehensive security strategy and prepared to identify and address false or misleading information about where, when and ways to register and vote.

### 6.1 Elections Canada's Role in Electoral Security

#### **Increasing collaboration with Canada's security agencies**

In the current environment, no single entity working alone can ensure election security. Recognizing that meeting today's challenges required a coordinated effort, Elections Canada worked closely with Canada's security agencies and the Commissioner of Canada Elections before and during the election.

Elections Canada leveraged the expertise of these security agencies to reinforce its physical, personnel and cybersecurity measures. The agency also worked to put in place collaboration mechanisms to ensure coordination on detection and response to potential threats, and participated in simulation exercises involving national security agencies and other relevant government departments.

These preparations proved helpful in addressing weather incidents such as the winter storms in Manitoba, as described in Section 3.3.

#### **Modernizing and securing the agency's information technology infrastructure**

After the 2015 general election, the agency proceeded to renew key elements of its information technology infrastructure to ensure that services to Canadians and the administration of the electoral process would benefit from a reliable and secure information technology environment.

These investments allowed the agency to reinforce its security posture, in collaboration with Communications Security Establishment, which provided guidance and advice. Additional protections were added to Elections Canada's network, website and data centres. Elections Canada also considerably increased its ability to monitor its network and digital services to detect and address potential cyberthreats.

No cybersecurity incident disrupted services to Canadians or the administration of the electoral process in the 43rd general election.

## **Security by design**

Elections Canada adopted a security by design approach leading up to the election. This meant integrating security concerns and safeguards in the day-to-day business of the agency.

All employees at Elections Canada headquarters and staff at Elections Canada offices were required to take cybersecurity training, and their resilience to phishing attempts was routinely tested. Internal coordination and information mechanisms were reinforced to ensure the rapid detection of and response to potential vulnerabilities.

Furthermore, the agency embedded stringent security requirements and reviews for all new or significantly modified digital services or information technology infrastructure deployed in the election.

## **Providing reliable information on the electoral process**

One of the main goals of the agency's Voter Information Campaign, both in the pre-election period and during the election, was to emphasize Elections Canada's role as the *official* source of election information. The agency's social media posts, advertising, website, and other products reinforced the message that, if Canadians had any doubts about the veracity of information they were receiving on where, when, and ways to vote, on becoming a candidate, and on working at the election, they could turn to the agency for the right information.

## **Communications products repository**

As part of its commitment to ensuring that electors have the right information, the agency developed an online repository containing Elections Canada's advertising and communication products, with the exception of social media posts. If an elector saw a flyer, bus ad, or any other kind of communication about the election, they could confirm its authenticity by checking the repository. Electors were also invited to report any material that claimed to be from Elections Canada that was not in the repository. The repository received nearly 163,000 visits during the election period.

## **Social media monitoring**

Elections Canada's dedicated Social Media Monitoring Unit (SMMU) provided timely insights and actionable information to support effective election delivery and communications, and to safeguard Canadians' trust in the electoral process. The SMMU team, fluent in 21 languages, monitored keywords appearing in public posts on several social media networks, to detect:

- events that could impede electors or election delivery
- feedback on Elections Canada's services
- websites and social media accounts that falsely claimed to belong to Elections Canada
- inaccurate information about the electoral process, whether intentional or unintentional

SMMU's monitoring improved the agency's situational awareness and helped it respond to events such as weather, power outages, and road closures. SMMU also gathered real-time feedback from electors; this helped the agency more efficiently resolve issues, such as lineups at the polls and difficulties with the Elections Canada's web applications.

Many Canadians commented online about their voting experience and perceptions of the election process. The insights gained by SMMU into voter perceptions and trust will help inform Elections Canada's longer-term communication and outreach plans.

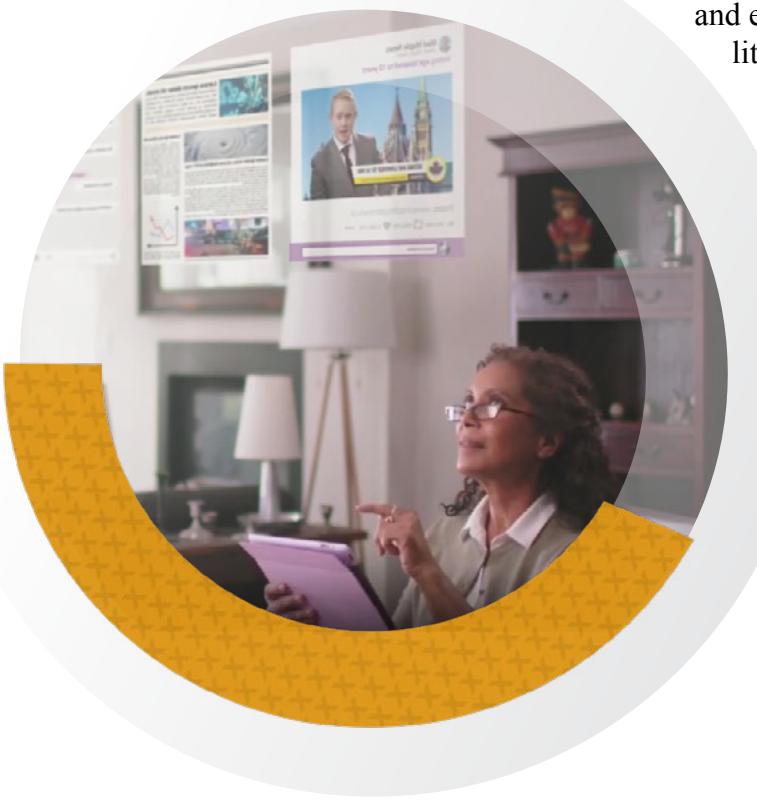
From August to October, the agency flagged to social media platforms or websites a total of 28 instances of impersonation of Elections Canada or inaccurate information that could have interfered with electors' ability to vote. Of the 28 instances reported, 13 were found to have met the platform or website's threshold for removal and were taken down. For the pages that platforms or websites did not remove, some were determined to be inactive and Elections Canada continues to work with the platforms and websites to provide the information required to seek removals on the grounds of trademark and official mark status (that is, use of the term "Elections Canada").

### **Communications products about electoral security**

Research has shown that people over the age of 55 are less likely to be digitally literate, and are at potential risk for digital disinformation and misinformation during a federal election. Elections Canada worked with Canadian non-profit organization MediaSmarts, along with an external production company, to produce two digital literacy videos aimed at seniors, titled *Check the Source*.

The educational videos identified some of the ways that disinformation or misinformation can be disseminated and encouraged seniors to improve their digital literacy skills with some basic tips. The videos also reiterated that Elections Canada is the authoritative source on where, when, and ways to register and vote in a federal election.

Elections Canada also produced a video about the safeguards in place during the voting process and comprehensive web content to reassure electors of the security of their vote.



## **6.2 Role of the Commissioner of Canada Elections**

The Commissioner of Canada Elections is responsible for enforcement of the *Canada Elections Act*. Changes to the Act now enable the Commissioner of Canada Elections to compel testimony or a written return, to lay charges without prior authorization, and to impose administrative monetary penalties for many political financing and communications offences, such as failure to return an ineligible contribution, late reporting, or advertising without a tagline.

The passage of Bill C-76 brought the Commissioner of Canada Elections and his personnel back under the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. This provision came into force on April 1, 2019. Despite the transfer, the Act requires that the Commissioner make decisions or take action on the enforcement of the Act independently of the Chief Electoral Officer. The Commissioner of Canada Elections will report separately on his activities related to the 2019 general election.

## 7. Closing the Election

A total of 338 candidates were elected to the House of Commons in the 43rd general election. Of these, 240 had been members in the 42nd Parliament.

Table 8 in the Appendix details the distribution of seats in the House of Commons by political affiliation.

### 7.1 Validation of Election Results

After the 43rd general election, electoral districts completed the validation of results in the days and weeks following election day. There were 12 electoral districts that required their validation dates to be postponed because of delays in the return of the ballot boxes to the returning officers due to logistical and weather challenges during transportation. Final validation of results was completed in 334 electoral districts by October 28 (within seven days), while four electoral districts completed the validation more than seven days after election day. The last validation was completed in Nunavut on November 7.

### 7.2 Judicial Recounts

Judicial recounts took place in three electoral districts: Hochelaga, Port Moody–Coquitlam, and Québec. In all three cases, the second-place candidate had made an application for the recount, which was granted by a judge.

In each case, the manual counting of ballots under judicial supervision began as scheduled. However, none was completed: upon request by the candidates who had applied for each recount, the presiding judge agreed to terminate the recount. As such, no results changed, and the validated results in each of the three electoral districts remained the final results.

There were no automatic judicial recounts requested by returning officers, as the difference between the number of votes cast for the first- and second-place candidates was more than one one thousandth of the total votes cast in each of the 338 electoral districts.

### 7.3 Contested Elections

As of this report, there were no contested elections.

### 7.4 Paying Election Workers

Elections Canada commits to paying electoral workers within six to eight weeks after election day. After four weeks, Elections Canada had paid 98 percent of about 232,000 workers. As in any event of this magnitude, some workers' pay needed more attention as the files were incomplete at the time the returning officers were ready to close their offices. Returning officers have been working diligently to ensure that any missed timesheets or information is submitted promptly. Elections Canada continues to work on processing and resolving exceptional cases.

## **7.5 Estimated Cost of the Election**

The costs of the 43rd general election were estimated at some \$504 million for a 40-day calendar with expenditures being incurred over the course of four fiscal years, as they include the preparation, delivery and closing of the event, as well as reimbursements to political entities.

As of this report, many disbursements were still being processed; also, the audit of financial returns which precedes the reimbursements of eligible expenditures was just getting underway.

A current estimate of expenditures for the 43rd general election can be found on [elections.ca](http://elections.ca).

## 8. Conclusion

For the 43rd general election, Elections Canada focused its efforts on improving services to electors and political entities while maintaining the integrity, security, and efficiency of the electoral process in a changed legislative and security environment. With a majority government in place and a fixed election date, the agency was also able to renew outdated business processes and invest in electoral systems with a view to improving its security posture.

As with every general election, there is much to do to close the election, including the audit of campaign returns for political entities (currently in progress) and the publishing of official voting results. Also, the agency is completing a comprehensive assessment of key aspects of election delivery. Evaluations and assessments will be informed by a variety of surveys with electors, political entities and election workers. These evaluations and assessments will be supported by feedback from stakeholder groups: the agency's Advisory Committee of Political Parties and Advisory Group for Disability Issues, field staff, and groups representing electors known to face barriers to the electoral process.

In the months to come, Elections Canada will publish a variety of surveys and assessments of the election as it prepares a more detailed retrospective report, along with recommendations for legislative changes to continue modernizing Canada's electoral framework.

Finally, in the context of a minority government, the agency must restore its capacity to deliver an election that could be called at any time. At the same time, Elections Canada has set April 1, 2021, as the first of a series of readiness dates where incremental improvements can be brought in.

Work will also begin on longer-term improvements, such as technology at the polls and assistive technology for electors with disabilities. However, these improvements and any other will only be rolled out in a general election when they are ready and after they have been tested in by-elections.





## Appendix

**Table 1 – Election workers hired for the 43rd general election**

Polling day workers hired	213,773
Office staff hired	17,826
<b>Total number election workers paid</b>	<b>231,599</b>
Number of trainees who did not work	10,016

**Table 2 – Voter turnout for the 42nd and 43rd general elections**

Province or territory	42nd general election, 2015			43rd general election, 2019*			Increase or decrease (-) from the 42nd general election		
	Electors on final lists	Ballots cast	Voter turnout (%)	Electors on final lists	Ballots cast	Voter turnout (%)	Electors on final lists	Ballots cast	Voter turnout (%)
Canada	25,939,742	17,711,983	68.3	27,372,715	18,350,359	67.0	1,432,973	638,376	-1.2
Newfoundland and Labrador	421,038	257,389	61.1	420,060	246,889	58.8	-978	-10,500	-2.4
Prince Edward Island	113,505	87,868	77.4	116,717	86,362	74.0	3,212	-1,506	-3.4
Nova Scotia	742,931	526,069	70.8	771,400	538,738	69.8	28,469	12,669	-1.0
New Brunswick	597,542	444,459	74.4	616,693	444,356	72.1	19,151	-103	-2.3
Quebec	6,393,478	4,303,758	67.3	6,482,769	4,360,030	67.3	89,291	56,272	-0.1
Ontario	9,691,517	6,572,378	67.8	10,484,294	6,947,807	66.3	792,777	375,429	-1.5
Manitoba	887,983	603,240	67.9	927,333	595,998	64.3	39,350	-7,242	-3.7
Saskatchewan	779,405	553,792	71.1	807,970	586,536	72.6	28,565	32,744	1.5
Alberta	2,842,504	1,937,228	68.2	3,023,947	2,093,981	69.2	181,443	156,753	1.1
British Columbia	3,392,598	2,374,317	70.0	3,641,215	2,402,554	66.0	248,617	28,237	-4.0
Yukon Territory	26,879	20,385	75.8	29,590	21,150	71.5	2,711	765	-4.4
Northwest Territories	30,110	19,077	63.4	30,703	16,416	53.5	593	-2,661	-9.9
Nunavut	20,252	12,023	59.4	20,024	9,542	47.7	-228	-2,481	-11.7

\*Final numbers will be available in the Official Voting Results publication on the EC website by the end of March 2020.

**Table 3 – Special Voting Rules ballots cast for the 42nd and 43rd general elections**

	Election	Electors on the lists	Valid ballots	Rejected ballots	Total ballots cast	Voter turnout (%)	Ballots received late
<b>Group 1</b>	<b>42nd</b>						
Canadian Forces		64,049	28,431	816	29,247	45.7	291
Incarcerated		44,296	20,673	1,689	22,362	50.5	0
International		15,603	10,707	294	11,001	70.5	994
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>123,948</b>	<b>59,811</b>	<b>2,799</b>	<b>62,610</b>	<b>N/A*</b>	<b>1,285</b>
	<b>43rd</b>						
Canadian Forces		111,880	17,943	906	18,849	16.8	272
Incarcerated		41,261	14,975	1,397	16,372	39.7	0
International		55,512	32,720	1,424	34,144	61.5	6,537
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>208,653</b>	<b>65,638</b>	<b>3,727</b>	<b>69,365</b>	<b>N/A*</b>	<b>6,809</b>
<b>Group 2</b>	<b>42nd</b>						
Local		N/A*	425,175	4,066	429,241	N/A*	N/A*
National		140,191	122,163	4,787	126,950	90.6	3,104
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>N/A*</b>	<b>547,338</b>	<b>8,853</b>	<b>556,191</b>	<b>N/A*</b>	<b>N/A*</b>
	<b>43rd</b>						
Local		N/A*	392,374	4,747	397,121	N/A*	N/A*
National		207,854	185,451	8,084	193,535	93.2	3,735
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>N/A*</b>	<b>577,825</b>	<b>12,831</b>	<b>590,656</b>	<b>N/A*</b>	<b>N/A*</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>42nd</b>	<b>N/A*</b>	<b>607,149</b>	<b>11,652</b>	<b>618,801</b>	<b>N/A*</b>	<b>4,389</b>
	<b>43rd</b>	<b>N/A*</b>	<b>643,463</b>	<b>16,558</b>	<b>660,021</b>	<b>N/A*</b>	<b>10,544</b>

\*The number of electors on the lists and special ballots received late is not available for local electors.

**Table 4 – Community relations officers, and Indigenous elders and youth hired for the 41st, 42nd and 43rd general elections**

<b>Election</b>	<b>41st</b>	<b>42nd</b>	<b>43rd</b>
<b>Number of participants</b>			
Youth	230	230	437
Ethnocultural*	129	132	218
Indigenous**	164	169	231
Homeless	40	117	111
Seniors	300	314	394
Accessibility	N/A	233	138
<b>Total</b>	<b>863</b>	<b>1,195</b>	<b>1,529</b>
<b>Aboriginal Elder and Youth Program</b>			
Elders	163	151	40
Youth	140	134	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>53</b>

\*Includes community relations officers for official language minority and Jewish communities.

\*\*Includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

**Table 5 – Summary of accessibility complaints\***

Accessibility category	Number of complaints	Percentage of total complaints (%)
Parking	699	29
Exterior pathway	128	5
Level access entrances	221	9
Exterior building lighting	92	4
Signage	440	18
Protruding obstacles	33	1
Doors	131	5
Door thresholds	36	1
Hallways	47	2
Location of voting room	548	23
Interior lighting	45	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,420</b>	<b>100</b>

\*As of January 8, 2020. Not all complaints related to accessibility have been received and addressed.

**Table 6 – Confirmed candidates by registered parties and final expenses limits\***

<b>Political affiliation</b>	<b>Confirmed candidates</b>	<b>Final election expenses limit</b>
Conservative Party of Canada	338	\$29,060,308.97
Green Party of Canada	338	\$29,060,308.97
Liberal Party of Canada	338	\$29,060,308.97
New Democratic Party	338	\$29,060,308.97
People's Party of Canada	315	\$27,574,528.95
Bloc Québécois	78	\$6,938,926.15
Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada	50	\$4,439,834.15
Christian Heritage Party of Canada	51	\$4,342,399.70
Parti Rhinocéros Party	39	\$3,380,776.69
Communist Party of Canada	30	\$2,757,217.68
Veterans Coalition Party of Canada	25	\$2,239,616.67
Libertarian Party of Canada	24	\$2,185,762.44
Animal Protection Party of Canada	17	\$1,535,597.09
Parti pour l'indépendance du Québec	13	\$1,243,828.74
Canada's Fourth Front	7	\$591,255.27
Marijuana Party	4	\$340,709.61
The United Party of Canada	4	\$323,866.80
Progressive Canadian Party	3	\$301,113.86
National Citizens Alliance of Canada	4	\$278,980.94
Canadian Nationalist Party	3	\$217,847.57
Stop Climate Change	2	\$192,436.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,021</b>	

\*Independent candidates and candidates with no affiliation are not included in this table.

**Table 7 – Allocation of broadcasting time**

Political party	Paid time (min:sec)	Free time* (min:sec) CBC-TV SRC-TV	Free time* (min:sec) CBC Radio One SRC Première chaîne	Free time* (min:sec) TVA V Télé
Liberal Party of Canada	92:00	48:00	27:00	13:00
Conservative Party of Canada	67:00	35:00	20:00	9:00
New Democratic Party	45:00	24:00	13:00	6:30
Green Party of Canada	22:30	12:00	6:30	3:30
Bloc Québécois	20:00	10:30	6:00	3:00
Libertarian Party of Canada	14:00	7:00	4:00	2:00
Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada	13:30	7:00	4:00	2:00
Christian Heritage Party of Canada	13:00	6:30	4:00	2:00
Communist Party of Canada	12:30	6:30	3:30	2:00
Parti Rhinoceros Party	12:30	6:30	3:30	2:00
Alliance of the North	12:00	6:00	3:30	2:00
Animal Protection Party of Canada	12:00	6:00	3:30	2:00
Marijuana Party	12:00	6:00	3:30	2:00
National Citizens Alliance of Canada	12:00	6:00	3:30	2:00
People's Party of Canada	12:00	6:00	3:30	2:00
Progressive Canadian Party	12:00	6:00	3:30	2:00
Canada's Fourth Front	6:00	3:00	1:30	1:00
Canadian Nationalist Party	6:00	3:00	1:30	1:00
Stop Climate Change	6:00	3:00	1:30	1:00
The United Party of Canada	6:00	3:00	1:30	1:00
Veterans Coalition Party of Canada	6:00	3:00	1:30	1:00
<b>Total (rounded)</b>	<b>414:00</b>	<b>214:00</b>	<b>120:00</b>	<b>62:00</b>

\*In the case of the CBC and SRC television and radio stations, the number of minutes shown applies to each station, English and French.

Source: Broadcasting Guidelines for the 43rd General Election, issued on September 11, 2019.

**Table 8 – Number of seats in the House of Commons by political affiliation**

Political affiliation	After the 42nd general election (October 19, 2015)	At the dissolution of Parliament (September 11, 2019)	After the 43rd general election (October 21, 2019)	Change from dissolution of Parliament
Liberal Party of Canada	184	177	157	-20
Conservative Party of Canada	99	95	121	+26
New Democratic Party	44	39	24	-15
Bloc Québécois	10	10	32	+22
Green Party of Canada	1	2	3	+1
People's Party of Canada	0	1	0	-1
Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	0	1	0	-1
Independent / no affiliation	0	8	1	-7
Vacant	0	5	0	-5

**Table 9 – Adaptations made pursuant to subsection 17(1) of the  
Canada Elections Act during the 43rd general election**

The Chief Electoral Officer may, for the sole purpose of enabling electors to exercise their right to vote or enabling the counting of votes, adapt the *Canada Elections Act* (the Act) under subsection 17(1) to address an emergency, an unusual or unforeseen circumstance, or an error. These adaptations are only applicable for the period of the election during which they are made and for the 30 days after election day.

Statutory provision	Explanatory notes
Section 30	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Allowed a returning officer to establish two additional assistant returning officer (AARO) offices outside of the electoral district.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> Section 30 of the Act requires returning officers to appoint an AARO for each area of their electoral district designated by the Chief Electoral Officer and to establish an office in each of those areas. Electors are able to vote in AARO offices during the election period.</p> <p>In establishing two AARO offices, the returning officer for the electoral district of Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Sœurs (Quebec) had, by error, leased premises in the neighbouring electoral district of Laurier–Sainte-Marie (Quebec).</p> <p>The adaptation allowed the returning officer to open these two AARO offices.</p>
Section 60	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Allowed three returning officers to establish their main offices outside of their electoral districts.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> Section 60 of the Act requires returning officers to open offices in premises that are accessible to electors with disabilities in convenient places in the electoral district. Electors are able to vote in the returning officer's office during the election period.</p> <p>Three returning officers were unable, despite exhaustive searches, to secure suitable premises to be used as offices within their electoral districts.</p> <p>The adaptation permitted these returning officers to open their main offices in accessible premises that, while being in adjacent electoral districts, were still in convenient locations for electors of those electoral districts.</p>
Sections 120, 159, 172, and 289	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Permitted enhanced registration and voting services to be offered on election day to electors of Manitoba communities affected by severe weather events.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> The province of Manitoba was affected, during the last 10 days of the election period, by the consequences of severe weather events. On election day, several communities were still facing flood risks and electrical power shortages. Some electors residing in the affected communities had been evacuated, inside or outside of their electoral districts; others remained in their communities.</p>

The adaptations allowed for the issuing of transfer certificates to affected electors, the assignment of specific polling divisions to more than one polling station, and the establishment of polling stations outside of the electoral districts to which they belonged. The adaptations also provided returning officers with more flexibility in the assignment to election-day operations of human and material resources and in their management.

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#### Section 171

**Purpose:** Authorized the establishment of an advance poll for only three days in a community located in the electoral district of Labrador (Newfoundland and Labrador).

**Explanation:** Subsection 171(2) of the Act requires advance polling stations to be open from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the 10th, 9th, 8th and 7th days before election day.

An unforeseen outbreak of tuberculosis in a Labrador community made it impossible to recruit election officers from outside the community to work at the advance polling station. Moreover, there were not enough local election officers in the community to staff the advance polling station on the 10th day before election day.

The adaptation allowed an advance poll to be established for three days in the affected community.

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#### Section 232, 237.1, 239, 243, and 266

**Purpose:** Allowed special-ballot registration and voting services to be offered on election day to emergency workers assigned to the restoration of electrical power supply and telecommunications in Manitoba.

**Explanation:** The registration deadline for electors wanting to vote by special ballot is set by the Act at 6:00 p.m. on the 6th day before election day.

Parts of Manitoba were affected, during the last 10 days of the election period, by severe weather events. A state of emergency was declared by the province on October 12, 2019, to facilitate the restoration of public utilities. As a result of their assignment to the restoration of electrical power supply and telecommunications in Manitoba, some electors would not have been capable of exercising their right to vote at their polling stations on election day.

The adaptations allowed the offer of special-ballot registration and voting services on election day to those emergency workers. The adaptations also allowed for the votes cast by these electors to be counted at Elections Canada headquarters on the day after election day.

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**Table 10 – Instructions issued pursuant to section 179 of the  
Canada Elections Act during the 43rd general election**

The Chief Electoral Officer may, for the purpose of adapting any provision of the special voting rules in Part 11—sections 177 to 280—of the *Canada Elections Act* (the Act), issue instructions to execute the intent of those sections in a particular circumstance. In general, instructions address issues with the special voting rules process that are not contemplated by the Act, or fill gaps in the Act that would prevent electors who are otherwise qualified to vote from casting their ballot. These instructions can be made applicable for the purposes of a particular election only, or can be made to continue to apply for future elections until rescinded by the Chief Electoral Officer or superseded by new instructions made by the Chief Electoral Officer.

Statutory provision	Explanatory notes
Section 181  (Instructions issued for the purposes of the 43rd general election only)	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Permitted the appointment of additional special voting rules administrators to facilitate the counting of the votes at Elections Canada headquarters.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> Section 181 of the Act provides for the appointment of a special voting rules administrator, the duties of whom include the supervision of the counting of the votes at Elections Canada headquarters.</p> <p>In light of the high number of electors who voted under the Special Voting Rules, it became impossible in practice for a single person to accomplish all of those duties.</p> <p>The instructions provided for the temporary appointment of four additional special voting rules administrators, who were granted the authority to exercise the special voting rules administrator’s duties in relation to the counting of the votes at Elections Canada headquarters.</p>
Sections 190 and 245  (New instructions superseding instructions issued at a previous election)	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Authorized the special voting rules administrator to extend the voting period for some Canadian Forces electors and some incarcerated electors.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> Section 190 of the Act provides that the voting period for Canadian Forces electors begins 14 days before election day and ends 9 days before election day. Subsection 245(1) provides that every incarcerated elector is entitled to vote by special ballot on the 12th day before election day.</p> <p>Some Canadian Forces electors would not have been able to exercise their right to vote during the voting period set out in the Act because of their military duties. Similarly, some correctional institutions were unable—given the number of electors or security constraints—to allow same-day voting for all incarcerated electors who wanted to vote.</p> <p>These instructions allowed the special voting rules administrator to authorize the opening of a polling station on one or more additional days to serve these electors. The additional days were required to be in the period beginning on</p>

the 18th day before election day, once the official list of candidates was available, and ending on the 6th day before election day, being the last day when electors could register to vote under the special voting rules.

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Sections 227, 235,  
and 237

(New instructions  
superseding  
instructions issued  
at a previous election)

**Purpose:** Allowed electors a new opportunity to vote when circumstances outside the elector's control, such as a delay affecting the delivery to the elector of the special ballot voting kit, could have prevented the elector from voting by special ballot.

**Explanation:** The Act provides that electors whose applications for registration and special ballot have been accepted may vote only under the special voting rules.

Circumstances outside their control would have prevented electors from voting by special ballot—for example, when a delay affected the timely delivery to electors of their special ballot voting kits.

These instructions allowed the special voting rules administrator and returning officers to allow the elector to be given a new opportunity to vote and, when necessary, to annul the application for registration and special ballot made by the elector.

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Sections 232 and  
243.1

(New instructions)

**Purpose:** Authorized certain electors to vote at home after 6:00 p.m. on the 6th day before election day or after that day.

**Explanation:** Section 243.1 of the Act authorizes eligible electors to vote by special ballot from their dwelling places in certain limited circumstances. However, section 232 requires that applications for registration and special ballot be received before 6:00 p.m. on the 6th day before election day.

Certain returning officers did not provide registration and voting services to some electors who were eligible for home visits, despite prior confirmed arrangements. As a result of this oversight, these eligible electors could have been deprived on their right to vote.

These instructions allowed eligible electors who were affected by such oversights to vote at home after 6:00 p.m. on the 6th day before election day or after that day.

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Section 233

(New instructions  
superseding  
instructions issued at a  
previous election)

**Purpose:** Permitted some electors whose pieces of identification did not include civic addresses to satisfy the proof-of-address requirements when applying for registration and special ballot.

**Explanation:** Some electors residing in rural or remote areas have no civic address by which to prove their residence; or, such a residential address is not stated in or on their piece or pieces of identification. When those electors

are registered on the lists of electors and vote at polling stations, subsection 143(3.1) of the Act provides them an alternative mechanism allowing them to prove their residence.

These instructions extended the application of this alternative mechanism to electors applying for registration and special ballot other than in person.

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Section 245

(Instructions issued  
for the purposes of the  
43rd general election  
only)

**Purpose:** Allowed incarcerated electors who were observant members of the Jewish community to vote on a day other than a Jewish holiday.

**Explanation:** Section 245 of the Act provides for incarcerated electors to vote on the 12th day before election day.

During the 43rd general election, the 12th day before election day—Wednesday, October 9, 2019—coincided with the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. Some incarcerated electors informed the liaison officer for their correctional institution that they would be unable, by reason of their sincerely held religious beliefs, to cast a ballot on the 12th day before election day.

These instructions allowed the special voting rules administrator to authorize the opening of a polling station on an additional day in such circumstances. That additional day had to be as close as possible to the 12th day before election day and could not be after the 6th day before election day, being the last day when electors may register to vote under the special voting rules.

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Sections 251, 252, and  
267

(New instructions  
superseding  
instructions issued at a  
previous election)

**Purpose:** Allowed special ballot officers to set aside special ballots cast by incarcerated electors, and to omit these electors' names from the list of electors, if the incarcerated electors specified the correctional institution as their place of ordinary residence while not being entitled to do so.

**Explanation:** Each incarcerated elector is required to vote for a candidate in the electoral district of their place of ordinary residence. Subsection 251(2) of the Act directs how that place of ordinary residence is to be determined, and that place may be a correctional institution only in very specific circumstances.

Some incarcerated electors indicated a correctional institution as their place of ordinary residence.

These instructions allowed the special voting rules administrator to validate the information provided by electors with the correctional institution's liaison officer. The instructions allowed the special voting rules administrator to instruct special ballot officers to set aside unopened the envelope containing the vote cast by the elector in the wrong electoral district, where the special voting rules administrator was of the opinion that the elector's application for registration and special ballot indicated in error a correctional institution as the elector's place of ordinary residence.

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Sections 267 and 277 (New instructions superseding instructions issued at a previous election)	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Allowed electors to be given a new opportunity to vote, if they wanted to, in cases where they had been registered by election officers to vote by special ballot in the wrong electoral district.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> Section 6 of the Act provides for each elector's right to have their name included in the list of electors for the polling division—and, by extension, for the electoral district—in which they ordinarily reside and to vote at the polling station established for that polling division.</p> <p>Some electors were mistakenly registered by an election officer in the wrong electoral districts.</p> <p>These instructions permitted electors who were registered and who voted in the wrong electoral districts to vote again in the correct electoral districts. They also authorized election officers to set aside, during the counting of the votes, special ballots cast by electors in the wrong electoral districts.</p>
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Sections 267 and 277 (New instructions superseding instructions issued at a previous election)	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Allowed electors to be given a new opportunity to vote, if they wanted to, in cases where it was believed that they could have improperly marked their special ballots because of erroneous information provided to them by election officers.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> The Act sets out the voting procedure that must be followed by an elector voting with a special ballot under the special voting rules.</p> <p>Some electors voting by special ballot were given erroneous information that may have caused them to improperly mark their ballots. A ballot is marked improperly when the mark will lead to the ballot's rejection pursuant to subsections 269(1) or 279(1) of the Act. For example, some electors were mistakenly provided with an incorrect list of candidates, while others were mistakenly told that they could vote by marking their special ballots only with the name of the political parties they supported.</p> <p>These instructions permitted electors to be given a new opportunity to vote, in cases where election officers had provided them with erroneous information that may have caused them to improperly mark their special ballots. When the elector accepted to vote again, the instructions also provided for the setting aside, unopened, of the envelope containing the special ballot initially marked by the elector.</p>
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Sections 267 and 277 (New instructions superseding instructions issued at a previous election)	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Allowed electors to be given a new opportunity to vote, if they wanted to, in cases where they had not signed the declaration shown on the outer envelope.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> An elector who votes under the special voting rules must, after having marked the ballot or special ballot, place it in the inner envelope and seal that envelope, sign the declaration shown on the outer envelope, and place</p>
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the inner envelope in the signed outer envelope and seal that envelope. An unsigned declaration will generally lead to the setting aside of the envelope pursuant to paragraphs 267(1)(b) or 277(1)(b) of the Act.

Some electors in this situation inadvertently failed to follow this voting procedure.

These instructions permitted electors to be given a new opportunity to vote. They also provided for the envelopes containing the special ballots affected by the errors to be set aside unopened.

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Sections 267 and 277  
(Instructions issued  
for the purposes of the  
43rd general election  
only)

**Purpose:** Authorized the procedure for the verification of electors' declarations to be conducted without opening the outer envelopes in certain cases.

**Explanation:** The special ballot voting procedure could eventually be modified to allow some electors to vote using a special ballot voting kit provided to them electronically. As part of this process, those electors would be required to print and sign a declaration form and to provide their own inner and outer envelopes. Amendments were recently brought to the Act to allow for this additional flexibility in the administration of the special voting rules. As a consequence, where the Act used to speak of the setting aside of outer envelopes, it now speaks of the setting aside of inner envelopes.

For the purposes of the 43rd general election, the declaration that had to be signed by electors who voted under the special voting rules was always printed on the outer envelope provided to the elector by the Chief Electoral Officer. Therefore, the election officers who proceeded to the electors' declarations verification procedure did not have to open outer envelopes to retrieve electors' declarations.

These instructions authorized an election officer who set aside an outer envelope to accomplish their duties by noting on the outer envelope—instead of the inner envelope—the reasons for setting it aside and by initialling the outer envelope.

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Sections 267 and 277  
(New instructions)

**Purpose:** Authorized the setting aside of special ballots marked by persons who were not qualified as electors.

**Explanation:** Section 3 of the Act is clear: only Canadian citizens can be qualified as electors.

A person who was not qualified as an elector, believing in error that they had the right to vote, made an application for registration and special ballot and voted by special ballot.

These instructions authorized the special voting rules administrator and returning officers, upon determining that a person who was not qualified as an elector had made an application for registration and special ballot and had

voted by special ballot, to reject the application, to ensure that the person's name was deleted from the list of electors, to make a request to the Chief Electoral Officer to have the person's name removed from the National Register of Electors or the International Register of Electors, as the case may be, and to instruct election officers to set aside unopened the envelope containing the vote cast by that person.

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Sections 269 and 279  
(New instructions)

**Purpose:** Permitted the counting of special ballots found with the stubs attached.

**Explanation:** The Act requires, as an integrity measure, for the ballot to feature a detachable counterfoil and stub, both of which are printed with serial numbers. The designated election officer who works at a polling station or advance polling station must detach the counterfoil from the ballot before the ballot gets placed in the ballot box. During the counting of the votes, section 284 of the Act states that no ballot shall be rejected only by reason that an election officer failed to remove the counterfoil; it also sets out a process to be followed where a counterfoil remains attached.

The special ballot, which is used by most electors voting under the special voting rules, also features a detachable stub on which is printed a serial number. While the stub is meant to remain attached to the special ballot booklet, some election officers erroneously provided electors with special ballots with the stubs still attached.

These instructions extended the procedure set out by section 284 to the counting of the votes cast under the special voting rules.

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Section 277  
(Instructions issued for the purposes of the 43rd general election only)

**Purpose:** Allowed electors in the electoral district of Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Soeurs (Quebec) who did not sign the prescribed declaration found on the outer envelopes to have their ballots counted.

**Explanation:** Paragraph 277(1)(b) of the Act provides for the setting aside of the envelope containing the ballot cast by an elector who failed to sign the declaration found on the outer envelope.

In the electoral district of Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Soeurs (Quebec), an election officer erroneously failed to require nine electors to place their ballots in inner envelopes, and then in outer envelopes, resulting in those electors not signing the prescribed declaration found on the outer envelopes. As a result of the election officer's error, those electors' votes would have been set aside. The returning officer nevertheless determined that each of these electors had proven their identity and residence in accordance with sections 143 and 237.1 of the Act and was entitled to vote in the electoral district.

These instructions allowed the ballots cast by these nine electors to be counted.

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<p><b>Section 277</b></p> <p>(Instructions issued for the purposes of the 43rd general election only)</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Allowed electors in the electoral district of Spadina–Fort York (Ontario) who did not complete applications for registration and special ballot before special ballots were issued to them to have their ballots counted.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> Section 232 of the Act requires electors residing in Canada who want to vote under the special voting rules to apply for registration and special ballot. The verification and counting process, set out by sections 276 to 278 of the Act, requires election officers to confirm that the information found in an elector’s declaration (i.e. on the outer envelope) corresponds with the information found in the elector’s application for registration and special ballot.</p> <p>In the electoral district of Spadina–Fort York (Ontario), an election officer erroneously failed to require 30 electors to complete applications for registration and special ballot before issuing special ballots to them. As a result of the election officer’s error, those electors’ votes would have been set aside. The returning officer nevertheless determined that each of these electors had proven their identity and residence in accordance with sections 143 and 237.1 of the Act and was entitled to vote in the electoral district.</p> <p>These instructions allowed the ballots cast by these 30 electors to be counted.</p>
<p><b>Section 277</b></p> <p>(Instructions issued for the purposes of the 43rd general election only)</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Allowed electors in the electoral district of Thornhill (Ontario) who did not sign the prescribed declaration found on the outer envelopes to have their ballots counted.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> Paragraph 277(1)(b) of the Act provides for the setting aside of the envelope containing the ballot cast by an elector who failed to sign the declaration found on the outer envelope.</p> <p>In the electoral district of Thornhill (Ontario), an election officer erroneously failed to require eight electors to sign the prescribed declaration found on the outer envelopes. As a result of the election officer’s error, those electors’ votes would have been set aside. The returning officer nevertheless determined that each of these electors had proven their identity and residence in accordance with sections 143 and 237.1 of the Act and was entitled to vote in the electoral district.</p> <p>These instructions allowed the ballots cast by these eight electors to be counted.</p>

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