
ENGAGING ELECTORS WITH DISABILITIES

ELECTIONS CANADA INSPIRE DEMOCRACY WORKSHOP

Friday, March 2, 2018

Hosted by the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy, University of Ottawa

Alex Trebek Alumni Hall, 157 Séraphin-Marion Private, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5

8:00 a.m. – 12:30 pm

CONTEXT

Research conducted after the 2015 federal general election shows that electors with disabilities experience additional barriers to voting than most Canadians, including motivational and access barriers. For voters with disabilities, the journey to the ballot box can be impeded by a range of barriers – accessing the voting place, engaging in the voting process, and using the voting instrument (i.e. machines, ballots, etc.).

Analyses from the 42nd federal general election further reveal that:

- 1) Electors with a disability were less likely than electors without a disability to vote in the 2015 election (85% compared with 92% according to self-reports). This tendency has carried since the 2011 federal general election;
- 2) Less than half of electors with a disability were aware of the tools and the assistance available from Elections Canada. This lack of awareness may partially account for how infrequently voters with disabilities took advantage of these tools and services;
- 3) Young Canadians with disabilities tend to be more politically engaged than young Canadians without disabilities.

To attempt to better reach and engage persons with disabilities in the voting process, the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) at the University of Ottawa is hosting an Inspire Democracy workshop to learn from the stakeholder community.

WHAT IS INSPIRE DEMOCRACY?

Inspire Democracy is an Elections Canada initiative that focuses on civic engagement and electoral participation in Canada. It was developed to help understand and address why certain groups of Canadians do not vote or do not participate in the democratic process. Through our workshops we engage in a dialogue with organizations and community leaders about how we can work collaboratively to promote civic engagement among electors who face barriers to voting.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this workshop is twofold:

- 1) To create a forum for stakeholders to:
 - Share knowledge on issues related to access and motivational barriers to voting and civic engagement;
 - Instill a sense of shared responsibility among participants for mobilizing people within their reach;
 - Strengthen the network of organizations and community leaders active in citizen engagement.
- 2) To harness participants' expertise to develop Elections Canada's Inspire Democracy program in a way that serves the needs of electors with disabilities.

AGENDA

- 8:00 am** Continental Breakfast
- 8:30 am** Welcome, Agenda Overview, and Introductions (Icebreaker)
Elections Canada
- 9:00 am** Global Comparisons: Overview of Practices to Mobilize Persons with Disabilities for Civic Engagement — Lessons for Canada.
Paul M.A. Baker, Ph.D. (Georgia Tech University, Center for Advanced Communications Policy)
- 10:00 am** Health Break
- 10:15 am** Trends and Barriers to Voter Turnout in Canada
Elections Canada
- 10:45 am** Democracy Talks: Civic Engagement and Best Practices Discussion to Engage Persons with Disabilities in Civic Life
John Beebe (Democracy Xchange)
- 11:45 am** Working Lunch
- 12:00 pm** The Way Forward: How Can Elections Canada Better Serve Electors with Disabilities?
Breakout groups will discuss the following questions:
- 1) What barriers exist for accessible voting (voting place; voting process; voting instrument)?
 - 2) What are outreach opportunities or practices that can encourage electors with disabilities to engage in the voting process?
 - 3) What role can Elections Canada play? Are there other organizations that can support Elections Canada's efforts?
 - 4) What are some practical materials or resources Elections Canada can provide to mobilize electors?
 - 5) What will you do to mobilize electors?
- 12:30 pm** Close of Workshop



LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Alex Trebek Hall is located on a pedestrian-only street.

PARKING

There is 1 hour free parking on Stewart Street (near Waller/Nicholas). There is 3 hour free parking as you move east on Stewart and on the nearby streets. There are some limited paid visitor parking options on campus but the best and nearest paid parking is at the Rideau Centre (Nicholas Street entrance).

PUBLIC TRANSIT

If you are arriving by bus, please note that the Laurier Station (stop #3020) is located near Séraphin-Marion Pvt., about ten steps away or so. [This area map](#) illustrates the proximity. .

TAXI/UBER

If arriving by taxi or Uber, you may wish to be dropped off in the parking lot immediately to the left of 1 Stewart Street.