

Elector Personas

Final Report

Prepared for Elections Canada

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Final report

Prepared for Elections Canada by Environics Research.

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Executive Summary

A. Background and Objectives

Elections Canada (EC) is an independent, non-partisan agency that reports directly to Parliament. EC exercises general direction and supervision over the conduct of elections and referendums at the federal level.

As part of the 2020–2028 Elections Canada Strategic Plan, the agency is adopting user-centric design methods to develop programs and services that are easy to use. This is part of a broader commitment to better understand who it serves and to ensure its programs and services address their individual needs, wants, and abilities.

The intention behind creating personas is so that EC can clearly envision who the agency is designing experiences for and understand electors' personalities, motivations, and goals. The personas will enable EC to make the end users more central to the design of services and products.

Elections Canada commissioned Environics Research to develop a set of user personas that are evidence-informed, engaging, and whose content will help the agency improve its services and communications for electors, its engagement with various groups and communities, and its thinking about the medium- and long-term future of elections in Canada.

To this end, successful elector personas should be grounded in data. Environics first conducted secondary analysis of survey data from EC's National Electors Study for the 43rd federal general election held in 2019 (NES 2019) to distinguish electors based on their behavioural, attitudinal, and socio-demographic characteristics, and then conducted primary qualitative research with electors who embodied a variety of characteristics.

B. Methodology

The project proceeded in two main steps: secondary analysis of EC survey data to identify elector target groups of interest, followed by qualitative research that provided the basis for the personas.

Secondary analysis. The secondary analysis used data from Elections Canada's National Elector Study 2019 (NES 2019) and provided insight into segments of electors and reasoning behind voting or not voting. This analysis focused on 10 groups of electors, including voters and potential voters (those who are open to voting but haven't recently). Each group was profiled in terms of their responses to a set of indicators covering the electoral process, reasons for not voting, efforts to vote and perceptions of difficulty, demographics and psychographics. This secondary analysis helped guide the design of qualitative research and eventual persona development.

Bulletin board and individual in-depth interviews. From August 10–13, 2021, Environics hosted an online bulletin board with 62 Canadians participating in both English and French. The research included several activities, such as journey mapping, and/or scenarios, polls, etc. Once complete, this was supplemented with 26 in-depth individual interviews (IDIs) focused on specific audiences for whom a bulletin board approach was not appropriate, such as electors with low literacy or those with no home internet access.

Participants were screened and selected based on the secondary research and in consultation with Elections Canada. A recruitment screener was utilized to achieve a balance between voters and non-voters, age groups, region, gender, level of tech-savviness (meaning level of comfort using computers, cell phones, and the internet) and agreed-upon quotas with target groups. These target groups included:

1. non-binary or transgender identity
2. First Nations (on- and off-reserve)
3. Western Métis
4. Inuit
5. new Canadian from a country with a functioning but different electoral democracy
6. new Canadian from a country with a weak or non-existent electoral democracy
7. snowbirds
8. single parents with children under the age of 12
9. electors with low literacy in English and French
10. electors with no home internet access
11. electors with a moderate or severe mobility limitation
12. electors with a moderate or severe visual disability
13. electors with a moderate or severe mental health diagnosis

From the interviews and bulletin board exercise, a total of nine personas were developed, each structured around their goals, motivations, and barriers. In developing the personas, we also considered the way electors may consume information and media and relate to self-service digital environments, their key socio-demographic characteristics, and quantified features such as literacy/education, interest in politics, values, etc.

Statement of limitations: Qualitative research provides insight into the range of opinions held within a population, rather than the weights of the opinions held, as would be measured in a quantitative study. The results of this type of research should be viewed as indicative, rather than projectable to the population.

C. Contract Value

The contract value was \$84,629.27 (HST included).

D. Key Findings

Barriers to Voting

One of the objectives of the research was to identify and group electors into personas based on common goals, motivations, and obstacles in relation to the electoral process. In the context of this research, these obstacles, or “barriers to voting,” can be understood as any combination of personal factors, perceptions, attitudes, or experiences related to the voting process or political participation that might increase the difficulty of voting for a person or the likelihood that they may not vote.

The following general types of barriers were identified from the qualitative and quantitative research:

- **Trust/ideological:** Feeling distrustful of politicians, political parties and/or the political system is a major barrier for members of this group, resulting in disengagement. They do not see people like themselves, or their needs or interests, reflected in the political process. Possibly they may have voted at some point in

their lives and felt disappointed that an elected candidate did not keep their promises. Whatever their past experience, Canadians with this barrier struggle to motivate themselves to vote.

- **Disconnected:** Members of this group struggle to relate to an election because they don't see how it connects to their everyday lives. They tend to lack knowledge about political parties and platforms, rather than about the process of voting. This lack of knowledge can result in feeling disconnected from federal elections and disengaged from politics overall. To feel compelled to vote, it may help the disconnected to see how the results of an election can impact their day-to-day lives.
- **Unpredictability:** Canadians lead busy lives with multiple work and family responsibilities. The unpredictability of the wait times they may encounter at their polling place, and the cascading effect on their carefully planned schedules, can be frustrating to members of this group. Being "too busy" or overwhelmed with work or childcare are two reasons that may cause a Canadian in this group to miss out on voting.
- **Anxiety:** Canadians who often feel general anxiousness or worry about complexity might be more discouraged by the surprises of daily life than others. A forecast of bad weather, for example, might make a member of this group feel defeated. They are prone to stress over matters others may find trivial, such as the correct way to mark their ballot or the lack of parking spots at the polling place. (Note that this reflects a general worldview, and not that these individuals have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder).
- **Excluded:** Canadians who are a member of a minority group may encounter friction points in a process that was originally designed to serve the majority of Canadian voters. One example is those who have changed their names or identities in some way (reflecting such varied experiences as divorced individuals and members of the trans community). Inaccurate personal information on the voter registration list, and thus on their VICs, results in frustration and potentially feelings of exclusion from the voting process. Compared with other Canadians, members of this group may encounter extra checks of their identification, which can contribute to feeling singled out at the polls.
- **Inexperience:** Likely to be a new Canadian or a first-time voter, members of this group could benefit from more information about voting earlier on. Members of this group are engaged and passionate about elections, and a voting information package specifically for new citizens (for instance) could help them more effectively navigate this first-time process. Moreover, once empowered with more information, they may be inclined to share it with family and community members.
- **Accessibility:** Canadians who require additional support to vote (for example, due to a physical or intellectual disability) are subject to feeling frustrated at election time. While they know how, when, and where to vote, members of this group advocate for change to ensure they can participate independently, just like other Canadians. Providing fully accessible advance poll and voting day locations, adequate accessible parking spots, and ballots in Braille or large print are changes that would be noticed and appreciated by those who experience some form of this barrier.
- **No barrier:** Accounting for most Canadians, members of this group consider the voting process to be easy. They are familiar with the process and feel they have the right amount of knowledge to cast their ballot year after year.

Elector Personas

Nine elector personas were developed based on each of the identified barriers and other elector characteristics. The nine personas are summarized below:

“Angela Reid” – Skeptic

Voting importance: Not very important

Voting method: N/A

Next election: Unlikely to vote

Past election: Did not vote

Primary emotion: Negative

Barriers: Trust/ideological

Disability: N/A

Age: Across age groups

“Tony Castilano” – Follower

Voting importance: Not very important

Voting method: Election day

Next election: May or may not vote

Past election: Did not vote

Primary emotion: Neutral

Barriers: Disconnect

Disability: N/A

Age: 18–24

“Joseph Kasongo” – Changemaker

Voting importance: Very important

Voting method: Election day

Next election: Will definitely vote

Past election: Was not eligible

Primary emotion: Positive

Barriers: Inexperience

Disability: N/A

Age: Across age groups

“Casey Tremblay” – Planner

Voting importance: Somewhat important

Voting method: Advance polls

Next election: Likely to vote

Past election: Voted

Primary emotion: Neutral

Barriers: Unpredictability

Disability: N/A

Age: 18–44

“Alix Chen” – Individualist

Voting importance: Very important

Voting method: Election day

Next election: Will definitely vote

Past election: Voted
Primary emotion: Neutral
Barriers: Exclusion
Disability: N/A
Age: Not clear

“Ajeet Kaur” – Thinker

Voting importance: Very important
Voting method: Election day
Next election: Will definitely vote
Past election: Voted
Primary emotion: Neutral
Barriers: Anxiety
Disability: N/A
Age: Across age groups

“Andrea Reyes” – Champion

Voting importance: Very important
Voting method: Election day
Next election: Will definitely vote
Past election: Voted
Primary emotion: Positive
Barriers: Accessibility
Disability: Yes
Age: 45+

“Nia Morrison” – Idealist

Voting importance: Very important
Voting method: Advance poll
Next election: Will definitely vote
Past election: Voted
Primary emotion: Positive
Barriers: N/A
Disability: N/A
Age: 18–34

“Tim Robinson” – Traditionalist

Voting importance: Very important
Voting method: Advance poll/Election day
Next election: Will definitely vote
Past election: Voted
Primary emotion: Positive
Barriers: N/A
Disability: N/A
Age: 65+

E. Political Neutrality Statement and Contact Information

I hereby certify as senior officer of Environics that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada, and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

Sarah Robertson
Vice President, Corporate and Public Affairs
Environics Research
sarah.roberson@environics.ca
(613) 793-2229

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For more information, contact Elections Canada at rop-por@elections.ca.

About This Report

This report begins with an executive summary outlining key findings including barriers and final personas, followed by a detailed analysis of the qualitative results in the form of the elector personas.

Secondary analysis of the NES 2019 served as a foundation for the personas, which were further developed through the qualitative phase of interviews and bulletin board activities. The research methodologies are discussed in Appendix A. The qualitative research instruments are presented in Appendices B to D. The results of the secondary analysis are summarized in Appendix E.

Elector Personas

Personas build off traditional segmentation offerings and aim to help organizations empathize with the consumers or target audience they serve. These personas were born out of conversations with Canadians, who shared their opinions and thoughts when asked about each step of their voting journey. The personas can help Elections Canada clearly envision who they are designing experiences for and understand the varied personalities, motivations, and needs that factor into how different electors approach voting in a federal election.

The following personas intend to frame the current voter context and needs by highlighting reactions to an elector-specific journey through the voting process. These personas can be used to inform the communication of products/services/experience, optimization of communication mediums, customer experience journey adjustments, and execution of new product and service offerings.

A. Voter Personas Barrier Definitions

One of the objectives of the research was to identify and group electors into personas based on common goals, motivations, and obstacles in relation to the electoral process. In the context of this research, these obstacles, or “barriers to voting,” can be understood as any combination of personal factors, perceptions, attitudes or experiences related to the voting process or political participation that might increase the difficulty of voting for a person or the likelihood that they may not vote.

The following definitions of the different types of barriers to voting serve as an index while reading the personas.

Trust/ideological: Feeling distrustful of politicians, political parties and/or the political system is a major barrier for members of this group, resulting in disengagement. They do not see people like themselves, or their needs or interests, reflected in the political process. Possibly they may have voted at some point in their lives and felt disappointed that an elected candidate did not keep their promises. Whatever their past experience, Canadians with this barrier struggle to motivate themselves to vote.

Disconnected: Members of this group struggle to relate to an election because they don’t see how it connects to their everyday lives. They tend to lack knowledge about political parties and platforms, rather than about the process of voting. This lack of knowledge can result in feeling disconnected from federal elections and disengaged from politics overall. To feel compelled to vote, it may help the disconnected to see how the results of an election can impact their day-to-day lives.

Unpredictability: Canadians lead busy lives with multiple work and family responsibilities. The unpredictability of the wait times they may encounter at their polling place, and the cascading effect on their carefully planned schedules, can be frustrating to members of this group. Being “too busy” or overwhelmed with work or childcare are two reasons that may cause a Canadian in this group to miss out on voting.

Anxiety: Canadians who often feel general anxiousness or worry about complexity might be more discouraged by the surprises of daily life than others. A forecast of bad weather, for example, might make a member of this group feel defeated. They are prone to stress over matters others may find trivial, such as the correct way to mark their ballot or the lack of parking spots at the polling place. (Note that this reflects a general worldview, and not that these individuals have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder).

Excluded: Canadians who are a member of a minority group may encounter friction points in a process that was

originally designed to serve the majority of Canadian voters. One example is those who have changed their names or identities in some way (reflecting such varied experiences as divorced individuals and members of the trans community). Inaccurate personal information on the voter registration list, and thus on their VICs, results in frustration and potentially feelings of exclusion from the voting process. Compared with other Canadians, members of this group may encounter extra checks of their identification, which can contribute to feeling singled out at the polls.

Inexperience: Likely to be a new Canadian or a first-time voter, members of this group could benefit from more information about voting earlier on. Members of this group are engaged and passionate about elections, and a voting information package specifically for new citizens (for instance) could help them more effectively navigate this first-time process. Moreover, once empowered with more information, they may be inclined to share it with family and community members.

Accessibility: Canadians who require additional support to vote (for example, due to a physical or intellectual disability) are subject to feeling frustrated at election time. While they know how, when, and where to vote, members of this group advocate for change to ensure they can participate independently, just like other Canadians. Providing fully accessible advance poll and voting day locations, adequate accessible parking spots, and ballots in Braille or large print are changes that would be noticed and appreciated by those who experience some form of this barrier.

No barrier: Accounting for most Canadians, members of this group consider the voting process to be easy. They are familiar with the process and feel they have the right amount of knowledge to cast their ballot year after year.

B. Guide to Voter Personas

Each persona was built around one (or none) of the key barriers to voting identified from the research and the common goals and motivations of different segments of electors.

Personas were associated with a fictional name, nickname, photograph, and quote that illustrates their attitudes and perspective on voting.

The body of each persona consists of the following sections:

About

This section provides an overview of the persona in terms of:

- Their views on the importance of voting
- Likely voting method
- Likelihood of voting in the next election
- Whether or not they voted in the past election
- Whether their primary emotion toward voting is positive, neutral, or negative
- Barriers to voting that the persona might experience
- Whether or not any disability was relevant to the persona
- A general age of the persona

Voting feelings

This section compares and contrasts three pairs of words, each including one positive word and one negative word, to describe the persona's general feelings toward voting as selected by participants in the qualitative research.

Voting motivations

This section answers the following questions:

- How important is it to you to vote in elections? Why do you say that?
- Describe a memorable experience voting in the past.
- What emotions do you associate with voting and why?
- What are you thinking and feeling about going to vote? Why?

Voting barriers

This section answers the following questions:

- Is there an obstacle or reason that could keep you from voting if a federal election happened in the next few weeks? And what alternative method would you choose to vote by and why?
- Whether you find voting easy or hard, what changes would you like to see that would make voting (even) easier and simpler for you?
- What supports or tools could Elections Canada offer?

Voting journey

This section answers the following questions:

- How important is it to you to vote in elections?
- Why do you say that?
- Where do you go to find information on how, when, and where to vote?
- What sources of information do you use?
- Would you check to see if you're registered?
- If you were not registered, how would you register?
- Why would registering that way work better for you?
- What are you thinking and feeling about going to vote? Why?
- How do you choose to vote? Why?
- If you post on social media, would you make your post...?

C. “Angela Reid” – Skeptic

Key barrier

- Trust/ideological

About

- Voting importance: Not very important
- Voting method: N/A
- Next election: Unlikely to vote
- Past election: Did not vote
- Primary emotion: Negative
- Barriers: Trust/ideological
- Disability: N/A
- Age: Across age groups

Voting feelings

- Disconnected as opposed to hopeful
- Doubtful as opposed to confident
- Discouraged as opposed to proud

Voting motivations

Guided by her general distrust in the electoral system and in politicians, Angela is highly likely to sit out the election. Having voted in the past and felt that election promises were not met or actualized, she feels disappointed.

Angela has strong feelings about the societal divide between the haves and have nots. She believes that she has consistently seen how the election results and resulting policies from the winning party do not reflect her needs or those of like-minded people. Thus, she doesn't feel it is important to vote in federal elections and is unlikely to vote in the future.

Voting barriers

Angela lacks trust in both the voting process and the outcome of voting in elections. Voting is not something that leads to a change in her life or the lives of those in her community—so why would she bother doing it? It also leads her to question the validity or legitimacy of the process.

With notably less trust in the electoral system compared to other Canadians, Angela's barrier to voting is deeply ideological. Until further representation is realized in candidates, or until the ballot casting process feels more transparent to her, Angela will not be inclined to vote.

Voting journey

- Keeping up with the news, Angela is very aware of an upcoming election. She is not keen on any of the candidates or parties, who at one point or another have disappointed members of her community.
- Angela takes part in conversations with those around her to discuss the election. She connects deeply with those who echo her sentiments.

- While she is knowledgeable about the process of voting, and may have voted in the past, she makes no effort to find out more about the election. Where her polling place is located and whether she is registered are of little interest to Angela.
- In the weeks before election day, Angela has conversations with a close colleague and family members. She has always spoken very candidly and openly about politics and elections.
- On election day, she looks to the latest results to corroborate her view of the world. If she is ever going to vote again, she may need a “sea change” in representation.

Key quote

- “It feels like I am throwing my vote in the ocean because it doesn't lead to any changes in Parliament as it should.”

D. “Tony Castilano” – Follower

Key barrier

- Disconnect

About

- Voting importance: Not very important
- Voting method: Election day
- Next election: May or may not vote
- Past election: Did not vote
- Primary emotion: Neutral
- Barriers: Disconnect
- Disability: N/A
- Age: 18–24

Voting feelings

- Unsure as opposed to relaxed
- Inexperienced as opposed to organized
- Uninterested as opposed to hopeful

Voting motivations

Feeling neutral about voting and elections in general, voting is often a last-minute decision for Tony. On election day, he is more compelled to participate if he has a partner or friend to join him and some extra time on his hands. In this thinking process, he is unsure if his vote will have any real impact on the election or his life.

At this point in his life, Tony is not very attentive to elections. Socializing with friends, both in person and online, is how he keeps himself “in the know.” If it wasn’t for his social media feeds, or his friends mentioning it in passing, he may have missed his chance to vote.

Voting barriers

Currently halfway through his undergraduate degree, Tony's life is centered around his studies and the friends he socializes with daily. He doesn't relate much to the election season, unaware of the implications it will have on his own life.

He's seen some postings on campus and heard a few reminders from his professors to vote, but would need to know what his friends are doing first. If one of his friends is going out to vote, Tony would consider joining them. Tony could also benefit from a broader perspective about how voting might impact his life, as he needs to perceive it as relatable.

Voting journey

- In between socializing and studying at the campus library, Tony scrolls through his Instagram feed. He notices some friends posting pictures of themselves voting. He asks a few friends nearby if they are going to vote.
- Tony relies heavily on friends to keep him in the loop. His roommate is keen on voting and received a text from his parents reminding him to vote that morning.
- After his last class of the day, somewhat spontaneously, Tony decides to drive with his roommate to the nearby polling place a few streets away from campus.
- Tony is not registered to vote at this polling place, so his roommate lets him know that in order to do so, he should bring a proof of address and his IDs. On his way to vote, Tony hopes that the registration process won't take too long.
- While waiting in line to register, Tony starts to feel nervous that he may not be able to vote, since he was not previously registered, but that feeling is remedied once the process is complete.
- After he casts his vote, he feels slightly proud of himself, and gallantly tells his friends about it while socializing that night.

Key quote

- "I would feel like it is more of an inconvenience to go if there was a long wait to vote."

E. "Joseph Kasongo" – Changemaker

Key barrier

- Inexperience

About

- Voting importance: Very important
- Voting method: Election day
- Next election: Will definitely vote

- Past election: Was not eligible
- Primary emotion: Positive
- Barriers: Inexperience
- Disability: N/A
- Age: Across age groups

Voting feelings

- Empowered as opposed to confused
- Divided between excited and unsure
- Divided between inexperienced and hopeful

Voting motivations

As a new Canadian, Joseph thinks of his family, his community, and the importance of offering the perspective of an immigrant. Having voted every chance without hesitation in his previous country, he feels impatience toward people who express strong political opinions and yet do not vote. To Joseph, voting within a democracy is a privilege—a value he hopes to instill deeply in his children.

As a new Canadian, Joseph is always putting himself in the shoes of others like him. Upon receiving his citizenship, he might have benefitted from an information package detailing the voting process. Having this information early on, he believes, will empower many more newcomers like him to vote.

Voting barriers

Joseph's VIC is delayed in the mail. Having only just received his Canadian citizenship, not getting his VIC makes him feel confused and unsure about his eligibility to vote in Canada.

While slightly concerned, Joseph is not discouraged yet. Driven and unwavering, Joseph does everything he needs to do to find out where, when, and how to vote. This includes taking advantage of the Elections Canada website and contacting newcomer agencies to get the information he needs. He makes sure he has what he needs, as he is not going to miss the chance to vote.

Voting journey

- As a new Canadian, Joseph has been eager for and looking forward to his chance to vote ever since he received his citizenship. He believes in the power of voting and considers it a great privilege to do so.
- Joseph is comfortable using the internet to find out what he needs to know about voting. If feeling unclear on the process, he uses the internet to find contacts to reach out to.
- If Joseph's VIC arrives in the mail on time, he feels assured that he is registered to vote. However, if it is delayed or missing, he worries this might impact his chances of voting.
- Joseph voted in his home country. He is a believer in democracy. He is excited to be eligible to vote and proud to cast his ballot in Canada. He will choose no other option but to vote on election day—where he can truly feel the spirit and vibrancy of the election. He is in and out within minutes and is impressed.

- While he may reach out to other friends to vote, he isn't compelled to post on social media. Joseph is a communicator, but prefers to chat over the phone or in person.

Key quote

- “Even if it was two hours away, I would go there to vote. The voting station is only five minutes away.”

F. “Casey Tremblay” – Planner**Key barrier**

- Unpredictability

About

- Voting importance: Somewhat important
- Voting method: Advance polls
- Next election: Likely to vote
- Past election: Voted
- Primary emotion: Neutral
- Barriers: Unpredictability
- Disability: N/A
- Age: 18–44

Voting feelings

- Empowered as opposed to disconnected
- Prepared as opposed to uninterested
- In control as opposed to stressed

Voting motivations

Seeing voting as a necessary civic duty motivates Casey to continue participating in federal elections by getting out to vote early at advance polls. While she isn't necessarily politically charged, voting is just something she and her family have always done.

Though Casey does not consider it a complex task to vote, she would appreciate more reassurance to make it a smooth and steady process. A phone or web application that could tell her how busy the polling place is or the ability to select voting “appointment” times are two things that would help Casey feel more relaxed.

Voting barriers

Casey is a planner. She is a busy person with many responsibilities and keeps a tight schedule to manage and fit them all in. A key challenge is fitting voting around her work and family responsibilities.

Having penciled voting into her schedule, just as she would an appointment or meeting, Casey thinks hard to find a time where lineups are short. She likes to take advantage of advance polling for this very reason. If a

longer lineup impacts the time frame she has allotted to vote, it can leave her frustrated about the experience. Ideally, voting would fit into her schedule, instead of dealing with the unpredictability of not knowing the situation before she shows up at the polling place.

Voting journey

- During her lunch hour at work, Casey spends some time researching this election's candidates and their platforms. If she is going to vote, she needs to feel informed about her choice.
- Casey uses the internet to do her research. She reads recent editorials by a few journalists she trusts, then visits the Elections Canada website to learn more.
- Having a tight schedule, both at work and at home, she starts thinking about the best time to get to the advance polls. It'll have to be on an evening where her son doesn't have soccer practice and she isn't on dinner duty.
- With her Voter Information Card in hand and her wallet full of IDs, Casey drives over to the advance polls closest to her home. She knows the way there and where to park. She'd like to make the process as quick as possible for herself.
- As soon as she gets home from voting, her husband leaves her with the kids so that he can go vote. She assures him that the lines aren't long and she was in and out in minutes.

Key quote

- "I hope that the best candidate will be chosen, the one who will be able to help citizens the best."

G. "Alix Chen" – Individualist

Key barrier

- Exclusion

About

- Voting importance: Very important
- Voting method: Election day
- Next election: Will definitely vote
- Past election: Voted
- Primary emotion: Neutral
- Barriers: Exclusion
- Disability: N/A
- Age: Not clear

Voting feelings

- Proud as opposed to unsure
- Divided between frustrated and relaxed

- Hopeful as opposed to disconnected

Voting motivations

Alix considers voting to be a requirement of being Canadian. It is something she has always done. Yet at times, she feels frustrated that underrepresented groups in Canada, of which she is a part, are not sufficiently reflected on the political stage. Her motivation to vote depends on precisely that. She votes with a visionary mindset, hopeful that the political landscape (and accordingly, our societal landscape) might transform over time.

While she has grown accustomed to the barriers and obstacles experienced when voting in elections, she is a forward thinker who expects more, and soon.

Voting barriers

In the last decade, Alix has changed her name. Since then, she has encountered several identification errors when going to vote in federal elections.

Although she is used to it by now, it is still a point of friction and frustration for Alix. Having to prove her identity with various pieces of identification makes Alix feel stressed and anxious, while others enjoy a smooth in and out experience. She recalls the frustration of her mother, who continued to receive a VIC addressed to her married name 12 years after her divorce.

Voting journey

- Hoping her voice will aid progress for underrepresented Canadians nationwide, Alix considers it important that she votes.
- Alix relies heavily on official government sources such as the Voter Information Card (VIC) and Elections Canada website to help her find answers on when, where, and how to vote. Alix also looks to news websites and media to gain further information on party policies and election information.
- Having experienced issues related to her identification cards in the past, Alix heads to the polling place armed with several ID cards to validate her name and identity. Unfortunately, this is not new to her.
- Heading to the polling place on election day after work, she hopes the evening rush will have slowed down, and that there will be less attention on her and the poll worker she is communicating with at the polls.
- Once voting is done, Alix posts to social media about her experience and frustrations. Until Elections Canada gets her name right, she will not be content.

Key quote

- “I don't know if I will make a change, but it is more about the opportunity.”

H. “Ajeet Kaur” – Thinker

Key barrier

- Anxiety

About

- Voting importance: Very important
- Voting method: Election day
- Next election: Will definitely vote
- Past election: Voted
- Primary emotion: Neutral
- Barriers: Anxiety
- Disability: N/A
- Age: Across age groups

Voting feelings

- Hopeful as opposed to disconnected
- Proud as opposed to uninterested
- Prepared as opposed to inexperienced

Voting motivations

Ajeet believes that voting is an important way to speak for yourself and for your community. He is moved by this belief and by his fond memories of voting with his grandfather when he was younger.

Hopeful that his voice will count, election day is no ordinary day for Ajeet. He considers how to strategically make his choice at the ballot box so it will contribute to the best result for Canada. Because of this, he wakes up feeling slightly anxious. He is hoping that lines aren't long and that the family member who agreed to join him at the polling place won't back out.

Voting barriers

In his daily life, Ajeet doesn't like surprises. Voting in an election is no different. In order to feel confident and prepared, he studies all aspects of the voting process. Having driven by the polling location a few times on his way back from work during the days of advance polling, he notes when the parking lot is busier than he'd prefer. A full parking lot could mean long line-ups and wait times, which is something Ajeet wants to avoid.

A forecast of bad weather could also make Ajeet contemplate his plans to vote and less optimistic about the day.

Voting journey

- Ajeet considers voting to be an integral part of being Canadian. Once an election is called, he has every intention of voting. He awaits election day to vote, just as he and his family have always done in the past.

- The Voter Identification Card (VIC) is a valuable piece of information for Ajeet. It has all the information he needs. Once received, he will use the internet and official government websites to validate the information.
- Once he has his VIC, Ajeet feels more settled, although he has lingering concerns about bringing the wrong ID and being turned away. He decides to bring extra identification, so that all the bases are covered.
- With good weather and good company, Ajeet heads over to the polling place. He is feeling nervous. He hopes that he fills in his ballot correctly and is choosing the best-suited candidate.
- On his way out, he begins to feel more relaxed. While he isn't comfortable around clusters of people, he feels accomplished to have taken part in another election. Depending on his experience voting, Ajeet might be inclined to post on social media, viewable to only his close friends.

Key quote

- “When going to vote, I feel nervous that I will do something wrong on the ballot to make my vote not count.”

I. “Andrea Reyes” – Champion

Key barrier

- Accessibility

About

- Voting importance: Very important
- Voting method: Election day
- Next election: Will definitely vote
- Past election: Voted
- Primary emotion: Positive
- Barriers: Accessibility
- Disability: Yes
- Age: 45+

Voting feelings

- Proud as opposed to frustrated
- Relaxed as opposed to stressed
- Hopeful as opposed to inexperienced

Voting motivations

Andrea is a determined voter. When she votes, she feels that she is expressing her viewpoint. As a Canadian with accessibility obstacles, Andrea uses her voice to make a difference for those like her. She is vocal about the necessity of voting, in order to speak for those who might not be able to.

As a person with both mobility and visual impairments, Andrea has experienced her fair share of frustrating moments related to voting in the past. These moments are what continue to motivate her to vote time after time and also encourage her to be an advocate for change and accessibility.

Voting barriers

Due to her health considerations and impairments, Andrea is often unable to predict how she will feel one day to the next. Her preference is to vote in person. In order to do so, she must connect with a family member to ask them to drive her to the polling place.

If health issues get in the way, Andrea will have already missed her chance to vote by mail-in ballot. She wishes she had another option to vote on election day without leaving her home if needed. She is determined to vote but is aware that her disability may shake up her day unexpectedly.

Voting journey

- In preparation to vote, Andrea feels excited and hopeful to elect a candidate who shares her ideals for the future and the future of fellow Canadians, including those with disabilities.
- To inform herself, Andrea typically reviews the platforms of the party she plans to vote for, ensuring that she is comfortable with her choice. With the help of enlarged text and a screen reader, she turns to Elections Canada’s website to get more information. She also enjoys tuning into her local TV stations.
- With the help of a magnifier, Andrea reads her VIC to confirm the polling place and accessibility. If there is any uncertainty, she would ask a family member to help sort out her registration and make sure the location is accessible to her.
- Andrea votes on election day, as it allows her to feel part of an important occasion. She goes with her brother, who helps her get to and from the polling place. A poll worker helps her to cast her ballot.
- After she has voted, Andrea feels accomplished and proud. As in previous elections, however, she wishes she could vote more independently, with the introduction of customized tools and support to help meet her needs.

Key quote

- “People may think their vote is only one of millions so it doesn't count, but that's far from the truth.”

J. “Nia Morrison” – Idealist

Key barrier

- No barrier

About

- Voting importance: Very important
- Voting method: Advance poll

- Next election: Will definitely vote
- Past election: Voted
- Primary emotion: Positive
- Barriers: N/A
- Disability: N/A
- Age: 18–34

Voting feelings

- Empowered as opposed to frustrated
- Organized as opposed to stressed
- Confident as opposed to inexperienced

Voting motivations

Nia is motivated by the power of democracy. She feels it is important to vote because it determines how our lives and country will be impacted. She believes voting provides a great opportunity to shape the direction of society by selecting candidates who most closely mirror her views through policy.

Nia feels comfortable in an increasingly digital world and would welcome an option to vote online or even an online chat service available on the Elections Canada website that could help answer any questions she or others may have.

Voting barriers

While Nia hasn't been voting for long, she finds the voting process to be simple. In order to avoid any spontaneous switch-ups or conflicts to her plans on election day, Nia makes sure to take advantage of advance polls to ensure her vote is cast on time.

Invigorated by current events and her vast knowledge of politics, Nia can't imagine anything standing in her way of voting. She holds the inherent belief that every citizen's vote can impact how the government meets the needs and expectations of Canadians.

Voting journey

- Nia feels optimistic that her vote can make a difference in society. She is hopeful that others feel the same way, and that the party she supports will win.
- During the writ period, Nia is keeping up with party platforms. She is watching the news and keeping track of relevant election promises.
- To find information on how, when, and where to vote, Nia uses her VIC. To ensure a swift voting process, Nia likes to be proactive. If necessary, she would prefer to register online rather than waiting to do it in person.
- Nia votes at advance polls to get it done ahead of time. She prefers to get ahead of the last-minute rush and avoid hurrying to the polling place.

- After she casts her ballot, Nia hopes there might be an “I Voted” sticker she can take with her. She is feeling energetic, invigorated, and looking forward to watching the results unfold on election night.

Key quote

- “I like being able to vote for a party that has the same interests as me and that supports the things I support.”

K. “Tim Robinson” – Traditionalist**Key barrier**

- No barrier

About

- Voting importance: Very important
- Voting method: Advance/election day
- Next election: Will definitely vote
- Past election: Voted
- Primary emotion: Positive
- Barriers: None
- Disability: N/A
- Age: 65+

Voting feelings

- Proud as opposed to disconnected
- In control as opposed to stressed
- Prepared as opposed to inexperienced

Voting motivations

Tim feels strongly that it is his duty as a Canadian citizen to vote when an election is called, and it is a responsibility he takes seriously. Tim emphasizes that voting is an obligation or duty, but he also considers it to be a right or privilege that must be practiced and preserved.

Like his grandfather did before him, he looks forward to taking his own grandchildren with him to vote on election day. Continuing this memorable family tradition and passing on the importance of voting to the next generation is meaningful to Tim. He hopes they will, in time, share the same sense of duty he does.

Voting barriers

Ever since Tim reached legal voting age, he has taken part in as many municipal, provincial, and federal elections as possible. He lives in a small town, where he has frequented the same polling place for the last several elections. When an election is called, Tim is prepared to vote.

Tim believes that everything possible is being done to make the voting process easy and simple, and that ultimately the responsibility falls on each individual voter to do his or her part. He thinks offering an online version of the Voter Information Card to encourage others to vote would be great.

Voting journey

- When it's time for an election, Tim feels prepared. Having lived in the same house and town for the last several elections, he is aware of where to vote and how to do it.
- For as long as he can remember, he has received his VIC in the mail and has no trouble making sense of it. On the off chance of any confusion, he knows the people working at the polls can help him to register.
- In the days leading up to the election, Tim reaches out to his 18-year-old granddaughter to see if she needs a ride on election day, and is pleased when she accepts.
- Tim prefers to vote on election day because it feels like tradition. He remembers when he used to go with his father and the sense of pride he felt seeing the community come together. On the rare occasion he couldn't vote in person, he would take advantage of mail-in ballots.
- As Tim leaves the polling place with his granddaughter, he feels satisfied. He notes the helpful poll workers at the polling location. He is content and may share this on social media with his close network.

Key quote

- "It's my duty to vote. An obligation I take seriously."

Appendix A: Methodology

Secondary analysis. The secondary analysis used data from Elections Canada’s [National Electors Study 2019](#) (NES 2019) and provided insight into segments of electors and reasoning behind voting or not voting. This analysis focused on 10 groups of electors, including voters and potential voters (those who are open to voting but haven’t recently). Each group was profiled in terms of responses to a set of indicators covering the electoral process, reasons for not voting, effort to vote and perceptions of difficulty, demographics and psychographics. This secondary analysis helped guide the design of qualitative research and eventual persona development.

The qualitative phase of this project included a two-day bulletin board and in-depth interviews.

Bulletin board. The bulletin board hosted 62 Canadians and took place between August 10 and 13, 2021. The Recollective online bulletin board platform produced an asynchronous threaded discussion that developed as participants completed the research. The full set of questions was programmed in advance. Once participants answered the specific questions allotted for the day, they returned the next day to complete the next set of questions. Participants who took part in the two-day bulletin board exercise received a \$125 honorarium to thank them for their commitment.

Participants were recruited to represent the Canadian electorate, finding balance among age groups, regions, gender, and level of tech-savviness (meaning level of comfort using computers, cell phones, and the internet). The following table outlines the number of participants who completed the online bulletin board and the group(s) they belong to:

Group description	Number of participants who completed bulletin board
TOTAL	62
Language	
English	47
French	15
Voters	
Voters	40
Non-voters	22
Age	
18–24	17
25–34	12
35–44	4

45–54	11
55–64	5
65–74	9
75+	4
Region	
B.C./Alberta	18
Manitoba/Saskatchewan	6
Ontario	17
Quebec	15
Atlantic provinces	6
Gender	
Men	28
Women	34
Non-binary or trans identity	0
Target group	
Lower tech-savviness	4
First Nations on-reserve	0
First Nations off-reserve	2
Western Métis	1
Inuit	0
New Canadian from a country with a functioning but different electoral democracy	1
New Canadian from a country with weak or non-existent electoral democracy	1
Snowbirds	7

Electors with a moderate or severe mobility limitation	7
Electors with a moderate or severe visual disability	3
Electors with a moderate or severe mental health diagnosis	6

Interviews. A total of 26 in-depth individual interviews (IDIs) were conducted between November 2, 2021 and January 14, 2022, with Canadians representing specific populations of interest and fulfilling quotas not met in the bulletin boards, including: newcomers (6), those with low literacy (4), those with no home internet access (4), Inuit (4), First Nations on/off reserve (6), those who are transgender or non-binary (4) and those with low technology skills (2). It is important to note that these are not mutually exclusive categories; for example, a few of the no home internet access respondents had low tech skills, and some of the Indigenous respondents were also transgender.

The interviewees were recruited through service organizations across Canada. The interviews were conducted over the phone at times convenient for the respondents. The in-depth interviews were approximately 30 minutes in length. Each participant was provided with a \$75 cash incentive as a thank you for their time.

The following table summarizes the IDIs:

Target group	Total	English	French	Other language	Service organization	Date
Indigenous electors						
Inuit	4	4	-	-	Ilinniapaa Skills Development Centre	Nov 2, 5 Dec 8
First Nations on- or off-reserve	6	6	-	-	St. Mary's Wolastoqiyik; Tobique First Nation	Jan 6, 14
Canadian newcomers						
Newcomer – weak democracy	2	2	-	-	Institute for Canadian Citizenship	Nov 9, 10
Newcomer – functioning democracy	4	4	-	-	Institute for Canadian Citizenship	Nov 12, 16, 19
Other						
Low literacy	4	-	-	4	Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre (OCCSC)	Dec 20 Jan 6
No home internet access	4	4	-	-	EMBERS Eastside Works	Dec 7
Low technology skills	2	2	-	-	EMBERS Eastside Works	Dec 7

Transgender/non-binary	4	4	-	-	QMUNITY, B.C.'s Queer, Trans, & Two-Spirit Resource Centre	Nov 2 Dec 23 Jan 6
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Recruitment

Bulletin board: Environics developed the recruitment screener and provided it to Elections Canada for review prior to finalizing. Participants were screened to ensure they were eligible to vote. Participants were also screened to ensure the participants included a mix of gender, age, region and that they would be comfortable expressing their thoughts with the moderator.

Additional IDIs: In order to connect with Canadians who are challenging to reach through online panels, Environics reached out to organizations that provide programs and services to the target populations of interest. In addition, Environics benefitted from Elections Canada’s network, which was utilized to provide further organizational contacts and support. This is a recruitment approach that has proven to be successful with hard-to-reach audiences.

Transcripts from bulletin boards and IDIs were used for subsequent analysis by the research team. During the recruitment process, participants provided consent to use their answers for analysis and were assured of their anonymity.

Quality control

All qualitative research work was conducted in accordance with professional standards and applicable government legislation (i.e. PIPEDA). The survey was registered with the Research Verification Service (RVS) of the Canadian Research Insight Council (CRIC) to allow participants to verify the legitimacy of the research, register a complaint, get information about the survey industry, or ask technical questions about the research.

Appendix B: Recruitment Screener

Elections Canada — Personas Screener

DRAFT Online Screener

SPLASH PAGE

Please select your preferred language for completing the survey. / SVP choisissez votre langue préférée pour remplir le sondage

01 – English

02 – Français

Welcome and thank you for your interest in this study. We are conducting a research project on behalf of Elections Canada to understand Canadians' experiences during a federal election. The research discussion will be held on an online platform over the course of two days, where your participation will be required for approximately one hour per day answering questions and completing activities. Upon completion of the tasks, you will receive an honorarium of \$125.

The following survey should take no more than five minutes to complete. Please note that your participation is voluntary and completely confidential. All your answers will remain anonymous and the information provided will solely be used to determine your eligibility for the online discussion.

Please note that all information collected, used, and/or disclosed will be used for the purposes of this study only and administered as per the requirements of the Privacy Act. Environics upholds the highest standards of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and adheres to privacy standards set out by the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC), as well as ESOMAR, the global association for the data and insights industry. If you wish to verify the legitimacy of this research or to register a complaint, please contact Elections Canada at info@elections.ca.

Thank you in advance for your participation. Please click on >> to continue.

[RED = SKIP/BRANCH/PROGRAMMING LOGIC]

SCREENING QUESTIONS

1. In which age category do you belong?

SELECT ONE ONLY

- Less than 18 years old
- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74

- 75 or older

IF “LESS THAN 18 YEARS OLD” THANK AND TERMINATE

2. Are you a Canadian citizen, eligible to vote in federal elections?

- Yes
- No **THANK AND TERMINATE**

3. In what country were you born?

- Canada **SKIP TO Q6**
- Other

4. IF OTHER AT Q3: When did you come to Canada?

- Prior to 2011
- 2011 or onwards **NEWCOMER QUOTA**

5. IF ‘2011 OR ONWARDS’ AT Q4: Where were you born?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

W = WEAK DEMOCRACY

F = DIFFERENT BUT FUNCTIONAL

- Afghanistan **(W)** **‘WEAK’ DEMOCRACY QUOTA**
- Algeria **(W)**
- Bangladesh **(W)**
- Brazil **(F)** **DIFFERENT BUT FUNCTIONAL DEMOCRACY QUOTA**
- China **(W)**
- Egypt **(W)**
- Eritrea **(W)**
- France **(F)**
- Great Britain/United Kingdom and Overseas Territories **(F)**
- India **(F)**
- Iran **(W)**
- Iraq **(W)**
- Jamaica **(F)**
- Mexico **(F)**
- Morocco **(W)**
- Nigeria **(W)**
- Philippines **(F)**
- Pakistan **(W)**
- Republic of Korea **(F)**
- Syria **(W)**
- Turkey **(W)**
- United States of America **(F)**
- Vietnam **(W)**
- Other: Please specify _____

6. Are you...?
- First Nations (status or non-status) **FIRST NATIONS QUOTA**
 - Inuk **INUIT QUOTA**
 - Métis **MÉTIS QUOTA**
 - A non-Indigenous person
 - Other: Please specify _____
7. IF 'Métis' AT Q6: Which of the following best describes your Métis identity?
- Western Métis (originally from Ontario, the Prairies, or British Columbia)
WESTERN MÉTIS QUOTA
 - Eastern Métis (originally from Québec or the Atlantic provinces)
 - Don't know
8. IF 'FIRST NATIONS' AT Q6: Do you currently live...
- On a reserve **ON-RESERVE FN QUOTA**
 - Off-reserve **OFF-RESERVE FN QUOTA**
 - Prefer not to say
9. For the purposes of this research, disability is defined as one or more functional limitations or impairments that make it harder to function day-to-day. Do you have a disability?
- Yes **DISABILITY QUOTA**
 - No
10. IF YES AT Q9: Please indicate the nature of your disability.
- Please select any that apply
- Blind or visual impairment
 - Coordination or dexterity
 - Deaf or hard of hearing
 - Mobility
 - Speech impairment
 - Developmental or intellectual
 - Emotional/psychological/mental health
 - Pain that is always present
 - Other: Please specify _____
 - Prefer not to say
11. IF YES AT Q9: How much difficulty do you have with daily activities due to this or these conditions?
- Little or no difficulty
 - Some difficulty **MODERATE MOBILITY/MENTAL HEALTH/VISUAL QUOTA**
 - A lot of difficulty **SEVERE MOBILITY/MENTAL HEALTH/VISUAL QUOTA**
 - Prefer not to say

12. Which of the following best describes your gender identity?
- Woman
 - Man
 - Non-binary **NON-BINARY QUOTA**
 - Transgender man or woman **TRANSGENDER QUOTA**
 - Or, please specify:
 - Prefer not to say

13. In which province or territory do you live?

Drop-down list

- 01 – Alberta
- 02 – British Columbia
- 03 – Manitoba
- 04 – New Brunswick
- 05 – Newfoundland and Labrador
- 06 – Northwest Territories
- 07 – Nova Scotia
- 08 – Nunavut
- 09 – Ontario
- 10 – Prince Edward Island
- 11 – Quebec
- 12 – Saskatchewan
- 13 – Yukon

VOTER PARTICIPATION

14. Did you know that a federal election took place on October 21, 2019?
- 01 – Yes
 - 02 – No
 - 98 – Don't know
15. Many people don't or can't vote for a variety of reasons. Which of the following describes you?
- 01 – I did not vote in the 2019 election. **NON-VOTER QUOTA**
 - 02 – I thought about voting in 2019 but didn't vote. **NON-VOTER QUOTA**
 - 03 – I usually vote but didn't in 2019. **NON-VOTER QUOTA**
 - 04 – I am sure I voted in the 2019 election. **VOTER QUOTA**

16. IF Q15=01-03 ASK: What is the main reason you did not vote?
- I was too busy or out of town
 - An illness or disability prevented me from doing so
 - A transportation problem/polling station too far
 - The polling place was not accessible
 - Due to my age, I was not eligible to vote at the time.
 - Other, please specify_____

17. IF Q15=04 ASK: Overall, how easy was it to vote?
- 01 – Very easy
 - 02 – Somewhat easy
 - 03 – Somewhat difficult
 - 04 – Very difficult

DEMOGRAPHICS

18. Which is the highest level of education that you have completed?

SELECT ONE ONLY

- Elementary school or less
 - Some high school
 - Completed high school
 - College/vocational/technical school
 - Some university
 - University grad
 - Postgraduate degree
 - Don't know
19. Which of the following categories best describes your current employment status? Are you:
(ACCEPT ONE RESPONSE ONLY)
- Working full-time, that is, 35 or more hours per week
 - Working part-time, that is, less than 35 hours per week
 - Self-employed
 - Unemployed, but looking for work
 - A student attending school full-time
 - Retired
 - Not in the workforce (full-time homemaker or unemployed but not looking for work)
 - Other
 - Prefer not to say
20. Are you a single parent with any children under the age of 12?
- Yes **SINGLE PARENT QUOTA**
 - No
 - Prefer not to say

21. When it comes to how you spend your winter outside the current COVID-19 pandemic, which of the following statements describes you best?

- I spend the winter in Canada.
- I spend part (or all) of winter in a warmer place and return to Canada in the spring.

SNOWBIRD QUOTA

22. How would you describe your level of comfort when using computers, cellphones, and the internet? **(ADAPTED FROM NEC)**

Drop-down list

01 – Very comfortable

HIGH TECH SAVVY QUOTA

03 – Fairly comfortable

HIGH TECH SAVVY QUOTA

04 – Not very comfortable

LOW TECH SAVVY QUOTA

05 – Very uncomfortable

LOW TECH SAVVY QUOTA

23. Do you have internet access at home?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

NO HOME INTERNET ACCESS QUOTA

We are hosting a series of online discussion boards in the next few weeks. To make sure that you are comfortable participating in this environment, please answer the following questions.

1. In the text box below, please describe what you consider to be the **luckiest thing** that ever happened to you. **Please be as specific and detailed as possible**, and explain not just what happened, but how you felt.

77 – Text box: [SET MIN 50 CHARS]

2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do the following statements express your feelings? A score of 10 means the statement describes your feelings extremely well, a score of 1 means that the statement does not describe your feelings at all, or you can use any number in between.

1 < DOESN'T DESCRIBE ----- DESCRIBES WELL > 10

a. If asked to describe something, I can usually do so in detail:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

b. I'm comfortable expressing my feelings online:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

c. My friends often ask my opinions of things:

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- d. I generally have an opinion or point of view on topics or issues:
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- e. I enjoy exchanging ideas with people on a wide variety of things:
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- f. People tell me I'm creative:
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- g. I will share my ideas, even if other people have different points of view:
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

ALL RESPONDENTS MUST HAVE 4 OR MORE STATEMENTS CIRCLED A "7", "8", "9", OR "10". IF NOT, THANK AND TERMINATE

QUAL1. We may conduct follow-up qualitative research about voting in Canada. This would take the form of a moderated online community of Canadians like yourself. Participants would receive an honorarium of \$125 as a thank you for their time.

Participating in the next phase of research is completely voluntary. If you are interested, you will be required to provide your first name, last name, and email address to be screened for the online community. Please note that this information will not be used for any analysis of your responses and will only be used if you are selected to be among those invited to participate in a subsequent qualitative phase of research.

Would you be interested in participating?

1	Yes	m
2	No	m

IF QUAL1=NO, THANK & TERMINATE

IF QUAL1=YES, ASK QUAL3 provide us with the following contact information so we can send you details about the online community if you are selected to participate:

1	First name	[open-ended box]
2	Last name	[open-ended box]
3	Email address	[open-ended box]

I am not willing to provide my contact information (you will not be invited to participate).

IF SELECTED, THANK AND TERMINATE

Thank you. We will let you know as soon as possible if you qualify for the study. Have a great day!

Appendix C: Qualitative Research Instrument: Bulletin Board/Interview Discussion Guide

July 15, 2021

Environics Research Group
Online Bulletin Board
Elections Canada
PN11091
Discussion Guide

Day 1: The voting journey

Hello and welcome!

Thanks for joining me today! My name is _____ and I will be your moderator for this discussion.

Over the next two days, I will ask you to share your thoughts, experiences, and feelings about voting in federal elections. A federal election is when you vote for the Member of Parliament who will represent you in Ottawa. Please try to be as detailed as you can when you answer each question. Your answers will help me understand how you think and what is important to you about voting.

Sometimes I will ask follow-up questions to make sure I really understand your answers. Please make sure you come back and check on this board to see if I have any follow-up questions for you.

All of the questions I'm going to ask are about how to get ready to vote and cast your ballot. They are not about choosing which candidate or party to vote for.

Some of the questions ask you to imagine that a federal election will take place in the next few weeks and to think about the steps you would take before and on election day. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a big part of our lives in the past year, but for this exercise, please imagine what your actions, thoughts and feelings would be if COVID-19 was not an issue during the next federal election.

Let's get started!

Day 1a: Perceptions of voting

Getting to know you

- A. To get us started, please briefly introduce yourself and tell us something that is interesting or unique about you (such as your interests, hobbies, etc.). You can answer in writing or, if you want, upload a meme or picture (no selfies please!) that represents you or captures your current mood. If you do that, please tell me in a few words why you chose this image. [image upload option]
- B. Did you vote in the last federal election held on October 21, 2019?
yes/no/not sure/was not eligible to vote in elections before now
- C. How likely are you to vote in the next federal election?
will definitely vote/likely to vote/unlikely to vote/will definitely not vote

General perceptions on voting:

- A. How important is it to you to vote in elections?
very important/somewhat important/not very important/not at all important
Why do you say that?
- B. What emotions (positive, neutral, or negative) do you associate with voting? [Card sort] Why did you select that/those emotion(s)?
- C. Please tell me about a memorable experience you've had with voting. Please focus on what was memorable about it (i.e., when, where, and how) and not the party or candidate (i.e., who).
- D. How did this experience affect you? What did you take away from it?

Day 1b: Planning to vote

- A. What do you need and want to know about how, when, and where to vote in the federal election? Please be as specific as possible. (This question is about what information you need to vote, not about choosing which party or candidate to vote for.)
- B. Where do you go to find this information?
- C. What sources of information do you use?
- D. PART A: Use the words below to tell us what emotions you feel about finding out how, when and where to vote. Please answer as realistically as possible. Place the words below into one of three groups: "I felt", "I did not feel", or "Does not apply". Move a word into a group by clicking the card and choosing the desired group from a list. You can also drag words directly into groups. Change the order of words by dragging them up and down or selecting "Move Up" / "Move Down" from the card's menu.

Words include: (Unsure; Inexperienced; Confused; Discouraged; Empowered; Confident; Hopeful; Excited; Proud; Joyful; Prepared; Organized; Uninterested; Disconnected; Relaxed; In control; Doubtful; Frustrated; Stressed; Tired)

PART B: Tell us a little more about the words you chose and why you picked them. Use the questions below to help you fill out your answer.

- Why did you choose these words? (TOP 5)
 - What about the voting process makes you feel this way?
 - Describe an experience that highlights one of the words you chose.
- E. Tell us about any challenges you face when trying to find out how, when, and where to vote.

This is an example of a voter information card, also called a VIC. The VIC tells you where and when to vote, either at an advance poll or on election day. If you are registered to vote and Elections Canada has your current address, you will receive a VIC in the mail about [x] days before election day. [SHOW EXAMPLE]

- F. Do you remember ever receiving a card like this in the mail before a federal election?
yes/no/was not eligible to vote in elections before now
- G. Imagine you receive a VIC in the mail about [x] days before election day. What do you do with it, and why?

Let's say you're thinking about or planning to vote. There are several ways to vote. Most people vote in an advance poll, on election day, or by mail-in ballot.

- H. How would you typically choose to vote?
advance poll/on election day/mail-in ballot/other (write in)
Why would you choose that option?
- I. Can you imagine a situation where you would choose a different option? If yes, what would that be? If not, why not?
- J. How do you feel about voting in advance polls? If you have voted in advance polls before, please share the experience you had.
- K. How do you feel about voting on election day? We want to know what emotions you experienced, so please be as specific as possible about your thoughts and feelings.

Day 2a: Casting your ballot

Welcome back! Today is all about the different steps that lead to casting your ballot (the act of marking your vote on your ballot and putting it in the ballot box).

We'll ask you to describe how you would approach each of the following steps:

- Checking if you are registered to vote
- Going to vote and what to bring with you
- Reflecting on the voting process

Please provide as much detail as you can about your thoughts and feelings at the time. Each step is described below, and we will provide some prompts to help you think back. Have fun!

Checking to see if you are registered to vote

To vote, you must be registered on the list of electors. (Electors are Canadians who are eligible to vote.) There are several ways to register: you can register in advance, either online or in person, or you can register at the polling station when you go to vote.

- A. Once an election is called, would you check to see if you are registered to vote?
yes/no
Why or why not?
- B. Let's say you decided to check if you are registered to vote. Where would you look for this information?
- C. Let's say you check and find out you are not registered. What would you do next? Please be as detailed as possible.
- D. Let's say you want to register. You have two choices: You can register online in advance by uploading pictures of your pieces of ID, or you can wait until the day you vote and register in person at the polling station. Which one would you do? Why would that work better for you?
- E. To register to vote, you need to provide proof of identity (your name) and proof of your current address. Would that be a challenge for you? If yes, how so?
- F. PART A: Use the words below to tell us what emotions you feel about registering to vote. Please answer as realistically as possible. Place the words below into one of three groups: "I felt", "I did

not feel", or "Does not apply". Move a word into a group by clicking the card and choosing the desired group from a list. You can also drag words directly into groups. Change the order of words by dragging them up and down or selecting "Move Up" / "Move Down" from the card's menu.

Words include: (Same words as 1B–D: (Unsure; Inexperienced; Confused; Discouraged; Empowered; Confident; Hopeful; Excited; Proud; Joyful; Prepared; Organized; Uninterested; Disconnected; Relaxed; In control; Doubtful; Frustrated; Stressed; Tired)

PART B: Please tell us more about the words you chose and why. Use the questions below to help you fill out your answer.

- Why did you choose these words? (TOP 5)
- What about the registration process made you feel this way?
- Describe an experience that highlights one of the words you chose.

Where and when to vote

Imagine you've decided to vote in person, either on election day or at an advance poll.

- A. What happens for you on that day? How does voting fit into your day? Do you go to vote by yourself or with others, and if so, with whom? (please identify their relationship to you, but do not give their name.)
- B. What, if anything, do you plan to bring with you when you go to vote?
- C. What are you thinking and feeling about going to vote? Why? If you want, you can upload an image that captures your mood about this step. (Again, please share what you are thinking and feeling about voting, not about which party or candidate you choose to vote for). [image upload option]
- D. Would you post about your voting experience on social media after you vote? If yes, what would you post and how would you caption it? If no, why not?
- E. If you post on social media, would you make your post...?
public for the world to see/viewable by your contacts/limited to close friends/other (specify)/I would not post on social media

Day 2b: Reflecting on the voting process

Improving the voting process

- A. Thinking back to the steps involved in voting: Overall, do you feel that voting is easy and simple or hard and complex? Why do you say that?
- B. Thinking about your life right now, is there an obstacle or reason that could keep you from voting if a federal election happened in the next few weeks? Please exclude COVID-19 concerns from your response.
- C. How motivated are you to overcome this obstacle/reason so that you can vote?
- D. Whether you find voting easy or hard, what changes would you like to see that would make voting (even) easier and simpler for you? What supports or tools could Elections Canada offer?

Slogans

The following are four types of slogans that could be used to motivate Canadians to vote in a federal election. Look at the four slogan examples in each category. Which category do you like best?

A	B	C	D
Contribute to Canada's democracy	Have you voted yet? Don't miss your chance!	Envision. Believe. Vote.	I'm a voter. Are you?
Be ready to vote!	Be cool. Be smart. Vote!	Shape your future. Vote!	Be a part of democracy!
Let's vote!	Voting rocks!	Your vote matters	Experience democracy first-hand
Vote: It's your right	It's our vote!	Let your voice be heard. Vote.	You, too, can have your say!

01-A

02-B

03-C

04-D

05-none/do not like any of them

Please share a few words about why you gave that answer.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix D: Qualitative Research Instruments: Introduction Letter for Qualitative Recruitment

1) For main stakeholder contacts:

Hello,

Elections Canada is in the process of conducting research to better understand electors' experiences during a federal election. The results from this research will be used to help Elections Canada design and implement more user-centric programs and services that are easy to use for all electors across Canada.

We are reaching out to ask for your support in sharing this research participation opportunity, in order to ensure that this research captures the experiences of underserved populations in Canada. More specifically, we are hoping to reach **[number of desired participants]** people who are: eligible electors (at least 18 years old and a Canadian citizen), and **[insert group here]**. Please ensure that the individuals you are reaching out to are not leaders working within your organization, but are among those that your organization serves.

The commitment would involve a telephone interview that would take approximately 30 minutes of their time. Upon completion, participants will receive an honorarium of \$100.

Your support on this would be very much appreciated. If you know individuals who would be interested, you are welcome to forward them the attached email template, but please note that we are looking for a limited number of participants this time around and once we have this number of participants, we will unfortunately not be conducting any more interviews. Feel free to adjust the template as you see fit.

If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Thank you very much.

2) For stakeholder networks—to be shared with potential participants:

Hello,

Elections Canada is looking for participants as part of research they are conducting to better understand electors' experiences during a federal election. The results from this research will be used to help Elections Canada design and implement more user-centric programs and services that are easy to use for all electors across Canada.

In order to understand the challenges and barriers facing underserved populations, Elections Canada is looking for people to participate in this research who are eligible electors (at least 18 years old and a Canadian citizen) and **[insert group here]**.

This research will be conducted by Environics Research and would involve a telephone interview that would take approximately 30 minutes. Upon completion, you will receive an honorarium of \$100.

Please note that we are looking for a limited number of participants this time. Once we have around **[number of desired participants]** participants, we will unfortunately not be conducting any more interviews.

Also note that **your participation is voluntary and completely confidential**. All your answers will remain anonymous and the information provided will solely be used to contact you for the interview.

If you are interested in participating in this study or if have any questions, please contact Sarah at Sarah.Roberton@environics.ca.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Appendix E: Segmentation Analysis

The following table summarizes the secondary analysis of data from Elections Canada's [National Electors Study 2019](#) (NES 2019) to provide insight into segments of electors and their reasoning behind voting or not voting. This analysis focused on 10 groups of electors, including voters in the 2019 federal general election and potential voters (those who were open to voting, in that they reported that they intended to vote during the election period survey, but did not end up voting according to the post-election survey). Each group was profiled in terms of responses to a set of indicators covering the electoral process, reasons for not voting, effort to vote and perceptions of difficulty, demographics and psychographics.

	Electors open to voting (intended to vote in the 2019 election, but did not)						Voted in the 2019 election			
	Reasons for not voting					Electors with a disability		Degree of difficulty of voting		
	Too busy/out of town	Illness or disability	Registration/information issue	Transportation/distance to the polls	Polling place issue	Mild/moderate disability	Severe disability	None (easy)	Some	High
Experience with the electoral process										
Registered to vote	Mixed/don't know	Mixed	No/don't know	No/don't know	No/don't know	Mixed	No/don't know	Yes	Don't know	Don't know
Checked registration during the election	Updated/no	High	High	High	High	Average	Registered/updated	Verified	Registered/updated	Registered/updated/none
Know about polling day registration	Don't know	No	No	Above average	No	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average
Received a Voter Information Card (variation from average)	Very low/don't know	Very low/don't know	Very low/don't know	Very low	Very low	Below	Below	Slightly above	Below	Very low/don't know
Awareness of accessible tools and services	Below average	Below average	Average	Average	Above average	Average	Very low	Average	Average	Low
Visited EC website	Low	Very Low	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average
Satisfaction with EC website	Average	Very low	Low	Low	Very low	Average	Low	Average	low	Very low
Contacted EC	Low	Low	High	High	High	Average	High	Average	Above average	Above average
Satisfaction with EC contact	-	-	-	-	-	Average	Average	Average	Low	Very low
Reason for not voting	Everyday life	Everyday life	Process	Process	Process	Political, everyday life	Process	-	-	-
Felt informed about:										
Where to vote	Low	Low	Very low	Very low	Very low	Average	Low	Average	Low	Low

	Electors open to voting (intended to vote in the 2019 election, but did not)							Voted in the 2019 election		
	Reasons for not voting					Electors with a disability		Degree of difficulty of voting		
	Too busy/out of town	Illness or disability	Registration/information issue	Transportation/distance to the polls	Polling place issue	Mild/moderate disability	Severe disability	None (easy)	Some	High
When to vote	Low	Below average	Very low	Low	Very low	Average	Very low	Average	Low	Very low
How to vote	Very low	Low	Very low	Low	Low	Low	Very low	Average	Low	Very low
Perceive it would be easy/difficult to:										
Check if you are registered	Very difficult	Average	Very difficult	Average	Very difficult	Average	Very difficult	Average	Very difficult	Very difficult
Register to vote	Somewhat/very difficult	Somewhat difficult	Somewhat/very difficult	Very difficult	Somewhat easy	Somewhat difficult	Somewhat/very difficult	Very easy	Somewhat/very difficult	Somewhat/very difficult
Get to the polling place	Somewhat/very difficult	Somewhat/very difficult	Somewhat/very difficult	Very difficult	Very difficult	Somewhat difficult	Somewhat/very difficult/don't know	Very easy	Somewhat difficult/don't know	Somewhat/very difficult/don't know
Vote once there	Somewhat/very difficult	Somewhat difficult	Somewhat difficult	Somewhat/very difficult	Somewhat difficult	Somewhat difficult	Somewhat/very difficult/don't know	Very easy	Somewhat/very difficult/don't know	Somewhat/very difficult/don't know
Psychographics and cynicism toward politics										
Voting is a duty or choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	Mix	Choice	Duty	Choice	Choice
Agree all political parties are basically the same	High	Average	High	High	High	Average	High	Low	Average	High
Agree government doesn't care much what people like me think	Above average	Average	Above average	Average	High	Average	Above average	Low	Average	Above average
Agree that politics/government is too complicated to understand	High	Above average	High	Average	High	Above average	Above average	Average	Above average	Average
Lack of civic/political engagement (No/never/don't know)										
No high school civics	Average	Above average	Average, don't know	High	Average, don't know	Average	Don't know	Average	Average	Average
Never talk politics/government at home growing up	High	High	Average	High	Average, don't know	Average	High	Average	Don't know	Don't know

	Elector open to voting (intended to vote in the 2019 election, but did not)							Voted in the 2019 election		
	Reasons for not voting					Elector with a disability		Degree of difficulty of voting		
	Too busy/out of town	Illness or disability	Registration/information issue	Transportation/distance to the polls	Polling place issue	Mild/moderate disability	Severe disability	None (easy)	Some	High
Never talk politics/government at home now	High	High	High	High	Average/don't know	Average	High	Low	High	Above average
Never talk politics/government with friends	High	High	High	High	High	Average	High	Low	High	High
Socio-demographics (higher representation)										
Male/female		Female		Female	Female		Female			
Region	Atlantic, Prairies	Quebec, British Columbia	Alberta, Ontario	Atlantic, Quebec, Prairies	Quebec, Prairies	Atlantic	Atlantic		Quebec	British Columbia
Age	18-34, 45-54	45-54, 65+	18-34, 45-54	25-34, 45-54	25-44	18-24, 65+	45-64	65+	18-34	25-34, 75+
Marital status	Single	Single, divorced, widowed	Single, divorced, widowed	Single, divorced, widowed	Single	Divorced, widowed	Single, divorced, widowed	Widowed	Single	Divorced, widowed
Education	High school or less	High school or less, some post-secondary	High school or less	High school or less	High school or less, some post-secondary	High school or less, some post-secondary	High school or less, some post-secondary	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
Employment	Employed, unemployed, student, other	Unemployed, home, retired, other	Unemployed, home, student, other	Unemployed, home, student, other	Unemployed, student	Unemployed, retired, other	Unemployed, home, retired, other	Retired	Unemployed, student	Unemployed, home, student, other
Indigenous	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Immigrant to Canada				Yes	Yes					
Person with disability	Severe disability	Mild, severe	Severe disability	Mild, severe	Severe disability	Mild, moderate	Severe, very severe		Mild, moderate, severe	Mild, moderate, severe