

Implementation of the Identification Requirements in the Canadian North
Final Report
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1. Executive Summary

This report addresses the challenges and opportunities surrounding implementation of the new election identification requirements in the Canadian North and more generally, obstacles and challenges to voter participation specific to the realities of the North.

Apathy is Boring conducted over 70 interviews (both in person and over the phone) with a variety of identified stakeholders in the three territories – Yukon, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories – and in the electoral district of Desnethé–Missinippi–Churchill River (Saskatchewan), as well as with members of Parliament whose ridings are directly above or below the 60 parallel. These interviews were guided by a questionnaire, developed in collaboration with Elections Canada, in order to:

- identify any barriers arising from the implementation of the new identification requirements
- determine the effectiveness of the list of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada and determine if there are additions or changes that could be made to the list to reduce barriers
- determine how Elections Canada can best provide information on the new voter identification requirements to targeted groups that are likely to experience challenges

Participants mainly agreed that voting in federal elections in the North is currently fraught with challenges. Obstacles identified obstacles ranged specifically from accessing, understanding, and then satisfying the new voter ID requirements to the larger issues of awareness of and education about the federal electoral system (as opposed to territorial and/or band elections), in addition to the motivation and desire to opt in to the federal system. The importance of the cultural and physical realities of northern communities (inclement weather, limited infrastructure, and high costs associated with procuring necessary documents) pervaded most interviews, and many participants expressed frustrations with a system they felt was not adapted to their particular reality.

The consistencies noted in our consultations informed the recommendations that follow, and wherever exceptions did occur, they are noted in the report. Apart from particular changes to the list of authorized pieces of identification and some operational aspects (see section “Recommendations”), based on our work, Apathy is Boring believes that the key aspects that should be given consideration are the following:

- Increase clarity, communication and streamlining of current practices to ensure that all northern Canadians have the same opportunity to cast a ballot as their southern neighbors.
- Adapt all processes – from advertising elections-related information to running community relations officers programs and polling stations – to take into account the specificities of northern communities’ contexts.

Apathy is Boring believes that Elections Canada can capitalize on the changes to ID requirements to increase the accessibility of elections to northern Canadians in an innovative and proactive manner.

A critical aspect of this project will be the follow-up, which will help ensure that participants feel included in the process and have a clear sense of resulting action steps. Particulars of the follow-up are still to be determined in consultation with Elections Canada.

2. Introduction

Upon the request of Elections Canada, Apathy is Boring conducted a series of interviews to seek an understanding of the potential challenges that people in the North could face at the polls with the changes brought by the Canada Elections Act concerning identification requirements.

In order to vote in a federal election, electors must now satisfy the identification requirements laid out in the following options:

Option 1

Provide one original piece of identification issued by a government or government agency containing your photo, name and address.

Option 2

Provide two original pieces of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada. Both pieces must contain your name, and one must also contain your address.

Option 3

An elector can be vouched for by an elector whose name appears on the list of electors in the same polling division and who has an acceptable piece or pieces of identification. Both are required to make a sworn statement. An elector cannot vouch for more than one person, and the person who has been vouched for cannot vouch for another elector.

Drawing on the authors' own contacts in the communities visited as well as those of Elections Canada, Apathy is Boring interviews were conducted in person and by phone with community members who had a wide range of experience with the electoral process and the realities of the North. Interviews were conducted in various communities in Yukon, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and in Desnethé–Missinippi–Churchill River (Saskatchewan) as well as with members of Parliament whose ridings are directly above or below the 60th parallel.

3. The Research Framework

A. Objectives

The purpose of this research was to identify potential challenges for northern Canadians to meet identification and address requirements arising from the new voter identification requirements when voting during a federal election event. Its particular objectives were to:

1. determine the impact of the list of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)
2. identify any barriers arising from the implementation of the new voter identification requirements
3. determine which, if any, additions are required to the list of identification authorized by the CEO
4. note existing challenges regarding the accessibility of the electoral process that are unique to the North.

B. Methodology

The methodology used in the development of this report was based on securing qualitative research. Using a questionnaire developed in partnership with Elections Canada, in addition to an informal and personalized interview format, we discussed the new voter identification requirements and experiences with voting and elections in general with all interviewees. Explanations of the new ID requirements and prompting were used to clarify questions for those who had not previously heard of the ID requirements.

Interviews were conducted in a careful, lengthy and very “human” process underpinned by an understanding of the nature of relationships in northern communities. The time was taken to ensure that community members were comfortable with the process, and that a diversity of members of any given community were able to participate. Over 70 in-depth interviews ranging from 1 hour to 1.5 hours in length—with members of Parliament among others—were conducted in Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Northern Saskatchewan.

Because several participants requested anonymity, names have not been assigned to the quotes outlined in this report. Cities and occupation (where relevant) are listed.

Selection of provinces and territories, cities and communities

The communities were selected for this interview process based on the following criteria:

- They ensured appropriate coverage of the North.
- They offered a sample representation of other communities in the North.
- The interviewers had already established contacts there, or Elections Canada had provided them with contacts there.
- The established target groups were represented (youth, isolated residents, fly in communities, Aboriginal communities, transient members of northern communities).

The following communities were part of the study:

Yukon

- Whitehorse (population 24,473)
- Dawson City (population 2,022)
- Old Crow (population 282)

NWT

- Inuvik (population 3296)

Nunavut

- Iqaluit (population 7,250)
- Igloolik (population 1,538)

Saskatchewan

- Spruce Home (population 3,429) – 20 kilometres north of Prince Albert
- La Ronge (population 3,500) / La Ronge Reserve (population 2,000)
- Prince Albert (population 34,138)
- Saskatoon (population 208,300)

Selection of interviewees

Participants were selected based on the following three categories, within which the aim was to provide as diverse and representative a selection as possible:

Target Groups: Representatives of the following targeted groups were interviewed:

- youth
- isolated residents (trappers, hunters, those living more than 2 hours from the closest town)
- fly-in communities
- Aboriginal communities
- transient members of northern communities

Demographics: The following demographics were taken into account:

- age
- gender
- education level
- degree of community involvement
- geographic location (rural/urban, isolated/community-oriented, on /off reserve)
- language considerations

Occupation: The following community members were targeted given their high level of interaction with community members and/or understanding of the identified issues:

- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers
- health care providers (nurse, etc.)
- representative from each federal registered political party (in that electoral district)
- Aboriginal government leaders (band leader, chief, head of band council)
- community workers (social workers, youth workers, etc.)
- government employees (postal workers, etc.)
- field liaison officers (FLOs – Elections Canada; Saskatchewan only)
- returning officers (ROs – Elections Canada)

- community relations officers (CROs – Elections Canada)
- territorial chief electoral officers (CEOs)
- religious leaders (Church bishop, pastor, minister)

Members of Parliament (MPs) were selected based on the geographic location of their electoral district. Any member of Parliament whose electoral district is located on the 60th parallel was contacted for an interview.

Period of interviews

Interviews were conducted during the following time periods in 2008:

- Yukon/NWT April 18 – May 2
- Nunavut May 11 – May 18
- Saskatchewan June 22 – June 28
- Member of Parliament Interviews / Additional Interviews by Phone June 10 – August 29

4. Attitudes Towards Voter Identification at the Polls

Throughout the interviews, participants expressed the consensus that the requirement to produce ID at the polls is not seen as necessary in the Canadian North, especially in small isolated communities. “Everyone knows everyone else” was a phrase repeated in almost every interview conducted. Producing ID is seen as a strange and redundant process, especially when it is likely a family member or friend who will be staffing the polls. As expressed by participants, this issue is compounded because it is not general practice for northerners, especially First Nations, to carry ID because they don’t often use it in day-to-day life: “People won’t have their ID in their wallet.”

Simply put, participants felt that this legislation “will create difficulty” in the North, and many people will “fall through the cracks”.

There was an overall concern expressed in Nunavut and the NWT that even when locals do have ID there will be many issues with inaccuracy including misspellings, incorrect information, or information that does not match or is inconsistent across multiple pieces of ID. For example, participants referred to the recent admission by the Government of the Northwest Territories that there are more health cards in circulation than there are people living in the NWT. It was pointed out that birth dates of many Elders are unclear, or not known, and many First Nations people have names that have been changed or adapted throughout their lifetime. Debit cards are often stolen in Inuvik and employee cards and firearm acquisition cards (FACs) are often inaccurate. Given this, it was made clear by participants that identification in the North is not a fail-safe way to ensure that the most accurate and necessary information about voters will be obtained.

Participants identified youth, Elders, First Nations, and middle-aged women as those who will have particular trouble proving their residential address because their names generally do not appear on many of the documents accepted by Elections Canada for use at the polls. There is also confusion among families around who exactly needs to prove their identify.

Specific Challenges

Identification

It was explained that in the North physically obtaining a piece of ID is a challenge due to a lack of resources necessary to create ID in both urban and rural areas. For example, participants reported that there are only two ID machines that produce ID cards that are sent out to communities in the Yukon. Only Dawson City, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse have permanent machines (one in each of these communities) to produce ID cards. Furthermore, participants said that there are ongoing issues with breakdowns, and also with the quality of ID cards that are produced.

“There was an instance recounted where a husband and wife came to the polls and it was assumed that because the husband had ID the wife didn’t need her own form of identification in order to vote.”

During the interviews, participants indicated that there has been a recent push in the North to encourage community members to acquire passports, especially in fly-in communities where air travel is a necessity such as Old Crow, Yukon. They said that this process has been challenging, as acquiring the necessary supporting documents to get ID is difficult for many, particularly Elders. An example given in La Ronge, Saskatchewan, by the local librarian was that when people come to the library to get library cards, they sometimes don't even know their address, making even this simple process complicated. The RCMP in Inuvik (NWT) said that it is common practice, both in Inuvik and in several other communities where community members have no ID at all, for them to provide affidavits for community members so that these persons can prove their identity.

Interviewees repeatedly said that ID costs money and takes time to acquire. Given the large distances between communities, slow and unreliable postal service, a lack of perceived need for producing ID, challenges in obtaining supporting documents and rare access to the necessary equipment to produce ID cards, the northerners interviewed suggested that they are at a significant disadvantage when it comes to being able to acquire the identification required for options 1 and 2.

While we did not specifically ask respondents about their views on having a voter ID, some participants asked "Why don't we have an 'elections card'?" (La Ronge and Whitehorse); others expressed concerns that such a card would only complicate matters rather than improving the situation. In La Ronge and Spruce Home, Saskatchewan, participants said that producing such a card is much too reminiscent of a "national ID card" and would raise additional concerns about privacy.

Interviewees repeatedly suggested that the status card should be adequate proof of ID to vote in federal elections, especially when a band or reserve is listed on the card. It was also suggested that the cards produced by individual First Nations such as the Métis card or the Gwich'in Tribal Council card be included as viable options in option 2.

It was articulated that the North is still very much a cash society, so debit cards (known as bank cards) and credit cards that are so common in the South do not exist in similar numbers in the North. Participants mentioned that general stores (NorthMart in Inuvik, Robertson's in La Ronge) cash cheques for locals who don't have their own bank accounts; furthermore, employees of the youth centre in Inuvik will

often ask the executive director to cash their cheques for them as they do not have bank accounts themselves.

When discussing experiences at the polls in the context of the new ID requirements, participants reported overwhelmingly that those people turned away for not having adequate ID would leave and not return. In these instances, frustration, embarrassment, and even a sense that a person's reaction could be dangerous to those around them were sentiments commonly expressed throughout the interviews. Taking into account the long distances northerners may travel in order to reach their polling station, participants repeated that if someone was turned away from the polls and had to drive 2 or 3 hours to get different ID or a utility bill, they just wouldn't do it.

Concern was expressed that the new ID requirements within the voting process would be especially confusing for Elders who don't know what to do when they get to the polling station. Elders "don't like to look stupid" (Old Crow, Yukon) in front of their communities and thus their reaction to being turned away might be "But you know me" or "This is my land". This would be considerably more embarrassing for those in small communities, participants explained, because they will likely know the person turning them away. As such it will be an issue "they will talk about all year" (Dawson City, Yukon).

Although there was no evidence of this in the recent by-election in northern Saskatchewan, there was a sense among some interviewees that these new requirements would encourage poll clerks in small towns to bend the rules around ID requirements so that community members could avoid embarrassment.

Residential address and privacy

Many participants identified the residential address requirement as an obstacle to voting in federal elections for many in the North. Transient workers (many of whom have no ID at all), such as those in Dawson City, Yukon, are often also squatters. They live in tents surrounding the community and therefore lack any type of address. Several local service providers in Dawson City estimated that there are several hundred transient workers per year without any ID in Dawson City alone.

Many interviewees stated that the term "residential address" was not clear, especially considering the often arbitrary systems used to assign addresses (both street names and numbers) in northern communities. Small communities

“Elections Canada is not tapping into this reality (of mixed dwellings). By not having a bill, it’s like you don’t exist.”

Member of Parliament

have house numbers that are not listed on ID but are used commonly for band elections. The house numbers currently used to identify houses for the purpose of water and sewage services are seen in many communities as potentially useful in both the revision process and also the general identification process. It was suggested by several interviewees that house numbers, which are different from civic addresses, should be taken into account when attempting to find ways to accommodate northerners.

During the interviews, we heard that due to the housing crisis in northern Canada, many electors in these communities live in multiple family or government housing and therefore have more difficulty producing the required ID to vote. Participants said that there are often many families in one home, especially on reserves, and frequently people move from house to house and may not have any fixed address within the community. It was stated in many interviews that sometimes there are up to 15 people "residing" at one address. In cases like these, it was explained, many items on the option 2 list will only be in one family member's name (often an older male or "head of the household") and will not be accessible and/or available to the remaining people living there for use as ID (for example, utility bills). Another obstacle mentioned is that many people in the North don't pay federal income tax or contribute to a Canada Pension Plan. For example, many NWT communities surrounding Inuvik are not tax based, so property tax assessments are irrelevant. The same is true below the 60th parallel on reserves.

Furthermore, participants reported that there is a significant amount of government and subsidized housing in the North. Many Elders and others living in this housing do not pay their own bills and thus do not have access to bills in their names. They also noted that many youth in small communities, especially fly-in communities, may lack ID and bills in their names.

Another concern raised by participants is that there is confusion around which polling station a person should be going to. "Is it the polling station where your street address is located or where your box is?" La Ronge, Saskatchewan election official. One specific example in Saskatchewan is the Mistawasis Reserve where everyone lives in the Desnethé riding but has addresses in Leask (which is outside of the riding). The member of Parliament for this area said that this caused confusion during the last by-election. It was also made clear that which polling station to go to is confusing for those who use their local band office as their mailing address, but live in a different part of the community. These community members may not receive a voter information card, and they may be confused as to where to vote, close to the band office or close to their home.

In small communities privacy was also raised as a concern. According to participants, everyone knows everyone and their business. Items listed in option 2, such as a bank statement, property assessment, government statement, or a SIN number are of concern in small isolated communities where this information could be used to invade the privacy of a voter. Many people stated that they were not comfortable using these items to vote.

5. Vouching

Many participants said they were not aware that vouching was an option for identification.

The vouching process, presented as option 3 in the list of acceptable identification, was considered problematic by the northern communities interviewed. While a general indifference among those unfamiliar with the process was expressed insofar as no one thought it could hurt to have it, the caveats and restrictions surrounding the vouching process (you may only vouch for one person, who in turn cannot vouch for anyone else) were met with concern.

Those in more isolated communities identified vouching as theoretically useful given that these communities have less access to government offices that issue ID. In reality, the vouching process is contingent on having an adequate ratio of those with acceptable ID and those who need someone to vouch for them and this ratio, participants expressed, could not be met in many of these small communities. Ultimately, it appears that the places where vouching in its current form could be used were also the places that had less of a need for it.

Specific challenges

Lack of information/misinformation

Overall, participants felt that the vouching process was not adequately promoted or communicated as an option. Many participants interviewed either had no knowledge or incorrect knowledge of how it was supposed to work. Those who were familiar with the vouching process cited its complexity and the consequent difficulties in communicating that complexity as major obstacles to its implementation. Specific issues identified included not understanding who could vouch for whom within a polling division or at a polling station, or why those already known to elections officials should need to formally vouch at all. For example, in La Ronge, Saskatchewan, some electors during the last by-election found themselves at the same polling station but were told they were in different polling divisions and therefore ineligible to vouch for one another.

Multiple vouching

Allowing someone with acceptable identification to vouch for only one other person was seen by many participants as problematic in ensuring accessibility to northern electors.

From the perspective of service providers or others in a position to vouch for electors, the “first come first served” approach was seen as difficult; they mentioned that it would be hard to avoid playing favorites, as they would not want to turn people away or further disenfranchise potential electors.

Moreover, many expressed confusion as to why multiple vouching could not be an option. Concerns about security and fraud were seen as extremely minimal in these communities.

In communities where most people showing up to vote will know those administering the elections, many thought that needing to be formally vouched for was a redundant and unnecessary process. Several participants suggested that only those unknown in the community should need someone to vouch for them, and that “common sense” would ensure that people showing up at the polls could vote despite not having adequate ID. Issues concerning compromised security and voting fraud were mentioned mainly by those involved in the administering of elections; many participants in the communities found the idea of someone bothering to vote multiple times unlikely and unfeasible given the resources needed to travel to more than one polling station during the course of election day.

“Vouching could be very problematic in very small communities.”

Nunavut

“One to one is useless; not enough.”

Nunavut

'Anecdotes about vouching being abused by partisan interests who bring intoxicated individuals to the polls were told by election officials in the Yukon. However stories such as these however are seen as more of an urban myth than a real concern.'

6. Letters of Attestation

“There was no direct contact with individual band administrators/village councils to ensure someone was in place to sign attestation forms. A faxed out form is insufficient. Follow-up calls need to be made and individuals identified on election day.”

Desnethé Riding, Saskatchewan

Participants noted that, as with vouching, there are several issues concerning letters of attestation that impede their utility. First of all, having letters of attestation as part of option 2 was not viewed as helpful because many people didn't even notice it in the long list of ID options. Once this was clarified, most participants could think of one or two instances in which it would be useful (hospitals, shelters); however, many people did not think it applied at all. It was suggested by some participants that a possible solution to increasing the efficacy of letters of attestation is to expand the list of those in a position of authority to provide one.

Specific challenges

Too dependent on the whims of individuals

Concerns were expressed by participants, especially those in the Desnethé riding, that the letter of attestation was not always accessible to electors due to the difficulties in actually procuring one from a recognized authority. This problem with implementation is expressed in several examples communicated in interviews throughout the North. For instance, having a housing authority or band chief sign a letter of attestation could be difficult as it means relying on someone who may or may not be willing to sign the form, participants explained. Manipulation and coercion in the case of authorities who may withhold a letter of attestation from members who do not align with certain partisan views was also expressed as a concern by interviewees. In these situations, participants suggested that there is too much onus on the individual to procure a letter of attestation.

Lack of awareness and advance notice

As with the vouching process, many interviewees were unaware that letters of attestation were acceptable forms of ID. Many people said that they had not heard of them at all, and in the Desnethé riding participants mentioned that the candidates had not talked about them during outreach efforts. Several election officials and candidates interviewed in Desnethé said that they had tried to publicize this option, but found it very difficult to get in touch with authorities who could provide letters of attestation, such as band chiefs, managers, and membership coordinators. Throughout the North it was expressed that letters of attestation would take too much effort to organize before an election.

7. Communicating With Electors

A. Voter Information Card (VIC)/Householder

During the interviews, all participants (excepting interviews conducted by phone) were shown copies of the VIC and householder produced by Elections Canada for the fall 2007 and spring 2008 by-elections describing the new voter identification requirements. For the majority of participants, the complexity of the documents' messaging and layout was seen as a barrier to comprehension.

The comment received most often was that many people who receive the VIC and the householder in the mail would simply throw them away without looking at them. When showing participants both materials, the overall sentiment was that both were too confusing, wordy, and generally not useful.

Importantly, many people thought that the VIC was an acceptable form of identification because it seemed to contain all the information listed as acceptable on the householder. These participants wondered why it could not be used as ID to vote.

Specific challenges

Complexity of messaging

When written materials are used, many participants in all regions reiterated they should be written at a Grade 6 level of literacy (maximum) and be simple and to the point in order to communicate to a wide cross-section of the population.

The amount of information on both the VIC and householder, combined with small print, was viewed as “too much”. Although thorough, it was mentioned that these materials over-inform and consequently are regarded as not worth the effort to read and understand. One participant who works with at-risk youth said she “would never send a document (like the householder and the VIC) to the parents she works with” (Whitehorse, Yukon), highlighting the numerous misinterpretations that could be caused by the level of complexity on both materials.

The divisions between the three options on the householder were another source of confusion to many participants, as the three boxes at the top and two lists (options 1 and 2) were again seen as simply too much information.

Look and feel

Participants stated that the VIC looked like advertising and that it ends up in “piles of garbage at the post office”. Because written materials are seen as secondary to verbal communication, a suggestion of one participant to ensure that the VIC and householder are not thrown away was to reinforce their importance through radio announcements indicating that electors will be receiving information in the mail about new voter ID requirements, and that these documents are important.

Misleading message

Participants perceived the VIC as misleading in that the phrase “This is not identification” is not prominently featured. Because the VIC has all needed personal information on it (name, address, polling station, etc.) some participants thought that by virtue of receiving one you didn’t have to bring any other identification to the polls.

While the householder’s intent is to inform electors of what type of ID they can bring, again its length “gave people a false sense of security” (La Ronge, Saskatchewan). Many participants suggested that while viewing the long list, community members would assume they had some form of acceptable ID without making the effort to confirm.

Languages used

The overall needs regarding language echoed throughout the communities surveyed breaks down into two parts:

1. having written materials available in many languages besides English and French;
2. having verbal service provided in First Nations languages.

According to participants, due to strong oral traditions in many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, verbal translations (for Elders and those with low or no literacy) are more useful to have than are written translations. For instance, it was reported that local First Nations languages may not always be codified and therefore although the entire community may speak it, it’s unlikely that many will be able to read it. However, print materials were still deemed useful by participants, and it was suggested that it may be helpful to send materials in First Nations languages to returning officers, a practice that used to be commonplace (according to one elections official in Saskatchewan).

In addition to the 27 languages found on Elections Canada’s Web site, many people expressed the need to be served by Elections Canada officials in their own language, or to easily access someone to translate. For example, participants in Nunavut said that if someone calls to revise their information on the list of electors, they need to have the option of being served in Inuktitut.

Languages identified by participants as useful (in addition to English and French) were:

- Cree and Dene (both verbal and written)
- Inuktitut / a dialect of Inuktitut called Inuinnaqtun, which is pronounced like Inuktitut but uses the alphabet instead of Inuktitut symbols (both verbal and written, Nunavut)
- Michif (Metis Language) (Verbal)
- Dogrib (both verbal and written)
- Inuit (both verbal and written)
- Several official languages in NWT (verbal)
- Gwich’in and Inuvialuktun (both verbal and written)
- German (Yukon) (written)

B. Advertising Campaign/Outreach Initiatives

By far the most successful forms of advertising, promotion, and outreach identified by participants surrounding the new identification requirements were those that involved verbal communication. Whether a radio PSA or a community member talking to electors about the changes, personal outreach that involves a conversation, listening to a radio program, or word of mouth was seen as critical, as opposed to passively receiving information in the mail and being expected to (1) actually read the materials and (2) take an action based on one’s interpretation of them.

Specific challenges

Lack of awareness – new ID requirements

As one participant stated, “there was no mainstream news interest (until) after the fact when there was an issue, but not during the election” (media expert – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan). People expressed frustration that the education and awareness campaigns undertaken by candidates, MPs, political parties and Elections Canada were inconsistent, unclear, and did not start well enough in advance.

Participants noted that simply having written materials like the VIC and Householder sent by mail during a campaign is not effective outreach because too much onus is put on the individual to read, comprehend, and then take action. Without an accompanying verbal explanation or push (whether it be hearing all your neighbors talking about getting new ID to vote or listening to a radio interview about the new requirements), participants suggested that most people would not take action to ensure their ID is acceptable to vote. Interviewees explained that more effective outreach strategies would be radio campaigns, PSAs, TV commercials, word of mouth and door-to-door advertising when used in tandem with written promotions such as posters.

**“In the case of the by-election, some
didn’t even know there was a by-election
until after the fact”**

Desnethé Riding, Saskatchewan

Lack of awareness – election event

“In the case of the by-election, some didn’t even know there was a by-election until after the fact” (La Ronge, Saskatchewan).

Several specific issues expressed by participants across all regions included the need for informational sessions and workshops, as well as other education initiatives in general, and a concerted media buy in all languages prior to the election. Also, participants, especially service providers, viewed the first few days after the writ is dropped as crucial in getting the word out.

It was stated by many participants that using local resources to assist in outreach is very important; suggestions included informing community service providers about the changes and asking them to pass on the information, setting up general information tables in frequented public venues, or having income tax professionals let people know that they can update their information when they file their taxes.

Elections Canada’s Web site

“The Elections Canada Web site should be made less complicated. It’s very hard to find what information you’re looking for.”
Nunavut

For example, one participant in Nunavut mentioned that he had gone to the Web site to look for information but after a few minutes of not being able to find what he was looking for, gave up.

Election officers’ involvement

There was a general consensus among participants that programs such as the Community Relations Officer (CRO) Program and the Aboriginal Elder and Youth Program are good in theory but are not currently meeting the objectives or needs of the community, particularly in terms of communicating these new requirements.

Election officers who were interviewed indicated that the training for election workers was deemed insufficient, the manuals were seen as confusing and often changed at the last minute, and there was confusion as to the goals and objectives that the CRO and Aboriginal Elder and Youth programs are trying to achieve.

During the recent by-election in Desnethé, participants in La Ronge stated that elections officials in Ottawa and in the local riding were not giving out consistent information about the new ID requirements and thus confusion and frustration

ensued. In the Desnethé riding one interviewee said that an Elections Canada official was turning people away if they didn’t have ID without telling them that they could go home to find an alternative piece of ID or be vouched for. Another example from Desnethé was that when election time came around “some elections workers had only worked for two days and they were answering the phones but didn’t have a clue (about what was going on)” (La Ronge, Saskatchewan).

Participants in Saskatchewan noted that a better understanding of local realities must be integrated into the structure of this program for it to be successful: “The community needs to be more involved in this process.” Community involvement is seen as critical to ensure that the program is actually reaching those it intends to reach in the most effective and accessible manner possible. Having an “in” with the local community is critical in effectively communicating a message to a diversity of community members. It was repeated consistently that the CRO program “could be great” but currently isn’t reaching its mandated goals or potential. Interviewees stated that CROs should have the budget and time to travel to remote communities. Some local election officials suggested that CROs could also act as liaison between the RO and local communities, supporting the RO in finding local poll clerks for example.

Many participants noted that in the North it is extremely difficult to fill these positions with qualified people. There is a lack of staffing at the polls and also in elections offices. Even once someone is offered a position it is “hard to find people who will show up”. (election official, La Ronge, Saskatchewan). The wage differential (working territorial elections pays more than working federal ones – NWT) is such that it is even harder to hire workers people to staff the polls, according to several participants. They explained that it is not only a matter of pay scales but also that these positions are short term and have to compete with higher paying longer term options.

It was said by several people involved in the Desnethé by-election that the returning officer and field liaison officer did a good job, and did the best they could with the resources available to them. Many noted that they had no interaction with community relations officers during the by-election, and some didn’t know that the program existed at all.

According to community members and election officials, workers at the polls in Desnethé were frustrated and many of them didn’t agree with the ID requirements. This influenced their presentation of the options to electors; as stated by an elections official, “Everyone just bucked it” (La Ronge, Saskatchewan). It was also stated in Desnethé that “Elections Canada will need to overcome the fact that there was wrong information out during the last election” (La Ronge, Saskatchewan).

8. Voting Issues in the North

Experience at the polls

Dramatic distances, ice roads, or no roads at all, and often a severe lack of infrastructure, were all identified by participants as challenges faced by Canadians who live in the far North. A concrete example given by one participant occurred in 2004 when severe weather in Northern Saskatchewan meant that people just didn't show up to vote. Freeze-up and breakup as well as hunting and fishing seasons were also described as unavoidable hindrances by interviewees. As a northern Saskatchewan journalist explains "This obstacle comes down to the different contexts in which elections are taking place and how they are understood. Elections Canada needs to be aware of the differences in the North" (La Ronge, Saskatchewan).

Participants indicated that in the North it is not unusual at all for a poll not to open because the deputy returning officer is out hunting caribou (Desnethé riding during by-election) or for an advance poll not to happen because it coincides with hunting season for the community (Uranium City, Saskatchewan, recent election). Participants emphasized that those in Ottawa or in the larger cities who service the North need to be more sensitive to this cultural reality.

"Ottawa doesn't understand our communities."

At the same time, participants talked about resilience and an ability to cope with external circumstances as particular to the North; one election worker in La Ronge explained that during the last federal election she had worked at a polling station during a blackout, and despite everything "everyone just kept going" (librarian and election worker, La Ronge, Saskatchewan).

There was an overall consensus among those we interviewed that working to clarify and simplify the voting process, as well as adapting it to the realities of living in the North, are critical and would greatly enhance the experience of northerners at the polls. According to participants, voting in the North requires a commitment that should not be underestimated. Participants noted that the myriad realities surrounding voting in the North, whether physical (walking across town, driving three hours, or taking a boat or plane to the polling station) or personal (voting happens in a community setting and the act of voting [or lack thereof] will be witnessed by your neighbors, friends, and family) must be taken into account.

It was noted that people will make the effort to vote once and if it is a bad experience it will "shake the ability to engage them in the future" (La Ronge, Saskatchewan). Some people may even be angry and vocal; it was suggested that they would say things like "The government messed up" (Old Crow, Yukon).

Distances in the North were another reoccurring theme during interviews, especially when it came to advanced polls and other voting options that require travelling. Interviewees explained that participating in an election is far more costly and difficult for many voters in the North than it is for someone living in downtown Vancouver or Halifax. One participant said, "What is needed in Toronto doesn't work in small communities. These regulations are a step backwards."

"Ottawa and Toronto don't know what is going on here."

It was repeated often (especially in the Desnethé riding) that people have "election fatigue" and that it is important to recognize that a federal election is only one of many elections in First Nations communities; band, municipal, provincial/territorial elections all compete for a voter's attention. Participants stated that education around what a federal election actually means is critical in ensuring that northerners understand why elections are important. For example, many voters in Nunavut expressed confusion as to how federal elections are run and how the prime minister is elected through representatives versus the territorial non-partisan system.

Specific challenges

Time constraints

As mentioned previously, participants felt that there was not enough time to procure adequate ID between the time the writ is dropped and the election.

Revision

It was repeatedly stated that revision is useful for outreach and is a great way to “spread good information.” Participants said that information about ID requirements should be communicated during the revision process.

Interviewees stated that an updating of the voters list is urgently required in the Canadian North, especially in First Nations communities because of the “fluid occupation” in these communities. About 45 percent of the population is under the age of 23 and many of these young people are not on the voters list, according to many participants. It was recommended that a large part of the revision process be carried out by individuals who know the communities and understand the cultural context. It was repeated numerous times that the voters list is currently perceived as inaccurate. Tools such as the Métis communities’ own enumeration process, water and tax bills, as well as provincial lists, were seen as important in ensuring that the list is kept up to date. It is also seen as critical to communicate with First Nations leadership in order to facilitate this process.

Elections officers mentioned that it is hard to find staff to carry out revision.

Also, many were under the perception that “revision” is actually enumeration; among interviewees, there was a lot of confusion about what the revision process actually entailed.

Voting methods

Both the mail-in ballot and advance polling days were overwhelmingly seen as useful tools. The mail-in ballot, however, was deemed more useful in larger communities where the postal service is more reliable, as it was repeatedly mentioned that mail in the North in general can be too slow to ensure that people will be able to mail their votes in on time. Participants (predominantly those in Nunavut) explained that sometimes it is too much trouble for people to actually go and mail a ballot, due to factors including remoteness and isolation.

There was a concern among participants that advance polls only exist in some communities; for example, in the Desnethé riding advance polls were only in larger areas like Prince Albert. “Moving advance polls around to different communities would be positive, to give as many people as possible a chance to vote in these polls” (La Ronge, Saskatchewan).

“Advance polls work! Elections in the North have been decided on advance polls” (Nunavut).

Although not currently options, registering and voting on-line were both identified by a few participants as tools that would potentially increase voting accessibility in the North. For example, the Yukon has the highest rate per capita of people on-line. There were, however, mixed reactions to the use of technology in the electoral process and not all respondents supported the idea.

Mobile polls or some sort of special ballot were seen as extremely useful in work camps. This was another area where frequent revision of the polling list was seen as useful given the transient population.

9. Recommendations

Northern Canada, while a geographically vast part of the country, contains a small and often overlooked segment of the population. The amendments made to the Canada Elections Act in 2007 concerning the voter identification requirements, can have significant and unexpected effects on those living in small, rural communities across the Canadian North.

At present, electors in Pond Inlet do not have the same resources, information, and tools at their disposal to vote as electors in Toronto, nor are there adequate accommodations being made to ensure that the particular reality and challenges faced by northern electors are taken into consideration in the voting options available to them.

The recommendations below encourage increased clarity, communication and streamlining of current practices to ensure that all northern Canadians have the same opportunity to cast a ballot as their southern neighbors.

The recommendations aim to find a balance between the need for accessibility and the need for security when it comes to voting in federal elections. We encourage Elections Canada to work with its existing tools and programs to both clarify and improve them so as to better meet the needs of northern Canadians.

Major legislative change is not recommended. Rather, we focus on the challenges of communicating these new ID requirements to northerners and ensuring that all Elections Canada officials, especially those who are not based in northern Canada, work to become more aware and sensitive to the unique realities of the North.

The new ID requirements are an opportunity for Elections Canada to work to develop innovative practices in creating an accessible process so that all electors have an equal opportunity to cast a ballot.

With voter turnout already low in these small, rural, often First Nations communities, the perception of a problem with the voting process, has, in our opinion, just as much potential to dissuade voters as does whether or not the ID requirement can actually be met. These recommendations address both the perceptions of northern voters and the effectiveness of the electoral system itself for voters in the North.

A. Voter Identification Requirements

Recommendation 1: The following should be considered for addition to the list of authorized pieces of identification:

- baptismal certificates
- band enrollment number documentation – “enrollment card”
- band membership cards (for example, Gwich’in Tribal Council card, Métis card)
- NTI card
- land claims documents/beneficiary card

Notes:

- Status cards only have pictures if they have been renewed recently.
- Debit (commonly know as bank cards in the North) cards in NWT are generic (don’t have names on them).
- SIN card: those who are married may have a different name on their SIN card.
- Locals, especially First Nations, don’t have hunting and fishing licences. Some interviewees suggested that hunting and fishing licences should be taken off the list. But in Fort Smith, which has a 90 percent voter turnout, they have been useful.

Recommendation 2: Further examine in collaboration with the federal government the current reality that no federal piece of ID meets option 1 criteria, and that obtaining ID in the North remains a significant challenge.

Recommendation 3: Consider allowing letters of attestation to be provided by a community authority (mayor or equivalent) or elections official for all residents in any community with less than 1000 members, especially those that are particularly isolated (e.g. fly-in communities).

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Recommendation 4: Clarify and expand the letter of attestation option. Allow application to a broader cross-section of institutions/situations.

Recommendation 5: Remove letter of attestation from option 2 and have it be a category unto itself.

Recommendation 6: House numbers (which are different from civic addresses) should be taken into account when attempting to find ways to accommodate northerner voters.

B. Communications and Outreach

Recommendation 7: Redesign the voter information card and householder to ensure clarity, especially for those with low literacy levels.

Notes:

Suggestions by participants include:

- Use shorter and simpler language (maximum Grade 6 level of literacy).
- Have important words and phrases in bold capitals, such as “VOTER REMINDER CARD”, “THIS IS NOT ID”, “IMPORTANT – BRING THIS CARD AND IDENTIFICATION TO VOTE”.
- Use brighter and more “user-friendly” design incorporating pictures and more colors.
- Focus on two to three main messages as opposed to including ALL options and details.
- Both the voter information card and the householder need to make it clear that (1) there are NEW AND DIFFERENT rules regarding identification and (2) these rules are important and you need to understand them and take action to make sure you can abide by them.

Recommendation 8: Ensure that materials in all available languages offered by Elections Canada are accessible from the front page of the Elections Canada Web site, and that every effort is made to provide verbal translation by Elections Canada when possible, especially in Inuktitut and related languages.

Recommendation 9: In collaboration with local communities continue to support voting education initiatives that directly target the North and First Nations communities in between elections.

Recommendation 10: Begin education about new ID requirements before the writ is dropped for the next election.

Recommendation 11: The Community Relations Officer Program is a critical program that is not currently achieving its program goals. Revisit this program to ensure:

- Accessibility of training materials
- Clarity of job description and goals

Recommendation 12: Review the Community Relations Officer Program and determine whether or not this program should be administered solely by Elections Canada or whether it may be more effective to partner with external groups such as First Nations and youth organizations to administer this program.

Recommendation 13: Ensure clarity of messaging regarding ID requirements so that consistent information is provided by all Elections Canada staff.

Recommendation 14: Implement mandatory cultural sensitivity training of all Elections Canada officials who may work with First Nations or northern communities, especially those not based in the North.

Recommendation 15: Continue the Aboriginal Elder and Youth Program, but work with local communities' members to ensure that this program is meeting its goals.

Notes:

As additional support for Elders at the polls was a consistent theme, some suggestions include:

- Translators and helpers for Elders (helpers currently read out voting options for Elders who can't read or write)
- Elders need to be encouraged to ask for help
- Provide pictures of each candidate's/political party's symbols for those who can't read

C. Voting Process

Recommendation 16: Expand targeted revision in the North, with a specific focus on First Nations communities. Ensure that outreach materials and messaging surrounding the new ID requirements are communicated as part of the revision process.

Note:

There is still the perception that "revision" is actually enumeration. There was a lot of confusion about what the revision process actually entailed and this must be clarified, especially among those who are part of the electoral process.

Recommendation 17: Clarify and expand the use of mobile polls. Allow application to a broader number of situations (e.g. work camps).

Note:

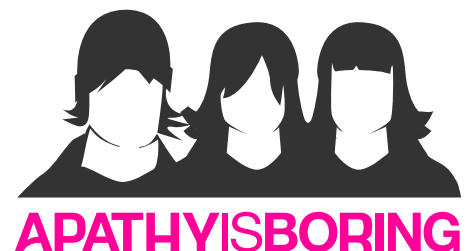
Mobile polls or some sort of special ballot were seen as extremely useful in work camps. This was another area where frequent revision of the polling list was seen as useful given the transient population. This is an area of significant concern that needs particular attention.

Recommendation 18: Hold advance polls in more communities or move advanced polls around to different communities, to ensure as many people as possible have access.

Recommendation 19: Work to implement the use of on-line methods to enable extremely rural voters to participate in the electoral process.

10. Appendices

1. List of interviewees (date, location, name and title)
2. Interview Guide
3. Letters from Elections Canada



Appendix 1

Name	Occupation	Target Group (Supported or Part of)	City or Town	Province or Territory	Status
Esau Schafer	Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation - Deputy Chief	Fly in communities / First Nations	Old Crow	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Joe Teltlich	Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation - Justice Coordinator	Fly in communities / First Nations	Old Crow	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Megan Williams	Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation - Heritage Manager	Fly in communities	Old Crow	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Marion Schafer	Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation- Community Health Representative	Fly in communities / First Nations	Old Crow	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Kimberly Blake	Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation- Health and Social Services - Office Assistant	Fly in communities / First Nations	Old Crow	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Tracy Kapuschak	Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation - Home and Community Care Coordinator	Fly in communities / First Nations	Old Crow	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Tracy Rispin	Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation- Education Director	Fly in communities / First Nations	Old Crow	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Ida Tizya	Old Crow Community Member	Fly in communities / First Nations	Old Crow	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Robert Bruce	Old Crow Community Member	Fly in communities / First Nations	Old Crow	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Constable Shannon Steller	RCMP Officer Dawson City	Service Provider	Dawson City	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Susan Titterington	Anglican Minister	Service Provider	Dawson City	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Lee Titterington	Anglican Minister	Service Provider	Dawson City	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Walker Thomas Graham	Head Nurse in Charge	Service Provider	Dawson City	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Kyla Popadynec	Dawson City Community Member	Community Member	Dawson City	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Courtney Craty	Trondek Hwech'in - Support Centre	First Nations	Dawson City	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Father Mouchet	Old Crow Health & Fitness Program	Fly in communities / Seniors	Whitehorse	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Gayle Gruben	Inuvialuit Regional Corporation - Office Manager	Inuit	Inuvik	NWT	Interviewed April 2008
Debbie Dillon	Inuvialuit Regional Corporation - Executive Secretary	Inuit	Inuvik	NWT	Interviewed April 2008
Derek Lindsay	Mayor - Town of Inuvik	Service Provider	Inuvik	NWT	Interviewed April 2008
Ceryl Wright	Gwich'in Tribal Council - Office Manager	First Nations	Inuvik	NWT	Interviewed April 2008
Lawrence Norbert	Gwich'in Tribal Council - Communications Advisor	First Nations	Inuvik	NWT	Interviewed April 2008
Liz Hansen	Inuvik Native Band - Councilor	First Nations	Inuvik	NWT	Interviewed April 2008
W.M. (Bill) Eubank, S/Sgt.	Inuvik RCMP Officer	Service Provider	Inuvik	NWT	Interviewed April 2008
Lindsay Wood	Inuvik Youth Center Program Coordinator	Youth	Inuvik	NWT	Interviewed April 2008
Mrs. Jo-Ann Waugh	Yukon Territorial CEO	Election Official	Whitehorse	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Larry Bagnell	Member of Parliament - Yukon	Member of Parliament	Whitehorse	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Susan Edelman	Yukon Returning Officer (ROs - Elections Canada)	Elections Canada	Whitehorse	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
David Prodan	Whitehorse Boys and Girls Club - Executive Director	Youth	Whitehorse	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Louise Hardy	Social Worker / Former Member of Parliament	Transient Members	Whitehorse	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Carole Kroening	Whitehorse Community Member / Pelly Crossing Resident	Isolated Resident	Whitehorse	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Todd Hardy	Yukon Territorial - Leader of the Opposition	Elected Official	Whitehorse	Yukon	Interviewed April 2008
Rob Clarke	Member of Parliament - Desnethé	Member of Parliament	Ottawa	Saskatchewan	Interviewed June 2008
Joan Beatty	Liberal Candidate - Desnethé	Candidate	Deschambault Lake	Saskatchewan	Interviewed June 2008
Brian Morin	NDP Candidate - Desnethé	Candidate	Buffalo Narrows	Saskatchewan	Interviewed June 2008
Jennifer Brown	Metis Youth Activist	Metis Youth	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	Interviewed June 2008
Roger Francis	Regional Media Advisor	Media	Saskatoon	Saskatchewan	Interviewed June 2008
Jim Matern	CJWW - Saskatoon - Journalist	Media	Saskatoon	Saskatchewan	Interviewed June 2008
Peggy Woods	Field Liaison Officer	Elections Canada	Saskatoon	Saskatchewan	Interviewed June 2008
Mariene Volkosky	Returning Officer - La Ronge	Elections Canada	La Ronge	Saskatchewan	Interviewed June 2008
Robin Orr	Green Party Candidate	Candidate	La Ronge	Saskatchewan	Interviewed June 2008
Valerie Barnes-Connell	La Ronge Northerner	Media	La Ronge	Saskatchewan	Interviewed June 2008
Rosemary Loeffler, MLIS	Town of La Ronge	Service Provider; Former Elections Canada	La Ronge	Saskatchewan	Interviewed June 2008
Meg Shatila	Spruce Home Community Member	Rural Residents	Spruce Home	Saskatchewan	Interviewed June 2008
Clifford Iqauq Innoya	Municipal Liaison Officer	Service Provider; photographer for General RCMP	Igloolik	Nunavut	Interviewed May 14 2008
Wendy Picknell	Constable, RCMP	RCMP	Iqaluit	Nunavut	Interviewed May 11 2008
Vinnie Karetak	Director of Communications, Qikiqtani Inuit Association	Service Provider; QIA	Iqaluit	Nunavut	Interviewed May 12 2008
Sidonie Ungalaq	Community Liaison Officer, Igloolik	Service Provider; QINI/Q	Igloolik	Nunavut	Interviewed May 14 2008
Sandy Kosugak	Chief Electoral Officer, Nunavut	Elections Canada	Igloolik	Nunavut	Interviewed May 16 2008
Mike Gardner	Reverend, Iqaluit	Community Service Provider	Iqaluit	Nunavut	Interviewed May 16 2008
James Barlow	Reverend, St. Jude's Anglican Church, Iqaluit	Community Service Provider	Iqaluit	Nunavut	Interviewed May 13 2008
Raj Downe	Sous-ministre adjointe responsable des programmes et des normes	Ministre de la Santé et des Services sociaux	Iqaluit	Nunavut	Interviewed May 12 2008
Michael Seidemann	Constable, RCMP Igloolik Detachment	RCMP	Igloolik	Nunavut	Interviewed May 14 2008
Mike Immaroitok	Land Administrator, Igloolik	Service Provider; Hamlet Office in Igloolik	Igloolik	Nunavut	Interviewed May 14 2008
Leah Otak	Manager, IQ and Oral History Research, Nunavut Research Institute	Community Researcher	Igloolik	Nunavut	Interviewed May 14 2008
Beverley Browne	Senior Judge	Justice Department, Iqaluit	Iqaluit	Nunavut	Interviewed May 16 2008
Jimmy Akavak	RCMP Community & Inuit Policing Section	RCMP Iqaluit, Inuit Community Service Provider	Iqaluit	Nunavut	Interviewed May 12 2008
Ed Pizzo	MLA, Iqaluit East	Minister, Government of Nunavut	Iqaluit	Nunavut	Interviewed May 12 2008
Charlie Angus	Member of Parliament	Member of Parliament	Kirkland Lake	Ontario	Interviewed August 11 2008
Brian Jean	Member of Parliament	Member of Parliament	Fort McMurray	Alberta	Interviewed June 2008
Jay Hill	Member of Parliament	Member of Parliament	Fort St. John	BC	Interviewed June 2008
Louise Chernetz	Winnipeg; North East Winnipeg, Justice and Peace	Field Support Officer	Fort St. John	Nunavut	Interviewed June 2008
Elizabeth Wyman	Returning Officer Western Arctic	Elections Canada	La Ronge	NWT	Interviewed August 11 2008
Kelly Provost	News Director at Mississippi Broadcasting Corporation	Media	La Ronge	Saskatchewan	Interviewed August 7 2008
Denise Yuhas	MLA Constituency Assistant, MLA Campaign Manager	Elected Official	Fort Smith	NWT	Interviewed August 7 2008
Nathan Cullen	Member of Parliament	Member of Parliament	Smithers	BC	Interviewed August 29 2008
Sue Heron-Herbert	Aboriginal Community Relations Officer	Elections Canada	Yellowknife	NWT	Interviewed August 22 2008
Nancy Karetak-Lindell	Member of Parliament	Member of Parliament	Iqaluit	Nunavut	Interviewed June 2008
Roger Valley	Member of Parliament	Member of Parliament	Kenora	Ontario	Interviewed June 2008



Consultation on Voter Identification Requirements at Federal Elections – Interview Guide

The *Canada Elections Act*, which governs the administration of federal elections in Canada, was amended in June 2007 to require electors to prove their identity and residential address when voting.

Following a detailed analysis by Elections Canada, it was determined that large numbers of electors geographically concentrated in rural and northern communities do not have a complete civic address or do not have identification documents with a civic address. It was also noted that electors residing in the same polling division would not be able to vouch for other electors since most electors in the polling division would likely have no document to prove their residential address.

Parliament passed legislation in December 2007 to provide that if an elector or voucher provides a piece of identification, he or she is considered to have proved their address if the address on the piece(s) of identification used is consistent with the information on the federal list of electors. (See Annex A for more information on the new identification requirements and implementation.)

Objectives

Elections Canada is undertaking consultations with various groups and within specific regions that are more likely to experience problems with the new voter identification requirements when voting at federal elections. The objectives of this consultation are:

- To identify any barriers arising from the implementation of the new identification requirements;
- To determine the effectiveness of the list of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, and to determine if there are additions or changes that could be made to the list to reduce barriers; and
- To determine how Elections Canada can best provide information on the new voter identification requirements to targeted groups that are likely to experience challenges.

(See Annex B for information about the authorised pieces of identification.)

Elections Canada commissioned *Apathy is Boring* to conduct initial consultations in the Canadian North to get further insights into the existing challenges and potential solutions that are unique to electors regarding the accessibility of the electoral process. (See Annex C for more information on *Apathy is Boring*.)

The results of these consultations will be made available once completed.

Annex A – New identification requirements and implementation

The *Canada Elections Act* provides three options for an elector to proof his or her identity and residence:

Option 1 Provide **one original piece of identification** issued by a Canadian government, whether federal, provincial, territorial or local, or an agency of that government, that contains a photograph of the elector and his or her name and address; or

Option 2 Provide **two original pieces of identification** authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada each of which establishes the elector's name and at least one of which establishes the elector's address (see Annex B). The Chief Electoral Officer may authorize as a piece of identification for Option 2 any document, regardless of who has issued it; or

Option 3 Be **vouched for by an elector** whose name appears on the list of electors in the same polling division and who has an acceptable piece or pieces of identification (as indicated in Option 1 or Option 2). If an elector uses this option, both will be required to make a sworn statement. In addition, an elector cannot vouch for more than one person, and the person who has been vouched for cannot vouch for another elector.

The new voter identification requirements were first implemented during the September 17, 2007, by-elections held in Outremont (Québec), Roberval–Lac-Saint-Jean (Québec) and Saint-Hyacinthe–Bagot (Québec), and subsequently during the March 17, 2008, by-elections held in Desnethé–Missinippi–Churchill River (Saskatchewan), Toronto Centre (Ontario), Vancouver Quadra (British Columbia) and Willowdale (Ontario).

Elections Canada's communications and outreach activities were re-worked, including its advertising campaign, to incorporate key messages about the new voter identification requirements. In particular, the Voter Information Card was revised to include specific messages about the new requirements and a new householder was created. The householder included the three options to prove identity at the polls as well as the list of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada. The householder was translated into 27 heritage languages and made available on Elections Canada's Web site. As well, a poster containing the three options for voter identification was created for display at polling stations and other locations. Elections Canada also developed an information backgrounder specific to the new identification rules as well as two new sections on its Web site.

In addition, as an Attestation of Residence is authorized under Option 2, community relations officers obtained signatures from administrators of homeless shelters, soup



Consultation on Voter Identification Requirements at Federal Elections – Interview Guide

kitchens, senior residences, student residences and Aboriginal bands and delivered them to deputy returning officers on election day to validate the attestations.

Annex B – Option 2

Provide **two original pieces of identification** authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada. **Both pieces must contain the elector’s name, and one must also contain the elector’s address.**

Identity Cards	Original documents (containing name and address)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Health Card <input type="checkbox"/> Social Insurance Number Card <input type="checkbox"/> Birth Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Driver’s Licence <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian Passport <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate of Indian Status <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate of Canadian Citizenship or Citizenship Card <input type="checkbox"/> Credit/Debit Card with elector name <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian Forces Identity Card <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans Affairs Canada Health Card <input type="checkbox"/> Employee Card issued by employer <input type="checkbox"/> Old Age Security Identification Card <input type="checkbox"/> Public Transportation Card <input type="checkbox"/> Student ID Card <input type="checkbox"/> Library Card <input type="checkbox"/> Liquor Identification Card <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian Blood Services/Héma-Québec Card <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital Card <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing Licence <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Identification Card <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting Licence <input type="checkbox"/> Firearm Acquisition Card/Firearm Possession Card <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoors Card and Licences <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial/Territorial Identification Card <input type="checkbox"/> Local Community Service Centre Card (CLSC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Utility Bill (residential telephone, cable TV, public utilities commission, hydro, gas or water) <input type="checkbox"/> Attestation of Residence issued by the responsible authority of an Indian band or reserve <input type="checkbox"/> Local Property Tax Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> School, College or University Report Card or Transcript <input type="checkbox"/> Residential Lease, Residential Mortgage Statement or Agreement <input type="checkbox"/> Canada Child Tax Benefit Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Income Tax Assessment Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Government Cheque or Government Cheque Stub with elector name <input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Employment Insurance Benefits Paid (T4E) <input type="checkbox"/> Canada Pension Plan Statement of Contributions/Quebec Pension Plan Statement of Participation <input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Old Age Security (T4A) or Statement of Canada Pension Plan Benefits (T4AP) <input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Benefits from provincial workplace safety or insurance board <input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Direct Deposit for provincial works or provincial disability support program <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Ownership <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> Attestation of Residence issued by the responsible authorities (shelters, soup kitchens, student/senior residences, long-term care facilities) <input type="checkbox"/> Letter from public curator

Note: A document bearing an address may be used as proof of the elector’s address if this address was written by the issuer of the document and is the same as or consistent with the address on the list of electors. No document other than those included on this list may be accepted to establish the name and address of an elector.

Annex C – Apathy is Boring



Tired of seeing their peers feel disconnected from the democratic system, three young Canadians founded Apathy is Boring in January 2004. After an extremely well-received ‘get out the vote’ campaign in the 2004 federal election and another in 2006, Apathy is Boring has continued its work on democracy projects that create dialogue between youth and community leaders. Using a Web site, digital media technology, concerts, and a media outreach campaign, Apathy is Boring has established itself as a respected voice on issues relating to youth and Canadian democracy, and has been recognized and supported nationally by a diversity of NGO, corporate, and celebrity partners, not to mention continual recognition by the Canadian media.

At Apathy is Boring our goal is to reach as many youth as possible who are not being reached by traditional channels, give them basic information about issues, and then show them in clear easy steps how they can get involved, influence policy makers, and become influential policy makers themselves. The three key pillars of our innovative approach are:

- Art: capturing the attention of youth and providing role models
- Technology: being where young people are
- Intergenerational Partnerships: meeting youth halfway

Interviewer biographies

Ilona Dougherty

The project will be led by Ilona Dougherty, Executive Director of Apathy is Boring. Ms. Dougherty grew up in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and Whitehorse, Yukon. Having grown up in a family that encouraged community involvement, Ilona became a concerned citizen at a surprisingly young age. Drawing from her studies and interests, in January 2004 Ilona founded Apathy is Boring. She was recently named one of five women changing the world by Canadian Dimensions Magazine, and was also featured in Severn Suzuki’s new book “Notes from Canada’s Young Activists”. Her recent speaking engagements include University of Toronto, McGill University, Ottawa University, Yukon Volunteer Bureau, Volunteer Bureau of Montreal, and Performance Creation Canada Conference.

Adrienne Smith

Adrienne Smith is currently the Development Director at Apathy is Boring. Trained in anthropology and women’s studies at McGill University, Ms. Smith has extensive experience working with diverse interest groups. Having worked with a number of NGOs and non-profits conducting research at both the national and international levels, she has produced several articles for publication. Adrienne has a long history of community



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volunteerism. Deeply committed to women's rights, she focused her activism during university on the Women's Studies Student Association, academically as an executive and artistically as creative director for their literary publication. She currently chairs the fundraising committee for RECLAIM, a Montreal literacy organization that caters to English speaking adults.

Appendix 3

In June 2007, Parliament passed Bill C-31, *An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Public Service Employment Act* (S.C. 2007, C.21). Among the new provisions, electors are now required to prove their identity and address when voting. For this reason, we are undertaking interviews with various groups that may experience challenges in meeting the new voter identification requirements.

Elections Canada recently commissioned *Apathy is Boring*, a national non-partisan organization, to conduct initial interviews with individuals and organizations in northern Canada to seek a better understanding of the challenges associated with implementing these changes. Ms. Ilona Dougherty, Executive Director, and Ms. Adrienne Smith, Development Director, were mandated to conduct interviews with individuals and organizations representing northern communities, including members of Parliament for electoral districts on or close to the 60th parallel. These interviews began in April and will continue over the next few weeks. Upon completion, the results will be shared with participants and other interested stakeholders.

The study has three objectives:

- To identify any barriers arising from the implementation of the new identification requirements;
- To determine the effectiveness of the list of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, and whether additions or changes could be made to the list to reduce barriers; and
- To determine how Elections Canada can best provide information on the new voter identification requirements to targeted groups that are likely to experience challenges.

Ms. Dougherty should be in touch with your office shortly to organize a telephone interview that should not last longer than an hour. Your feedback would provide further insight into how Elections Canada can continue to meet the needs of electors in northern Canada.

Yours truly,

Marc Mayrand

Chief Electoral Officer

April 18, 2008

Dear participant:

The *Canada Elections Act* was recently amended to require electors to prove their identity and address when voting.

Elections Canada is seeking a better understanding of the challenges associated with implementing these changes. For this reason, we are undertaking consultations with various groups that may experience challenges in meeting the new voter identification requirements. The consultations will begin in northern Canada and take place during April and May 2008.

The study will have three objectives:

- to identify any barriers arising from the implementation of the new identification requirements;
- to determine the effectiveness of the list of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, and whether additions or changes could be made to the list to reduce barriers;
- to determine how Elections Canada can best provide information on the new voter identification requirements to targeted groups that are likely to experience challenges.

Elections Canada has commissioned *Apathy is Boring*, a national non-partisan organization, to conduct initial consultations in northern Canada. Ms. Ilona Dougherty, Executive Director, and Ms. Adrienne Smith, Development Director, will be contacting and interviewing individuals from a number of target groups. The interviews should take between 1 and 1.5 hours.

Elections Canada developed the enclosed interview guide in order to familiarize interviewees with the new identification requirements and their implementation. Information about *Apathy is Boring* is also provided. Upon completion, the results of the consultations will be made available to participants and other stakeholders.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in an interview. We anticipate that your feedback will provide further insight into how Elections Canada can continue to meet the needs of electors in northern Canada.

Yours truly,

Belaineh Deguefé

Director General

Outreach, Communications and Research

June 17, 2008

Dear participant:

The *Canada Elections Act* was recently amended to require electors to prove their identity and address when voting.

Elections Canada is seeking a better understanding of the challenges associated with implementing these changes. For this reason, we are undertaking consultations with various groups that may experience challenges in meeting the new voter identification requirements. The consultations began in northern Canada and are taking place from April to June 2008.

The study will have three objectives:

- to identify any barriers arising from the implementation of the new identification requirements;
- to determine the effectiveness of the list of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, and whether additions or changes could be made to the list to reduce barriers;
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Thank you for your willingness to participate in an interview. We anticipate that your feedback will provide further insight into how Elections Canada can continue to meet the needs of electors in northern Canada.

Yours truly,



Belaineh Deguefé

Director General

Outreach, Communications and Research