

Democracy & Democratic Participation







What is Democracy?

Democracy or *demos-kratos* means
"power to the people"

What is Democratic Participation?

One way to understand democratic participation:
 Activities designed to deepen community connectedness and strengthen commitment to democracy.

> Four Dimensions of Civic Literacy


| KNOWLEDGE | APPLICATION |
|---|---|
|  Institutional Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic institutions and processes • How political power dynamics work in society • The historical evolution of Canada <p>Examples: the three branches of the state; the function of political parties; the methods by which public leaders are elected.</p> |  Political Ability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate political participation • Know where to go in government if problems arise <p>Examples: voting; political actions like protesting; writing to elected leaders; engaging with appropriate government agencies; using media to advance a cause.</p> |
|  Topical Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues and current events • Policy discussions • Awareness of parties' positions <p>Examples: knowing who the premier or prime minister is; awareness of the public policy issues in play; following current affairs.</p> |  Media Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze and process information from the Internet and media • Seek out and evaluate original sources <p>Examples: recognizing fake news; processing new information and evaluating existing beliefs; identifying bias.</p> |


Source: [Samara Centre for Democracy](#)




Getting Involved

What does democratic participation look like beyond the ballot box?


Political Participation Activities 

1. THE TWITTERING CLASSES: ONLINE DISCUSSION 


- I circulated or reposted political information on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter
- I discussed societal/political issues over email or instant messaging services such as WhatsApp
- I blogged about a political issue
- I participated in an online group or discussion forum about a societal/political issue

2. SOMETHIN' TO TALK ABOUT: OFFLINE DISCUSSION 


- I discussed a societal/political issue face to face or on the phone
- I wrote a letter to the editor about a political issue
- I made a public speech on a political issue
- I organized a public event or meeting about politics

3. TAKING IT TO THE STREETS: ACTIVISM 

- I signed a petition
- I boycotted/"boycotted" a product
- I was part of a protest

4. COMMUNITY REVIVAL: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT 

- I worked with others on an issue in my community
- I was active in a group or organization
- I donated to a political/societal cause
- I did voluntary work

5. IN THE SYSTEM: FORMAL ENGAGEMENT 

- I contacted an elected official about an issue that concerns me
- I attended a political meeting
- I volunteered in an election
- I donated to a political party or candidate
- I am or have been a member of a political party

If we missed a political activity that you think we should track, please let us know by emailing us at info@samaracanada.com. The Samara Centre will use your feedback to develop future editions of the Democracy 360, our biennial report card on the health of Canadian democracy.

samaracanada.com

Source:
[Samara Centre for Democracy](https://www.samaracanada.com/)

How you can get involved:



1. Volunteer

The City and Park Board have a wide range of volunteer opportunities. Volunteering is a rewarding way to:

- ➔ Share your skills to improve your community
- ➔ Meet new people who share your interests
- ➔ Gain experience or learn new skills you can use in a job or other areas of your life

1. Volunteer



<https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/volunteering.aspx>

<https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>

<https://volunteeringvancouver.ca/>

2. Share Your Views

The City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Park Board want to hear from you.


We use a variety of ways to listen to what you have to say about what is most important to you.

2. Share Your Views



<https://shapeyourcity.ca/>

Join Talk Vancouver



Never miss a chance to have your say.

Help us build a better Vancouver by becoming a member of the City's community of trusted, local advisors. We are excited to hear from you. Registration is quick and easy. Join today!

[Join Talk Vancouver](#)

<https://vancouver.ca/your-government/citizen-involvement.aspx>

3. Share Your Thoughts with Mayor and Council

Share your thoughts with the Mayor and Council

All fields required unless marked optional.

Feedback subject: (optional)

Comment: (Maximum 3,000 characters)

3,000 characters remaining

About you

We will only use your contact information to follow up if necessary. [View our privacy policy](#)

Name:

Which neighbourhood do you live in? (optional)

Choose one:

Email:

send me a confirmation

Address: (optional)
Address example: 89 W 9th Av
Intersection example: Cambie St and SW Marine Dr

<https://vancouver.ca/your-government/contact-council.aspx>

4. Watch or Attend a Council Meeting

- Meetings are currently held online.
- Council meetings are live-streamed on our website.
- We operate meetings from the Council Chambers at City Hall but the mayor, councillors, staff, and rezoning applicant representatives participate remotely.

<https://vancouver.ca/your-government/city-council-meetings-and-decisions.aspx>

5. Speak at a Council Meeting

Types of meetings open to speakers:

1. Public hearings
2. Council meetings
3. Special Council meetings
4. Standing committee meetings (City Finance and Services, Policy and Strategic Priorities)

5. Speak at a Council Meeting



What you need to know

Requests usually open one week before a meeting once we post the agenda. Request early to speak earlier.

Meetings are publicly streamed and recorded.

1. [Types of meetings open to speakers](#)
2. [Deadlines to request to speak](#)
3. [Upcoming meetings taking requests](#)
4. [Prepare to speak](#)
5. [Track your turn to speak](#)

<https://vancouver.ca/your-government/speak-at-city-council-meetings.aspx>

6. Serve on an Agency, Board or Committee

- Agencies, boards, and committees focus on a particular topic that has an impact on the City of Vancouver and its people. Through the expertise of its members, these groups advise Council and City staff.
- Committees include persons with disabilities; children, youth & families; seniors; Urban Indigenous Peoples; Racial & Ethno-Cultural Equity; and more!

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- To ensure that the membership of our civic agencies, boards, and committees represents the broader community and can address the issues of those communities
- We encourage applicants of all ages, genders, neighbourhoods, racial origins, income levels, and sexual orientation to apply.

<https://vancouver.ca/your-government/join-an-advisory-board-or-committee.aspx>

7. Vote!

To vote in a local government election in BC you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older on election day
- Be a Canadian citizen
- Have lived in BC for at least 6 months immediately before registering to vote
- Have lived in Vancouver or owned property registered in your name in Vancouver for at least 30 days immediately before registering to vote
- Not be disqualified by law from voting

<https://vancouver.ca/guides/voting.aspx#section51386>

Other Ideas!

- Start or join a [community garden](#) or [community orchard](#)
- Host or join a [neighbourhood cleanup party](#), or [block party](#)
- Become a volunteer gardener in the [Green Streets](#) program
- Prevent local flooding by [adopting a catch basin](#)
- Volunteer for the [Adopt a Block](#) program
- Learn more about the City's [Healthy City Strategy](#), [Greenest City Action Plan](#), [Resilience Strategy](#) or [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#)

Learn more about how you can get involved by visiting:

<https://vancouver.ca/your-government/your-city-hall.aspx>

<https://vancouver.ca/share-your-views.aspx>

Email: yourcityhall@vancouver.ca

