

All-Candidates Meeting Toolkit

**Supporting Community Engagement During
Municipal Elections in the City of North Vancouver**
2026 Edition



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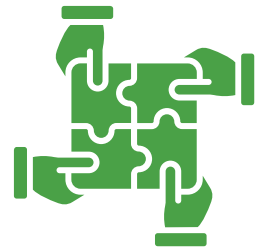
INTRODUCTION

All Candidates Meetings (ACMs) are an important way for voters to hear directly from those seeking office for Mayor, Councillor or School Trustee. These events are typically hosted by non-partisan, community-based organizations. This Toolkit has been developed to help community groups independently plan and host ACMs.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To support respectful, inclusive, and transparent public dialogue, organizers are encouraged to ground their ACMs in the following principles:

- » **Authenticity:** Be clear and open about your purpose in hosting the event.
- » **Inclusion:** Ensure all candidates and members of the public are invited and have opportunities to take part in ways that allow their views to be heard and questions to be addressed.
- » **Accessibility:** Identify and remove barriers to participation in advance, and where this is not possible, put measures in place to reduce their impact so people with different access needs can still participate and access information.
- » **Fairness:** Ensure equal treatment of all candidates, from invitations to speaking opportunities, so that everyone has the same opportunity to participate.
- » **Respect:** Foster a constructive environment where all viewpoints are heard and valued.



STEP 1: ESTABLISH YOUR OBJECTIVES

Clear objectives will guide your planning and help you evaluate success.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY TARGET AUDIENCE(S)

Identify who may have an interest in your event and who you want to reach.



These may include:

- Residents and neighbourhood associations
- Special interest or advocacy groups
- Community groups
- Local businesses
- Demographic groups



STEP 3: CHOOSE AN EVENT FORMAT

Different ACM formats offer different levels of interaction and resource requirements. Options can include:

General ACM:

- Includes all Mayor and Councillor candidates, with or without School Trustee candidates
- Often 10+ candidates; consider a large venue or online meeting
- Best with an experienced moderator
- Candidates give brief opening statements
- Questions may be pre written, submitted by the public, taken from the floor, or combined
- May include short closing statements

Issue-Specific ACM:

- Fewer candidates, either by design or due to candidate choice
- Often hosted by a specific community group or advocacy organization
- Suitable for smaller venues
- Format can be tailored to the host's objectives

Mayoral Debate:

- High public interest; consider a larger venue or online meeting
- Needs an experienced moderator
- Debate themes typically organized into 4–8 topic areas; candidates receive themes in advance but not questions
- Includes brief opening and closing statements

STEP 4: SELECT THE MODERATOR

The role of the Moderator is to lead the ACM by providing equal opportunities for candidates to express their platform, applying the same rules consistently, and keeping the event on schedule. The Moderator should be an individual who is comfortable in front of a crowd.

Consider how the questions will be collected and asked:

- » **Moderator led questions:** Prepared in advance and asked consistently to all candidates.
- » **Public submitted questions:** Collected online or in person, then screened for clarity and relevance.
- » **Thematic rounds:** Grouping questions by topic to help candidates provide more focused responses.
- » **Rapid response questions:** Short, time limited questions that allow candidates to highlight key differences in approach without lengthy statements.

Any questions of the candidates should be neutrally framed, concise and clear with local relevance. All Candidates should be given the opportunity to answer each question and should be allotted the same amount of response time.





STEP 5: CHOOSE A LOCATION

In-Person Location Options:

When choosing a venue or meeting format, select spaces and options that reduce barriers to participation by ensuring physical accessibility, transit access, and clear wayfinding.

Possible locations could include:

» **City Library**

<https://www.nvcl.ca/meeting>

» **John Braithwaite Community Centre (NVRCC Facility)**

<https://www.nvrc.ca/facilities-fields/book-indoor-space>

» **Harry Jerome Community Recreation Centre (NVRCC Facility)**

<https://www.nvrc.ca/facilities-fields/book-indoor-space>

» **Online platform** (ie. Zoom, Teams, WebEx, etc)

STEP 6: DEVELOP A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Your communications plan should outline how you will engage:

- » **Candidates:** Reach out early, share your objectives and event format, and explain why participation is worthwhile.
- » **Target Audience:** Tailor messages to highlight why the event is relevant to them and how they can participate.
- » **Accessibility:** Ensure people are first made aware of the event through multiple channels, and provide clear, plain-language information in accessible formats, where possible, to support different communication needs and participation.

STEP 7: DEVELOP YOUR BUDGET

Use the sample budget to estimate costs for:

- Venue
- Tables and Chairs
- Audio / Visual
- Event staffing
- Facilitation
- Advertising and promotion

STEP 8: EVALUATE YOUR EVENT

After the ACM, assess:

- What worked well
- What could be improved
- Whether you met your objectives
- How participants experienced the event
- Indicators of success such as turnout, engagement, and fairness
- Accessibility feedback



Evaluations will help strengthen future events.

