

# National Electors Study following the 44th Canadian Federal Election

Report on the Voter Information Campaign and Elector Awareness

Prepared for: Elections Canada

July 2022

Supplier name: Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. / Advanis

Contract number: 05005-20-0676

Contract value: \$756,867.40 (incl. applicable sales tax)

Award date: March 1, 2021

Delivery date: July 13, 2022

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

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**National Electors Study following the 44th Canadian Federal Election  
Report on the Voter Information Campaign and Elector Awareness  
Final Report**

Prepared for Elections Canada

Supplier name: Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. / Advanis

This public opinion research report presents the results of the voter information campaign research conducted to help evaluate the September 20, 2021, federal election.

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**Catalogue number:**

SE3-114/3-2022E-PDF

**International Standard Book Number (ISBN):**

978-0-660-45508-2

**Related publications:**

Catalogue number: SE3-114/3-2022F-PDF (Final report, French)

International Standard Book Number (ISBN): 978-0-660-45509-9

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Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : *Étude nationale auprès des électeurs à la suite de la 44e élection générale fédérale canadienne : Rapport sur la Campagne d'information des électeurs et les connaissances des électeurs*

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## Executive Summary

Elections Canada (EC) is the independent, non-partisan agency responsible for conducting Canadian federal elections. In the context of the 44th federal general election (GE), held on September 20, 2021, EC conducted the 2021 National Electors Study (NES). This study measures electors' attitudes and experiences of the GE to inform evaluation and development of EC policy, programs and services to electors.

The NES consisted of two components: 1) a public opinion survey of electors, and 2) a series of post-election focus groups and interviews. The target population for both components of the NES was eligible electors (Canadian citizens who were at least 18 years of age on polling day).

The survey component was conducted by telephone (via live interviewers) and internet (via an online survey platform) between August and October 2021, in two waves. Respondents to each survey were as follows: n=53,731 for the election period survey and n=39,568 for the post-election survey. The survey samples were achieved primarily through probability sampling; however, a small number of respondents (n=111) were drawn from a non-probability web panel. The inclusion of this non-random sample means no estimate of sampling error can be calculated for the entire sample. If the panel completions are excluded and only the random samples are considered, all samples would have had a margin of sampling error less than  $\pm 1\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

The qualitative component included 14 virtual focus groups and 5 in-depth telephone interviews which were conducted between October 18 and 27, 2021, with 133 eligible electors. This included students; youth who are not in education, employment or training; electors living with a physical or cognitive disability or a mental health condition; new Canadians; and Indigenous electors. Qualitative research findings are not statistically projectable but offer detailed opinions that complement the broader quantitative findings.

This report presents results from the survey and focus groups on electors' recall and evaluation of EC's voter information campaign for the 44th GE and electors' awareness of when, where and the ways to register and vote during and after the election.

Presented below is an integrated summary of the quantitative and qualitative results found in the [detailed findings](#), organized by theme. A report on the findings from the NES related to electors' experience of the voting process during the 44th GE is available under separate cover.

### Recall of EC advertising and communications

***Over the course of the voter information campaign, surveyed electors increasingly recalled having seen or heard Elections Canada advertising or communications about where, when and the ways to register and vote in the Canadian federal election.***

- During the early election phase of the election period survey, one-quarter (24%) of electors had read, seen or heard EC communications; this increased to 85% post-election. This is generally consistent with the pattern of increasing awareness recorded as part of the 2019 NES election period survey, from 21% early in the election up to 81% by the end of the election day phase.
- Electors who recalled seeing EC advertising or communications mainly recalled them from television (56%) and a postcard or brochure in the mail (48%). Television and direct mail were also the main

sources of unaided recall of EC advertising or communications about the voting process in 2019 (TV, 56%; direct mail, 38%). Notably, in 2021, the increase in recall of ads on social media platforms observed in 2019 continued—specifically, 42% of those who recalled EC advertising or communications in 2021 mentioned seeing it on one of the social media platforms, up from 29% in 2019.<sup>1</sup>

- One-third of surveyed electors who recalled EC advertising or communications thought “get out and vote” was the main message of the ads. The proportion of respondents who said the main point of the ads was to remind electors to “get out and vote” steadily increased through the information campaign, from 17% in the early election phase, to 28% by the end of the election day phase, to 37% post-election.

***Aided recall of key Elections Canada communications and specific advertisements generally increased with each phase of the voter information campaign.***

- Aided recall of the campaign slogan “It’s Our Vote” increased over the course of the election period, from 15% during the early election phase to 24% in the week leading to election day. Recall of the slogan is virtually identical to the 2019 GE (18% recalled the slogan during the VIC phase, 21% during early voting and 24% by election day).
- The proportions of electors who recalled receiving a voter information card (VIC) increased from 26% during the VIC phase of the election period survey, to 69% during the early voting phase, to 87% in the week leading to election day. Consistent with 2019, post-election, most surveyed electors aware of the federal election recalled receiving their VIC (92% in 2021 versus 93% in 2019).
- A majority (56%) of those aware of the federal election recalled receiving a brochure in the mail by the post-election survey, up from 37% who recalled the brochure during the VIC phase of the election period survey. Post-election recall in 2021 was higher than in 2019, when 48% of electors reported receiving the brochure.
- Aided recall of the recruitment and main campaign ads increased over time: 13% of survey respondents presented with recruitment ads recalled at least one of the ads during the registration phase. Recall of these ads increased to 25% by the early voting phase before peaking at 31% by election day. Recall of the main campaign ads was higher and increased more significantly over the election period: 18% of respondents recalled at least one of the ads they were presented with during the registration phase, 39% during the VIC phase and 55% during the election day phase.
- Across all ad campaigns, the largest proportions of survey respondents indicated that a main point of the ads they were presented with was the September 20 date of the federal election (results range from 49% to 57%). This was followed by mentions of the general messages “get out and vote” (40% to 48%) and “it’s important to vote” (36% to 42%).

**Evaluation of advertising and communications**

***The ads and communications products were generally well received by electors, in particular for being clear and useful. The television and radio ads received the most positive reactions.***

- When presented with a selection of advertisements, survey respondents offered generally positive feedback. Specifically, the vast majority somewhat or strongly agreed that the presented ads were clear (85%) and provided useful information (85%), while smaller majorities agreed that they were

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<sup>1</sup> Derived from respondents who recalled EC ads from one or more of the following: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat.

relevant (71%) and attention catching (63%). Assessments of the ads for each separate campaign and phase were also positive overall, although electors were generally more positive in their assessments of ads related to the VIC, early voting options and election day compared with ads related to recruitment and registration.

- The ads presented as part of the qualitative research were also routinely described as clear as well as easy to understand across all phases of the ad campaign. Participants had no difficulty identifying a main message or messages they felt the ads were trying to communicate. Overall, participants identified relatively little in the way of additional types of information that would have been useful or helpful to include in specific ad campaigns or phases. There was near unanimity among qualitative participants that the campaign materials work well together and complement each other.
- The TV and radio ads tended to elicit the most consistently positive reactions from electors who took part in the qualitative research, with participants routinely noting the friendly voiceover and upbeat music as engaging. Ads produced in other media that did not include these elements (print ads, static social media posts, social media video ads, animated web banner ads) were more likely to elicit mixed reactions.
- There was a widespread impression that the target audience for the information campaign was electors in general, although participants also routinely suggested that the focus might be more on new electors voting for the first time. Some suggested that the ads might also be targeting electors who are unsure/undecided about voting, for two reasons: 1) the emphasis on health and safety measures adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was seen not only as a way of informing all electors but also as a way of reassuring those who might have concerns about voting during the pandemic, and 2) the impression that there is an implicit call to action in some of the ads, specifically an encouragement to vote associated with reminders about registration and information about different options for voting.

## Satisfaction with electoral information

***Satisfaction with the information electors received from Elections Canada on the voting process increased over the course of the voter information campaign, and most felt informed about when, where and how to vote and about the health and safety measures for COVID-19 that were in place at the polls for this election.***

- During the early election phase at the start of the election period survey, 69% of electors were satisfied (26% very satisfied) with the information they had received thus far from Elections Canada. By post-election, this had risen to 94% of electors being satisfied (71% very satisfied) with the information received from Elections Canada on the voting process. This outcome is consistent with the results of the 2019 NES, where 95% of post-election survey respondents were satisfied with the information received from Elections Canada on the voting process.
- Most electors felt informed about when, where and how to vote in the election. In the early election phase, 56% felt very informed; post-election, nearly three-quarters (74%) felt very well informed. Overall, 96% ended up feeling at least somewhat informed about when, where and how to vote in the federal election, consistent with the results of the 2019 NES.
- Respondents also felt informed about health and safety measures for COVID-19 that were in place at the polls for this election. Early in the election period, two-thirds (68%) of electors said they felt at least somewhat informed about the COVID-19 safety measures at the polls, including a third (35%)

who felt *very* informed. Post-election, nine in 10 (89%) electors said they felt at least somewhat informed about these measures, including six in 10 (60%) who felt *very* well informed.

### **Electors' knowledge of voter registration, ID requirements and voting methods**

***Many electors were aware that voter registration information must be updated, most were aware that proof of identity and address are required to vote, and majorities knew that electors could vote on election day, by mail and at advance polls.***

- Two-thirds (67%) of electors in the early election phase knew of the need to update their voter registration if their information changes. This remained stable through the registration phase before increasing to three-quarters (76%) of respondents in the post-election survey. This is down from 87% during the 2019 NES post-election survey, when the fixed election date allowed advertising about registration to begin before the start of the election period.
- Throughout the campaign, most electors were aware that a proof of identity is required to vote in the GE. During the early election phase, 93% of surveyed electors were aware of the need to present a proof of identity, and by post-election this had increased to 97%. Similarly, post-election, 89% of electors were aware that one must present a proof of address to vote (compared to 83% during the early election phase).
- Most surveyed electors knew, without prompting, that electors can vote on election day (88%), by mail (70%) or at an advance polling station (61%). Compared to results from the 2019 NES and 2015 Survey of Electors, knowledge of the option to vote at an advance poll declined slightly (from 71% in 2019 and 64% in 2015). On the other hand, knowledge of the option to vote by mail recorded a historic high for Elections Canada's post-election surveys, having increased significantly amid heavy promotion of this option due to the COVID-19 pandemic from the previous high of 23% in 2019 and from 13% in 2015.
- Among electors who participated in the qualitative research, most said they were aware of the option to vote by mail. Few, however, said they looked into this option for casting their vote. Asked why they did not consider voting by mail, two reasons were identified most often: habit and ease of voting in person.

### **Awareness and perceptions of Elections Canada as a source of electoral information**

***Top-of-mind awareness of Elections Canada as a source for electoral information increased during the campaign. Moreover, there was widespread agreement that Elections Canada is the most trusted source of information about the electoral process.***

- Elections Canada was the top-of-mind source of electoral information for electors in both the election period and the post-election surveys, with recognition being higher after the election. During the election period, 42% of electors identified EC as the organization that first comes to mind when looking for information on when, where and how to vote; by the post-election survey this had climbed to 66%. This represents a small increase from the 2019 election, when 62% of electors in the post-election survey said Elections Canada first comes to mind.
- Post-election, 93% agreed that Elections Canada is the most trusted source for information regarding the elector process. A significant proportion of these respondents (72%) strongly agreed with the statement (up from 57% during the 2019 NES post-election survey).



## Introduction

Elections Canada commissioned Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. (Phoenix SPI) and Advanis to conduct research to help evaluate the 44th federal general election.

### 1. Background and Objectives

Elections Canada (EC) is an independent, non-partisan agency that reports directly to Parliament. The agency is mandated to conduct federal general elections, by-elections and referendums; administer the political financing provisions of the *Canada Elections Act*; monitor compliance; and conduct public information campaigns on the electoral process.

In the context of a federal general election (GE), EC conducts studies of electors that are used as part of the evaluation and development of EC's programs and services and to inform the Chief Electoral Officer's reports to Parliament.

The 2021 National Electors Study (NES) is EC's primary public opinion research study conducted for the 44th GE held on September 20, 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The NES measures electors' values, opinions and attitudes toward various election-related issues; their knowledge of, expectations toward and experience with the electoral process, including their views on the health and safety of voting in relation to the pandemic; and their satisfaction with the agency's communications, services and programs.

The NES consisted of two components: 1) a national longitudinal survey of electors, and 2) a series of post-election focus groups and interviews.

This report presents results from the survey and focus groups used to evaluate EC's voter information campaign for the 44th GE and to measure electors' knowledge and awareness of the voting process in terms of:

- recall and evaluation of advertising and communications from the voter information campaign
- satisfaction with information received about when, where and the ways to vote in the election
- knowledge of various aspects of the electoral process, including voter registration, voter identification, the different ways to vote, and health and safety measures put in place for voting due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- awareness and perceptions of Elections Canada as the authoritative source of information about the electoral process

### 2. Methodology

A brief overview of the 2021 NES quantitative and qualitative methodologies is provided in this section. A detailed description of the research methodologies, including the research instruments and the campaign materials tested, can be found under separate cover.

## 2.1: Quantitative Methods

Public opinion surveys were conducted by telephone (via live interviewers) and online (via Advanis' online survey platform) between August and October 2021, in two survey waves. All respondents were eligible electors—Canadian citizens who were at least 18 years of age on election day (September 20, 2021). The questionnaires varied in length, from nine to 19 minutes.

The survey component included longitudinal, top-up and discrete samples. The sample sources used included:

Sample	Wave	Sample source	Type of sample
S1 Longitudinal	W1 W2a	GPRS (Advanis)	Probability; general population
S2 Top-up	W2b	GPRS top-up oversample Online panels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lucid</li> <li>• Dynata</li> <li>• Asking Canadians</li> </ul>	Oversample, non-probability; First Nations electors who live on reserve
S3 Discrete	W2b	GPRS (Advanis); Random digit dial (RDD)	Probability; general population

The table below presents technical information about each wave of surveying:

Wave	Sample	Method	Field period	Sample size
W1	Longitudinal	Online	Election period: August 16–September 19	53,731
W2a	Longitudinal	Online	Post-election: September 21–October 17	31,621
W2b	Discrete	Online, by telephone	Post-election: September 21–October 17 (online) September 21–October 14 (phone)	7,947

The W1 election period survey was fielded as a rolling cross-section and divided into five phases. Questions changed based on the survey date to correspond with milestones in the election period and advertising phases in the voter information campaign, as follows:

- August 16<sup>2</sup> to August 22: Early election phase (W1a)
- August 23 to August 30: Registration phase (W1b)
- August 31 to September 6: Voter information card phase (W1c)
- September 7 to September 13: Early voting phase (W1d)
- September 14 to September 19: Election day phase (W1e)

The W1 and W2a surveys were in part used to measure recall of Elections Canada's voter information campaign through the inclusion of questions from the Government of Canada Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET).

<sup>2</sup> The election writs were issued August 15, 2021. This fell on a Sunday; therefore, the first day of surveying was August 16, 2021. On this day, the W1 survey was pretested, with full field starting the next day, August 17, 2021.

The survey data have been weighted to correspond to the demographic composition of the full population of electors. Weighting was done in two stages: 1) adjustments for factors related to the study design, the in-scope rate, non-response and household size, followed by 2) post-stratification/calibration to align the results with known population characteristics of age, gender and province/territory.

The inclusion of the non-probability web panel (to augment the sample size of First Nations people living on a reserve) means no estimate of sampling error can be calculated for the entire longitudinal sample, and results are not statistically projectable to the entire elector population. A margin of sampling error and statistical estimations can be obtained if the panel completions are excluded and only the random samples are considered, in which case all samples are of a size such that overall results across all waves would have had a margin of sampling error less than  $\pm 1\%$ , 19 times out of 20. The margins of error for subsamples would be larger.

## 2.2: Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research was conducted with 133 eligible electors as follows:

- Between October 18 and 27, 2021, 14 virtual focus groups were conducted with electors residing in the following locations: Halifax and surrounding areas (two groups: students and the general public), Atlantic Canada (one group: electors with a mobility impairment), Montreal and surrounding areas (three groups, conducted in French: the general public, students and new Canadians), the Greater Toronto Area (three groups: new Canadians, Indigenous electors and electors with a visual impairment), Winnipeg and surrounding areas (two groups: youth who are not in education, employment or training; and Indigenous electors) and Metro Vancouver, including Vancouver Island (three groups: the general public, new Canadians and electors with a hearing impairment).
  - These groups lasted 90 minutes and included a mix of participants by age, gender, employment status and education.
- Five in-depth telephone interviews were conducted between October 26 and 27, 2021, with electors who have mental health conditions or cognitive disabilities.
  - Interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes and were conducted with a mix of participants by gender, age and region of residence.

All participants were paid an honorarium to thank them for taking part in the research. Electors with visual or mobility impairments were paid \$150; all other participants were paid \$100.

The moderators for this study were Philippe Azzie and Alethea Woods. Both contributed to the preparation of the final report.

## 3. Notes to the Reader

- The survey research relies on self-reported voter turnout, which historically is overreported in public opinion surveys: in this survey, self-reported turnout was 93%, while the turnout rate for the 44th GE among registered electors was 62.6%. A limitation of this current research, therefore, is that it overrepresents voters in the survey sample. Two factors may be responsible for the

overrepresentation of voters: 1) people who vote may be more likely than non-voters to participate in a study about voting, particularly across multiple survey waves (response bias), and 2) people who did not vote may report that they voted in order to present themselves in a more positive light (social desirability bias).

- The term *elector* denotes research participants who were eligible to vote in the 44th GE (all survey respondents). The term *voter* denotes research participants who reported that they voted in the 44th GE.
- This report identifies measures of respondent recall, awareness and knowledge based on aided or unaided questions. Aided questions include additional information that can help respondents answer the question, such as a list of suggested answers to a knowledge question or a visual of an advertising piece for a recall question. Unaided questions provide limited information in an attempt to avoid leading respondents' answers, such as by asking an open-ended question with no suggested answers. Aided measures tend to produce higher levels of recall, awareness and knowledge among respondents than unaided measures.
- All results are expressed as percentages, unless otherwise noted. Percentages may not always add up to 100% due to rounding or multiple mentions.
- The number of respondents varies where questions were asked of subsamples of the survey population and during different survey waves.
- Statistically significant reporting includes a variety of demographic, behavioural and attitudinal variables. Particular subgroups were defined as follows:
  - Electors with a disability: These respondents were identified using a functional disability approach based on reported difficulty with various activities, combined to a single measure of overall level of disability, on a scale ranging from no disability to mild to very severe disability.
  - Indigenous electors: Electors who self-identified as First Nations, Inuit or Métis.
  - New Canadians: Immigrants to Canada who became citizens after the 42nd GE, held in 2015.
  - Students: Students between the ages of 18 and 34 years who were (or planned to be) attending school at a secondary or post-secondary institution in the fall of 2021.
  - NEET youth: Those between the ages of 18 and 34 years who were "Not Employed, in Education or in Training" during the fieldwork.
- When reporting subgroup variations, only differences that are significant at the 95% confidence level and that pertain to a subgroup sample size of more than n=30 are discussed. If one or more categories in a subgroup are not mentioned in a discussion of subgroup differences, it can be assumed that significant differences were found only among the categories reported.
- Comparisons to results from previous studies are included when possible. This includes the 2019 [National Electors Study for the 43rd General Election](#), the 2015 [Evaluation of the Electoral Reminder Program \(ERP\) for the 42nd Canadian Federal Election](#) and the 2015 [Survey of Electors Following the 42nd General Election](#).

## Part 1: Quantitative Findings

Part 1 presents survey results from the National Electors Study (NES), with a focus on the voter information campaign and electors' awareness of the electoral process during the 44th general election (GE).

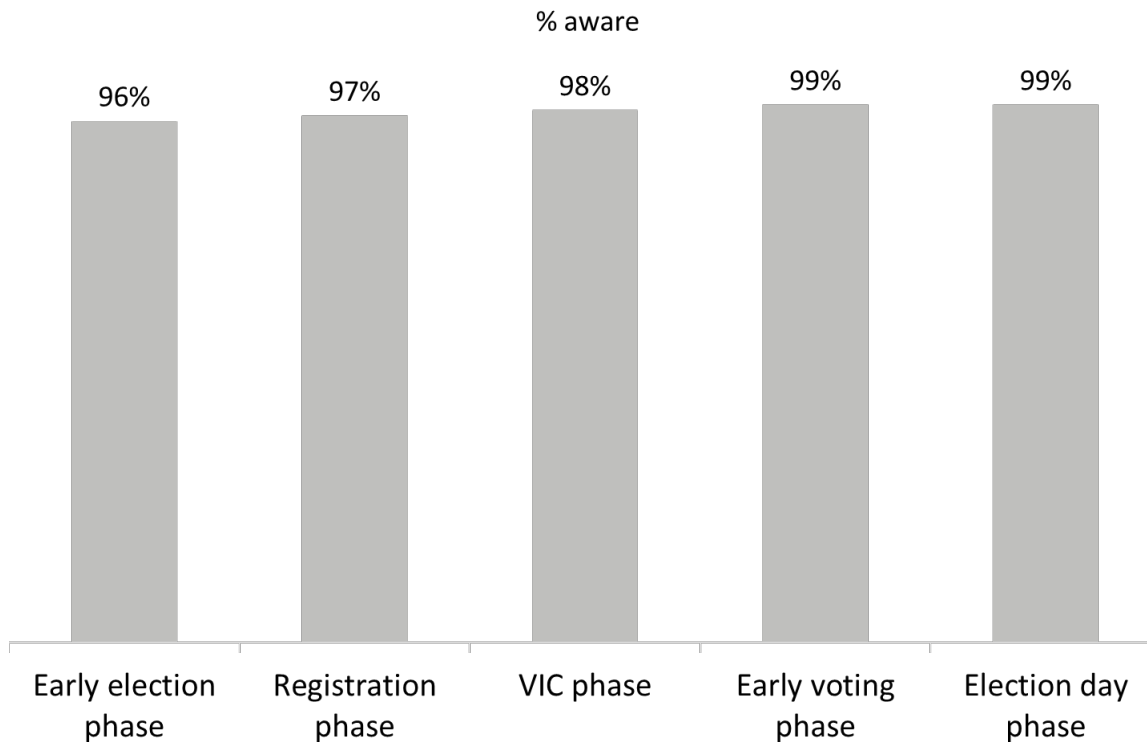
### 1. Awareness of the Federal Election

The election period survey began on August 16, 2021.<sup>3</sup> Through all phases of the election period survey, electors were asked whether they were aware that a federal election was scheduled to take place on September 20, 2021.

#### Virtually everyone was aware of the 44th federal election

Awareness of the September 20, 2021, federal election increased very modestly over the course of the election period, from 96% of respondents early in the election period survey to 99% in the early voting and election day phases. This is consistent with results from the 43rd GE in 2019, when 99% of electors surveyed in the final week of the election period were aware of the upcoming election.

Figure 1: Awareness of the federal election during the election period



Q. Are you aware that a federal election will take place on September 20, 2021? Base: all respondents (n=53,731) [WAVE 1]

<sup>3</sup> The election writs were issued August 15, 2021. This fell on a Sunday; therefore, the first day of surveying was August 16, 2021.

Across the election period survey, those who voted in the 2019 federal election (99% versus 92% of non-voters who were eligible to vote)—along with those interested in politics (99% versus 93% of those not interested in politics) and those who view voting as a duty (99% versus 96% of those who view voting as a choice)—were more likely to have been aware of the upcoming federal election.

The following electors who completed the election period survey were *less* likely to report having been aware that a federal election will take place on September 20, 2021:

- electors with a disability (97% versus 99% of those without a disability)
- Indigenous electors (97% versus 98% of non-Indigenous electors)
- new Canadians (95% compared to 98% of other Canadians)
- 18- to 24-year-olds (95% versus 97% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 99% of electors aged 35 and older)
- 18- to 34-year-olds not in education, employment or training [NEET] (94% versus 95% of 18- to 34-year-olds working full-time and 95% of 18- to 34-year-olds attending school)

## 2. Unaided Recall of Elections Canada Advertising and Communications

This section of the report presents recall, on an unaided basis, of advertising and communications that formed Elections Canada's (EC) national voter information campaign for the 44th GE. The objective of the campaign was to provide electors with all the information they needed on when, where and ways to register and vote in the election.

The voter information campaign was a multimedia election period campaign conducted mainly in four phases with distinct focuses: 1) registration, 2) voter information card (VIC) awareness, 3) early voting options, and 4) election day. Phases in the election period survey largely corresponded with the election period phases of the voter information campaign.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the four phases of the main advertising campaign, two additional ad campaigns ran during the entire election period: 1) a recruitment campaign that focused on employment opportunities during the general election, and 2) the safety campaign that focused on the safety measures in place to protect poll workers and voters during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Many had read, seen or heard EC advertising or communications during the election period

Beginning in the election period survey, respondents were asked if they had seen, heard or read any advertising or communications from Elections Canada about where, when and the ways to register and vote in the Canadian federal election.

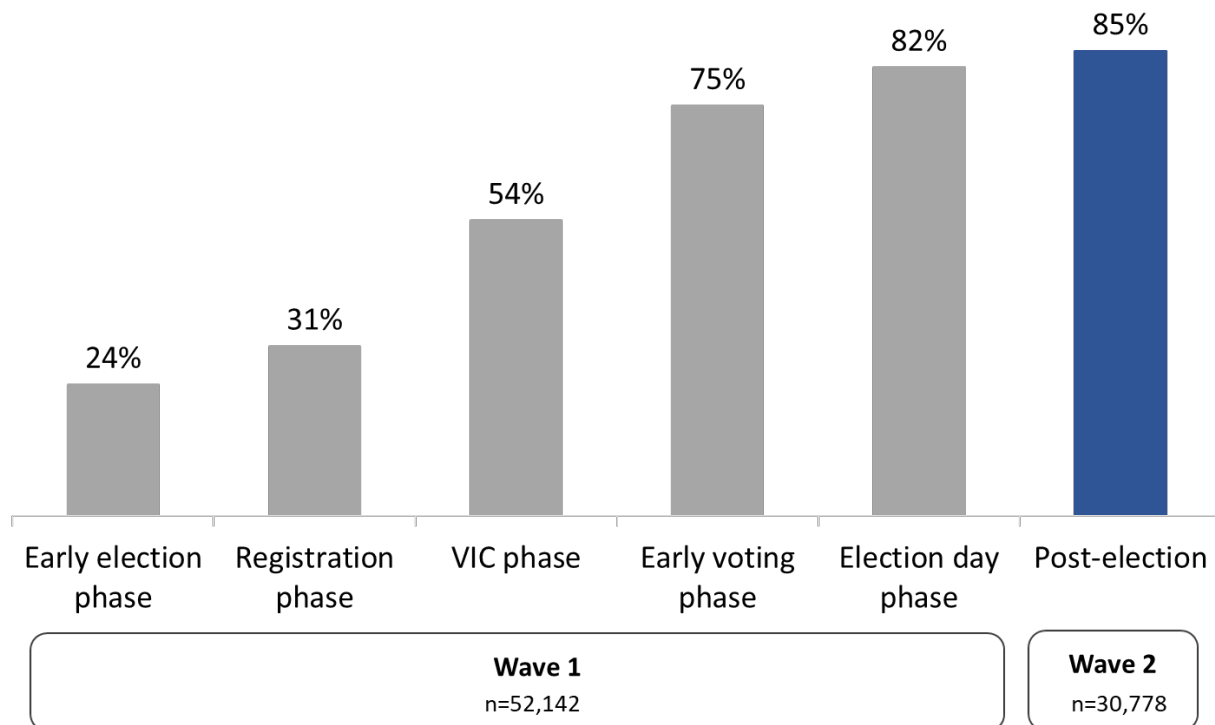
Unaided recall increased throughout the election period survey, from 24% of respondents in the early election phase to 82% by the end of the election day phase. Post-election, ad recall continued to increase, reaching a high of 85% of surveyed electors. This is generally consistent with the pattern of increasing awareness recorded as part of the 2019 NES election period survey, from 21% of respondents early in the election up to 81% of respondents by the early voting phase and through to the end of the election day phase.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Survey phases tended to change one or two days after the start of a new advertising phase to allow time for the ads to be seen before measuring recall. The early election phase of the survey does not correspond to any particular phase of the voter information campaign but instead refers to the one-week period immediately following the issuing of the election writs on August 15, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> The post-election results for 2021 and 2019 are not comparable due to a change in the question formulation.

Figure 2: Unaided recall of EC advertising



Q. (Over the past few weeks or so, have you seen, heard or read/During the election campaign, did you see, hear or read) any advertising or communications from Elections Canada about where, when and the ways to register and vote in the Canadian federal election? Base: those aware of the election [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

In the post-election survey, the likelihood of recalling EC advertising or communications about the federal election was higher among:

- those interested in politics (86% versus 77% of those not interested in politics)
- those who voted in the 2019 GE (86% versus 74% of non-voters who were eligible to vote in the 2019 GE)
- those who voted in the 2021 GE (86% versus 71% of non-voters)
- those who view voting as a duty (87% versus 79% of those who view voting as a choice)

The following groups of electors were *less* likely to have recalled advertising or communications:

- electors with a severe/very severe disability (81% versus 85% of those with a mild/moderate disability and 86% of those without a disability)
- Indigenous electors (82% versus 86% of non-Indigenous electors)
- 18- to 24-year-olds (81%) and 25- to 34-year-olds (80%) compared to electors aged 35 and older (87%)
- NEET youth (75% versus 82% of 18- to 34-year-olds working full-time and 82% of 18- to 34-year-olds attending school)



### Electors mainly recalled seeing EC advertising or communications on television and via direct mail

Among election period respondents who recalled seeing EC advertising or communications, television was one of the top communication channels across all phases of the election period survey. It was followed by websites in general, radio, Facebook and newspaper. Notably, the proportion of surveyed electors who mentioned a postcard or brochure in the mail increased from 7% early in the election period to 49% by the early voting phase and 50% by election day, making it the top source of recall by the end of the election day phase. This coincides with the period when the voter information card (VIC) and *Guide to the federal election* were delivered to households.

The top channels among post-election respondents were television (56%), a postcard or brochure in the mail (48%) and radio (40%). These were followed by websites in general (29%), Facebook (27%) and newspaper (25%). Television and direct mail were also the main sources of unaided recall of EC advertising or communications about the voting process in 2015 (TV, 50%; direct mail, 30%) and 2019 (TV, 56%; direct mail, 38%).

In 2021, the increase in recall of ads on radio, websites and social media platforms observed in 2019 continued: radio (40% in 2021, 34% in 2019 and 15% in 2015), websites (29% in 2021, 20% in 2019 and 14% in 2015), and social media platforms, particularly Facebook (27% in 2021 versus 21% in 2019) and Instagram (10% in 2021 versus 5% in 2019).

The full range of responses can be found below in figure 3.

Figure 3: Channel of unaided ad recall

Channels	Wave 1 (n=27,824)					Wave 2 (n=26,338)
	Early election phase	Registration phase	VIC phase	Early voting phase	Election day phase	Post-election
Television	48%	46%	45%	46%	46%	56%
Postcard or brochure in the mail	7%	11%	27%	49%	50%	48%
Radio	33%	33%	34%	33%	35%	40%
Website	35%	33%	27%	28%	30%	29%
Facebook	21%	23%	21%	23%	23%	27%
Newspaper	21%	21%	19%	21%	22%	25%
YouTube	8%	11%	10%	10%	11%	15%
Outdoor billboards	9%	12%	11%	13%	14%	15%
Instagram	8%	10%	8%	7%	10%	10%
Public transit (bus or subway)	4%	5%	5%	5%	6%	9%
Twitter	9%	11%	9%	8%	9%	9%
Snapchat	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%
Spotify	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
Other	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	1%
Don't know / don't remember	4%	4%	3%	2%	3%	2%

Q. Where did you see or hear this advertising or communication? [Multiple responses accepted].

Base: those who recalled EC ads or communications [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

Among post-election survey respondents, notable subgroup differences included the following:

- Indigenous electors were more likely to report having seen or heard Elections Canada advertising or communications on Facebook (35%) compared to non-Indigenous electors (26%).
- New Canadians were most likely to have seen Elections Canada communications or ads on websites (38% versus 31% of immigrants who became citizens before the 2015 GE and 29% of Canadians by birth), YouTube (27% versus 15% and 14%), and on Instagram (19% versus 8% and 10%).
- Youth aged 18 to 24 years and 25 to 34 years were more likely than older Canadians to have seen EC communications or ads on YouTube (43% and 30% versus 9%, respectively), Instagram (34% and 22% versus 5%) and Spotify (7% and 5% versus 1%). Youth aged 18 to 24 years were more likely to recall seeing ads on public transit (24% versus 12% of electors aged 25 to 34 years and 7% of those aged 35 and older) and on Snapchat (21% versus 5% and 0%, respectively).
- Seniors aged 65 years and older were more likely than younger electors to recall seeing EC ads or communications on television (71% versus 50%) and in the newspaper (41% versus 18%). Men were more likely than women to report seeing EC ads or communications on websites (31% versus 27%), but men were less likely than women and non-binary/transgender electors to recall seeing EC ads or communications on Facebook (23% versus 30% and 32%, respectively).
- Electors in Quebec were more likely than electors in any other province to recall seeing EC ads on television (65% versus a range of 49% to 58% across the other provinces), in newspapers (31% versus a range of 18% to 26%) and on outdoor billboards (21% versus a range of 11% to 16%).

### One-third thought “get out and vote” was the main message of ads

Electors who recalled EC advertising or communications were asked, in an open-ended manner, what they thought was the main point of what they saw or heard. Through the election period and post-election surveys, the largest proportions of respondents said the main point of the ads was to remind electors to “get out and vote.” This steadily increased from 17% in the early election phase, to 28% by the end of the election day phase, to 37% post-election.

Following “get out and vote,” respondents indicated that the point of the ads was to provide general information on how, when and where to vote. Notably, higher proportions mentioned this during the latter phases of the voter information campaign (20% in the VIC phase, 24% in the early voting phase, and 24% in the election day phase) and post-election (25%).

Relatively few respondents identified more specific messages about how, when and where to vote in the election as the main message of the ads they saw or heard. Among post-election respondents, the specific messages electors most often mentioned were about there being many options/ways to vote (7% of those who recalled EC ads or communications), the need to be registered to vote (5%) and the fact that election day was on September 20 (4%).

Figure 4: Unaided recall of main ad message

Messages	Wave 1 (n=4,078)					Wave 2 (n=3,054)
	Early election phase	Regis- tration phase	VIC phase	Early voting phase	Election day phase	Post- election
Get out and vote	17%	21%	20%	25%	28%	37%
General information on how, when, where to vote	16%	14%	20%	24%	24%	25%
It's important to vote	5%	6%	7%	7%	7%	8%
It is easy to vote	1%	3%	2%	3%	3%	7%
Many options / ways to vote	7%	5%	5%	5%	4%	7%
Need to be registered to vote	4%	5%	5%	2%	2%	5%
The federal election is on September 20	6%	5%	5%	5%	6%	4%
You can vote safely	10%	7%	6%	6%	5%	3%
Check or update your registration	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%	3%
EC website has official information	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
It's our vote	1%	<0.5%	<0.5%	1%	1%	2%
It is a right to vote	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%
Who is eligible to vote	<0.5%	1%	<0.5%	--	<0.5%	2%
There are ways to vote early	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%
There are safety measures at the polls	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	1%
You need to prove identity and address to vote	--	<0.5%	1%	1%	1%	1%
You can vote by mail	9%	6%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Check the mail for your VIC	1%	1%	2%	1%	<0.5%	1%
VIC tells you when and where to vote	<0.5%	<0.5%	1%	<0.5%	--	1%
You can work at the federal election	<0.5%	1%	<0.5%	--	<0.5%	<0.5%
Wear a mask when you go vote	1%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%	--
Other	8%	7%	7%	5%	4%	2%
Comments about political parties	6%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%
Don't know/Don't remember	27%	27%	26%	27%	26%	18%

Q. Thinking about the advertising and communications that you saw or heard, what do you think is the main point they were trying to get across?  
[Multiple responses accepted]. Base: those who recalled EC ads or communications unaided. [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

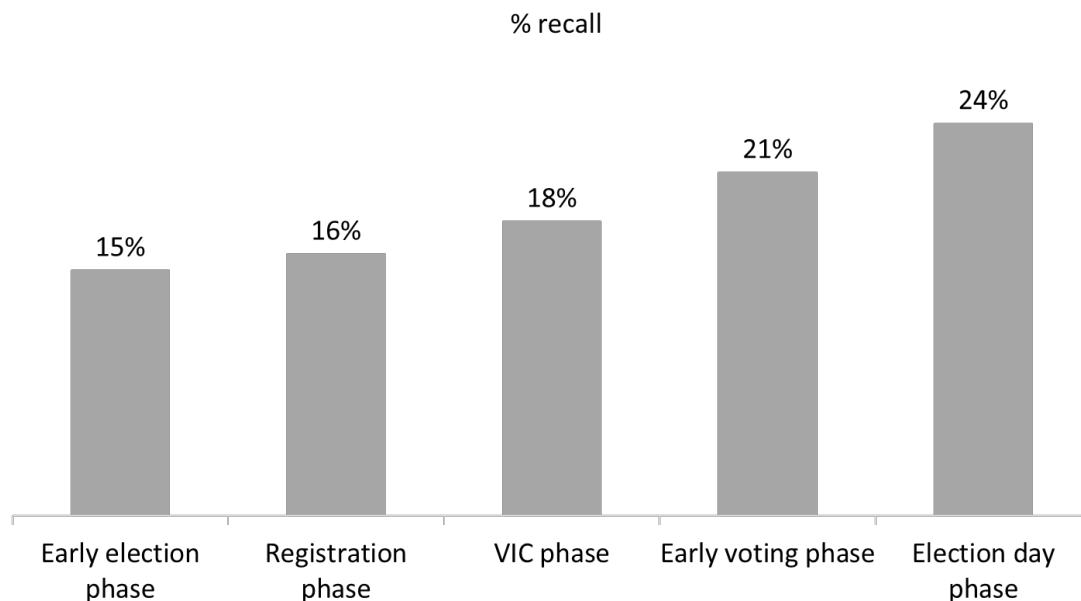
### 3. Aided Recall of Key Elections Canada Communications

This section of the report presents aided recall of key Elections Canada (EC) communications, including the voter information campaign slogan and direct mail products sent to every registered elector and household in Canada: the voter information card (VIC) and the *Guide to the federal election*.

#### Aided recall of “It’s Our Vote” slogan increased during the campaign leading up to election day

Electors were asked if they had heard or seen the slogan “It’s Our Vote” during the election period survey. The proportion of respondents recalling the slogan increased over the course of the election period, from 15% during the early election phase to 24% in the week leading to election day. Recall of the slogan is virtually identical to the 2019 GE (18% recalled the slogan during the VIC phase, 21% during early voting and 24% by election day). The only difference of note is that recall of “It’s Our Vote” was lower in 2019 during the early and registration phases of the campaign (12% and 14%, respectively).

Figure 5: Aided recall of “It’s Our Vote” slogan



Q. Do you recall hearing or seeing the slogan “It’s Our Vote”? Base: n=52,142; those aware of the election [WAVE 1]

Across the election period survey, the likelihood of recalling the “It’s Our Vote” slogan was higher among the following groups:

- Indigenous electors (22% versus 19% of non-Indigenous electors)
- new Canadians (23% versus 20% of those who became citizens before the 2015 GE and 19% of Canadians by birth)
- 18- to 24-year-olds (29% versus 21% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 17% of older Canadians)
- those who recalled EC’s ads and communications (25% versus 12% of those who did not)
- those who received a VIC (23% versus 18% of those who did not receive a VIC)
- Canadians interested in politics (19% versus 15% of electors not interested in politics)
- those who voted in 2019 (19% versus 16% of non-voters who were eligible to vote)

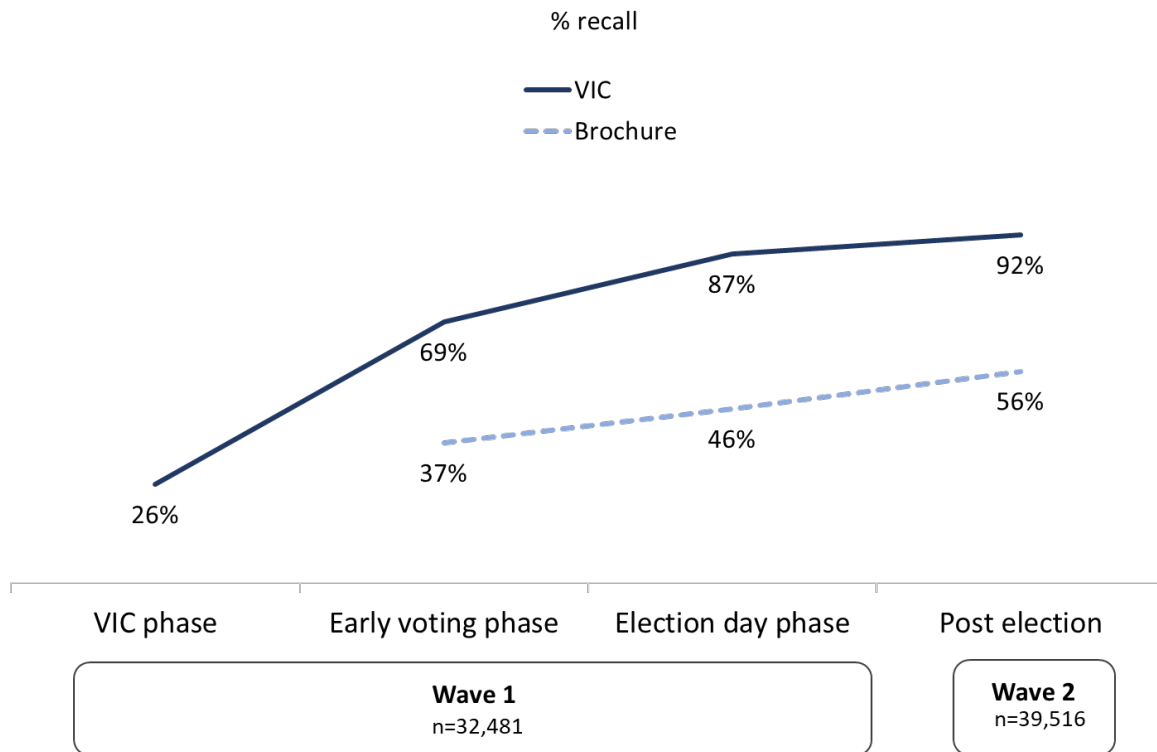
**Vast majority recalled receiving a VIC; about half recalled receiving the brochure**

A VIC was mailed to each registered elector beginning the week of August 30, 2021 (corresponding to the VIC phase of the election period survey). After sending the VICs, Elections Canada also mailed a brochure titled [Guide to the federal election](#) to every household in Canada.

The proportions of electors who recalled receiving a VIC climbed steadily through the election campaign, from 26% during the VIC phase of the election period survey, to 69% during the early voting phase, to 87% in the week leading to election day. Recall during the 2021 election period is noticeably lower than it was in 2019, when 80% reported receiving a VIC during the VIC phase of the election period, 90% by the early voting phase, and 92% by the election day phase. This slower recall rate corresponds to delays in the mailing of VICs that resulted from difficulties in finding suitable polling places during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>6</sup>

Post-election, over nine in 10 (92%) electors aware of the election recalled receiving a VIC addressed to them personally, similar to the 93% who reported receiving a VIC in the 2019 post-election survey.

Figure 6: Recall of VIC and brochure



Q. So far in this election, have you received a voter information card in the mail addressed to you personally telling you where and when to vote?  
 Q. Do you remember receiving a brochure in the mail over the past few weeks or so describing how to prepare to vote in the upcoming federal election? Base: those aware of the election [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

The same pattern is reflected in electors’ recall of the brochure: 56% recalled receiving the brochure by the post-election survey, up from 37% who recalled the brochure during the VIC phase of the election

<sup>6</sup> See “Communicating with Electors” in Elections Canada’s [Report on the 44th General Election of September 20, 2021](#).

period survey. Post-election recall of the brochure was higher than the 48% of electors who reported receiving the brochure following the 2019 general election.

Post-election, the following groups of electors were *less* likely to have recalled receiving a VIC:

- Indigenous electors (86% versus 92% of non-Indigenous electors)
- First Nations electors who live on reserve (72%) compared with First Nations electors who do not live on reserve (87%)
- electors with a severe/very severe disability (87% versus 91% of electors with a mild/moderate disability and 93% of those with no disability)
- new Canadians (89% versus 93% of those who became citizens before the 2015 GE and 92% of Canadians by birth)
- 18- to 24-year-olds (82% versus 90% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 94% of older Canadians)
- non-binary/transgender electors (83% compared with 93% of women and 92% of men)
- electors with a high school or less education (88% compared with 92% of those with some post-secondary/college and 93% who have completed university)
- electors who had moved in the last 12 months (81% versus 94% of those who had not moved)

Post-election, the following groups of electors were *more* likely to have recalled receiving a VIC:

- those who recalled EC's ads and communications (93% versus 86% of those who did not)
- Canadians interested in politics (92% versus 89% of electors not interested in politics)
- those who voted in 2021 (93% versus 77% of non-voters)
- those who voted in 2019 (93% versus 77% of non-voters who were eligible to vote)

Similar patterns of recall were evident when respondents were asked about the brochure. One notable difference, however, related to citizenship. New Canadians (66%) were more likely than those who became citizens before the 2015 election (59%) and Canadians by birth (55%) to remember receiving a brochure in the mail.

## 4. Aided Recall of Specific Elections Canada Advertising

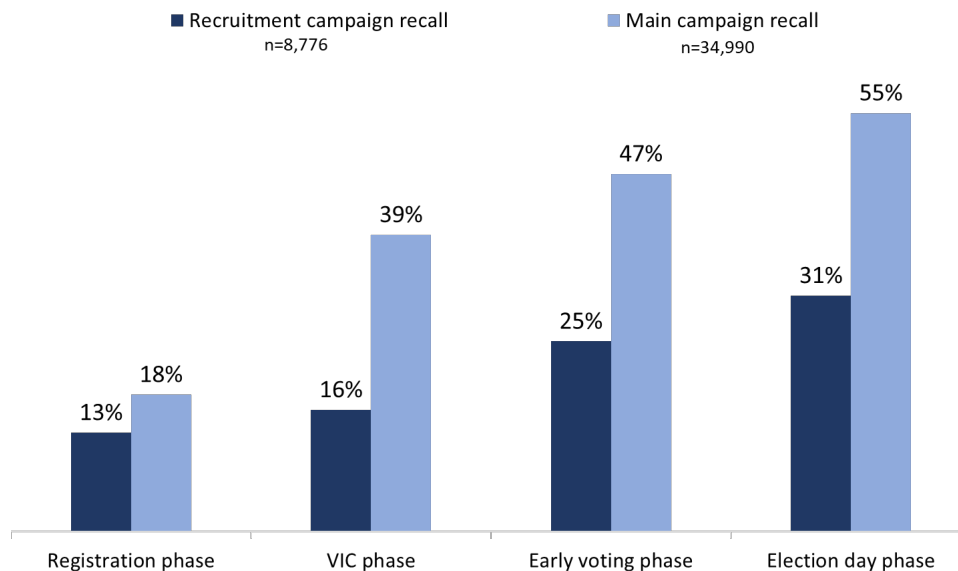
This section of the report presents aided recall of specific EC advertising pieces selected as representative of the range of ad designs, formats and messages used in the voter information campaign.

Beginning with the registration phase of the election period survey, online respondents were divided at random into two ad campaign streams: the recruitment campaign stream and the active campaign stream based on the active survey phase in the main campaign according to survey date (registration, VIC, early voting options and election day).<sup>7</sup> Respondents in each stream were presented with up to three ads from the selected campaign stream: a social media video ad (a social media video with music but no voiceover), an image ad (a print ad or animated web banner) or a broadcast ad (a radio ad or a TV ad with voiceover). Respondents were then asked whether they had seen or heard these specific ads during the election.

### Aided recall of the campaign ads increased across the election period

Recall of the recruitment and main campaign ads increased over time: 13% of respondents presented with recruitment ads recalled at least one of the ads during the registration phase, when they were first presented in the survey. Recall of recruitment ads increased to 25% by the early voting phase before peaking at 31% by election day. Recall of the main campaign ads was higher and increased more significantly over the election period: 18% of respondents recalled at least one of the ads they were presented with during the registration phase, 39% during the VIC phase and 55% during the election day phase.

Figure 7: Aided recall of ads by phase



Q. Have you seen this ad in the past few weeks? / Have you seen or heard this ad in the past few weeks?

<sup>7</sup> A third stream for ads from the safety campaign was planned but removed shortly before the start of the election period due to the uncertain environment of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific ads from the safety campaign were therefore tested only in the post-election qualitative research. See Part 2: Qualitative Findings for an evaluation of the dedicated safety campaign. That said, general messages related to COVID-19 health and safety were included in the presented ads across all campaign streams and phases.

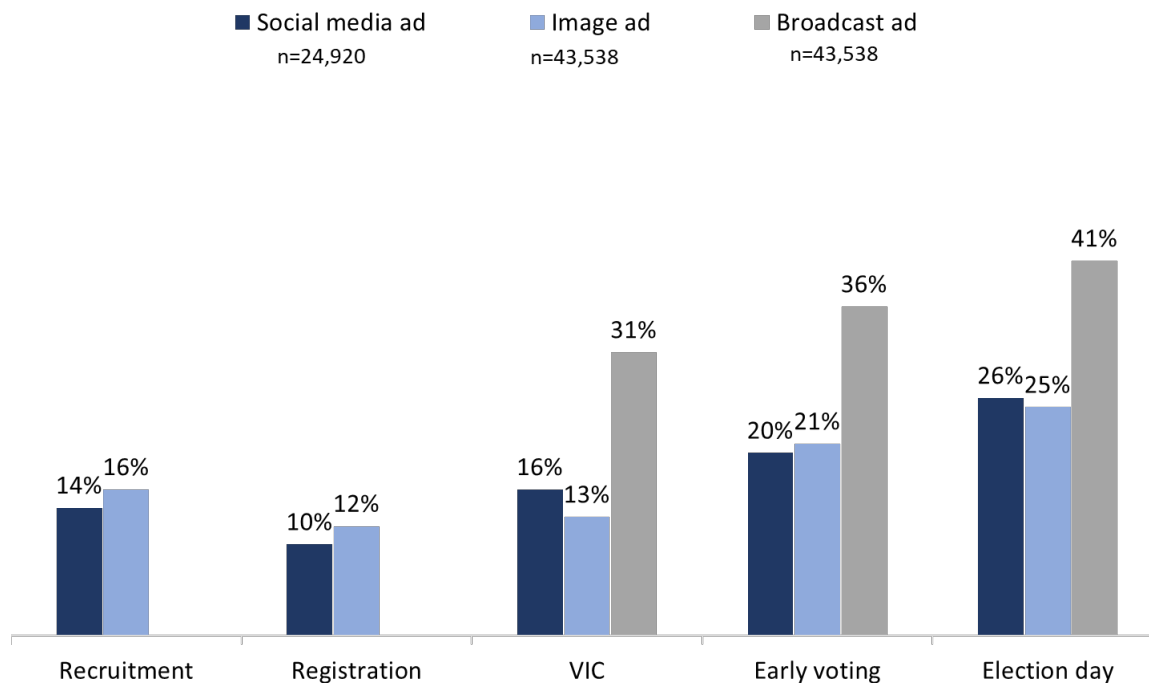
Among those who were presented with recruitment campaign ads, the following subgroups were more likely to recall at least one of the ads over the course of the election period:

- youth aged 18 to 24 (26%) compared with those aged 25 to 34 (18%) and 35 and older (21%)
- seniors aged 65 and older (25%) compared with those aged 18 to 64 (19%)
- students aged 18 to 34 (22%) compared with those working full-time (14%) and NEET youth (13%)
- those who received a VIC (28%) compared with those who did not receive a VIC (17%)

**Aided recall was highest for video and audio broadcast ads**

With respect to the ad format, aided recall of radio and television broadcast ads was higher than recall of social media video ads or image ads throughout the election period. Among respondents who were presented with ads from the election day phase of the voter information campaign, 41% recalled specific broadcast ads, compared with 26% who recalled a social media video ad and 25% who recalled an image ad. The recruitment campaign and registration phase lacked broadcast ads, which may in part explain the lower overall level of aided recall for those campaigns.

Figure 8: Aided recall of specific ads by format and ad campaign



Q. Have you seen or heard this ad in the past few weeks? / Have you seen this ad in the past few weeks?



## 5. Evaluation of Ads

This section of the report presents respondents’ evaluation of Elections Canada’s advertising based on the ads presented to respondents during the survey.

### Perceptions of the main ad message is varied; many say ads intend to encourage voting

All respondents were asked to select from a list what they thought was the main point electors were intended to get from the ads they were shown. The list included a mix of specific messages taken from the ads alongside more general messages that represent commonly volunteered responses from previous surveys of electors.

Across all ad campaigns, the largest proportions of respondents indicated that a main point of the ads they were presented with was the September 20 date of the federal election (results range from 49% to 57%). This was followed by mentions of the general messages “get out and vote” (40% to 48%) and “it’s important to vote” (36% to 42%).

Compared to unaided recall, respondents more often identified specific ad messages when aided by the presentation of specific ads. In particular, general COVID-19 health and safety messages found in ads across all campaigns and phases were identified more often across all respondents, including “you can vote safely” (25% to 37%) and “there are safety measures at the polls” (20% to 28%).

Figure 9: Perceptions of main ad message

Messages	Ad Campaign Wave 1 (n=43,951)				
	Recruitment	Registration	VIC	Early voting options	Election day
The federal election is on September 20, 2021	49%	52%	57%	56%	56%
Get out and vote	40%	44%	40%	46%	48%
It’s important to vote	36%	41%	38%	42%	42%
VIC tells you when and where to vote	22%	21%	47%	33%	39%
It is easy to vote	30%	33%	32%	47%	39%
You can vote safely	27%	32%	25%	37%	33%
There are ways to vote early	22%	21%	22%	52%	30%
Check the mail for your voter information card	20%	19%	43%	28%	29%
There are safety measures at the polls	24%	28%	20%	28%	27%
Need to prove identity and address to vote	14%	16%	14%	16%	27%
The EC website has official information	23%	27%	27%	27%	27%
You need to be registered to vote	24%	35%	37%	21%	24%
It’s our vote	22%	22%	21%	25%	23%
Check or update your registration	22%	34%	28%	17%	18%
Who is eligible to vote	14%	16%	11%	13%	13%
Apply on the Elections Canada website	16%	8%	7%	6%	6%
You can work at the federal election	29%	7%	5%	6%	5%
Paid positions are available	25%	5%	4%	4%	4%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Don't know / don't remember	8%	8%	7%	8%	7%
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Q. What do you think is the main point these ads are trying to get across?

Messages associated with specific campaigns or phases of the voter information campaign were identified more often as the main point of ads presented to those streams:

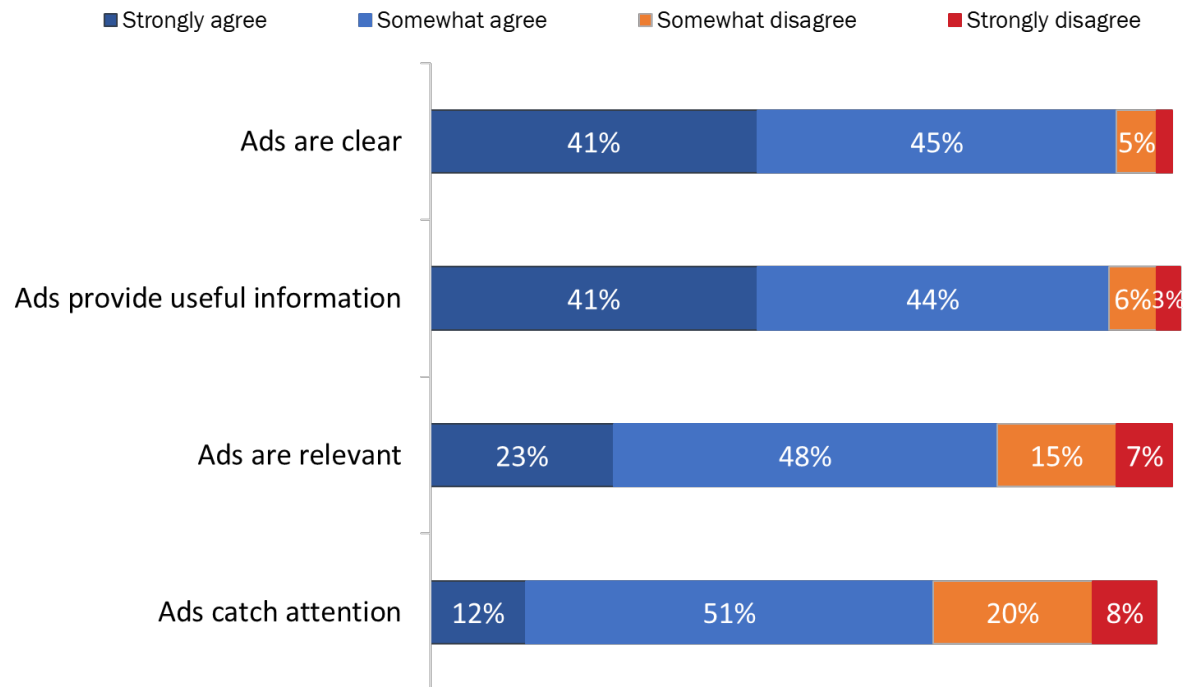
- Mentions of recruitment messages were higher among respondents presented with recruitment ads: “you can work at the federal election” (29%), “paid positions are available” (25%) and “apply on the Elections Canada website” (16%).
- Mentions of registration messages were higher among respondents presented with registration ads: “you need to be registered to vote” (35%) and “check or update your registration” (34%).
- Mentions of messages about the VIC were higher among respondents presented with VIC ads: “the VIC tells you when and where to vote” (47%) and “check the mail for your VIC” (43%).
- Mentions of messages about the early voting options were higher among respondents presented with early voting options ads: “there are ways to vote early” (52%). Mentions of “it is easy to vote” were also highest in this stream (47%), possibly because electors perceive that having multiple ways to vote early makes voting easier.

#### Ads received generally positive reviews

Election period respondents were asked to evaluate the ads they were presented with in the survey against four measures. The ads received positive assessments in all areas, and assessments were very similar to those recorded in 2019 following the 43rd GE.

The vast majority of respondents (85% each) somewhat or strongly agreed that the ads were clear and provided useful information. Few disagreed that the ads were clear (7%) and provided useful information (8%). Smaller majorities agreed that the ads were relevant (71%) and attention catching (63%). For both of these measures, respondents were more likely to agree somewhat rather than strongly. Conversely, disagreement was higher for these measures: 22% disagreed that the ads were relevant and 28% disagreed that they were attention catching.

Figure 10: Ad evaluation overall



\*Values of 2% or less are not labelled.

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about these ads? Base: n=43,951; all respondents. DK/NR: 7 percent-9 percent. [WAVE 1]

Assessments of the ads for each separate campaign and phase were also positive overall, although electors were generally more positive in their assessments of ads related to the VIC, early voting options and election day compared with ads related to recruitment and registration. For example, a range of 73% to 76% of electors presented with VIC, early voting and election day ads agreed that the ads were relevant to them, compared with 70% of electors presented with registration ads and 66% of electors presented with recruitment ads.

The following subgroup differences are noteworthy:

- Electors with a severe/very severe disability were *less* likely than electors with a mild/moderate disability or no disability to somewhat or strongly agree that the ads presented were clear (80% versus 84% and 86%, respectively), that they provided useful information (79% versus 84% and 86%), that they were relevant to them (67% versus 72% and 72%) and that they were attention catching (55% versus 62% and 65%).
- Indigenous electors were *less* likely than non-Indigenous electors to somewhat or strongly agree that the ads presented were clear (83% versus 86%), that they provided useful information (81% versus 85%), that they were relevant to them (68% versus 72%) and that they were attention catching (60% versus 64%).
- New Canadians were more likely to agree that the ads were clear (89% versus 86% of those who became citizens before the 2015 GE and 85% of Canadians by birth). New Canadians and immigrants who became citizens before the 2015 election were more likely than Canadians by birth to agree that

the ads provided useful information (88% and 86% versus 85%, respectively), were relevant to them (82% and 76% versus 70%) and caught their attention (74% and 70% versus 62%).

- Youth aged 18 to 24 years of age were more likely than other age groups to offer positive assessments of the ads across three of the four measures: the ads were relevant to them (77% of youth aged 18 to 24 versus 70% of those aged 25 to 34 and 71% of those aged 35 and older), the ads were clear (88% versus 85% and 85%) and the ads provided useful information (87% versus 83% and 85%).
- Canadians aged 35 and older, in particular those aged 65+, were more likely than younger Canadians to agree that the ads were attention catching (65% of those aged 35 and older and 71% of electors 65 years of age and older compared with 60% of 18- to-24-year-olds and 55% of 25- to-34-year-olds).
- In addition, 18- to 34-year-olds attending school were more likely than youth working full-time and NEET youth to say that the ads caught their attention (62% versus 53% and 53%, respectively), that the ads were relevant to them (78% versus 70% and 70%), that the ads were clear (89% versus 85% and 83%) and that the ads provided useful information (88% versus 83% and 83%).

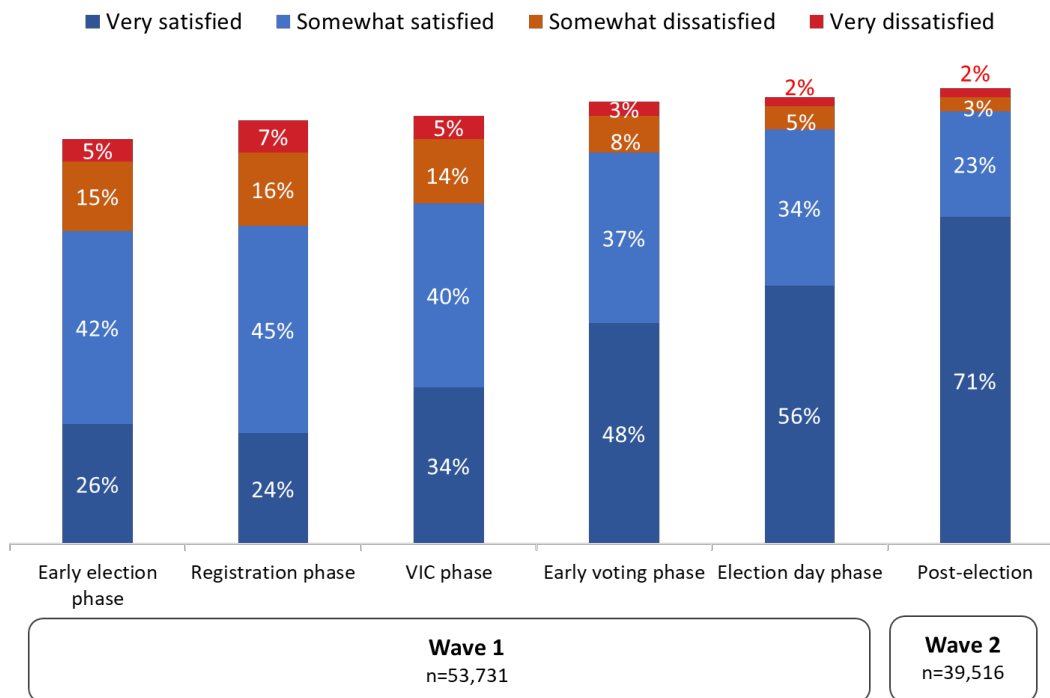
## 6. Satisfaction with Electoral Information

This section reports how satisfied respondents were with the electoral information provided by Elections Canada for the 44th GE and how informed they felt they were about where, when and the ways to vote over the course of the voter information campaign.

### Electors' satisfaction with EC information on voting increased over the campaign

Satisfaction with the information electors received from Elections Canada on the voting process increased over the course of the voter information campaign, from 69% who were satisfied (26% very satisfied) during the early election phase up to 94% who were satisfied (71% very satisfied) with the information received by the post-election survey. This outcome is consistent with the results of the 2019 NES, where 95% of post-election survey respondents were satisfied with the information they received from Elections Canada on the voting process.

Figure 11: Satisfaction with information on the voting process



Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with the information you have received from Elections Canada on the voting process, meaning where, when and the ways to vote in the federal election? Base: those aware of the election [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

Among electors who completed the post-election survey, the likelihood of being satisfied with the information received was lower among:

- electors with a disability (92% versus 95% of those without a disability), specifically those with a severe or very severe disability (87%)
- Indigenous electors (89% versus 94% of non-Indigenous electors). Among First Nations electors, those living on a reserve were less likely to be satisfied than those who do not live on a reserve (82% versus 91%)
- 18- to 24-year-olds (89% versus 92% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 95% of electors aged 35 and older)

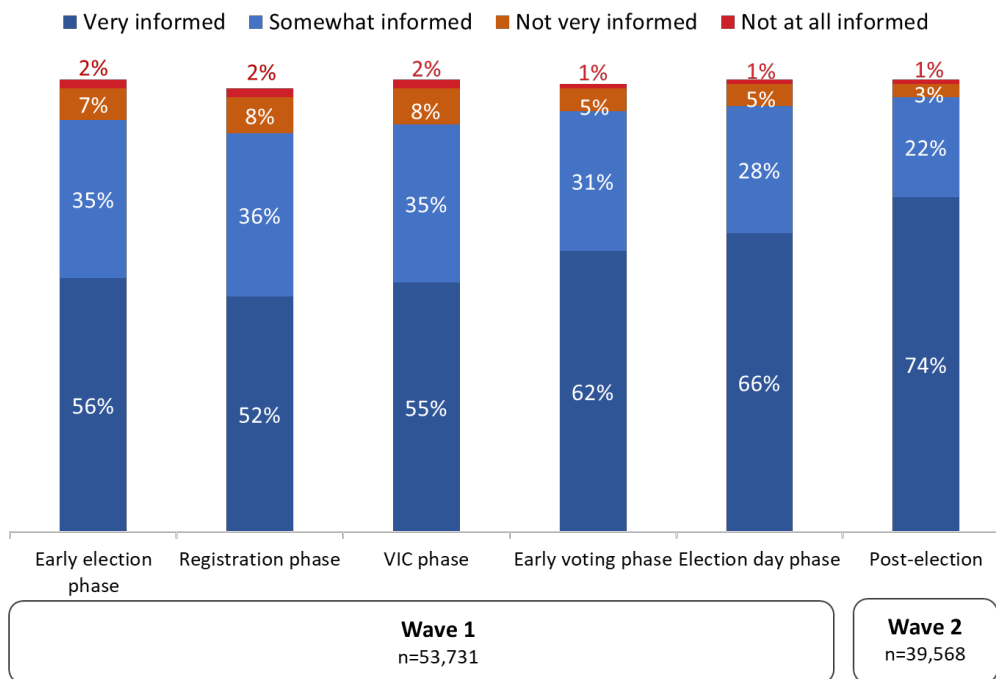
The likelihood of being satisfied with the information received was higher among:

- those who received a VIC (96% versus 75% of those who did not)
- those who recalled seeing EC advertising (96% versus 80% of those who did not)
- voters (95% versus 76% of non-voters)
- those who voted in 2019 (95% versus 80% of non-voters who were eligible to vote)
- those interested in politics (95% versus 88% of those not interested in politics)

### Most felt informed about when, where and how to vote

Over the course of the election period, most electors reported that they felt at least somewhat informed about when, where and how to vote in the 44th GE. Early in the election period, nine in 10 electors (91%) said they felt at least somewhat informed, including more than half (56%) who felt *very* informed. In the post-election survey, 96% of electors who completed the post-election survey reported feeling informed, including 74% who said they felt *very* informed, which is consistent with the results of the 2019 NES.

Figure 12: How informed electors felt about when, where and how to vote



Q. Overall, how well informed do you feel you are about when, where and how to vote in the federal election? Base: Those aware of the election [DK/NR: <0.5%]. [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

Post-election, the likelihood of respondents saying they felt *very* informed about when, where and how to vote was *lower* among the following subgroups:

- electors with a disability (68% versus 78% of those without a disability), specifically those with a severe (62%) or very severe (59%) disability

- Indigenous electors (62% versus 75% of non-Indigenous electors); among First Nations electors, those living on a First Nations reserve were less likely to feel very informed than those who do not live on a reserve (47% versus 65%)
- new Canadians (67% compared to 76% of those who became citizens before the 2015 election and 74% of Canadians by birth)
- 18- to 24-year-olds (55% versus 65% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 77% of electors aged 35 and older)

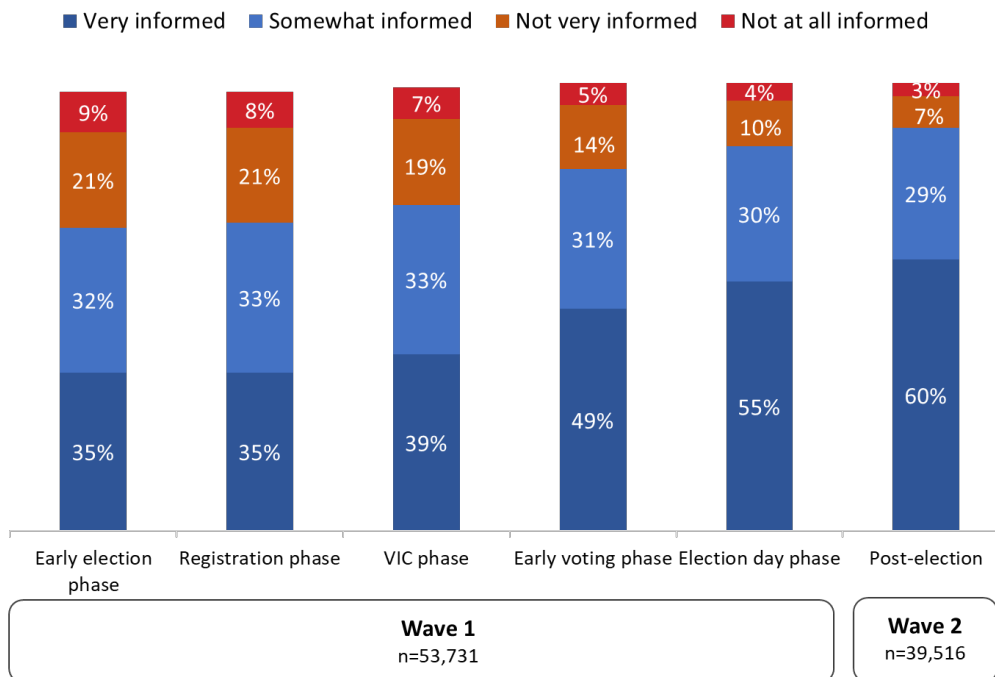
The following were *more* likely to say they felt very informed:

- electors who received a VIC (76% versus 45% of those who did not)
- those who recalled seeing EC advertising (96% versus 47% of those who did not)
- those who voted in the 2021 general election (76% versus 43% of non-voters) and those who voted in the 2019 general election (76% versus 46% of those who were eligible but did not vote)
- Canadians interested in politics (76% versus 56% of those not interested in politics)

### Vast majority felt informed about health and safety measures in place at the polls

Respondents were asked how well informed they felt they were about the health and safety measures for COVID-19 that were in place at the polls for this election. Early in the election period, two-thirds (68%) of electors said they felt at least somewhat informed about the COVID-19 safety measures at the polls, including a third (35%) who felt *very* informed. The proportions of electors who felt informed about the safety measures increased over the course of the election period: post-election, nine in 10 (89%) electors said they felt at least somewhat informed about these measures, including six in 10 (60%) who felt *very* well informed. Few (9%) felt uninformed about the health and safety measures.

Figure 13: How informed electors felt about COVID-19 safety measures at the polls



Q. How well informed do you feel you are about the health and safety measures for COVID-19 that are in place at the polls for this election? [WAVE 1] / How well informed do you feel you were about the health and safety measures for COVID-19 that were in place at the polls for this election? Base: all respondents [WAVE 2]

Among post-election survey respondents, the following subgroups were *less* likely to report feeling *very* informed about the health and safety measures in place:

- electors with a disability (55% versus 63% of electors with no disability)
- Indigenous electors (54% versus 61% of non-Indigenous electors)
- 18- to 34-year-olds (46% versus 55% of 35- to 54-year-olds and 71% of electors aged 55 and older)
- youth attending school (42% versus 48% of youth working full-time, 48% of NEET youth and 47% of other youth)
- electors living in urban areas (61% versus 65% of those living in rural areas)
- visible minorities (55% versus 61% of electors who are not a visible minority)
- non-binary and transgender electors (37% versus 62% of women and 59% of men)



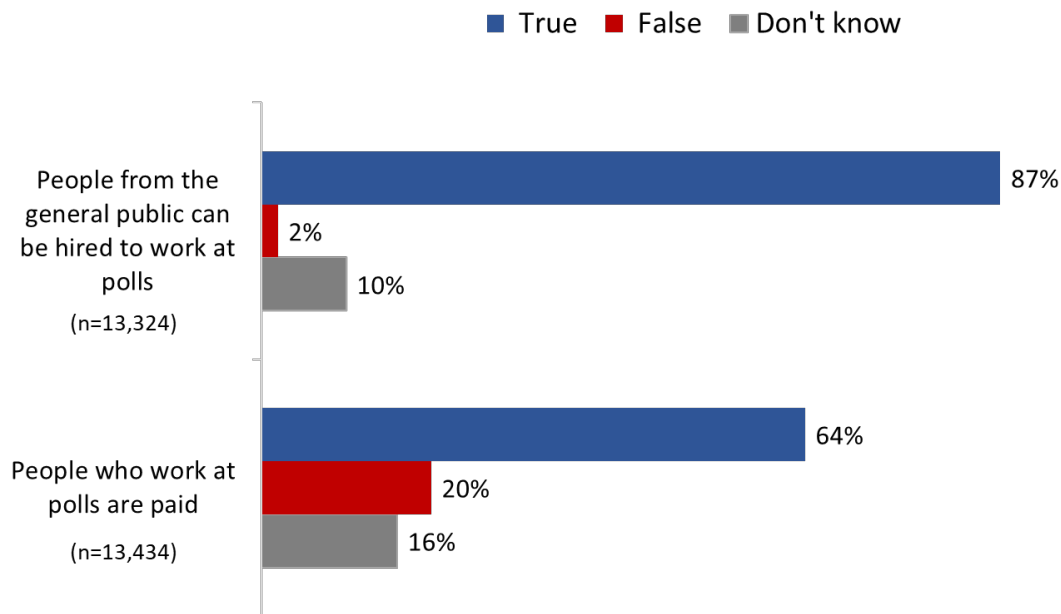
## 7. Knowledge of and Interest in Employment Opportunities

This section reports findings related to electors' awareness of and interest in employment opportunities with Elections Canada during federal elections.

### More electors are aware that people from the general public can work at polls than know these are paid positions

Nearly nine in 10 electors (87%) surveyed during the election period were aware that people from the general public can be hired to work at the polls during a federal election. Fewer, however, were aware that people who work at the polls during an election are paid for this work: approximately two-thirds (64%) correctly responded that the statement was true. These proportions did not meaningfully change over the course of the election period. These findings are aligned with those found during the 2019 election period survey, where more respondents were aware that people from the general public can work at polls than know these are paid positions.

Figure 14: Knowledge of employment opportunities



Q. Is this true or false? In a federal election, people from the general public can be hired to work at the polls. [SPLIT SAMPLE]

Q. Is this true or false? In a federal election, the people who work at the polls are paid. [SPLIT SAMPLE] Base: all respondents [WAVE 1]

The following subgroups were *less* likely to know that **people who work at the polls are paid**:

- electors with a disability (62% versus 66% of those without a disability), specifically those with a severe or very severe disability (59%)
- Indigenous electors (57% versus 65% of non-Indigenous electors)
- immigrants who became citizens after the 2015 general election (48%) as well as those who became citizens before the 2015 election (58%) compared with Canadians by birth (66%)
- 18- to 24-year-olds (52%) and 25- to 34-year-olds (54%) compared with electors aged 35 and older (68%)

- NEET youth aged 18 to 34 (46%) and youth working full-time (51%) compared with youth attending school (57%)
- visible minorities (56% versus 66% of other electors)
- electors who have completed high school or less (57% versus 68% of university graduates and 62% of those with some post-secondary or college)

The following subgroups were *more* likely to know that **people who work at the polls are paid**:

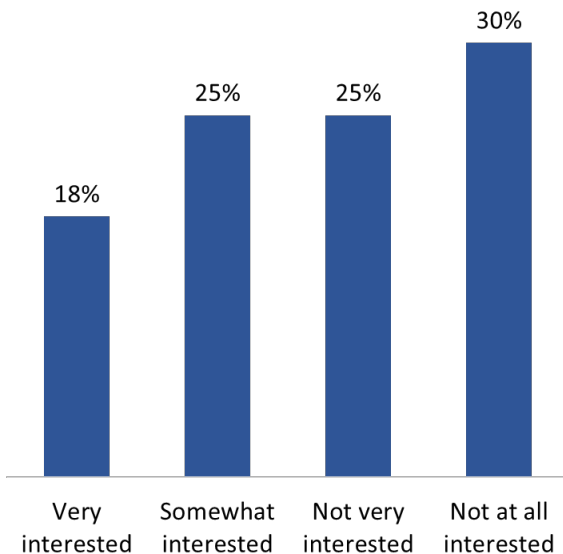
- seniors aged 65 and older (79% versus 59% of electors between the ages of 18 and 64)
- electors in Quebec (79%) and the Atlantic provinces (67%) compared with other provinces (results range from 57% to 62%)
- electors who recalled seeing EC advertising (67% versus 62% of those who did not)

### Interest in working at the polls decreased given the proposition of working during a pandemic

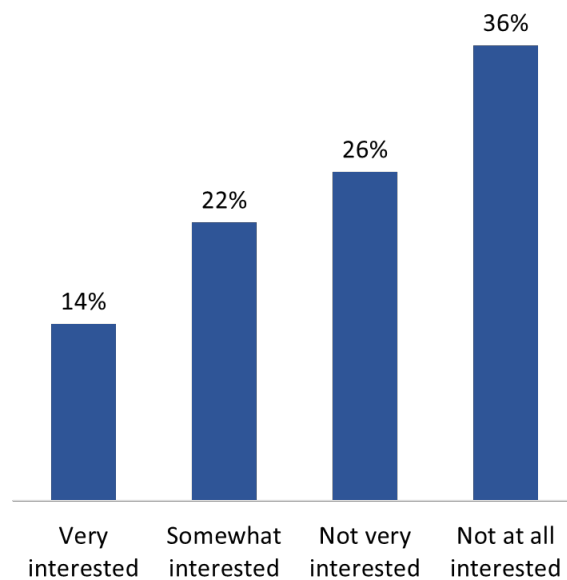
A split sample was used to compare electors' interest in working at the polls during a federal election. For half the election period survey respondents, the question was framed as an opportunity for paid work. The other half of respondents were asked about their level of interest in working at the polls after being informed about the health and safety measures that had been put in place to keep poll workers safe in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 15: Interest in employment opportunities

*"Elections Canada hires and pays local people to work at the polls in their area. How interested would you be in working at the polls in the election?"*



*"Due to the pandemic, Elections Canada has put health and safety measures in place at every polling place to keep workers and electors safe in this election. How interested would you be in working at the polls in the election?"*



[LEFT] Q. During an election, Elections Canada hires and pays local people to work at the polls in their area. How interested would you be in working at the polls in the election? Base: 13,745; all respondents. [SPLIT SAMPLES] [WAVE 1]

[RIGHT] Q. Due to the pandemic, Elections Canada has put health and safety measures in place at every polling place to keep workers and electors safe in this election. How interested would you be in working at the polls in the election? Base: 13,228; all respondents. [SPLIT SAMPLES] [WAVE 1]

Those who were informed that Elections Canada hires and pays local people to work at the polls were more likely to express interest in the employment opportunity: 43% were somewhat or very interested in the opportunity. This marks a decrease in interest in the opportunity to work at the polls for pay compared with early in the 2019 election period (51%).

Fewer (36%) electors in 2021 expressed at least some interest in working at the polls when the preamble mentioned the health and safety measures put in place at the polls to keep workers and electors safe in the election due to the pandemic. The same proportion (36%) said they were not at all interested in working when the health and safety measures at the polls were mentioned.

Among electors informed that Elections Canada pays people to work at the polls, the following groups were *more* likely to express interest in working:

- new Canadians (56% compared to 49% of those who became citizens before the 2015 election and 42% of Canadians by birth)
- visible minorities (55% versus 42% of electors who are not a visible minority)
- women (47% versus 40% of men)
- electors with a disability (48% versus 40% of those with no disability)
- 18- to 24-year-olds (54% versus 40% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 43% of those aged 35 and older)
- youth aged 18 to 34 attending school (58%) and NEET youth (52%) compared with youth working full-time (35%)
- Canadians aged 65 and over (46% versus 42% of those aged 18 to 64)
- electors in the Atlantic provinces (47%), Ontario (46%) and the Prairies (45%) compared with those in Quebec (40%)

Among those informed that health and safety measures had been put in place at the polls, the following were *more* likely to be interested in working:

- new Canadians (56%) along with Canadians who became citizens before the 2015 election (43%) compared to Canadians by birth (34%)
- visible minorities (49% versus 34% of electors who are not a visible minority)
- those with a disability (40% versus 33% of electors with no disability)
- Indigenous electors (41% versus 36% of non-Indigenous electors)
- 18- to 24-year-olds (42% versus 32% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 36% of those aged 35 and older)
- Canadians aged 65 and over (39% versus 35% of those aged 18 to 64)
- electors who had been vaccinated with at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine (37%) compared with those who had not (33%)

## 8. Voter Registration: Knowledge and Actions

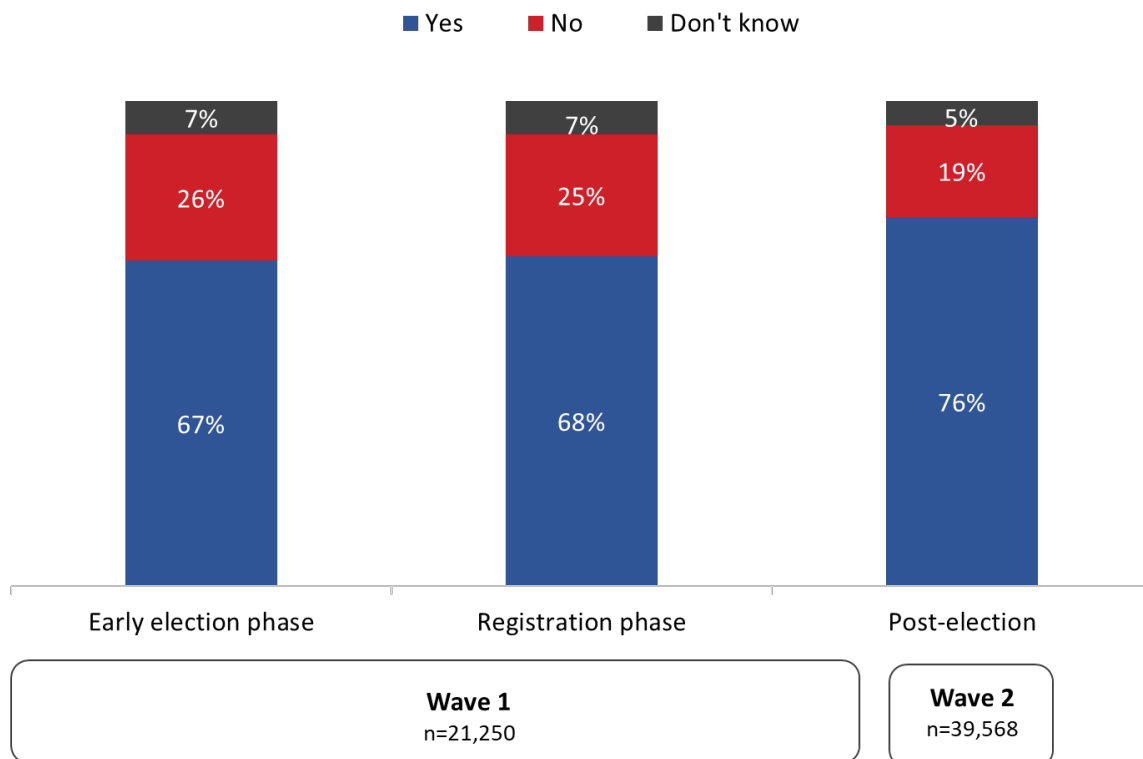
This section reports findings related to electors’ knowledge of voter registration requirements, their awareness of the different ways they can use to register, update or check their registration information, and whether they did anything to make sure they were registered to vote in this election.

### Many electors are aware that voter registration information must be updated

Two-thirds (67%) of electors in the early election phase knew of the need to update their voter registration if their information changes. This remained stable through the registration phase, increasing by just one percentage point (68%), before increasing to three-quarters (76%) of respondents in the post-election survey.

Awareness of the need to update voter registration information if it changes was lower in 2021 (76% aware post-election) as compared to the 2019 NES post-election survey, when 87% of electors said they were aware of this requirement. A longer voter information campaign may have contributed to the higher level of awareness in 2019: due to the known fixed date of the election, advertising about registration began before the start of the election period. In 2021, where the election date was not known in advance, advertising could begin only after the election period had begun; this resulted in a shorter registration phase and some registration ads being blended with messages from the VIC phase.

Figure 16: Knowledge of need to update registration



Q. To the best of your knowledge, do you need to update your voter registration if your information changes – for example, if you moved or changed your name? Base: all respondents [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

Among post-election survey respondents, the following groups were *more* likely to know about the requirement to update one's voter registration if their information changes:

- new Canadians (81%) compared with Canadians by birth (76%) and those who became citizens before the 2015 general election (76%)
- youth aged 18 to 24 (83%) and 25 to 34 (81%) compared with those 35 and older (74%)
- electors who had moved in the last 12 months (81% versus 75% of those who had not)
- electors who recalled EC advertising or communications (78% versus 72% of those who did not)
- electors in Quebec (81%) followed by electors in BC (77%) compared with other provinces (a range of 73% to 74%)

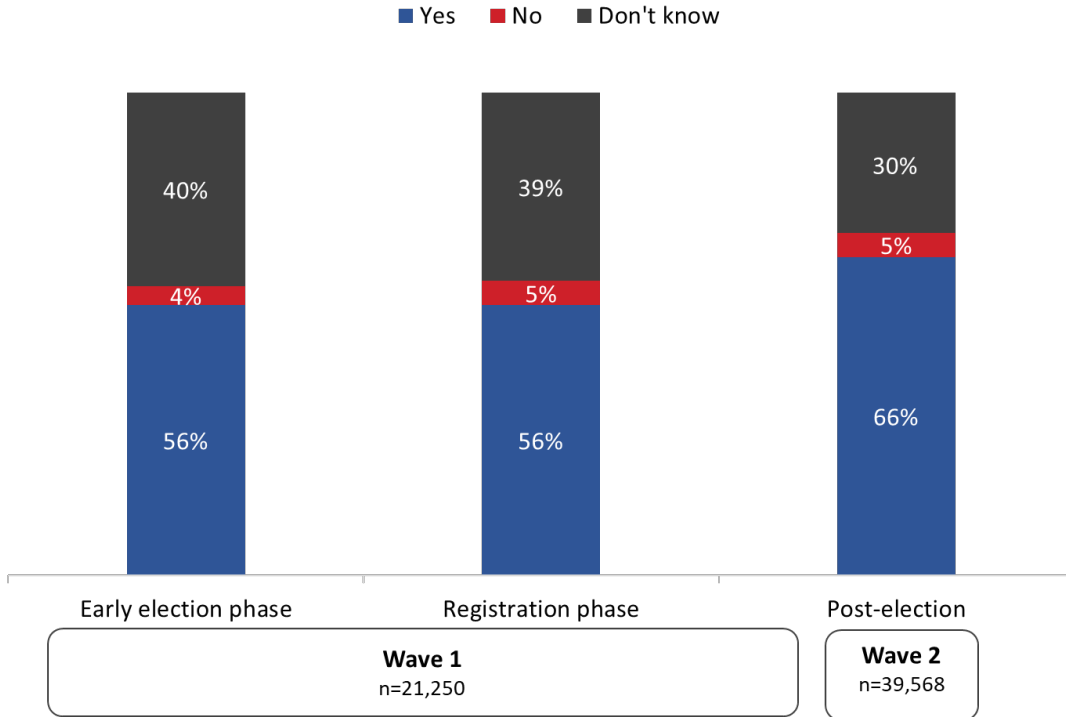
In addition, the following groups of electors were *less* likely to know about the need to update their voter registration:

- Indigenous electors (72% versus 76% of non-Indigenous electors)
- those who received their VIC (76% versus 78% of those who did not)
- non-voters (71% versus 77% of those who said they voted in 2021)
- those eligible to vote in 2019 but who did not (73% versus 76% of voters)
- electors not interested in politics (74% versus 76% of those interested)

#### **Two-thirds are aware that voter registration information can be updated/completed on EC's website**

Two-thirds of electors (66%) who completed the post-election survey were aware that Canadians can check, update or complete their voter registration on Elections Canada's website. This is up 10 percentage points from awareness recorded in the early election and registration phases of the election period, when just over half (56% each) noted this was possible. Worthy of mention, a significant minority of respondents said they did not know if it was possible to update voter registration online: 40% during the early election phase and 39% during the registration phase, decreasing to 30% in the post-election survey.

Figure 17: Knowledge of online voter registration service



Q. To the best of your knowledge, is it possible for Canadian electors to check, update or complete their voter registration on Elections Canada's website? Base: all respondents [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

Knowledge that Elections Canada's website can be used to check, update or complete voter registration followed a similar pattern to awareness of the need to update voter information. Specifically, Indigenous electors, non-voters in 2021 and eligible non-voters in 2019, and those not interested in politics were *less* likely to know that Canadians can check, update or complete their voter registration on Elections Canada's website.

In addition, the following post-election survey respondents were *less* likely to be aware that electors can update or complete their voter registration on EC's website: electors who did not feel informed about when, where and how to vote (48% versus 67% of those who did) and those who expected voting to be difficult during the election period (58% versus 67% who expected it to be easy).

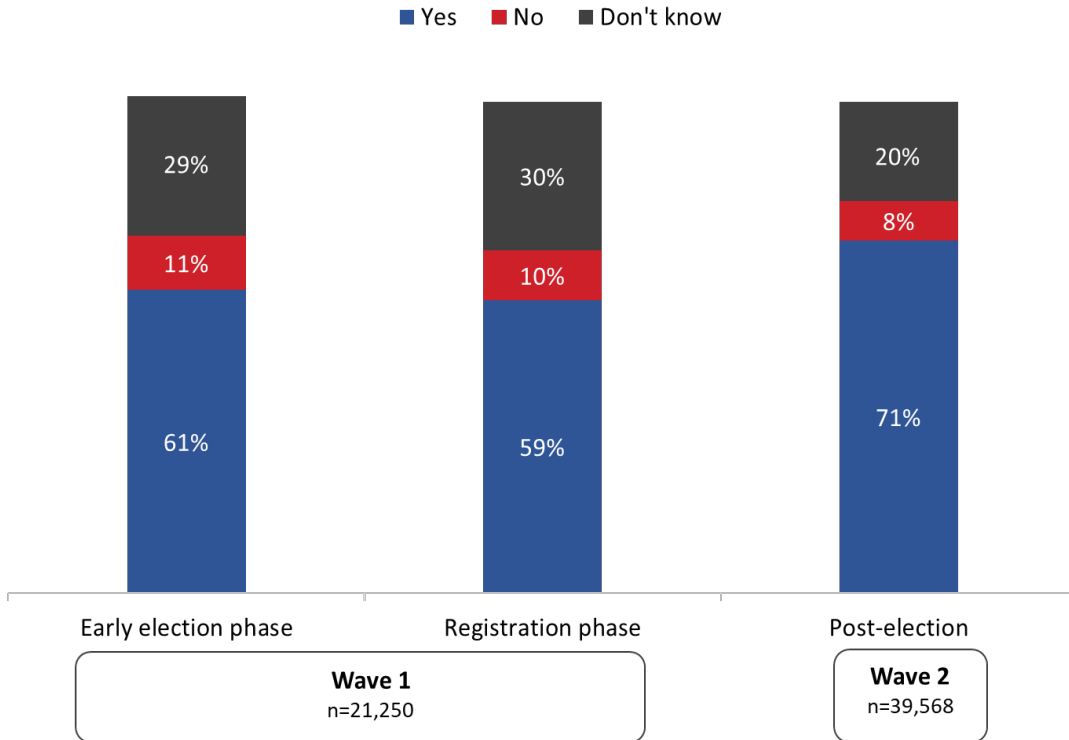
The following were *more* likely to be aware of online voter registration:

- new Canadians (75% versus 63% of those who became citizens before the 2015 general election)
- youth aged 18 to 24 (76%) and 25 to 34 (70%) versus those aged 35 and older (64%)
- youth aged 18 to 34 attending school (78%) versus NEET youth (70%)
- electors who had moved in the last 12 months (73%) versus those who had not (65%)
- electors who recalled EC advertising or communications (69% versus 55% of those who did not)

**Knowledge of polling day registration increased by post-election phase**

Between the early election and registration phases of the campaign survey, awareness of polling day registration did not change significantly (61% and 59%, respectively). Post-election awareness of polling day registration, however, increased significantly: 71% said that if an elector is not registered on election day and wants to vote, they can register at the polling place and then vote immediately after. Post-election awareness is identical to what was recorded following the 2019 general election, when 71% claimed to know that electors can register at the polling place on election day.

Figure 18: Knowledge of polling day registration



Q. If an elector is not registered on election day and wants to vote, can they register at the polling place and then vote immediately after?  
 Base: all respondents. [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

As in previous surveys of electors, knowledge that electors can register at the polling place on election day was much lower among electors in Quebec (56%) compared with all other provinces (results range from 75% to 80%). A possible explanation for this is that provincial elections in Quebec do not allow electors to register at the polls before voting on election day, while elections in all other jurisdictions allow for this in some form.

In addition, the following groups of electors were *less* likely to know about polling day registration:

- new Canadians (64% versus 72% of Canadians by birth)
- 18- to 24-year-olds (67% versus 71% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 72% of those aged 35 and older)
- NEET youth (65% versus 70% of youth attending school and 72% of youth working full-time)
- First Nations electors who live on a reserve (55%) compared with First Nations electors who did not live on a reserve (75%)

- electors who did not feel informed about when, where and how to vote (55% versus 72% of those who did)
- those who expected voting to be difficult (64% versus 73% who expected it to be easy)
- non-voters (55% versus 73% of voters)

The following were *more* likely to know about polling day registration:

- electors who had moved in the last 12 months (74% versus 71% of those who had not moved)
- electors who recalled EC advertising or communications (74% versus 63% of those who did not)
- electors who did *not* receive a VIC (78% versus 71% of those who did)

**One-half made sure they were registered to vote**

In the post-election survey, one-half (51%) of electors said they had made sure they were registered to vote in the election: 41% said they checked that they were already registered to vote; 8% said they updated their registration information; and 6% said they registered to vote recently.

The proportions of electors who checked that they were already registered to vote increased over the course of the voter information campaign. During the early election phase, just 9% of electors aware of the election had checked their voter registration. This increased to 17% by the VIC phase of the campaign and nearly doubled by the early voting and election day phases (30% and 33%, respectively). The proportions who reported that they had registered recently also increased modestly from 4% in the early election phase to 9% by the election day phase.

Figure 19: Registration actions

Registration actions	Wave 1 (n=53,731)					Wave 2 (n=39,516)
	Early election phase	Registration phase	VIC phase	Early voting phase	Election day phase	Post-election
Check that you are already registered	9%	11%	17%	30%	33%	41%
Update your registration information	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	8%
Register to vote recently	4%	4%	5%	7%	9%	6%
Did none of the above	80%	78%	71%	55%	50%	48%
Don't know	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%

Q. What, if anything, did you do to make sure you were registered to vote in this election? Did you...?  
 Base: those aware of the election [WAVE 1, WAVE 2].

Post-election, electors were *more* likely to have checked that they were already registered when they had recalled EC advertising or communications (41% versus 28% of those who had not) and when they had received a VIC (37% versus 28% of those who had not).



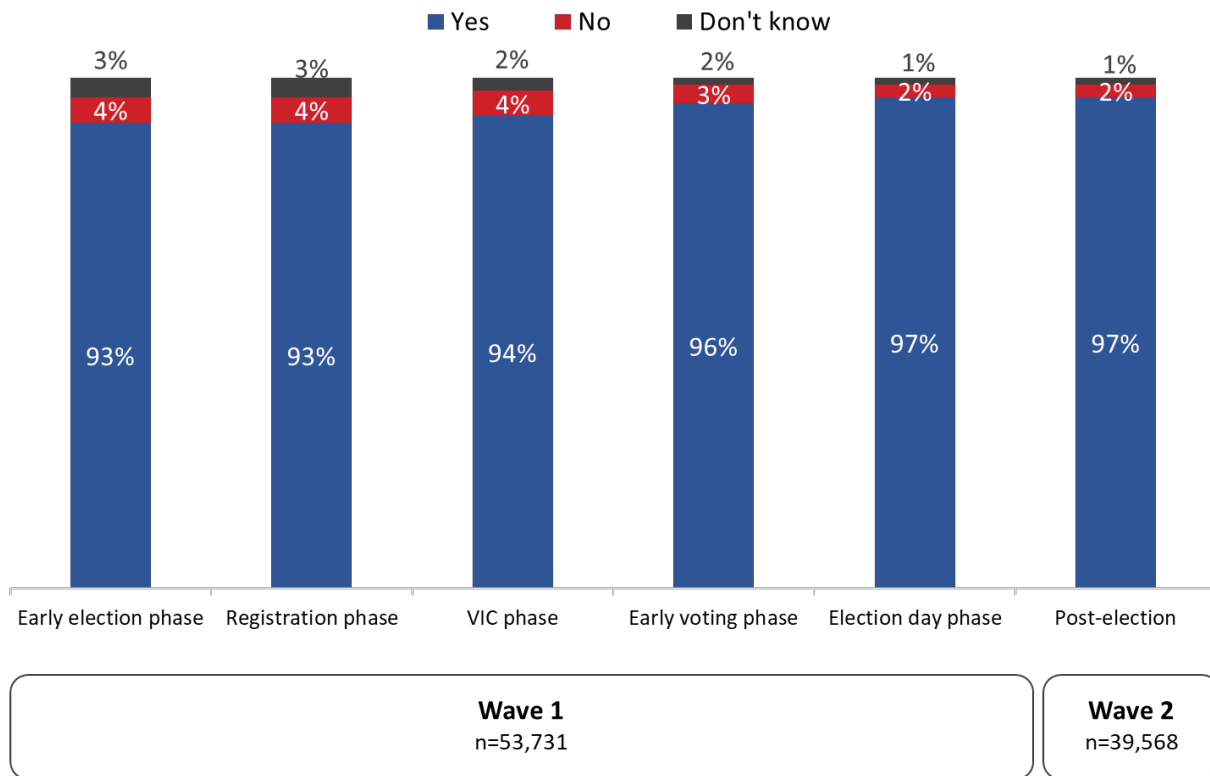
## 9. Knowledge of Identification Requirements

This section of the report presents electors' aided knowledge of the identification requirements for voting in a Canadian federal election.

### Widespread awareness of need to provide a proof of identity in order to vote

While the vast majority (93%) of electors surveyed during the early election phase said they were aware that voters have to present a proof of identity in order to vote, awareness did increase modestly through the election period. By the early voting phase, awareness of the requirement to provide a proof of identity had increased to 96% before reaching a high of 97% during the election day phase and remained stable through the post-election survey. Post-election awareness reached the same level it did following the 2021 and 2019 federal general elections.

Figure 20: Knowledge of proof-of-identity requirements



Q. To the best of your knowledge, do voters have to present a proof of identity in order to vote in a Canadian federal election?  
 Base: all respondents [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

Among post-election survey respondents, the following were *less* likely to correctly identify that a proof of identity is required to vote in a Canadian federal election:

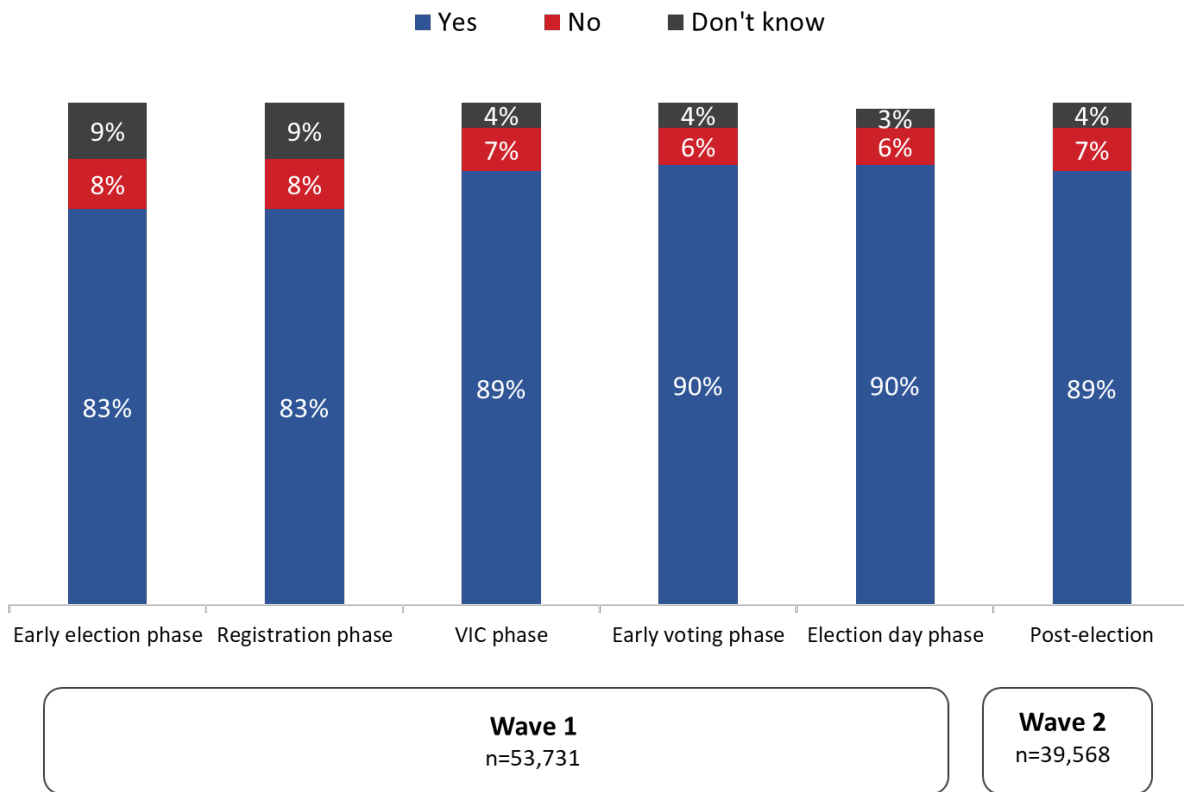
- Indigenous electors (94% versus 97% of non-Indigenous electors)
- First Nations electors who live on a reserve (87% versus 94% of First Nations electors who did not live on a reserve)
- non-voters (91% versus 97% of Canadians who voted in the 2021 GE)
- electors who were eligible to vote in 2019 but did not (91% versus 97% of those who voted)

- electors who did not feel informed about when, where and how to vote (92% versus 97% of those who did)

### Awareness of a proof of residence requirement increased through election period

Electors' awareness of the need to provide a proof of address to vote in a Canadian federal election was slightly lower than their knowledge of a proof of identity, but still very high at 89% in the post-election survey—a slight decline from the 2019 election (91%) but in line with 2015 (88%). Awareness, moreover, increased over the election period, from 83% during the early election and registration phases to 89% by the VIC phase, before reaching 90% during the early voting and election day phases.

Figure 21: Knowledge of proof of residence



Q. To the best of your knowledge, do voters have to present a proof of address in order to vote in a Canadian federal election? Base: all respondents [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

Post-election, the following subgroups of electors were *less* likely to be aware that a proof of address is required to vote:

- Indigenous electors (86% versus 89% of non-Indigenous electors)
- First Nations electors who live on a reserve (77% versus 86% of First Nations electors who did not live on a reserve)
- new Canadians (83% versus 86% of those who became citizens before the 2015 general election and 89% of Canadians by birth)
- those who did not recall any advertising or communications from Elections Canada (85% versus 90% of those who did)
- those who did not receive a VIC (87% versus 89% of those who did)

- non-voters in 2021 (80% versus 89% of voters) and in 2019 (81% versus 89% of voters)
- those not interested in politics (87% versus 89% of those interested in politics)
- electors who did not feel informed about when, where and how to vote (82% versus 89% of those who did)

## 10. Knowledge of Voting Methods

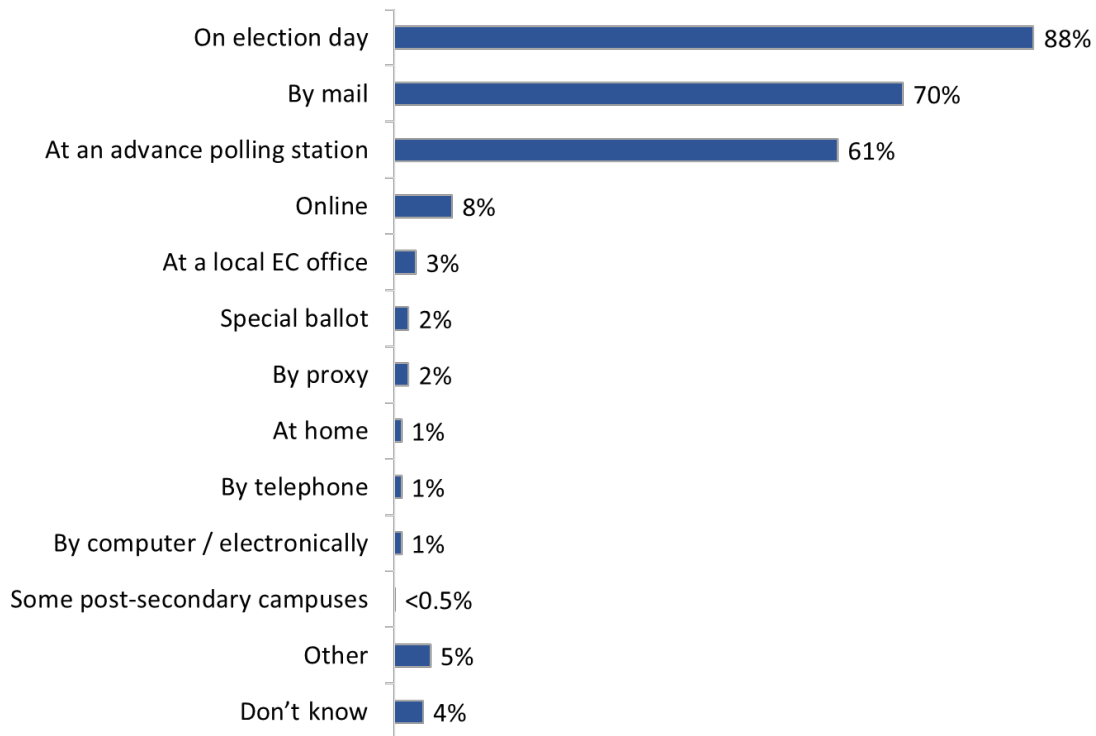
Electors’ knowledge of the voting methods available in a federal election was measured in both an unaided and aided manner. The results are presented in this section.

### Majorities aware that electors can vote on election day, by mail and at advance polls

Post-election survey respondents from the discrete telephone sample were asked, in an open-ended manner, to identify the current ways that electors can vote in a federal election. Awareness of in-person voting on election day was highest (88%), followed by seven in 10 (70%) who said electors can vote by mail and six in 10 (61%) who mentioned that electors can vote at an advance polling station.

Compared to results from the 2019 NES and 2015 Survey of Electors, knowledge of voting on election day declined slightly (from 91% in 2019 and 90% in 2015). There was also a decline in electors’ knowledge of the option to vote at an advance poll (from 71% in 2019 and 64% in 2015). On the other hand, knowledge of the option to vote by mail recorded a historic high for Elections Canada’s post-election surveys, having increased significantly amid the COVID-19 pandemic from the previous high of 23% in 2019 and from 13% in 2015.

Figure 22: Unaided knowledge of different ways to vote



Q. To the best of your knowledge, what are the current ways that electors can vote in a federal election? [Multiple responses accepted] Base: 1,560; all phone respondents [WAVE 2 phone respondents]

Among post-election respondents, notable subgroup differences included the following:

- Electors with a disability were less likely to mention in person on election day (83% versus 90% of electors without a disability) and by mail (65% versus 72%).
- Indigenous electors were less likely to be aware of the option to vote at an advance polling station (49% versus 62% of non-Indigenous electors) and by mail (53% versus 71%).
- New Canadians were less likely to mention in person on election day (73% versus 81% of those who became citizens before the 2015 general election and 90% of Canadians by birth), at an advance polling station (35% versus 53% and 64%) and by mail (40% versus 62% and 72%).
- 18- to 24-year-olds were less likely to be aware of the option to vote at an advance poll (42% versus 54% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 65% of those aged 35 and older).
- Electors who received a VIC were more likely to be aware of the option to vote at an advance polling station (65% versus 43% of those who did not receive a VIC) and by mail (73% versus 55%).

In addition, those who voted in 2021, those who voted in 2019, those interested in politics and those who felt informed about when, where and ways to vote were more likely than their counterparts to be knowledgeable of the options to vote in person on election day, at an advance poll and by mail.

#### Most electors recognized the main early voting options when aided

Throughout the election period and post-election surveys, online respondents were asked to identify from a list the various ways in which it is possible to vote besides at the polling station on election day. Post-election, 94% of electors knew it is possible to vote at an advance polling station, followed by 91% who identified voting by mail and half (50%) who mentioned voting at a local Elections Canada office. Awareness of the option to vote at an advance poll was highest overall across all phases of the campaign survey, while awareness of voting by mail steadily increased during the campaign survey (from 64% during the early election phase to 76% by the early voting phase).

Post-election levels of aided knowledge of voting at advance polls and at a local Elections Canada office were similar to the results obtained following the 2019 election (92% for advance polls and 50% for the local office). In contrast, aided knowledge of the option to vote by mail increased significantly since the 2019 NES, when 39% of post-election survey respondents said it is possible to vote by mail.

Figure 23: Aided knowledge of different ways to vote

Ways to vote	Wave 1 (n=44,329)				Wave 2 (n=31,621)
	Early election phase	Registration phase	VIC phase	Early voting phase	Post-election
At an advance polling station	85%	84%	86%	89%	94%
By mail	64%	65%	71%	76%	91%
At a local Elections Canada office	36%	35%	39%	42%	50%
Online (not available in a federal election)	9%	9%	9%	8%	7%
By telephone (not available in a federal election)	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%
None of the above	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Don't know	8%	8%	6%	4%	1%
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Q. Besides voting in person at the polling station on election day, is it possible to vote in the following ways? [Multiple responses accepted]

Base: all respondents [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

Among post-election respondents, notable subgroup differences included the following:

- Indigenous electors were less likely than non-Indigenous electors to identify voting at an advance polling station (87% versus 95%), by mail (83% versus 92%) or at a local Elections Canada office (46% versus 51%).
- Canadians by birth were more likely to identify advance polling stations (95% versus 91% of new Canadians and 92% of those who became citizens before the 2015 federal general election), by mail (92% versus 88% of those who became citizens before the 2015 federal general election) and at a local Elections Canada office (51% versus 48% of those who became citizens before the 2015 federal general election).
- Youth 18 to 34 attending school (94%), along with youth working full-time (92%), were more likely to identify voting by mail compared to NEET youth (87%).

In addition, those who recalled EC advertising, those who voted in 2021, those who voted in 2019, those interested in politics and those who felt informed about when, where and ways to vote were more likely than their counterparts to say it is possible to vote at an advance poll, by mail and at a local Elections Canada office.

## 11. Awareness and Perceptions of Elections Canada

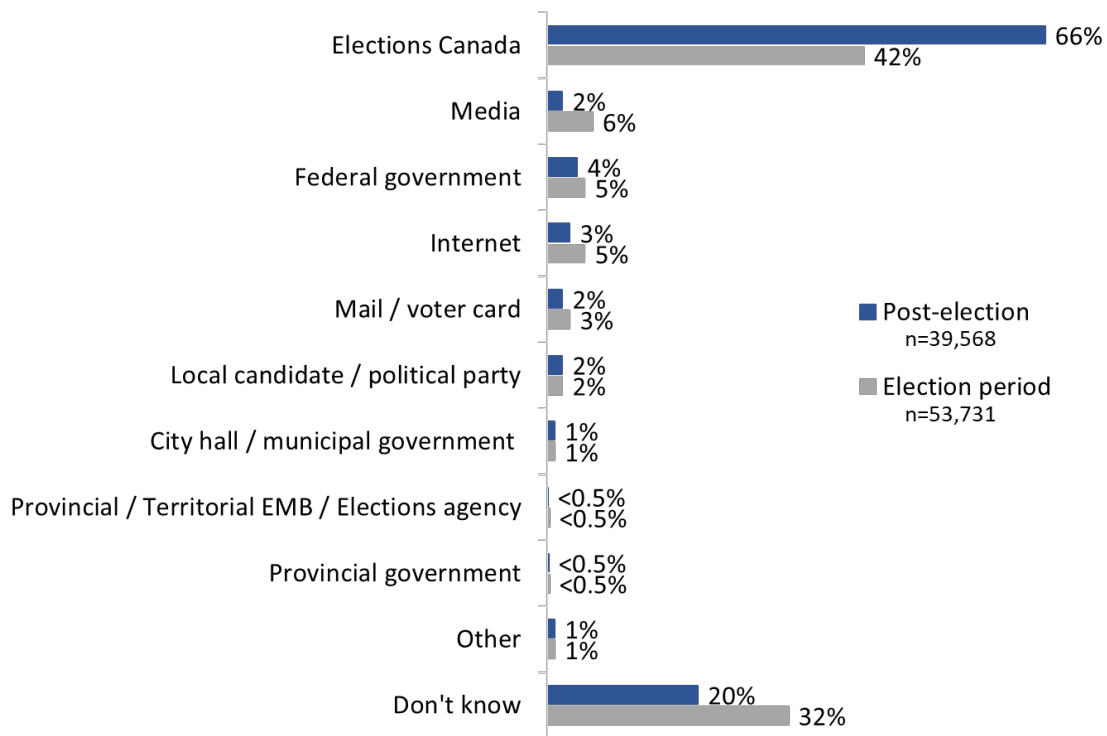
This section presents results on electors' awareness of and trust in Elections Canada as a source for electoral information during the 2021 GE.

### EC top of mind as a source for electoral information

Elections Canada was the top-of-mind source of electoral information for electors in both the election period and the post-election surveys, with recognition being higher after the election. Forty-two percent of electors surveyed during the election period identified EC as the organization that first comes to mind when looking for information on when, where and how to vote; by the post-election survey, this had climbed to 66%, a 24-point increase. This also represents a small increase from the 2019 election, when 62% of electors in the post-election survey said Elections Canada first comes to mind. One-third (32%) of those surveyed during the election period could not identify any organization as a source of electoral information; this proportion decreased to one-fifth (20%) of respondents post-election.

Other sources were mentioned by significantly smaller numbers and can be found below in figure 24.

Figure 24: Top-of-mind organization for electoral information



Q. When you think about getting information about when and where to vote, or any other information on the voting process, who or which organization first comes to mind? Base: all respondents [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

Post-election, the following subgroups of electors were *less* likely to identify Elections Canada as the organization that first comes to mind as a source of information on the voting process:

- electors with a disability (61% versus 69% of those without a disability)

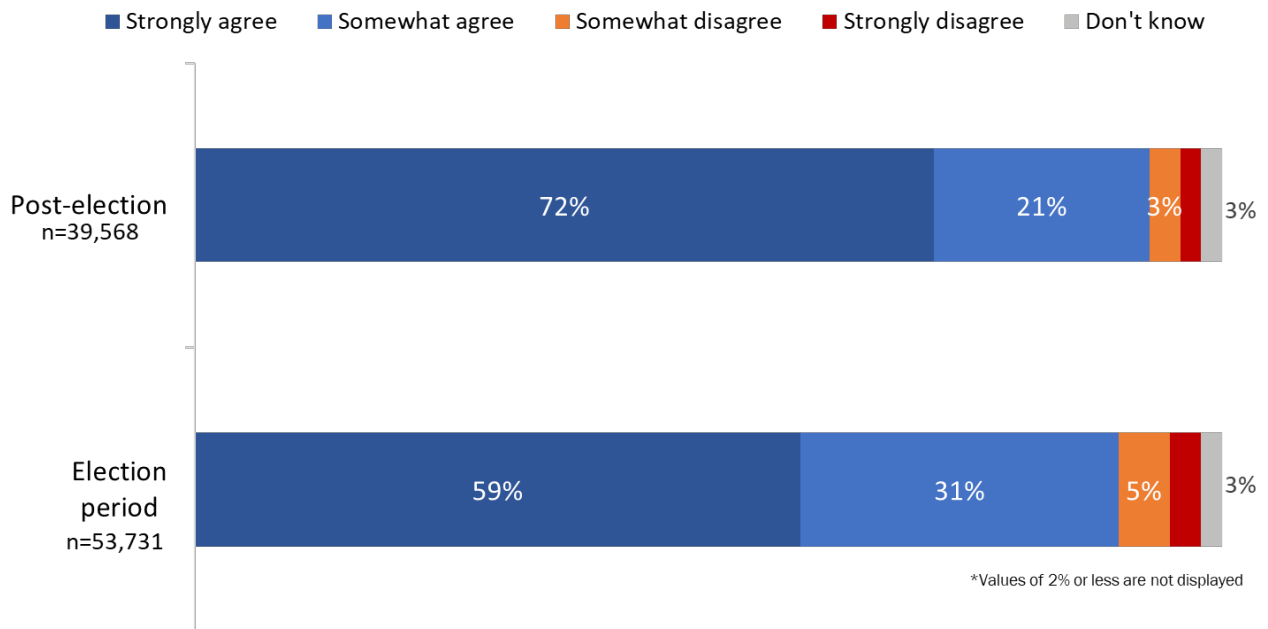
- Indigenous electors (52% versus 67% of non-Indigenous electors)
- First Nations electors who live on a reserve (24% versus 59% of First Nations electors not living on a reserve)
- Canadians by birth (66%) and those who became citizens before the 2015 general election (67%) compared to new Canadians (72%)
- 18- to 24-year-olds (59% versus 64% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 67% of those aged 35 and older)
- NEET youth (54% compared to 61% of youth aged 18 to 34 working full-time, 66% of youth attending school and 64% of all other youth)
- rural electors (60%) compared with urban electors (69%)

Those who recalled advertising or communications from Elections Canada, those who received their VIC, those who voted in 2021, those who voted in 2019, those interested in politics and those who felt informed about when, where and how to vote were *more* likely than their counterparts to point to Elections Canada as a source of information about the voting process.

### Widespread agreement that Elections Canada is the most trusted source of information about the electoral process

More than nine in 10 (93%) electors in the post-election survey agreed that Elections Canada is the most trusted source for information about the electoral process (up from 89% during the election period). This includes nearly three-quarters (72%) who strongly agreed with the statement.

Figure 25: Trust in Elections Canada as a source of information



Q. How strongly do you agree or disagree that Elections Canada is the most trusted source of information about the electoral process?  
Base: all respondents [WAVE 1, WAVE 2]

While the proportion of electors who agreed at least somewhat that Elections Canada is the most trusted source of information increased modestly from the 2019 NES post-election survey (91%), the proportion who *strongly* agreed increased significantly, from 57% in 2019 to 72% in 2021.



Among post-election respondents, the following subgroups of electors were *less* likely to agree *strongly* that Elections Canada is the most trusted source of information about the electoral process:

- electors with a disability (68% versus 75% of those without a disability)
- Indigenous electors (61% versus 74% of non-Indigenous electors)
- First Nations electors living on a reserve (48% versus 65% of First Nations electors not living on a reserve)
- Canadians by birth (72% versus 76% of those who became citizens before the 2015 federal election and 79% of new Canadians)
- 18- to 34-year-olds (69% versus 74% of Canadians aged 35 and older)
- NEET youth (61% versus 72% of youth attending school, 69% of youth working full-time and 69% of all other youth)
- rural electors (68% versus 75% of urban electors)
- those with a high school or less education (57% versus 67% of those with some post-secondary or college and 80% of those who have completed university)

On the other hand, those who recalled advertising or communications from Elections Canada, those who received their VIC, those who voted in 2021, those who voted in 2019, those interested in politics and those who felt informed about when, where and ways to vote were *more* likely than their counterparts to strongly agree that Elections Canada is the most trusted source of information about the electoral process.

## 12. Profile of Survey Respondents

	Base	Wave 1 n=53,731	Wave 2 n=39,568
<b>Province/territory</b>		<b>[weighted data]</b>	
Newfoundland and Labrador		1%	1%
Prince Edward Island		0.5%	0.5%
Nova Scotia		4%	4%
New Brunswick		2%	2%
Quebec		23%	22%
Ontario		38%	39%
Manitoba		4%	4%
Saskatchewan		3%	3%
Alberta		11%	11%
British Columbia		14%	14%
Nunavut		<0.5%	<0.5%
Northwest Territories		<0.5%	<0.5%
Yukon		<0.5%	<0.5%
<b>Indigenous</b>			
First Nations		1%	2%
Métis		2%	2%
Inuit		<0.5%	<0.5%
Non-Indigenous		94%	94%
Prefer not to answer		3%	3%
<b>Gender</b>			
Female		49%	50%
Male		48%	47%
Non-binary/transgender		1%	1%
Prefer not to answer		2%	2%
<b>Language spoken at home</b>			
English		77%	78%
French		20%	19%
Other		3%	3%
Prefer not to answer		<0.5%	<0.5%

	Base	Wave 1 n=53,731	Wave 2 n=39,568
<b>Education</b>			
Some elementary		<0.5%	<0.5%
Completed elementary		<0.5%	<0.5%
Some high school		2%	2%
Completed high school		8%	8%
Some community college/vocational/trade school/CEGEP		11%	10%
Completed community college/vocational/trade school/CEGEP		18%	18%
Some university		10%	9%
Completed university		29%	30%
Post-graduate university/professional school		20%	21%
Other		<0.5%	<0.5%
Don't know		<0.5%	<0.5%
Prefer not to answer		1%	1%
<b>Level of functional disability</b>			
No disability		61%	60%
Mild disability		20%	20%
Moderate disability		10%	10%
Severe disability		7%	7%
Very severe disability		2%	2%
<b>Age</b>			
18 to 24		10%	8%
25 to 34		16%	16%
35 to 44		16%	15%
45 to 54		16%	15%
55 to 64		18%	19%
65+		24%	27%
<b>Youth</b>			
Youth 18 to 34 attending school		7%	6%
Youth 18 to 34 working full-time and not attending school		8%	9%
NEET youth		2%	2%
All other youth		9%	7%
<b>New Canadians</b>			
Immigrants who became citizens <i>before</i> the 2015 GE		13%	13%
Immigrants who became citizens <i>after</i> the 2015 GE		2%	2%
Non-immigrants		85%	86%

## Part 2: Qualitative Research

This section of the report presents the results from the qualitative research conducted as part of our evaluation of the Elections Canada Voter Information Campaign for the 44th federal election.

**The results of this qualitative research are directional in nature: they provide an indication of participants' views about the issues explored, but they cannot be generalized to the full population of members of the targeted audience segments.**

### 1. Voting Experience and Impressions

This section reports on participants' experience during the federal election that was held on September 20, 2021.

#### **Most participants said they voted in person on election day**

Most research participants reported having voted in the most recent federal election. This includes most participants in each of the focus groups and all of the participants interviewed individually by telephone. Nearly all those who said they voted reported doing so in person (only seven voters reported doing so by mail), with most specifying that they did so on election day (September 20). All those who reported voting in advance specified doing so at an advance polling station.

#### **Most participants were aware of the option to vote by mail**

Most participants said they were aware of the option to vote by mail. Non-voters were as likely to be aware of this option as voters. Despite widespread awareness of the option to vote by mail, few said they looked into the option (how to apply to vote by mail).

#### **Habit and ease of voting in-person: main reasons for not considering voting by mail**

Participants who were aware of the option to vote by mail but who opted to vote in person were asked why they did not consider voting by mail. Two reasons were identified most often: habit and ease of voting in person. They often associated the ease of voting in person with the proximity of the polling place and/or the relatively short time it takes to cast one's vote in person. Other reasons given for voting in person included the following, all of which were identified by individuals or no more than a few participants:

- voting for the first time and therefore wanting to do so in person
- a tradition/habit of family members voting together
- wanting their children to watch them cast their vote
- wanting to vote in an advance poll
- a desire to get out of the house/get out in public
- a belief that a vote should be cast in a public forum
- a feeling that voting by mail seemed strange

A few voters who were aware of the option to vote by mail identified potential problems or inconveniences with voting by mail as their reasons for not choosing this option. These concerns included:

- not receiving one's voting kit/it being lost in the mail

- not noticing one's kit in a pile of mail or mistaking it for junk mail
- the completed ballot being lost in the mail or not received on time
- the impression that the process is time-consuming and/or more complicated than voting in person

Those who considered voting by mail or who looked into the option said they did so out of curiosity or because of its potential convenience. An example of the latter was the concern that voting in person might take much longer than usual as a result of COVID-19. No one who voted by mail or considered doing so said they did so out of health concerns.

### **Most described their voting experience as easy**

Most voters described the experience of voting in the most recent federal election as easy or relatively easy. This includes most participants in each of the focus groups and participants interviewed individually by telephone. Reasons given to explain the ease of the voting experience were varied, but typically involved the speed with which electors could cast their vote. Specific reasons offered routinely included:

- ability to vote at an advance poll, i.e., having different possible days on which to vote
- proximity of their assigned polling place
- there were no long lines or delays at their polling place
- helpful Elections Canada staff
- clear signage
- good organization/clear instructions

A new Canadian participant identified assistance provided in their mother tongue as contributing to the ease of the voting experience.

The few participants who described the voting experience as difficult often pointed to long lines/waits, sometimes associating this with what they perceived as limited staff/personnel at the polling place. Other difficulties included:

- the distance to their assigned polling place
- not receiving a voter information card (VIC) or having incorrect information on one's VIC (such as name misspelled)
- a perceived lack of organization/confusion at the polling place (occasionally linked to limited staff)
- inability to park in accessible parking due to lack of or limited spaces
- signage described as not well situated or easily visible
- lack of respect for and enforcement of physical-distancing protocols

A few youth participants who identified problems with their VIC associated this with the fact that they had recently moved or were in the process of moving in the period leading up to the election.

### **Experience of first-time voters tends to match expectations, while voters in previous federal elections see little, if any, change**

Only a small number of voters identified this election as their first time voting. Nearly all these first-time voters said their experience tended to match their expectations. To the extent that the experience varied from expectations, it was usually because it took either more or less time than expected. One first-time voter had expected to have the option to vote electronically in this election.

Most voters who had voted in previous federal elections described the process this time around as no more or less difficult than in previous elections. To the extent that the process was described either as more or less difficult compared to previous elections, this was usually because it took either more or less time than in previous elections.

A few Indigenous electors who voted by mail in this election described the process as easier this time because they did not have to go out to a polling place. On the other hand, one participant with a visual impairment described the voting experience in the previous federal election as easier because on that occasion, their assigned polling place was in their condominium building instead of at another location.

### **Health and safety measures noticed by in-person voters**

Participants who voted in person said they noticed the health and safety measures for COVID-19 that were in place at the polling place. While voters routinely said these made them feel safe when casting their ballot, it was also routinely mentioned that such measures have come to be expected in public spaces and that it is taken for granted that they will be in place for something like an election. That said, some participants specified that they appreciated such measures as voting booth wipe-downs between electors casting their ballot, the availability of hand sanitizer, use of disposable pencils, and clearly marked one-way traffic.

A few participants said they did not feel safer despite the measures in place. This was either because the number of people at the polling place made physical distancing difficult or because of a perceived lack of respect for and enforcement of physical-distancing protocols.

### **Various reasons for not voting**

Among participants who did not vote in the federal election, some had voted before, while others had not. Reasons given for not voting included not feeling informed enough about the issues to cast a ballot responsibly, being too busy or unable to vote, complications arising from a recent move or change in life circumstances, and disillusionment with politics in general. Almost no one expressed concerns about voting during a pandemic, and no one indicated that they did not vote due to the perceived difficulty of the voting process.

Youth participants and new Canadians were the most likely to identify not feeling informed enough about the issues as their reason for not voting. One participant said they did not vote because they had COVID-19. A few non-voters who were not aware of the option to vote by mail said they would have considered using this option had they known about it.

### **Location and voting hours: information most often sought**

Most participants said they did *not* look for information about how, where or when to vote in the lead-up to the election. However, at least a few participants in most focus groups and a few participants interviewed by telephone said they did look for such information. Respondents most often sought information related to polling place location and schedules for both regular and advance polls. Other types of information they sought included:

- ID requirements/valid pieces of ID
- requirements for voters and safety measures in place related to COVID-19
- information about when to expect one's VIC
- information about voting by mail

Everyone who sought information said they found or obtained the information they wanted.

### **Obtaining information included both active and passive means**

Sources of information included the Elections Canada website, Google searches, online searches (unspecified or specific site not recalled), word of mouth/acquaintances, and the VIC. Some participants were looking for information in the early weeks of the election period, but others expected that the correct information would arrive on their VIC and so waited to receive their VIC instead of actively seeking information. This included information about polling location, opening and closing times of polling places, and dates for voting in advance polls.

Among those who actively sought out the information they wanted, the point at which they started to look for it varied and tended to depend on the information they sought. For example, those looking for information on advance polls and mail-in ballot kits started looking early in the election period. Conversely, those who sought information about such things as voting hours, ID requirements and requirements/measures related to COVID-19 tended to do so no more than a few days before election day.

## 2. Review of the Voter Information Campaign Materials

This section reports on participant feedback related to ads that were part of a multi-media information campaign conducted by Elections Canada during the recent federal election. The campaign was designed to help Canadians understand when, where and ways to register and vote, as well as to provide information on the measures in place to ensure electors could register and vote safely and to ensure poll workers could do their job safely. The ads appeared on television, on radio, in print, on social media and as banner ads on the internet.

### 2.1: Overview

#### A) Procedure for reviewing ads

Participants reviewed ads from each of four phases of the main advertising campaign, as well as from the two additional ad campaigns that ran during the entire election period. Each phase of the main campaign focused on a specific theme: registration, the voter information card (VIC), early voting options and election day. The additional components consisted of a recruitment campaign that focused on employment opportunities during the general election and the safety campaign, which focused on the safety measures in place to protect poll workers and voters during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were presented ads from each campaign and phase in succession and asked a series of questions for each. Ads were presented to participants in the online focus groups via the moderator's monitor, while participants in the in-depth telephone interviews accessed the ads on their own computers via a link.

The following specifications applied to the presentation of ads:

- The number of ads reviewed by participants varied by campaign and by audience.<sup>8</sup>
- TV and radio ads were rotated across focus groups and in-depth interviews so that half the participants were shown the TV version and half heard the radio version.

#### B) Description of ads

Appendix 3.3 of the NES Methodology Report provides tables that identify the ads focus group and interview participants reviewed in each medium for each of the ad campaigns and phases.

What follows is a brief description of the ads by media channel:

- Television ads: The TV ads reviewed by participants for the safety campaign and the VIC, early voting options and election day phases of the main campaign used graphic icons (as opposed to actors) and were accompanied by background music and a voiceover. The target audiences for these TV ads included the general population (all eligible voters), Indigenous electors and members of ethnic communities.
- Radio ads: The radio ads reviewed by participants for the safety campaign and the VIC, early voting options and election day phases of the main campaign included voiceovers accompanied by

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<sup>8</sup> The number of ads reviewed by participants was adjusted following the sixth focus group because the sessions were running long. The changes applied to subsequent focus groups and all in-depth telephone interviews and involved no longer presenting TV and radio ads dealing with the VIC or web banner ads dealing with recruitment and registration.



background music. The target audience for these radio ads included the general population (all eligible voters), Indigenous electors and members of ethnic communities.

- Social media ads: The social media ads reviewed by participants for the recruitment campaign and the registration phase (and, in the case of student youth, for the election day phase) were short video ads that included bright colours and lively background music. These ads targeted the following audiences: the general population (all eligible voters), youth, Indigenous electors, new Canadians and those who had recently moved residences.
- Web banner ads: The banner ads reviewed by participants for the recruitment and safety campaigns and for the registration and VIC phases of the main campaign were multi-frame animated ads (they included a series of frames succeeding each other). These ads targeted the following audiences: the general population (all eligible voters), youth, Indigenous electors, new Canadians and those who had recently moved residences.
- Print ads: The print ads reviewed by participants for the early voting and election day phases were published in newspapers. These ads targeted the general population (all eligible voters), Indigenous electors and members of ethnic communities.
- Static social media posts: The static social media posts reviewed by participants for the election day phase targeted youth enrolled in post-secondary education, persons with disabilities and members of ethnic communities.

A sample of the ad messages, media formats and creative designs can be found on Elections Canada's website ([Advertising campaign – Spread the word – 44th General Election – September 20, 2021 – Elections Canada](#)).

### C) Presentation of findings

Some feedback from participants is best presented with a focus on the media channel because the feedback relates primarily to the vehicle, or format, for the ad (television, radio, social media video ad, animated web banner ad, print ad or static social media post). This applies to overall impressions/reactions, perceived strengths and weaknesses, and ease of understanding/clarity. In these areas, feedback on ads of a certain type was often similar or identical, regardless of the ad message or information.

On the other hand, some feedback is best presented by phase or campaign rather than by medium. This includes recall of ads, the perceived main message of the ads and perceptions of missing information. Consequently, feedback from participants is presented below under two main headings: assessment of ads by media channel, and assessment of ads by message.

## 2.2: Assessment of Ads by Media Channel

### Overview of ads by media channel

Overall, TV and radio ads tended to elicit the most consistently positive reactions from participants. This was underscored by the fact that, although participants were asked not to compare ads, they sometimes identified television or radio ads as ones they liked the most in those phases of the information campaign in which they appeared (safety, registration/VIC,<sup>9</sup> early voting and election day). Ads produced in other

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<sup>9</sup> TV and radio ads were blended—that is, these ads incorporated information on registration and voter information cards.

media (print ads, static social media posts, social media video ads, animated web banner ads) were more likely to elicit mixed reactions, with participants routinely identifying aspects or features they liked, did not like (or liked less), or about which they tended to be indifferent or neutral.

## **A) Television ads**

Television ads tested with participants focused on messages about safety, voter registration/VIC, early voting and election day.<sup>10</sup>

### **A.1: Overall impressions**

Participants in both the focus groups and the in-depth interviews who reviewed television ads routinely reacted positively to them. As noted above, positive impressions were underscored by the fact that the television ads were sometimes identified by participants as their favourite ad in a particular phase of the campaign, even though they were asked not to compare ads.

### **A.2: Perceived strengths and weaknesses**

Participants identified a number of strengths or positive features of the television ads, including the following perceptions:

- They are detailed and informative but do not include too much information. Regarding the TV ad dealing with safety, it was noted that it was good to include the information that voters could bring their own pen or pencil if they wanted.
- The message/information is simple, clear and easy to understand.
- The ads are captivating due to the combination/coordination of music, graphic icons and the voiceover (the use of both female and male voices was described by some as appealing). It was observed that the audio and video components are synchronized, so that one sees and hears the same things at the same time, which facilitates understanding.
- The tone of the ads is motivating/lively/upbeat.
- The overall pacing is good, making the ads easy to follow and the information easy to remember and process.
- The tagline “It’s our vote” is uplifting/empowering when spoken/heard.

Criticism of the TV ads was limited. One general criticism of the TV ads made by some hearing-impaired participants was that they lack captioning.<sup>11</sup> Another criticism, offered by a few participants, was that the ads are not actor-based. It was suggested that depicting people would make the ads even easier to relate to. It was also observed that the colour scheme in the early voting TV ad is not very engaging, though it was also suggested that the voiceover compensates for this through its friendly, engaging tone.

## **B) Radio ads**

The radio ads tested with participants focused on the following: safety, voter registration/VIC, early voting and election day.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See the specifications identified earlier regarding the presentation of TV ads to participants.

<sup>11</sup> The TV ads that aired as part of the campaign did have captions for those with impaired hearing.

<sup>12</sup> See the specifications identified earlier regarding the presentation of radio ads to participants.

### **B.1: Overall impressions**

Overall impressions of the radio ads were similar to those offered in relation to the TV ads, in the sense that participants in both the focus groups and in-depth interviews reacted positively to them, occasionally identifying them as their favourite in a particular phase or information component of the campaign.

### **B.2: Perceived strengths and weaknesses**

Perceived strengths or positive features of the radio ads mirrored those of the TV ads and included the following perceptions:

- They are detailed and informative, yet concise in the sense that there is not too much information.
- The message is short, clear, to the point and easy to understand.
- The voiceovers are very good, with participants routinely describing the voices as “clear,” “pleasant,” “positive,” “calming/soothing.” As a result, the ads attract and hold one’s attention. The use of both female and male voices was seen as a good feature of the radio ads.
- The overall pacing is good (not too slow or too fast).
- The background music is upbeat/positive and complements the voiceover.
- The tagline “It’s our vote” is uplifting/empowering when heard.

Negative feedback on the radio ads was limited and tended to focus on the background music. Specifically, some participants described the music as a little too loud, making it difficult to hear or interfering with the voiceover. Beyond this, the only other negative feedback on the radio ads included the impression that they are a bit too long and the impression that there are too many dates to remember in the version on early voting. Concerns about the length or content of the radio ads were raised by only a few participants.

## **C) Social media video ads**

All participants were shown two social media video ads: one dealing with recruitment and the other dealing with voter registration. In addition, student participants were shown a social media video dealing with election day, designed for students living away from home.

### **C.1: Overall impressions**

Overall reactions to these ads tended to range from moderately positive to neutral or mixed. Participants routinely identified things in these ads that they both liked and disliked (or liked less). Moreover, some features of these ads elicited mixed reactions, with some participants liking them and others not liking them. This should be kept in mind when reviewing the perceived strengths and weaknesses identified below, as the same feature might appear as a strength to some and a weakness to others.

### **C.2: Perceived strengths and weaknesses**

The most frequently identified strength of the social media videos was the content or information provided. This information was routinely described as simple and easy to understand, with some also describing it by using expressions such as “good,” “informative,” “important,” or “new.” Youth and new Canadians in particular emphasized the importance of information in the registration ad concerning people who have recently moved and/or became a citizen and people who are voting for the first time.

Other perceived strengths of the social media videos included the following:

- they are short, simple and to the point, providing key information succinctly
- they are attention-grabbing/eye catching and captivating (for example, the phrasing used in the recruitment ad was described as “catchy”)
- the design is crisp and professional looking
- the colours/colour combinations are vivid/attractive/engaging
- the ads flow well, providing one piece of information per slide and using a different colour for each slide, something that makes the ads easy to follow

The most frequently identified perceived weakness of the social media videos was their speed or fast pace. Although, as noted above, one of the perceived strengths of these ads was their succinct presentation of information, many felt that the pacing is too quick. Some felt that the pacing affected the clarity and ease of understanding of the ads because the speed at which the information was presented made them unsure that they had processed it/retained it. A few participants described these ads as “forgettable” or “not memorable” for the same reason (because of the speed of the presentation).

This impression was emphasized in particular by some new Canadian participants who said they had difficulty focusing on the text/information because it moved too quickly. A few other participants suggested that because of the quick pace of these ads, electors whose first language is neither English nor French might miss or have difficulty remembering the information provided. Others who commented negatively on the speed/pace of these ads included participants with a visual impairment and some youth participants (the latter focused specifically on the election day ad designed for students living away from home).

Other perceived weaknesses of the social media videos were identified by no more than a few participants and included the following:

- the black background in the recruitment ad, described as dark and ominous looking
- the colour scheme (particularly the use of purple), described as unattractive
- the absence of people/human characters

As noted above, some participants with a visual impairment commented negatively on the speed of these ads. In addition to this, a few other features of these ads elicited negative comments from members of this audience, with a focus on how their combined effect made the ads difficult to follow. These other features were described as poor contrast in the colour schemes, small font size and the use of too many colours. It was suggested that the combination of these features makes it difficult for people with low vision to clearly see these ads and/or properly grasp the information. Some participants with a visual impairment also noted that the social media ads did not include a voiceover, which was something they felt would help viewers follow the ad and more easily grasp the information.

## D) Animated web banner ads

Animated web banner ads tested with participants dealt with the following topics: recruitment, safety, registration and the VIC.<sup>13</sup>

### D.1: Overall impressions

Animated web banner ads typically elicited neutral or indifferent overall reactions. Feedback on both content and style/design tended to be mixed—both elicited positive and negative comments. Moreover, some participants observed that they liked the information in the ads but not the style/design. With a focus on the style/design, the most frequently offered criticism of these ads was that there is little or nothing attention grabbing about them, resulting in their possibly not being noticed or remembered.

### D.2: Perceived strengths and weaknesses

Perceived strength of the banner ads included:

- the information provided is clear and concise
- the information provided is important (for example, “new” to some, as in the case of the recruitment ad, and “reassuring” to some, in the case of the safety ad)
- the ads are short and to the point
- the frames move at a good pace/are well cadenced, allowing time to read and process the information
- inclusion of an image of the voter information card in the VIC ad

The most commonly identified perceived weaknesses of the web banner ads was that they are not very attention grabbing/captivating, with some describing them as bland and/or boring. Other perceived weaknesses were identified less often and included:

- Their overall look and feel seems somewhat dated/not modern looking
- They lack a voiceover (identified mainly by participants with a visual impairment, but also by a few new Canadians)
- They are too short/lack information/lack detail
- The ads are difficult to see/follow clearly. This criticism was made by some participants with a visual impairment: for example, it was observed that the use of an amber background in one of the frames of the safety ad makes it difficult to see and read the information

Perceived weaknesses of specific ads included:

- the symbol of the person behind Plexiglass in the safety ad (it is unclear what this symbol represents)
- the pace in the safety ad is a little too fast (identified by participants with a visual impairment)
- information in the safety ad is superfluous 20 months into the pandemic (the type of safety measures outlined in the ad is what participants have come to expect in public spaces after nearly two years of living through the pandemic)
- the image of the VIC in the VIC ad is too small

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<sup>13</sup> See the specifications identified earlier regarding the presentation of web banner ads to participants.

## E) Print ads

With the exception of participants with a disability, all participants were shown a print ad dealing with early voting and a print ad dealing with election day. Participants with a disability were shown the same print ad dealing with early voting reviewed by others, but they were shown two election day ads with a focus on accessibility: a print ad and a static social media post.

### E.1: Overall impressions

The print ads dealing with early voting and election day elicited reactions that ranged from positive to negative, including some neutral comments. Reactions tended to focus on the *type* of information provided and the *amount* of information included in the ads. Participants reacted positively to the type of information provided, routinely describing it as complete and clear and easy to understand. The information provided was also sometimes described as important and a good reminder/resource for anyone planning to vote in advance polls or on election day. Indeed, a few participants who had not seen any print ads dealing with early voting and election day during the campaign said they would have saved such ads had they seen them because it would have served as a good reminder as the election approached.

Reaction to the *amount* of information provided in the print ads was mixed, with some reacting positively, some neutrally and some negatively. Neutral or indifferent reaction to these ads was also sometimes linked to the medium, with some participants noting that they do not habitually engage with print media, and as a result such ads would be unlikely to resonate with them.

### E.2: Perceived strengths and weaknesses

The most frequently identified strength or positive feature of the print ads was the details and clarity of the specific information provided. For example, the health and safety information (including the ability to bring one's own pencil or pen) was described as a strength in both the early voting and the election day print ads. Specific perceived strengths of the early voting print ad included identification of specific options and dates/timelines for voting before election day and the reminder to check one's VIC. In the case of the election day print ad, participants routinely described the information about the ability to register on site as important, with some noting that this was new information to them. Participants with a disability routinely commented positively on the emphasis placed on accommodations in the election day print ad they were shown, with some describing such information as reassuring.

Other perceived strengths or positive features included:

- the layout/display of information in the early voting and election day print ads
- the amount of detail/information provided in the early voting and election day print ads
- the balance between text and images in the early voting and election day print ads

The most frequently identified weaknesses or criticism of the early voting and election day print ads was the perception that they are text heavy or that there is a lot of information to read. While this was noted by members of all audiences, with some participants suggesting that the amount of text/information be pared down, it tended to be emphasized by new Canadians. In terms of design, some participants felt that the colour scheme in the non-targeted election day print ad and the election day print ad focusing on accessibility is too busy.

Other perceived weaknesses related to specific print ads. They included the following, all of which were identified by small numbers of participants:

- The early voting print ad is not attractive or attention grabbing due to what was described as its drab or poor colour scheme. It was also suggested, in reference to advance voting by mail, that the expression “Apply by Tuesday, September 14, 6 pm” might be unclear to someone whose first language is not English.
- The font is too small for the bulleted points in the longer election day print ad focusing on accessibility.

## **F) Static social media posts**

Members of the following audiences were shown static social media posts dealing with election day:

- Student participants were shown a static social media post with a focus on students living away from home.
- New Canadian participants were shown a static social media post with a focus on first-time voters.
- Participants with a disability were shown a static social media post with a focus on accessibility.

### **F.1: Overall impressions**

The static social media posts dealing with election day were less likely to elicit general or overall reactions than the print ads. Overall reactions tended to be neutral and included the impression that the information was short, straightforward, and clear and easy to understand.

### **F.2: Perceived strengths and weaknesses**

The most frequently identified strength or positive feature of the static social media posts was the specific information provided. Some students reacted to the election day static social media post for students living away from home by noting that this information was not something they knew or had thought about. New Canadians routinely said that information in the election day static social media post reminding first-time voters to make sure they are registered is important and a good reminder. Participants with a disability described the reference to the availability of accessibility tools and services as reassuring. In addition to the content of the ad, some participants with a disability commented positively on the colour scheme in the static social media post.

Criticism of the static social media posts was voiced by new Canadians and persons with a disability. A number of new Canadians felt that the picture in the version of the ad they were shown is meaningless/unconnected to the message and too large in proportion to the text. Some participants with a disability felt that the ad they were shown is too succinct/lacks detail, and a few found the meaning of the symbol in the square with a blue background to be unclear.

## **2.3: Assessment of Ads by Message**

This section reports feedback elicited from participants that concerned the messages or information associated with a particular ad campaign or phase more than the specific medium.



## Overview

Recall of ads from the voter information campaign was relatively limited. Most participants could not recall having seen or heard any of the ads presented to them, and there was no noticeable difference by audience type or location in this regard. To the extent that ads were recalled, they were most likely to be radio or TV ads.

The ads presented to participants were routinely described as clear and easy to understand across all phases of the ad campaign. Participants had no difficulty identifying a main message or messages they felt the ads were trying to communicate. At times, there was overlap in terms of perceived messages across phases of the campaign. In some instances, ads were seen primarily or exclusively as providing information to electors, while in some instances they were seen (or also seen) as asking electors to take some type of action. Calls to action in the ads, however, were often seen as implicit as opposed to explicit.

Overall, participants identified relatively little in the way of additional types of information that would have been useful or helpful to include in specific ad campaigns or phases. Suggestions not necessarily associated with a specific phase included depicting people in the ads to humanize them and make them more relatable; and using more motivational messaging/calls to action (such as encouragement to vote).

### A) Recruitment

#### A.1: Perceived message

Two messages were seen to be conveyed in the set of ads dealing with recruitment, with some participants seeing elements of both messages in the ads:

- Employment available with Elections Canada: One message was publicizing/advertising employment opportunities with Elections Canada. There were two variations on how participants interpreted this message. One variation involved a straightforward descriptive message advertising this possibility (employment is available for anyone interested). Another variation involved more of an appeal to *motivate* people to apply for work with Elections Canada (such as your help is needed/we need workers/work for us). This latter variation was interpreted as a call to action.
- Get involved: The other perceived message focused on civic-mindedness or doing one's civic duty. Here the emphasis was more on promoting the opportunity to work for Elections Canada as a way to get involved in civic affairs, fulfill one's civic duty or participate in the democratic process in another way in addition to voting. New Canadian participants, in particular, detected this message in the recruitment ads and were more likely to interpret it as a call to action.

The first message was much more likely to be associated with the animated web banner version of the ad, while the second message was much more likely to be associated with the social media video ad.

Many participants said that if they had seen one of the recruitment ads at the start of the campaign, they would have considered working at a polling place. Some others said that the likelihood of their doing so would be based on the following types of considerations: if they had been looking for work, if the work hours were flexible, and if pay rates and hours of work were sufficiently attractive. Participants who said they would not have considered working at the polls usually pointed to lack of time and/or other responsibilities, such as work or school. Other considerations were identified by single individuals or no more than a few participants. These included being retired, a physical disability or emotional condition, a preference for full-time permanent work, life circumstances at the start of the campaign, already having done this kind of work previously and health considerations as a result of the pandemic.



### A.2: Information perceived to be missing

Participants identified various pieces of information that they thought could have been helpful to receive at this point of the campaign. That said, some added that they would not expect the ad to include every piece of information, especially since contact information is provided for anyone interested in following up. The specific pieces of information seen to be “missing” include:

- wages/rates of pay
- required skills
- responsibilities
- deadline for applications
- whether the work is full-time or part-time
- whether flexible work hours are available
- whether vaccination against COVID-19 is required
- a telephone number (in the banner ad version)
- measures in place to keep workers safe (in the social media video ad)

Although not seen to be a matter of missing information as such, it was suggested that the banner ad could be made more inviting or personable to motivate more people to respond to this possibility.

## B) Safety

### B.1: Perceived message

There was widespread agreement among participants that the main message in the set of ads from the safety campaign was the importance of safety when voting, with a focus on reassuring voters. A few suggested that this focus on reassuring voters was also, in a sense, an attempt to encourage them to vote. Variations on this theme included the following:

- voting is safe/safety measures are in place
- Elections Canada takes safety seriously, so don't worry/do be reassured
- bring a mask/do your part by wearing a mask

Apart from the specific instruction to bring a mask, most participants did not detect a call to action in this ad. A few detected an implicit or indirect call to action by suggesting that reassuring electors about the safety of voting could be interpreted as an encouragement to show up to vote.

### B.2: Information perceived to be missing

Information perceived to be missing in these ads was limited to the following: repeating the phone number in the radio ad to facilitate recollection and reminding electors of the mail-in voting option in case they have safety concerns.

## C) Registration

### C.1: Perceived message

Participants routinely suggested that the main message in the set of ads dealing with registration focused on the need/importance of being registered in order to vote. Variations of this theme included:

- make sure you are registered to vote/check your registration
- you have a right to vote, so make sure you can exercise it
- voting is important, so make sure you can do so
- make sure your information is up to date if your life circumstances have changed recently

According to some participants, this set of ads included a call to action, in the sense that it was a reminder to verify that they are registered to vote and to register if they are not.

### C.2: Information perceived to be missing

Information identified as missing from this phase of the campaign included<sup>14</sup>:

- if it is possible to register online
- how long it takes to register
- specifying that if someone is registered, they should receive a VIC

## D) Voter Information Card

### D.1: Perceived message

Specific messages identified in the set of ads related to the VIC included variations on the following, each of which was seen to involve some kind of call to action:

- be on the lookout for your VIC
- verify the information on your VIC when you receive it
- make sure everything is in order before you go to vote
- you may need/want to bring your VIC with you when you go to vote

### D.2: Information perceived to be missing

Information identified as missing from this phase of the campaign included the following:<sup>7</sup>

- specifying that one should contact Elections Canada if one has not received a VIC
- specifying the date by which the VIC should arrive by mail in the animated web banner ad

## E) Early voting

### E.1: Perceived message

Participants routinely suggested that the main message in this set of ads is the possibility of voting early (before election day) and the various options for voting early (how to do it). Some suggested that the message in these ads is the general one that electors have options when it comes to voting or that everyone has the opportunity to vote if they want. It was also suggested that there is a call to action through an implicit encouragement to vote in these ads. Specifically, it was suggested that emphasizing

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<sup>14</sup> Some of this information appeared in these ads but in a format not reviewed as part of the research.

both early-voting options and safety measures in the print ad sends the message that there is no reason not to vote; that is, anyone who wants to vote can do so, and voting is safe.

## **E.2: Information perceived to be missing**

Information identified as missing from this phase of the campaign included the following:

- specifying/clarifying in the TV and radio ads that the deadline to apply to vote by mail or at an Elections Canada office is the same: September 14
- identifying calendar dates for early voting in the TV ad (showing the actual numerical dates instead of dots on a calendar)

## **F) Election day**

### **F.1: Perceived message**

Participants suggested that the main message in this set of ads was to remind people of the date of the election.

- Student youth suggested that the message in the ad targeting students studying away from home was a reminder that they could still vote even if they were away from home. With that in mind, a few suggested that the message was also encouraging them to vote, if only because it was targeting them specifically.
- Persons with a disability said that the message in election day ads focusing on accessibility was reassuring to electors who need accommodations that these will be in place for them.
- New Canadians saw the following messages in the ad targeting first-time voters: a reminder of the election date, a reminder to register and encouragement to vote. As was the case with some student youth, there was a sense that an ad about election day targeting a specific audience (such as first-time voters) was also an encouragement or a reminder to vote.

### **F.2: Information perceived to be missing**

Information identified as missing from this phase of the campaign included:

- specifying the actual hours during which polls are open, not just the number of hours
- examples of acceptable pieces of ID for voting
- what to do/who to contact if one needs help or information about accommodations at polling places

### 3. Perceptions of the Elections Canada Guide

This section reports on participants' impressions of Elections Canada's *Guide to the Federal Election* booklet. Participants were asked to review the guide, then they were asked for their impressions of it.

#### Limited recall of receiving the *Guide to the Federal Election*

Relatively few participants recalled receiving the *Guide to the Federal Election*, which was mailed to every household in Canada during the election period. Indeed, no more than a few participants in any of the focus groups or interviews remembered receiving the guide. In the Winnipeg focus groups—one conducted with Indigenous electors and the other with NEET (Not Employed, in Education or in Training) youth—no one recalled receiving it. In addition, none of the participants with a visual impairment were aware that the guide is available in alternate formats, such as Braille, DAISY and large print.

#### Positive impressions of guide

Overall impressions of the guide were positive and sometimes very positive. Positive feedback focused on content, layout and style and routinely included the following type of feedback:

- The content is clear, comprehensive and informative. With a focus on content, some new Canadians emphasized the importance of such information for first-time voters, while a few participants described the guide as thorough but not too long.
- The guide is user-friendly/easy to browse and well laid out.
- The graphics are good, and there is a good balance of text and images. The picture of the VIC, in particular, was identified by some as very good.

Negative comments were limited and specific. These included:

- Reorder the presentation of the information so that information about the VIC precedes safety information. The former was described as more important in the sense that it might require some follow-up on the part of electors: specifically, making sure they are registered.
- There is no information on how to vote from outside Canada.
- The guide is a bit long for new Canadians whose first language is not English or French.
- It does not engage with non-voters, such as explaining why voting is important.
- Mailing hard-copy versions of the guide to all voters is expensive and involves too much paper, so is not environmentally friendly.
- Create a more culturally appropriate or inclusive version of the guide in which Indigenous Canadians are visually represented.

## 4. Overall Assessments of the Information Campaign

This section reports on participants' overall impressions of the information campaign.

### Materials seen as complementary and providing sufficient information

There was near unanimity among participants that the campaign materials work well together and complement each other. Reasons routinely provided to explain why included the following:

- Materials across the various phases of the campaign have a common or consistent look and feel. Examples include the colour schemes used, the background music, the voiceovers, the tagline (“It’s our vote”) and contact information for Elections Canada. So, although the information presented in each phase varies, there is a unifying theme to the ads running through the various phases.
- There is some repetition of information in ads that creates continuity across the various campaigns and phases. Examples include the safety information that comes up periodically and the emphasis on registration in the registration, VIC and election day phases of the campaign. With a focus on the information provided, it was also suggested that the ads complement each other because the information is consistent.
- There is a clear progression and sequencing of information in the ads. The ads were seen to progress both chronologically (from earlier to later phases of the campaign) and logically (each phase focuses on one aspect or theme related to voting, and they work together to build a cohesive whole).

Negative feedback on how well the campaign materials work together or complement each other was limited. This included the impression that the print ads and static social media posts were put together by a different team than the video ads because the basic approach seems inconsistent. It also included the impression that there is too much repetition between ads from different parts of the campaign, particularly the emphasis on safety measures.

There was widespread agreement that the materials provide an understanding of when and where to vote and the ways to register and vote. Information perceived to be missing in this regard was relatively limited, as highlighted above in sections 2.3 and 3.

### Perceived target audience(s) of information campaign

While there was a widespread impression that the target audience for the information campaign was electors in general, participants also routinely suggested that the focus might be more on new electors voting for the first time. This was seen to include young voters and new Canadians in particular, but also individuals described as unfamiliar with the electoral process. This impression tended to be based on the idea that people who have voted before are familiar with the process and therefore do not need this information as much as those who are unfamiliar with the process. With this in mind, it was suggested that the information provided is a good reminder for experienced voters but not as crucial to them as it is to first-time voters.

Some also suggested that the ads, while directed to all electors, might also be targeting electors who are unsure/undecided about voting. Reasons for this impression were based on two aspects of the ads. One was the emphasis on safety measures, seen as a way of informing all electors about such measures, but also as a way of reassuring those who might have concerns about voting during the pandemic. The other was the impression that there is an implicit call to action in some of the ads, specifically an encouragement

to vote. This was associated with reminders about registration and information about different options for voting (advance polls, election day and voting by mail).

The impression that the target audience includes all electors, but with specific subgroups in mind, was also based on the use of various media. It was suggested that the use of TV, radio and print ads was to ensure that older electors would be reached, while the use of social media and banner ads was to ensure that younger electors would be reached. Regarding the targeting of younger electors, it was suggested that this impression would be strengthened if the ads also appeared on Snapchat, Twitter and Instagram. One new Canadian participant emphasized that their impression that the target audience for these ads includes new Canadians is based on an assumption that the ads appeared in languages other than French and English. In other words, they would not necessarily believe that these ads target new Canadians if they appear only in English and French.

### **Meeting needs of electors with a visual impairment**

Focus group participants with a visual impairment were asked if there is any information that they needed but did not receive and/or any preferred format in which they want to receive this information but that was not available to them. In response, two suggestions were made regarding what Elections Canada might do to better meet their voting needs:

- create a phone app to download such materials/resources and access/revisit them at one's leisure
- issue "election alerts" similar to the national emergency alerts: these alerts could link to the voter information campaign materials and even to a contact person at Elections Canada who could assist someone having difficulty seeing the materials

### **Near unanimity regarding authenticity of Elections Canada ads**

Participants were virtually unanimous that if they saw one of these ads during the election campaign, they would have no doubt that it was sponsored by Elections Canada. A very small number of respondents said they might doubt that the ads were sponsored by Elections Canada. The few who said they might doubt the source of an ad provided one of three reasons to explain why:

- the impression that a radio ad specifically has nothing to confirm that it comes from Elections Canada<sup>15</sup>
- the impression that the style of the banner ads seems a little unprofessional or outdated, prompting some doubt as to the source of the ad
- a lack of familiarity with the official Elections Canada logo and the perception that the colour scheme used in the Elections Canada logo in these ads looks a little unofficial

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<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that the call to action in the radio ad identifies Elections Canada.

### **Additional ways that Elections Canada could be communicating with Canadians**

Participants collectively identified a variety of additional ways that Elections Canada should or could be communicating information to Canadians. That said, none of these suggestions was offered by more than one or two individuals. These included:

- broadcast texting (similar to emergency alerts and the National Public Alerting System)
- audio ads on music streaming services (e.g., Spotify) and podcasts
- email<sup>16</sup>
- correspondence from other federal government departments and agencies (such as Canada Revenue Agency, Service Canada)
- ads on online streaming services (such as Netflix, Crave)
- through a newsletter
- phone messages
- in schools, to target youth before they reach voting age (identified in one of the groups with Indigenous Canadians)
- in various languages (identified in one of the groups with new Canadians)

It was also suggested that Elections Canada focus more on social media ads (such as on Instagram and TikTok) and steer away from print media, as it requires too much paper and so is less environmentally friendly. With a focus on content, not medium, it was also suggested that if there is information that is more relevant or specific to a particular region of the country, Elections Canada communicate this information to that region.

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<sup>16</sup> In response to this, other participants suggested that communication via email could raise privacy issues.

## 5. Media Consumption

This section reports on the types of media used by participants.

When asked what kinds of electronic devices they use on a daily basis, participants were most likely to identify smartphones and laptops/PCs, followed by TVs/smart TVs. Tablets were identified less often, while e-readers were mentioned infrequently. When it came to social media platforms used by participants, the following were routinely identified, in no particular order: YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Platforms identified less often included Reddit, TikTok and LinkedIn, while WeChat and Rumble were identified by no more than a few participants.

Most participants said they keep themselves informed about current events and politics. They collectively identified various sources they typically use to get information about current events and politics. Routinely identified sources included:<sup>17</sup>

- Conventional/traditional news media/sources: This includes long-standing or established news providers, such as CBC/Radio Canada/RDI, Global News, CTV News, TVA, CPAC, APTN, the BBC and CNN, as well as local news channels (TV and/or radio). This also includes digital or print newspapers such as *The Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star* and *The New York Times*. Reasons for using such sources included the belief that they are non-partisan and have no hidden or explicit agenda, that their news is fact based or involves fact checking, and that they verify/corroborate their sources.
- News aggregators/news feeds: This includes news sources, such as MSN, Apple News, Reddit and Google News. Reasons for using such news aggregators include the ability to receive news from multiple sources and 24/7 availability.
- Social media: This includes accessing news through social media such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. Reasons for using such sources include quick and easy access, receipt of news/information tailored to one's interests, and the ability to follow what is trending and then pursue the topic or issue if it interests them.

A few participants said they consult sources outside the mainstream media, including Rebel News and True North. Reasons include a distrust of "conventional media," a sense that these providers cover issues and ask questions of interest to the participants in an unbiased way, and the fact that they are not government-funded media sources.

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<sup>17</sup> Participants did not necessarily identify specific sources as belonging to these general categories.