

Election Advocacy Toolkit

Your guide to advocating for physical activity in the federal election

April 2025

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Advocating for physical activity in the federal election

The Physical Activity Collective's advocacy work aims to elevate the issue of physical inactivity in Canada and increase awareness of its impacts on public health and the country's economic and social prosperity. We seek to ensure that **physical activity becomes a national priority**.

The Collective's **Change the Pace** campaign and its policy recommendations emphasize the collective voice and efforts of the physical activity sector in Canada. By uniting organizations, leaders, and communities across the country, we are advocating for policies that create accessible and sustainable opportunities for physical activity. Together, we can drive meaningful change and encourage greater government action to improve the health and well-being of all Canadians.

ELECTION OVERVIEW

The next federal election will be held on **April 28, 2025**. The federal election is expected to be focused on key issues including Canada-U.S. relations, the economy, cost of living, and national defense.

WHY ENGAGE DURING AN ELECTION?

During an election, political candidates must address their constituents' concerns to ensure they have the best chances of being elected or re-elected. This makes an election a prime opportunity to seek support for physical activity. By understanding how physical activity directly impacts their constituents, candidates can better address the issue and the benefits of supporting and promoting active living.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT

The physical activity sector can join election advocacy efforts by engaging with candidates and/or the community. Organizations can:

- **Use social media** to raise awareness.
- **Write letters** urging candidates to prioritize physical activity.
- **Request meetings** with candidates to discuss the importance of physical activity.

Note: This election toolkit is non-partisan, meaning it does not endorse or oppose any party or candidate. It is designed to help you motivate all candidates to promote support for physical activity in Canada.

*Candidates are quite busy during elections, so don't be offended if they are unable to meet. A good alternative is sending in a letter to the candidate, or meeting with one of their campaign team members.



What Canadians are saying: The importance of physical activity

Recently, thousands of Canadians shared their perspectives through a survey on [ChangeThePace.ca](https://www.changethepace.ca) and highlighted the importance of physical activity in their lives.

Their impactful testimonials strengthen our case for greater support of active living in Canada. They also illustrate the numerous benefits of physical activity and the impact it has on people from coast to coast to coast.

By understanding how physical activity directly affects their constituents, candidates can better understand the issue and the benefits of supporting and promoting active living.

Creative assets, like social media graphics and copy, have been created to showcase and share these testimonials far and wide and highlight the importance of physical activity during the election period and beyond.

Communications assets

To make it easier for you to advocate for physical activity in Canada during the election, we created a communications toolkit. The visuals and copy provided can be utilized across your organization’s communication channels. Feel free to adapt them as needed to reflect your organization’s unique voice.

[DOWNLOAD COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT](#)

WE ASKED CANADIANS WHY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS IMPORTANT TO THEM

HERE'S WHAT THEY SAID:

IT'S HOW I STAY
HEALTHY AND CONNECTED
TO MY COMMUNITY.”

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE I INTEND TO STILL BE ABLE
TO CARRY MY OWN GROCERIES AT THE
AGE OF 90!”

IT HELPS ME TO KEEP MY BODY IN SHAPE & IS A
STRESS RELIEVER
AFTER A HARD DAY AT WORK.”

#CHANGETHEPACE CHANGETHEPACE.CA

Why physical activity matters to Canadians

BETTER
MENTAL HEALTH


FEWER
SICK DAYS

A STRONGER, MORE UNITED
CANADA

91%

of survey respondents agreed that

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA SHOULD SUPPORT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THROUGH PROGRAMS AND FUNDING.



Sending a letter/email to candidates

Sending a letter to your local candidates is a powerful way to advocate for the promotion and support of physical activity. The below letter/email template offers a clear structure. Simply fill in the relevant details and personalize it to suit your organization. For information on ridings or to identify candidates, you can visit [Elections Canada's website](#). If Election Canada does not have your candidates listed yet, a google search of your riding name and 'Election Candidates' should provide additional information.

TEMPLATE LETTER/EMAIL

Subject: Championing physical activity in Canada

Dear Mr./Ms. [Candidate's last name],

I'm reaching out to encourage you to champion physical activity and help make it a priority issue within your party.

Canada is facing a physical inactivity crisis, with alarming rates of inactivity impacting the health, well-being, and productivity of Canadians. An inactive country has significant consequences on public health. It also increases the burden on our health-care system and worsens outcomes for chronic diseases.

Each year, physical inactivity and the resulting medical conditions conservatively account for **\$3.9 billion** of annual health-care expenditures.

It's time to *change the pace* and move towards a more active, healthier Canada. By advocating for policies that make physical activity more accessible, inclusive, and sustainable, we can improve the quality of life for Canadians of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

Organizations in the sport, physical activity, and recreation sector are rallying together to create change. I invite you to visit [ChangeThePace.ca](#) to learn more about our efforts to address this urgent issue and how you can support.

I would also welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person or virtually to discuss the physical inactivity crisis further and explore ways we could collaborate to make a lasting impact. Please let me know if you're available for a meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your support in building a more active, healthier future for all Canadians.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Role/Organization]

Meeting with local candidates

Meeting with your local candidates is a key opportunity to advocate for physical activity. These discussions allow you to share more about the issue, ask questions, and highlight policies that can improve access to physical activity in your community and across Canada. By sharing personal stories or impactful program/initiative examples, you can encourage candidates to prioritize active living while building a meaningful connection with them.

ASKING FOR A MEETING

When reaching out to a candidate's office to request a meeting, remember that their schedules are very busy leading up to the election. It's best to propose a 20-minute in-person or phone meeting.

To ask for a meeting via phone, call the candidate's office and state that you are a constituent in their riding, and that you are interested in discussing the issue of physical inactivity. You can also send an email.

MEETING AGENDA

Introduce yourself, your role, and your organization, and explain why you're passionate about physical activity.

Provide context on the current situation in Canada and highlight how the candidate can help by advocating for the importance of physical activity within the community and their party.

Thank them for their time and direct them to [ChangeThePace.ca](https://www.changethepace.ca) to learn more.

MEETING TIPS

Consider the following tips to ensure you have a productive conversation:

- Prepare a clear, focused message. Highlight the key points you want to discuss.
- Know your facts. Be well-informed about the issue.
- Personalize the discussion. Share how the issue impacts your community.
- Maintain a professional tone, even if you disagree on certain points.
- Express gratitude for their time.

Key messages



About physical activity in Canada

- Canadians know that physical activity is good for them, but only 49% of adults and 39% of children and youth meet recommended physical activity guidelines.
 - Low physical activity levels have remained prevalent in recent decades. This is largely due to modern lifestyles that have socially engineered movement out of our daily routines and to various other barriers, ranging from costs and financial commitments to lack of access to public play areas and active transportation.
 - Physical activity is vital to the health and well-being of individuals and communities. It contributes to improved physical and mental health, stronger social connections, economic prosperity, and more.
- Physical inactivity costs Canada billions. Each year, physical inactivity and the resulting medical conditions conservatively account for \$3.9 billion of annual health-care expenditures.
- Canada is facing a mental health crisis. Physical activity is recognized as a critical mental health support, but by the time Canadians reach 40 years of age, one in two have – or have had – a mental illness, and treating or managing depression alone costs Canada \$409 million annually.
- Canadians are idling and are less productive. Traffic congestion and a lack of transit and active transportation alternatives cost Canada \$15 billion in lost productivity annually and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions.
- Health inequities and barriers to getting active in Canada's communities are clear. Racially diverse groups, women and girls, newcomers to Canada, persons with disabilities, the aging population, and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ and Indigenous communities report even lower rates of physical activity participation, putting these equity-denied groups at greater risk for poor health outcomes, social isolation, and premature death.
- Increasing physical activity levels would make Canada healthier and wealthier. It would help create connected and safer communities, contribute to Canada's response to climate change and support sustainable development goals.

About the Change the Pace campaign

- The Change the Pace campaign aims to emphasize the need to prioritize physical activity in Canada.
- The campaign aims to enable policy- and decision-makers to invest in Canadians' physical well-being by directly calling on them to make a difference, to set a new tone for physical activity supports, and change the pace at which we plan, invest, and take action to get people moving.
- It calls for the prioritization of policy frameworks and dedicated action, leadership, and adequate investment to increase the physical activity levels of people living in Canada by a relative 15% by 2030. Doing so would positively impact approximately 18 million people across the country.
- The Change the Pace campaign is calling for collective action. There is no single policy, government or organization that can effect change alone. A collective, systems-based approach is needed to make meaningful change at the individual and population levels and to fully realize the positive impacts that increased physical activity levels could have on Canada now and in the future.
- The campaign is calling on Canada to elevate the importance of physical activity across all facets of society, including government, and move Canada in the right direction by creating a social climate that values and supports physical activity.
- There are few areas in public health like physical activity where the evidence on required action is so convincing, cost effective, and practical. By changing the pace and making physical activity a national priority, we can make physical activity a national asset.
- The Change the Pace campaign is supported by the Physical Activity Collective, with leadership provided by ParticipACTION.
- The Collective is a group of national organizations in the sport, physical activity, and recreation sector committed to building strategic partnerships and strengthening Canadians' health and well-being.

To learn more about how you can help change the pace to make physical activity a priority in Canada, visit [ChangeThePace.ca](https://www.changethepace.ca) ([ChangerCap.ca](https://www.changercap.ca) for French).

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Thank you