

OXFAM CANADA'S
FEDERAL ELECTION
GUIDE 2025



OXFAM
Canada

INFORMED CHOICES

YOUR VOTE, YOUR VOICE

Oxfam Canada's Federal Election Guide 2025

Informed Choices: Your Vote, Your Voice

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Oxfam is a global movement of people working to end injustice and poverty. Our mission is to build lasting solutions to poverty and injustice while improving the lives and promoting the rights of women and girls.

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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Our office is located on the unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin First Nation. We recognize the longstanding relationship the Algonquin have with this territory that has been nurtured since time immemorial.

We also pay respect to all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit on the lands that we now know as Canada. We acknowledge the historical and ongoing oppression and colonization of the people and the loss of culture and land.

We recognize the valuable past, present, and future contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit as customary keepers and defenders of this territory. We honour their culture, knowledge, leadership, and courage. As settlers, we recognize this first step in a long journey toward decolonization and move towards reconciliation.

We thank members of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation for their support in reviewing this text (September 2023).



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Introduction to Federal Election Guide 2025

As Canada approaches its upcoming federal election, we face a pivotal moment in shaping the future of our country and build a world that is just and equal for all. Oxfam Canada's Federal Election Guide is designed to engage, inform and inspire Canadians to take action, raising awareness of critical issues at the heart of Oxfam's vision to end injustice and poverty.

At Oxfam Canada, we believe that the choices we make today will define our collective future. Every day counts to build a more equitable future, but some days are more significant than others. We are committed to creating a world where poverty, inequality and injustice are no longer the norm. This election is a chance to push for policies that will help make a real difference in the lives of those who need it the most.

The guide's goals are to inform, empower and influence.

INFORM:

We hope to enable you to share Oxfam Canada's vision for a world that is equitable and just. By understanding the issues at stake and the solutions, you can have meaningful conversations with your family, friends and social networks, helping to amplify our collective voice.

EMPOWER:

This guide offers the information you need to make informed decisions as you engage with candidates in your riding. Our hope is that you feel confident in discussing key policy issues with those running for office and hold them accountable for their commitments.

INFLUENCE:

We aim to bring attention to the critical issues that matter the most for Canada, particularly in the areas of affordability, equality and justice. Together, we can push for meaningful change.

This guide focuses on eight critical themes that address the pressing issues facing Canada today – issues that demand bold action from our political leaders. These include affordable housing, accessible child care, real climate action, Indigenous women's rights and safety, taxing the ultra-rich, and combatting hate and discrimination. The issues highlighted in this guide reflect the urgent need for systemic change and a shared commitment to equality.

**LET'S RAISE
OUR VOICES,
ASK QUESTIONS
AND TAKE
ACTION.
TOGETHER, WE
CAN ENSURE
THE ELECTION
LEADS US
TOWARD A
MORE JUST,
EQUITABLE AND
SUSTAINABLE
FUTURE FOR
ALL.**

1

WE WANT
ECONOMIC
JUSTICE!

AFFORDABILITY
AND PUBLIC SERVICES
FOR ALL



AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE CHILD CARE

Making early learning and child care accessible and affordable for all families will enable children to thrive and help parents make ends meet.

What's the issue and what's at stake this year

A publicly funded early learning and child care system is crucial for the well-being of children, families and our economy. For women, who bear the brunt of caregiving, accessible high-quality child care is vital to their economic security and participation in the job market.

The federal government's 2021 investment of \$30 billion in a Canada wide early learning and child care system made great strides by lowering fees for over 1 million families, creating 100,000 new child care spaces, 40,000 jobs since 2019, and boosting women's labour force participation by 1.4 percentage points.

Recognizing the importance of child care for Canada's economy, the federal government has been working with the provinces and territories to implement the \$10 a day child care plan and recently extended the funding agreements with eleven out of thirteen provinces and territories until 2031.

However, many families, especially those from historically underserved communities, still face barriers to accessing care. To meet demand and sustain the program, continued investment is needed—especially to ensure fair wages and improved working conditions for early childhood educators and workers. Diligent implementation and expansion

is essential for both families and for building a stronger economy that works for everyone.

What the federal government should do

- » Commit to protecting and strengthening the \$10 a Day Child Care Plan to ensure it becomes a permanent part of Canada's infrastructure essential to the economic security and stability of communities.
- » Expand not-for-profit and publicly owned child care in every community to meet the high demand for \$10 a Day Child Care, while ensuring fair wages, better benefits and dignified working conditions for staff.
- » Build an inclusive system that supports all children and values childcare workers.
- » Create a national workforce strategy for the early learning and child care sector that establishes standards for fair wages, benefits, pensions and professional development, in partnership with provincial and territorial governments to address the shortage of workers due to poor working conditions.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- 1 Will your party commit to protecting and strengthening the \$10 a Day Child Care Plan? If so, how will you ensure its sustainability as an essential part of Canada's infrastructure?
- 2 How will your party ensure that the next federal budget allocates sufficient capital funding to expand not-for-profit and public child care services? What steps will you take to prioritize public planning for more equitable access to child care services?
- 3 If your party forms the next government, what is your plan to improve working conditions for child care workers and ensure a sustainable workforce of early learning and child care experts?



ENDING POVERTY

We can eliminate poverty and hunger, but only by addressing the root causes of inequality and providing good financial supports and public services to everyone in need.

What's the issue and what's at stake this year

Canadians everywhere are feeling the pinch, especially those living in poverty. Prices of food, housing, heating and transportation have shot up immensely since 2020. Nearly 1.4 million children now live in poverty in Canada, with child poverty shooting up at record rates since 2021. Lone-parent families, the majority of which are women-led, experience greater rates of poverty and deeper poverty. Systemic racism also locks racialized, immigrant and Indigenous households into much higher poverty rates. In this election year, millions of low-income Canadians are looking for economic relief and sustained support from governments at all levels. Ending poverty requires political leaders to fix the structural issues that keep people poor.

What the federal government should do

- » Increase government transfers to individuals and households who have been hardest hit by sky-high inflation and reduced economic opportunities. The new Canada Disability Benefit should be significantly scaled up to meet basic needs.
- » The Canada Child Benefit, which has proven widely successful but is losing its effectiveness as child poverty increased at record rates, should be supplemented with a new non-taxable supplement going to families in deep poverty (earning less than \$19,000 per year).
- » Increase competition and make space for smaller grocers to enter and remain in the market, monitor price gouging, shrinkflation and reign in the ultra-rich CEOs who dominate the Canadian grocery market. Increase transparency and access to information on food pricing and data.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- 1 Does your party have a plan to stop food prices from continuously rising and hold major grocery chains accountable?
- 2 What steps will your party take to increase the Canadian Disability Benefit to lift low-income people with disabilities out of poverty?
- 3 If your party forms the next government, will you supplement the Canada Child Benefit to keep families from falling into deep poverty?



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EXTREME WEALTH INEQUALITY

THE ISSUE:

GROWING WEALTH GAP

**\$309 M
PER DAY**

In 2024, billionaire wealth grew by \$309 MILLION A DAY

- » **3.8 MILLION** Canadians live in poverty
- » Canada's 65 **BILLIONAIRES** HOLD NEARLY **\$500 BILLION** - 8 times more wealth than those living in poverty
- » Rising grocery bills and housing costs strain families, while corporations saw **\$441 BILLION IN EXCESS PROFITS**



WHAT'S AT STAKE

1

DEEPENING POVERTY

HINDERING CLIMATE ACTION

AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

HOUSING CRISIS

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE
CHILDCARE

POWER IMBALANCE

THREATS TO DEMOCRACY

2

THE SOLUTION:

FAIR TAXATION

Fair taxation ensures the richest contribute their fair share and generates revenue for public services

Bold tax reforms could raise over \$409 billion to:

- » Tackle poverty and Canada's affordability crisis
- » Fund public services like affordable housing, better transit, universal childcare, better healthcare
- » Support a fair and clean energy transition



WHAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO:

- » Introduce a permanent wealth tax
- » Tax excess profits
- » Crack down on tax evasion

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ADDRESSING EXTREME WEALTH INEQUALITY

Fair taxation is a powerful tool to tackle inequality by ensuring the richest contribute their fair share and providing new government revenues to invest in public services.

What's the issue and what's at stake this year

Canada is facing a growing inequality crisis - in 2024, billionaire wealth increased by **\$309 million a day** while **3.8 million people** across Canada are living in poverty. The poverty rate rose to 9.9% in 2022, leaving millions of Canadians to struggle with rising grocery bills and housing costs while excess corporate profits surged by **\$441 billion**. The total wealth of Canada's 65 billionaires has soared to nearly \$500 billion – enough to carpet most of Vancouver (93%) in \$50 bills. This stark inequality threatens democratic systems, deepens poverty and hampers climate action. Bold tax reforms could raise more than **\$409 billion** over 10 years to tackle poverty, fund public services and drive a just energy transition. While last year's improvements to capital gains taxes was a big step forward, the federal government should continue in this vein and bring in a wealth tax, inheritance tax reforms and stronger regulations against tax avoidance to ensure our tax code benefit all Canadians, not just the ultra-rich.

What the federal government should do

- » Introduce a permanent wealth tax targeting the richest 1% to help bridge the inequality gap. This tax should be at least 2% for wealth over \$5 million, 3% for wealth over \$50 million and 5% for wealth over \$1 billion.
- » Tax excessive profits to ensure Canadian corporations unduly benefitting during global crises or through market dominance contribute their fair share. During the pandemic, the government's super-profits tax on banks and insurance companies set an important precedent for targeting excess profits in sectors like oil, gas and grocery chains.
- » Stop tax evasion and tax avoidance by enforcing stricter financial transparency standards and preventing the ultra-rich from parking their wealth in tax havens.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- 1 Does your party support implementing a permanent wealth tax on the ultra-rich to generate new revenue for public services like affordable housing and healthcare?
- 2 If your party forms the next government, will you introduce an excess profits tax on large corporations that profit from pollution, global crises and price hikes?
- 3 What steps will your party take to ensure the wealthy and large corporations pay their fair share by closing tax loopholes and increasing financial transparency?



REAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

With climate change making life more expensive and unsafe, climate action can save money in the long run, create good jobs, and more resilient communities for us all.

What's the issue and what's at stake this year

With polls showing Canadians are more concerned about the cost of living than climate change, federal leaders have been backing away from climate action. But, climate change doesn't listen to opinion polls; it's relentless and will only slow down if we change our ways. This election will be crucial in determining whether climate action is a priority or not.

Capping emissions from the oil and gas industry – Canada's largest source of carbon emissions – is a litmus test for every political party. So is investing in climate adaptation, both at home and abroad, so communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis can prepare for increasingly severe impacts. As the 12th highest emitter in the world and among the top 10 wealthiest nations, Canada has a responsibility to support low- and middle-income countries in facing the climate crisis.

What the federal government should do

- » Continue to support and incentivize Canada's clean electricity transition, making energy costs more affordable for most households.
- » Impose a cap on carbon emissions from the oil and gas industry to incentivize industry to find the most cost-efficient means of reducing industrial emissions and contribute its fair share to Canada's climate action.
- » Triple Canada's international climate finance over the next five years (2026-2031) to scale up our global response to climate change.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- 1 Does your party have a plan to make life more affordable through climate action, such as green home incentives, zero emission vehicle rebates and energy efficiency programs?
- 2 Does your party have a plan to make rich polluters pay through pollution pricing and excess-profits taxes on big oil and gas companies?
- 3 If your party forms the next government, will you triple Canada's international climate finance to scale up our contribution to fighting climate change globally?

2

ADVANCING FAIRNESS & EQUALITY



COMBATTING HATE AND MARGINALIZATION

Hate and intolerance is on the rise and threatens to corrode our democracy and social cohesion. In this election, candidates and voters must choose whether they will stoke fear and division, or stand up for equality, inclusion and justice.

What's the issue and what's at stake this year

Scapegoating – blaming others for problems they didn't create – has long been a convenient tactic to shift attention onto marginalized communities and deflect accountability, particularly when real solutions are absent or overlooked. Anti-immigrant, anti-queer, anti-trans, anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic, anti-Asian, and other types of hateful rhetoric are becoming more and more prevalent in Canada. Marginalized people have been blamed for all kinds of things: the housing shortage, rising unemployment, the drug overdose crisis, and even the COVID-19 virus itself.

Canada has many challenging problems but the solutions won't come from blaming poor and marginalized people. True leadership involves showing compassion for those in need and working with them to find empowering solutions to problems. Immigrants contribute to economic prosperity and need their skills recognized and barriers removed to their economic success. Trans-inclusive communities will be safer for everyone. Welcoming people who are fleeing persecution in other countries enriches our society and lives up to our international commitments to refugee rights.

What the federal government should do

- » Strengthen and invest more funding in federal strategies and programs that support 2SLGBTQ+ communities, black and other racialized populations.
- » Implement the Canadian Council for Refugees' National Plan for Asylum with Dignity, that would provide more reception centres, legal aid and support services to asylum seekers who come to Canada fleeing persecution to ensure they can succeed.
- » Protect the human rights of queer, trans, non-binary and gender diverse people, and promote Comprehensive Sexuality Education in partnership with the provinces and territories to create greater understanding of sexuality for safer and more inclusive communities and schools.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- 1 Does your party have a plan to counter hate and marginalization?
- 2 If your party forms the next government, will you provide a dignified start to asylum seekers by establishing new reception centres, support services and more legal aid to streamline processes and save money on their settlement in the long run?
- 3 Does your party have a plan to promote Comprehensive Sexuality Education across Canada and support communities to be inclusive and welcoming of all gender diverse people?



ACCESSIBLE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INFORMATION AND SERVICES

Sexual and reproductive health is a charter-protected right for Canadians, but access to services and accurate information is still an issue for communities on the margins.

What's the issue and what's at stake this year

The federal government has made sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) a priority over the past nine years at home and around the world. Most recently, the government passed the *Canada Pharmacare Act*, making contraceptives accessible to everyone. The Health Canada Sexual and Reproductive Health Fund supports community-based organizations to improve access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services, especially for vulnerable populations. Globally, Canada has supported programs providing access to SRHR in communities that desperately needed it.

However, many Canadians still face barriers to accessing SRH information and services, and the barriers are that much more gaping globally. We need the next federal government to continue Canada's leadership in SRHR at a time when these rights are under attack in many places and the US has reinstated the global gag rule.

What the federal government should do

- » Strengthen enforcement of the Canada Health Act and hold provinces and territories to account for their obligation to ensure that SRH care, including abortion, is accessible for everyone who needs it.
- » Ensure the Health Canada Sexual and Reproductive Health Fund is made permanent and expand the new Pharmacare Act to provide free coverage for all SRH prescription medicines including antiretrovirals, HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis and post-exposure prophylaxis, sexually transmitted infection treatment, abortion medication, infertility treatment, and gender affirming care.
- » Scale up funding for international programs on SRHR to fill the massive gaps in service provisions as a result of the USAID cuts and the re-instatement of the global gag rule.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- 1 If your party forms the next government, how will it hold provinces and territories accountable for ensuring universal access to SRH care, including abortion?
- 2 Does your party plan to continue pharmacare coverage of contraception, and have a plan to expand pharmacare to provide free coverage for all SRH medicines and treatments?
- 3 What steps will your party take to promote and defend SRHR internationally and maintain Canada's 10-year funding commitment to global health and rights, particular in a context of rollbacks by other donor governments?



INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND SAFETY

Indigenous women have the fundamental right to safety and the inherent right to participate in decision-making on issues that impact their lives, their families and their communities, as affirmed under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

What's the issue and what's at stake this year

To date, only two of the 231 Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2S people (MMIWG2S) are complete, and more than half have not been started. Inaction has resulted in violence continually being perpetuated against them.

Indigenous women and girls need immediate investments in safety and prevention services designed, developed, and delivered by and for Indigenous women. Yet, Indigenous organizations working to improve Indigenous women's safety continue to operate with funding that is insufficient to meet the needs of their communities and must continually compete against one another for short-term project-based funding.

Despite Indigenous women's right to participate in decision-making, current federal approaches to Indigenous affairs exclude Indigenous women and their organizations.

What the federal government should do

- » Implement the National Action Plan, with measurable and costed steps to fulfill the Calls for Justice from the final report of the National Inquiry into MMIWG2S that keep Indigenous women and girls safe.
- » Prioritize the safety of Indigenous women and girls in all policies, plans, and strategies that impact, or have the potential to impact, their lives. Meaningfully include Indigenous women in the development and decision-making of all legislative, policy, program and service responses to the issues that impact them.
- » Provide increased and sustainable investments into Indigenous women-led, community-based, culturally grounded programs and services that improve Indigenous women and girls' safety and promote family and community healing.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- 1** How will your party accelerate the implementation of the Calls for Justice that prioritize Indigenous women's safety and healing?
- 2** How will your party engage with Indigenous women and their organizations to ensure they are meaningfully involved in decision-making on issues that impact their lives and safety?
- 3** Will your party commit to providing core, sustainable funding to Indigenous women's organizations (per Call for Justice 1.8) to design, implement, and analyze Indigenous led, culturally grounded responses to the key issues they face?



PRINCIPLED LEADERSHIP IN GLOBAL CRISES AND CONFLICTS

In a volatile, unstable world, Canada should maintain its commitment to global cooperation on peace, justice and human rights; and strengthen its international partnerships and alliances to reach multilateral solutions.

What's the issue and what's at stake this year

This year, Canada faces a challenging geopolitical context like never before. Armed conflicts are raging on several continents, economic uncertainty abounds, and millions of people are fleeing persecution and the devastating impacts of climate change. Rich donor countries like Canada will also need to respond to more humanitarian emergencies due to extreme weather events, as such needs have increased eightfold over the past twenty years according to the UN. Globally, poverty and hunger are reaching crisis levels, with millions facing food insecurity and economic hardship and yet countries are cutting aid at record rates. Canada's responsibility doesn't stop at its borders. This election will determine how Canada engages in the world now and over the coming decade.

Canada must take a principled and pragmatic stance in defending its interests, with respect for human rights and international humanitarian law remaining cornerstones of our foreign policy and apply a coherent approach to all its global engagement. Women's rights and gender equality are under attack in many countries, and within UN processes and negotiations. Defending rights and equality against rollbacks by repressive regimes is not only the right thing to do – it is the only pathway to a more stable and prosperous world.

What the federal government should do

- » Strengthen multilateral processes and institutions that create genuine solutions for people living in poverty. Canada must not fall into an isolationist mentality of “fortress North America,” but rather foster a multipolar world that engages low- and middle-income countries as equal partners.
- » Scale up foreign aid significantly to respond to climate disasters, forced migration and social inequality that drives poverty and conflict. To make every dollar count, more of Canada's official development assistance should be channeled to women's rights organizations that know their context best and are already on the ground when a crisis strikes.
- » Immediately stop arms transfers to countries known to violate international humanitarian law and ensure Canada's foreign policy aligns with human rights and international law. Stand up for women's rights and gender equality in our development programming, international trade and diplomatic relations, particularly in the face of rollbacks at the UN instigated by other states like Russia, Saudi Arabia, Vatican and the USA.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- 1 If your party forms the next government, will Canada's official development assistance budget grow to respond to ever-increasing needs internationally? Will your party maintain a strong human rights approach in Canada's foreign policy?
- 2 Does your party support a robust multilateral system where nations come together to negotiate and solve major global problems like climate change, gender inequality and poverty?
- 3 If your party forms the next government, will your government end all arms transfers to Israel and uphold international law in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict?



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