



# **UP** *for* **DEBATE**

2021

## **MOBILIZATION TOOLKIT**

[up4debate.ca/toolkit](https://up4debate.ca/toolkit)

**UP** *for*  
**DEBATE**  
*The Alliance for Women's  
Rights and Gender Justice*

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# WHAT IS UP FOR DEBATE?

**U**p for Debate is a campaign coordinated by an alliance of women's rights and gender justice advocates from across Canada. We call for the human rights of all women and girls - trans and cis - and Two Spirit and non-binary people to be fully respected, protected and upheld. Action is needed on serious threats and rollbacks to the rights of women and girls - trans and cis - and Two Spirit and non-binary people in Canada and around the world, from the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on their financial security to the staggeringly high rates of gender-based violence.

During the 2021 federal election campaign, we're calling on all federal party leaders in Canada to:

- » Outline action plans in support of women's rights, gender justice, and an intersectional feminist economic recovery in their election platforms and commitments; and,
- » Focus on women's rights and gender justice in all federal leaders' debates.

For more information on Up for Debate and our calls to action, visit: <https://up4debate.ca>



# ***WHY A TOOLKIT?***

**F**or Up for Debate to succeed, people living across Canada need to engage in critical discussions about women’s rights and gender justice at home and around the world.

This is a time-sensitive campaign. As an Up for Debate supporter, you can take this conversation to your local community. We created the toolkit to provide everything you need to support Up for Debate and mobilize in your community and online. It contains information about the campaign, tips to engage candidates and political parties online and in person, and everything you need to know to organize your own local debate.

# **UP FOR DEBATE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?**

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#),  
and [Twitter](#): @UpforDebate2021

Key hashtags: #Up4Debate2021  
#elxn44

**A** great way to take this conversation to your local community and extended networks is through your social media accounts. By reposting and sharing the messages of the campaign, its supporters, and member organizations, we can amplify our collective voice. Here are some tips on how to use social media to support Up for Debate!

## **SHARE OUR POSTS**

Leading up to the election, Up for Debate will be posting on social media if and when we see our calls to action reflected in election platforms. Share our posts to inform your audience and community about our cause, or see our tips below for ideas on how to format your own posts.

You can also engage with UFD posts from our endorsers and other allies (<https://up4debate.ca/endorsers/>). Like, share, and comment on posts by key players and diverse voices – organizations and



individuals. Show your care for the cause and its importance for all women and girls - trans and cis - and Two Spirit and non-binary people.

## **LEVERAGE KEY DATES**

Highlighting relevant issues on key dates will increase your outreach and the impact of your content.

### **HERE ARE SOME KEY DATES IN 2021:**

August 14, 1984	<b>Federal leader's debate on women's issues</b>
August 26	Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Day
September 2	Labour Day
September 18	International Equal Pay Day
September (4th week of the month)	Gender Equality Week
September 30	Orange Shirt Day and National Day for Truth And Reconciliation
October	Women's History Month
October 4	Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit People Sisters in Spirit Vigils
October 11	International Day of the Girl
October 18	Person's Day
November 25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
November 25 to December 10	16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence
December 6	National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women
December 10	Human Rights Day
December 17	International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers



## USE UP FOR DEBATE HASHTAGS

Use hashtags on your posts. By grouping content together, Up for Debate posts will link to each other, amplifying our messages. Here are the Up for Debate hashtags, as well as others related to our calls to action and platform.

- » English hashtags: #Up4Debate2021, #elxn44, #cdnpoli, #canpoli, #canlab, #canfem, #DoneWaiting, #GenderJusticeNow, #NAPonVAW, #MMIWG, #WhatWillItTake
- » French hashtags: #PlaceAuDébat, #elxn2021, #polcan, #FautQueÇaBouge, #PANsurVFF, #QueFaire
- » Other hashtags: #feminist, #feminism, #feminista, #WomensRights, #HumanRights, #EqualRights, #IntersectionalFeminism, #GenderEquality
- » Leader/Party Handles: @JustinTrudeau, @liberal\_party, @erinotoole, @CPC\_HQ, @theJagmeetSingh, @NDP, @yfblanchet, @BlocQuebecois, @annamiepaul, @CanadianGreens

## REACH OUT

Share your support for Up for Debate with those around you and encourage your networks to amplify the campaign by using email, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, or any other social media your networks use. Here are some sample posts to engage your networks:

### SAMPLE FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM POSTS:

*Up for Debate is back and calling for the human rights of all women and girls – trans and cis – and Two Spirit and non-binary people to be fully respected, protected, and upheld. In advance of the federal election, all parties should outline action plans in support of women’s rights, gender justice, and an intersectional feminist economic recovery in their platforms and commitments. We also want to see a focus on women’s rights and gender justice in all federal leaders debates.*

*Let’s get federal party leaders to tell us how they plan to advance women’s rights and gender justice. Join the movement!*  
<https://up4debate.ca/>

### SAMPLE TWEETS:

*We need strong leadership and federal action on #WomensRights and #GenderJustice to address #GenderBasedViolence, the #GenderWageGap, the #CareEconomy, & #COVID-19 inequities. @JustinTrudeau @erinotoole @theJagmeetSingh @yfblanchet @annamiepaul: are you #Up4Debate2021? #elxn44*

*I support #Up4Debate2021 and their call for federal parties to prioritize women’s rights and gender justice in party platforms and federal leaders debates. Join the campaign: <https://up4debate.ca/> #cdnpoli #elxn44*

To find more social media shareables and sample posts, visit: <https://up4debate.ca/share-the-campaign/>.



# **UP FOR DEBATE WITH LOCAL CANDIDATES?**

## **TALKING TO LOCAL CANDIDATES ABOUT UP FOR DEBATE**

**T**his summer and throughout the election, there will be opportunities to connect with your local candidates. Whether it's at a local community event (in person or online), an organized debate, or they come knocking at your door, you can ask your candidate to support women's rights and gender justice.

Up for Debate advocates for a world where the human rights of all women and girls - trans and cis - and Two Spirit and non-binary people are fully respected, promoted, and upheld. Wherever you encounter your local candidates, you can ask them for their position on issues affecting women and girls - trans and cis - and Two Spirit and non-binary people and ask for their support. It's important to show your candidates that these issues matter to their potential constituents. Ask questions that reflect issues that are most important to you.

## **ADVICE FOR TALKING TO CANDIDATES**

For greater impact, tell your candidates why women's rights and gender justice are important to you. Emphasize your personal connection while discussing broader issues. You can mention that you support the Up for Debate campaign or any other connections you might have.

Be direct and explicitly ask your questions. Candidates will try to shift the conversation to their own positions



or their party's platform. Make sure you get an answer and repeat your question if necessary.

When opportunities to engage with your candidates come up, introduce yourself, explain how these issues matter to you, and ask how they will support women's rights and gender justice if elected. See the sample questions below for ideas on how to approach these issues with your candidates. For [a more complete list of sample questions](#), visit the Your Tools section.

- » Will you commit to implementing an intersectional feminist economic recovery and to remove barriers to economic equality by funding public services and social programs?
- » Will you commit to adopting a National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence that centers the most marginalized communities of women, including Black, Indigenous, racialized, newcomer, immigrant, refugee, and non-status women, and women with disabilities?

**AT A LOCAL DEBATE:** There is likely to be at least one local all-candidates debate organized in your riding. Attend the debate and use the question period to ask candidates about their positions on women's rights and gender justice. Bring a friend or another supporter of the campaign if possible and try to ask additional questions to candidates.

Local debates are often limited for time and there is often a line at the microphone to ask your question. Get in line early to make sure you get a turn and ask your question succinctly while still making a personal connection. Questions can sometimes also be submitted in writing.

For online debates, have your question(s) ready and submit them through the Q&A function (if available). If there's the opportunity to up-vote other questions, make sure you support other questions that focus on women's rights and gender justice. Some online events will ask you to submit questions in advance.

**FEEDBACK:** No matter where you talk to your candidates, let us know how it went and whether they are supportive of Up for Debate. Email us at [up4debatecanada@gmail.com](mailto:up4debatecanada@gmail.com).



# **UP FOR YOUR VERY OWN DEBATE?**

**T**he best thing about the debate or panel format is that it can easily be incorporated into any event that you might already be working on. Debates are extremely scalable events, as the only requirement is to have a room big enough for the size of the audience in attendance or, in the case of online events, a platform that meets your needs. Promoting and generating buzz about the event are the main ways for you to increase participation.

## **WHAT A LOCAL UP FOR DEBATE IS AND IS NOT**

A local Up for Debate event consists of a panel of community experts discussing the impact of gender inequality. It asks big questions about what role Canada should play in advancing women's rights and gender justice at home and abroad. It gives attendees an opportunity to take action by endorsing Up for Debate's call for women's rights and gender justice to be addressed in the televised leaders' debates for the 2021 federal election.

A local Up for Debate event can also include party candidates speaking on women's and gender justice issues. However, this should not be a partisan event. Be sure to invite all candidates and treat them equally. Do not endorse any candidate(s) or parties.

## **CREATING YOUR UP FOR DEBATE PROGRAM**

Groups across the country will be promoting conversation on women's rights and gender justice, and your event will be part of building a groundswell of activity. You might choose to focus on one or each of the main three calls to action (<https://up4debate.ca/calls-to-action/>):

- » Implementing an intersectional feminist economic recovery and removing barriers to economic equality.
- » Advocating for a National Action Plan (<https://nationalactionplan.ca>) on Gender-Based Violence that centers the most marginalized communities of women, including Black, Indigenous, racialized, newcomer, immigrant, refugee, and non-status women, and women with disabilities; and, a National Action Plan to address the extreme levels of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two Spirit people, including the implementation of the Calls to Justice from the MMIWG2S+ National Inquiry Report (<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>).
- » Supporting increased, long-term funding for women's rights and gender justice organizations, including grassroots advocates, to carry out their critical work.

Do your research on your speakers and see who would be best to respond to each of the above calls to action. You want all panelists to be able to speak to how the Canadian government acts (or doesn't act) on women's rights and gender justice and offer recommendations and/or solutions.

**One key aspect of a successful debate is asking good questions. Ask yourself - what do you want audience members to understand by the end of your event?**

When your event is over, you want everyone in the room to not only understand the issue but also what they can do to help advance women's rights and gender justice.

If you are having difficulty coming up with questions to ask at your debate, you may want to connect with your panelists beforehand, as this ensures that your questions are relevant to their line of work and lived experiences. You can also draw inspiration for questions from our Up for Debate Panels (<https://up4debate.ca/events/>), or see the [sample questions listed in the Your Tools section](#).

## **WHO SHOULD SPEAK ON YOUR UP FOR DEBATE PANEL?**

Deciding who to include on your panel and reaching out to them as early as possible is extremely important. Look for people who are relevant to your themes and can draw a crowd. Think about the message you want to convey through your debate and brainstorm to come up with 4-5 people in your community who will create a diverse, knowledgeable, and informative panel. You can check YouTube videos, clips from the news, or recommendations to make sure your panelists are also engaging public speakers who can hold an audience's attention.

**Alliance Partners:** Up for Debate is an alliance of dozens of organizations across Canada. These organizations will be great resources, and should be first priority in terms of groups to connect with. Take a look at the list of endorsers on the Up for Debate website (<https://up4debate.ca/endorsers/>) to find an organization close to you.

**Go-To Panelists:** Many community organizations work on overarching societal issues but also bring a specific gender lens in practice. Look for social programs that support women and girls - trans and cis - and Two Spirit and non-binary people in your community in areas such as housing, child support, or legal aid. You can check out organizational websites to dig a bit further into programs and values. You may also want to consider inviting:

- » Professors and those with academic expertise
- » Professionals in policy or urban planning who are working to create safer cities for women and girls - trans and cis - and Two Spirit and non-binary people
- » Those in the education sector working to get women's rights and gender justice issues into curriculum
- » Those working to address systemic racism and/or make immigration or labour laws more equitable.

**NOTE:** *that when searching for and contacting panelists, you should ensure diversity. Having panelists with different identities, backgrounds, and lived experiences helps your event be representative of, and more meaningful to, a wider range of people.*

Once you know who you'd like to be a panelist, you'll need to send them an invitation to speak. Do a little research on the person's work or organization and make sure your invitation to speak is tailored to them as an individual. Explain why they would be a good fit for this specific event and campaign. Send your invitations out early to leave time for scheduling or seeking out other speakers if your top choices aren't available. See our Invitation to Speak Template for ideas on how to format your invitations.

**NOTE:** *If you have funding or the ability to provide speakers with honoraria, it can be a nice gesture to recognize the time required to prepare and participate in an event. This does not apply to political candidates.*

## **LOCAL LOGISTICS PLANNING**

**Choosing Your Location:** When considering a venue location, ask yourself the following questions:

- » Will your event maximize interest and attendance if it's held on campus or in a community space?
- » Is the space free of charge or could it be donated?
- » Does the layout allow for visibility and accessibility?

**CHOOSING YOUR PLATFORM FOR AN ONLINE DEBATE:** We recommend reviewing the security, accessibility, cost, and capacity requirements of different platforms before purchasing any new platform.



- » Please see the checklist of different platforms from the Women's Environment & Development Organization on planning virtual meetings (<https://wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ICT-toolkit-English.pdf>).

**AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT:** A/V is a huge factor in the success and audience enjoyment of the event. Reserve your speakers and sound system well in advance. Ensure you have enough microphones for your panelists, moderator, and audience Q&A.

**SIGNS AND DECORATIONS:** Decorate your venue to create an atmosphere for the event and make sure to have clear signage directing people to the room. It's always a good idea to set up a space for information tables that showcase your group's amazing work as well as the work of any partnering clubs or organizations.

## **THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING ONLINE EVENTS:**

### **OPENING REMARKS**

- » DO let everyone know upfront that tech glitches, audio challenges, and maybe even zoom bombs/cyber attacks can happen. Mention that you have a plan or that you will send a group email with next steps if it cannot be resolved within a certain amount of time.
- » DON'T forget to do a land acknowledgement just because your meeting is online (<https://native-land.ca/territory-acknowledgement/>).
- » DO let folks know that the meeting will be recorded, which captures anything they type publicly in the chat.

### **TECHNICAL TIPS**

- » Make sure you review and/or test how to record on the platform and where to save your recording, before the event. If you plan to livestream the event to Facebook or use any other live streaming services, it is also a good idea to test this beforehand.
- » Offer to meet with speakers, interpreters, and captioners in advance to test the technology and ensure they are comfortable with the platform and event plan.

## **SPEAKER SETUP**

- » Use a microphone, headset, and/or headphones with a microphone for best sound quality.
- » Situate yourself in a room without an echo or a lot of background noise.
- » Position your camera so it is facing you at a level with your head, not angled. Lift your laptop up on a pile of books if needed.
- » Sit in front of a neutral background with good lighting. You do not want to be backlit – do not sit in front of a window.
- » Test the mute/unmute and screen sharing tools in advance.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

- » Offer simultaneous interpretation, American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ), and live-captioning whenever possible.
- » Assign someone to be the point person for accessibility and provide their contact information to attendees in case they have specific questions or requests.
- » Provide content warnings before discussing issues that may be upsetting or triggering to some people. If possible, have a list of crisis supports at the ready.

## **KEY ROLES IN A DEBATE/EVENT**

**MODERATOR:** The moderator must have a commanding presence to hold the audience's attention. Usually the moderator is someone with extensive relevant experience, who can relate and respond to the panelists' answers as well. Make sure your moderator is able to

keep a gendered focus on the discussion and is open to discussing questions with you ahead of time.

**HOST:** A host can be someone from your group who will give a welcome at the beginning of the event and thank participants and guests at the end. The host will introduce the moderator and may choose to introduce the panelists as well, though this can also be done by the moderator instead. When welcoming guests, the host should mention the #Up4Debate2021 hashtag for those tweeting or posting to social media.

**AUDIO/VISUAL PERSON:** The A/V person is responsible for setting up the technology (computers, microphones, visuals) and running tests ahead of time to make sure they work properly. This person can also ensure that audience members have access to microphones for the Q&A portion of the panel.

**PHOTOGRAPHER / SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST:** This can be one or several people, but you'll want to document your incredible event to share afterwards. Reporting live during your debate, tagging your panelists and moderator, and sharing quotes and photos on social media can help generate buzz for those not in attendance as well.

**MEDIA LIAISON:** This person or team can be in charge of contacting media ahead of time, working with them at the event, and following up afterwards. A media liaison will be important in making sure that media personnel get all of the information they need to share your story.

**ACCESSIBILITY POINT PERSON:** This person is responsible for contacting simultaneous English/French interpreters, American Sign Language and Langue des signes québécoise interpreters, and live captioners to make your event more accessible. This person's contact information may also be distributed to attendees to handle any

specific accessibility requests, or to answer questions on how to access the accessibility services during the event.

**Guest Relations:** This role will be especially important to get special guests or media to attend the event. This person or committee can be responsible for contacting and following up with these special guests, as well as greeting and accommodating them at the event itself.

## **PROMOTING YOUR EVENT**

The number of people in the room and those who hear about your local debate after it happens (through local media coverage or social media) will help increase the public profile of the Up for Debate campaign. Advertise early and use all methods available online and within your community. It's always great to reach out to like-minded people and groups, but don't forget to spread your reach and expand to new communities too.

### **OUTREACH BEFORE THE DEBATE**

Individuals need to know about your event in order to attend. Spreading the word to as many channels as possible is crucial to raise awareness and increase attendance.

- » Advertise around local campuses and the community with posters, flyers, newsletters, bulletin boards, class announcements, etc.
- » Promote your event on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok) and encourage people to share the event.

- » Get your event on the radio, local news, newspaper, or other promotional media. The more media you can involve, the more people will have the opportunity to hear about and attend your event.
- » It's always a good idea to ask your panel speakers to help promote the event by reaching out to their networks. You may also want to contact local schools, relevant university departments, clubs, and alliances that could help share your event.

### **MEDIA COVERAGE AT THE DEBATE**

Work to get the media interested in covering your event. Remember, your panelists have important messages and experiences to share and the more people who know about these issues the better. Try for a local newspaper, television station, popular online blogs, or radio show where you can further spread the Up for Debate campaign. Covering the event on social media is another way to reach people not in attendance.

### **FOLLOW-UP COVERAGE AFTER THE DEBATE**

It is never too late for people to hear the messages of your event. Op-eds and Letters to the Editor are great options for keeping in contact with media sources and getting more coverage of your message.

- » If the media doesn't show up to your event, take photos and send your best ones to photo editors along with a descriptive caption. Make sure to do this as soon as possible to stay timely with your event too.
- » For online events, consider sharing the recording on your website, social media, or through a mailing list. Sharing shorter snippets of longer events can also be effective when sharing on social media.



## **REPORT BACK**

**P**lease report back to Up for Debate after your event, whether it was an interesting interaction with a candidate or a social media storm. Your activities are important to the bigger picture of seeing women's rights and gender justice in the federal election, and we want to know how it went and what the impact was.

Let's stay in touch! Keep in touch and let us know about your plans by emailing us at [up4debatecanada@gmail.com](mailto:up4debatecanada@gmail.com). Follow us on social media ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#)) and sign-up for our mailing list for election and campaign updates and new resources.

**LET'S  
DO  
THIS!**

# YOUR TOOLS



## **INVITATION TO SPEAK TEMPLATE**

### **INVITATION TO SPEAK**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am contacting you on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_. We are a volunteer group based in \_\_\_\_\_ that works to insert your organization's mission/mandate. We're currently organizing a panel discussion insert date or possible week/month and time of day on the importance of women's rights and gender justice issues as part of the Up for Debate campaign. This campaign is calling for federal leaders to outline action plans for women's rights and gender justice, and for women's rights and gender justice to be a part of all federal leaders debates during the 2021 election. We would be honoured if you would participate as one of our panelist speakers.

We feel your work and especially your contribution in personalize based on their experience or area of work would offer incredibly important insights and practical experiences to this discussion, as well as an interesting perspective for our audience.

*(When sending to Up for Debate alliance members only, add: As name of their organization is also an alliance member in the Up for Debate campaign, we think this would be a wonderful opportunity to call for federal action on women's rights and gender justice in Canada together.)*

Insert your organization's name is one of dozens of organizations calling for action on women's rights and gender justice ahead of the 2021 election. We think it's time for a national conversation about building a Canada that works for women and girls - trans and cis - and Two Spirit and non-binary people. The goal of our event is to raise awareness of the Up for Debate campaign and bring this larger conversation to our local community. If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact me at your earliest convenience or to ask any questions.

Sincerely,

Name\_\_

Position/Organization

Email

Phone Number

## ***SAMPLE QUESTIONS***

### ***FOR CANDIDATES***

- » Will you commit to implementing an intersectional feminist economic recovery and to remove barriers to economic equality by funding public services and social programs?
- » Will you commit to adopting a National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence that centres the most marginalized communities of women, including Black, Indigenous, racialized, newcomer, immigrant, refugee, 2SLGBTQ+, and non-status women, and women with disabilities?
- » Will you commit to increased, long-term funding for women's rights and gender justice organizations, including grassroots advocates, to carry out their critical work?
- » What are your party's plans for affordable housing and childcare, federal health transfers, and other measures to end poverty, which disproportionately impacts women and gender-diverse people?
- » Since lack of access to childcare is a key contributor to the gender wage gap and increases women's economic insecurity, how will your party ensure that every family in Canada can access quality, affordable childcare?



- » How will your party address high rates of violence against women and gender-diverse people, and in particular Indigenous women, girls, and Two Spirit people?
- » How will your party ensure that Canada's Covid-19 recovery addresses the disproportionate effect of the pandemic on women and girls - trans and cis - and Two-Spirit and non-binary people, while also addressing the pre-existing inequalities faced by these groups?

#### **FOR PANELISTS**

- » What kinds of public services and social programs should the Canadian government implement to remove barriers to economic equality to help lift women and girls - trans and cis - and Two Spirit and non-binary people out of poverty?
- » What do you think the Canadian government should do to prevent and address all forms of violence against women and girls - trans and cis - and Two Spirit, and non-binary people, particularly those who are Indigenous?
- » What do you think the Canadian government's role is in supporting women's rights and gender justice organizations, including grassroots advocates, and how can it best support a healthy and thriving civil society in Canada and around the world?
- » What do you think the Canadian government needs to do to ensure that Canada's Covid-19 recovery addresses the disproportionate effect of the pandemic on women and girls - trans and cis - and Two-Spirit and non-binary people, while also addressing the pre-existing inequalities faced by these groups?

**TO FIND MORE HELPFUL TOOLS, including social media shareables and sample posts, visit <https://up4debate.ca/share-the-campaign/>.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION about our events and recordings of our live webinars, visit <https://up4debate.ca/events/>.**