

SASKATOON POVERTY REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP (SPRP)

# VOTE TO END POVERTY



PREPARED FOR:

2024-25  
ELECTION CYCLE

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# Cast your VOTE TO END POVERTY

This guide is designed to help readers understand how their voting choices can contribute to ending poverty and offer insights on how voters can make more informed voting decisions that align with their values.

The guide highlights six key elements that the SPRP believes are important for voters to consider when casting their votes. Understanding these elements can help ensure that election outcomes prioritize policies, platforms, and investments that improve the health, well-being, and financial security of all community members.



Provincial Government  
OCTOBER 28, 2024

Municipal Government and  
School Board  
NOVEMBER 13, 2024.

Saskatoon Tribal Council  
Tribal Chief election  
FALL 2024.

Looming Federal Election  
SPRING 2025 (?)

**Now, more than ever, it  
is critical to focus on  
the responsibility  
governments have to  
eliminate poverty.**



# Step 1: You actually need to vote!

## Voting Is Key to Ending Poverty

It allows citizens to have a say in who gets elected to political office and how local, regional, national, and Indigenous governments determine public policy priorities.

In a free and fair election system, voting determines who holds positions of power in our communities. Once in office, elected officials help oversee how society is organized and how public resources are allocated.

Elected officials who prioritize the needs of people living in poverty should invest in critical areas like housing, health care, and education.



But it's not just about making investments – it's about ensuring these efforts lead to **real, measurable outcomes** for those affected



The United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized that **the right to vote is key to achieving the full range of rights essential to all people** – freedom of movement, speech, religion, association, and protest; freedom from violence and discrimination; access to food, water, a clean environment.

## Did You Know?

When Canada was formed in 1867, only men could vote in federal elections.

The pursuit for women's equality did not end in 1918. Women in Quebec obtained the provincial vote in 1940, and First Nations women were excluded from the federal vote until 1960.



## Your Vote Matters

Misinformation, insufficient information, barriers to participation on voting day, and even the presence or perception of violence can all significantly discourage individuals from voting.

# So now you have to vote...

Here are some important things you need to know as you prepare to cast your vote across all the jurisdictions in the next 18 months (or so).



1

## Know if you are eligible to vote

You must be a Canadian citizen, at least 18 years old, and have lived in the jurisdiction where you're voting for at least six months. You'll also need to provide proof of residency.

2

## Are you registered?

You can pre-register to vote in the election.

Here are the online registration pages.

Registration IS NOT required but it makes your voting experience easier and faster.



City of Saskatoon



Provincial  
(Saskatchewan)



Federal  
(Canada)

3

## Providing proof.

You must provide proof of both your identity and residency in the area where you're voting. There are over 50 accepted types of valid ID. You can either present one piece of ID that includes both your photo and address, or two pieces of ID without a photo that together confirm your address.

## A couple other things to know...

School Board elections happen at the same time as the City of Saskatoon – so you will see the **School Board candidate's names on the same ballot as your City Councilor ballot.**

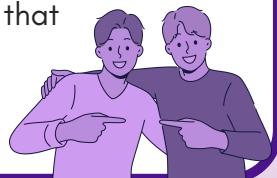
You will be assigned a polling station (the place where you vote) based on where you live. **You must vote at the assigned location.**

Indigenous government elections are only open to people who are registered citizens of the Nation. **For more information about Indigenous government elections it is best to connect directly with your Nation.**

## Did You Know?

If you don't have valid ID to prove your identity and place of residence that another registered voter with this ID can vouch for you.

Watch for information from community agencies and support services. They can step in and vouch for you if they know you and know you live in that area.



# Jurisdiction Matters.

The final consideration when casting your Vote to End Poverty is determining which level of government is responsible for addressing the priorities that matter most to you.



Level of Government	Examples of things different levels of government are responsible for...
City of Saskatoon	Municipal council derives its authority from The Cities Act, The Municipalities Act and The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010. Council's main role is to provide leadership and to make policy in areas including: roads and transportation, water treatment and sewer facilities, snow and garbage removal, recreation facilities and programs, land use planning and economic development, building code regulations, crime and fire prevention, animal control, and emergency planning.
Province of Saskatchewan	In the effort to end poverty in Saskatoon, most of the responsibility falls under the provincial government. Each ministry operates under its own laws and regulations, and is legally and financially accountable for key areas such as income assistance, transitional and affordable housing, minimum wage, Crown corporations, health, justice, education (K-12 and post-secondary), libraries, child care, employment, policing, agriculture, industry, climate, and highways.
Federal Government of Canada	The Federal Government creates laws and manages programs and services that affect the whole country. It is concerned with: national defense, foreign affairs, employment insurance, money and banking, federal taxes, the postal service, shipping and railways, telephones and technology, pipelines, Indigenous lands and rights, copyright law, criminal law, and national environmental and climate policy.
School Boards	School Boards are elected to govern kindergarten to grade 12 education in their school divisions. They play an essential role in local government, ensuring that the community's wishes are reflected in schools operations. School boards are responsible for decisions around operations, staffing, budgeting, and advocacy.

This is a simplified set of examples highlighting which governments are responsible for various priorities. For more specific details, refer to the respective government's website. It's also important to note that even if a government doesn't have formal jurisdiction, it can still advocate for or make changes within its capacity.



## Step 2: Determining WHO to vote for

**DON'T  
FORGET!**



**Elected officials who prioritize the needs of people living in poverty should invest in critical areas like housing, health care, and education.**



**But it's not just about making investments - it's about ensuring these efforts lead to real, measurable outcomes for those affected.**

Our goal is to provide you with information that empowers you to **make informed voting decisions based on your values and perspectives**, while also considering accurate, evidence-based, and community-supported insights to guide your choices.

Use this information when talking to candidates at your door, reading social media posts about poverty or the challenges faced by vulnerable community members, and when considering what matters most to you in building a healthy, vibrant, safe and thriving community.

### **When deciding who to vote for, consider the following:**

- 1** Do I understand the complexity of the issue that is being discussed? If not, who can I turn to for accurate, evidence based information?
- 2** Do I have any personal experience with what is being discussed? If not, how can I learn from someone with first-hand, lived experience of this issue?
- 3** Are my personal experiences influencing causing my perspectives to be biased? If so, how can I mitigate this bias? How can I better understand how my bias impacts my decisions?



# Here are the links to where to find out more information about candidates and party platforms.

Level of Government	Information about candidates and platforms are changing all the time. Here are the links to the main pages of information.				
City of Saskatoon	 	<p>As the City of Saskatoon election approaches, follow along on their website and watch for this logo.</p> <p>If you are looking for information about the rules to be a candidate, scan this QR Code.</p>	<p>Many candidates have active FaceBook, Insta and LinkedIn accounts – find your ward and search for more info on social media.</p>		
Province of Saskatchewan	<p>Currently the Provincial Government is represented by two parties: the SaskParty (majority) and the Saskatchewan NDP (opposition).</p> <p>   </p> <p>There are other parties in Saskatchewan who you will see campaigning this election. You may also see candidates running as “Independents”, meaning they don’t represent any political party.</p> <p>       </p>				
Federal Government of Canada	 	 	 	 	 
School Board (Saskatoon)	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p>				



Search for candidate and party information on social media!

# Step 3: Understanding Poverty in Saskatoon

In 2023, the SPRP released this report card as a baseline to start a conversation about the 12 Bold Ideas to Eliminate Poverty. Data for this report card will be updated in 2025.

## POVERTY RATE

**16%**

of people in Saskatoon  
live in poverty

**18.4%**

of people in SK  
live in poverty

**15.6%**

of people in Canada  
live in poverty

## INCOME & ASSETS



The Market Basket Measure  
for Saskatoon is  
**\$52,018/yr**

Saskatchewan Income Support  
families make  
**\$35,089/yr**

SIS families would need an additional \$1,410.75 per month to live at the official poverty line

## HOUSING

**1  
12**

people are in core housing need.

This means homes are in need of major repairs,  
don't have enough room for everyone, and cost  
more than 30% of their household income

**2  
3** of Saskatoon  
neighbourhoods  
have homeless  
encampments



The life expectancy of SK  
residents dropped from  
80.24 to 78.48 years

OVERDOSES

**180  
350**

drug toxicity related  
deaths in 2019  
drug toxicity related  
deaths in 2022



## CHILDCARE



### ONE IN FIVE

children have access to licensed and financially subsidized child care in Saskatoon

How many children 0-6 are actually left out?

**19,088**

based on 2022 population data

**61%**

of students entering Kindergarten were ready to learn

**14.3%**

of students entering Kindergarten were significantly delayed

**45%**

Indigenous students graduate on time in Saskatchewan

On average, only 1 Indigenous student graduates for every 2 non-Indigenous students

## EDUCATION



## TRANSIT



**23**

is how long it takes to travel to a grocery store using public transit during peak commuting hours in Saskatoon

It takes **16** minutes on average in Winnipeg

It takes **15** minutes on average in Canada

Regina  
106.93

Saskatoon  
113.50

2023  
CRIME SEVERITY INDEX

Saskatoon's crime severity index has increased by 7.74% since last year, with notable increases in reported armed robberies and property crimes. Both of these categories are connected to social factors associated with poverty

## JUSTICE



## PUBLIC WASHROOMS



There is only **1** barrier free public access washroom available in Saskatoon's Core neighbourhoods between 6pm and 10pm

There are **NO** public access washrooms available between 10pm and 8am

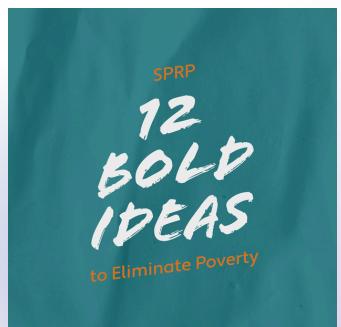
**1500+**

City of Saskatoon residents have access to free wifi in their homes and in the community since February 2023

## TECHNOLOGY



The reports, data dashboard and SPRP materials can all be accessed using this QR Code.



# Step 4: The 12 Bold Ideas to Eliminate Poverty



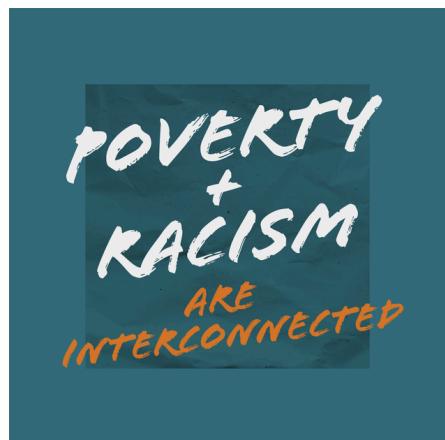
Income and Assets  
Access to Public Washrooms  
Social Enterprise and Procurement  
Child Care  
Education  
Health Care

Transportation  
Access to Good Food  
Housing  
Justice  
Literacy and Technology  
System Navigation

At the root of the conversation about poverty is the issue of **access to income and the ability to make ends meet**. While income alone is not the solution to ending poverty, it's an essential first step to acknowledge that people in the deepest poverty – **those who are regularly excluded from active participation in the economy** – are those who don't have enough income to cover the basic costs necessary for a stable and thriving life.



The SPRP recognizes that many people who have historically faced, and continue to face, intentional exclusion from the economy are often **women, people of color, Indigenous people, and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community**.



This exclusion is rooted in social systems upheld by patriarchal power structures, colonization, and policies that favoured certain peoples and groups over others. Understanding how historical inequities shape present-day disparities for certain peoples and groups is essential to addressing and ultimately eliminating poverty.





## ENDING WORKING POVERTY REQUIRES A MAP

Where your money comes from, where it goes, how you create balance and how you build for a poverty-free future.

### MONEY IN

This includes all money that comes in to fill your treasure chest. Employment income, benefits and tax incentives, inheritance, gifts, lottery, side gigs, government supports.

**ALL income is counted.**



### MONEY OUT - FIXED

This includes all expenses that you cannot skip and/or that you have no flexibility in the cost, and includes things like taxes and interest. This can also include sudden/emergency costs like a ticket or broken essential item.



### MONEY OUT - VARIABLE

This includes all expenses that you have control over, to some extent. It includes the basket of goods used to describe the poverty line (or market basket measure MBM) and includes things like: food, housing, utilities, transportation, technology, clothes, entertainment, investments, education, debt payments. Many of these things are essential, but unlike Fixed Costs above, there is some degree of how much money you can spend on each item, some option to sacrifice one thing for another, and as your wealth increases, these options/choice become more flexible.



### BALANCING ACT

Managing the money IN and money OUT is always a balancing act. To live above the poverty line, your money in **MUST** be more than your money out. As your wealth changes, so does the balancing act. As wealth increases, so do choices. As part of the balancing act public policy must ensure that low income earners are not caught in a cycle of poverty that they cannot get out of.



### BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Families should be encouraged to build assets. These assets can be money (loans/debt load, investments) or things (car or house) and even things like education, training and expertise.

Asset building create opportunities for intergenerational wealth transfer and improves options for savings for uncertain times. Assets are a families' safety net. They support vibrant thriving families that live above the poverty line



In this election, the SPRP encourages you to consider **how people make money, how they need to spend it, and how government policies affect this balance**

# Money IN > Money OUT

Money in needs to be greater than money out. But for so many this is not the case.

The rising cost of living is impacting many people in Saskatoon, making it tougher for many to cover both fixed and variable expenses. We need innovative policies to help restore the balance.

## Did You Know?

The MBM is the official Poverty Line in Canada

### MARKET BASKET MEASURE - MBM

Transportation \$4823/yr (\$90/week)	Shelter \$18,327 (\$1500/month)
Other (tech, health, childcare included) \$12,644/yr (\$1050/month)	Clothing \$2262/yr (\$188/month)
	Food \$13,219/yr (\$250/week)

**\$51,275.00/yr**

2 earners making about \$4200/month total



**For Saskatoon, a family with 2 income earners and 2 children in school need \$51,275.00 a year to not live in poverty.**



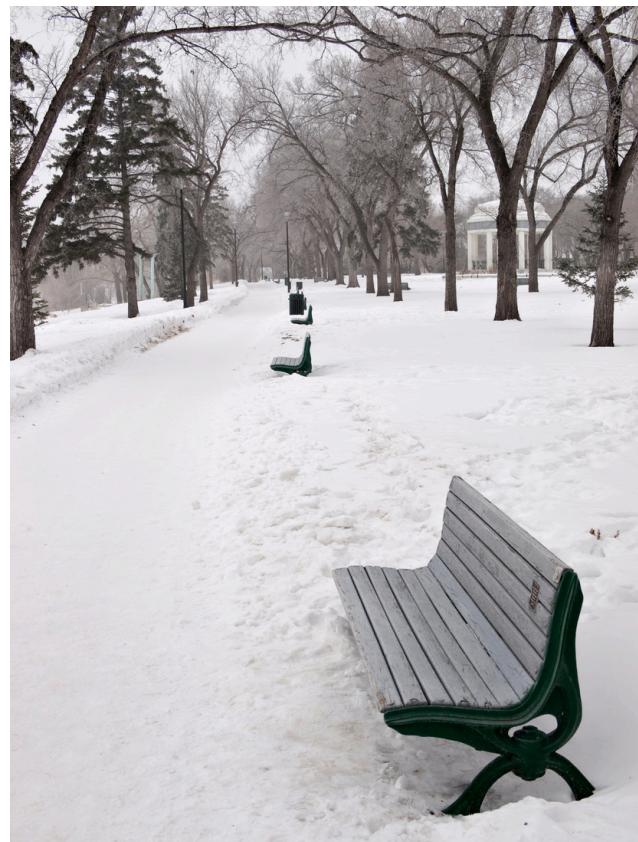
## Platform Ideas and Candidate Information to watch for:

1. Minimum Wage
2. Basic Income Guarantee
3. Income assistance policy
4. Active transportation
5. Public Transit Investment
6. Cost of Living
7. Costs and Access to Child Care
8. Education (e.g., class sizes to changing the school model)
9. Affordable housing
10. Homelessness and Emergency Shelter
11. Harm Reduction supports
12. Access to basic health care
13. Criminalization of poverty
14. Overdose and Substance use crisis
15. Progressive & innovative taxation
16. Density and multi-use housing
17. Equity & supportive LGTBQ2S+ policies, services & investments
18. Alternatives to incarceration
19. Blaming Crime on Poverty
20. Tuition and student benefits
21. Free Wi-fi & improved technology
22. Social procurement & Social Enterprise
23. Innovative business investment
24. Public washrooms and basic services

### Remember....

Elected officials who prioritize the needs of people living in poverty **should invest in critical areas like housing, health care, and education.**

But it's not just about making investments – it's about ensuring these efforts lead to real, measurable outcomes for those affected



# QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING THE ELECTION CYCLE

**YES... Candidates will come to your house and knock on your door. Be ready with questions about how your vote for them will be a Vote to End Poverty.**

Did you know that SK has the lowest minimum wage and that people who work full time making minimum wage live below the poverty line?

Currently the vacancy rates in Saskatoon are below 2% and rents are skyrocketing.

Currently almost EVERY neighbourhood in Saskatoon has an encampment. On Oct 8th the 2024 PIT Count will capture the current homelessness realities.

Substance use in Saskatoon is at crisis levels. Overdoses are at an all time high, and people are dying. So far in 2024, Prairie Harm has prevented 60 people from overdosing, keeping these folks out of the emergency department.

Even with the \$15 increase on October 1st, the SK minimum wage is too low. The current living wage for Saskatoon is \$18.95/hr  
(CCPA-Regina)

Currently the average rental cost of a 2 bedroom unit in Saskatoon is \$1365.00 (CMHC)

Encampments and Emergency Shelters are NOT housing solutions. The 2012 Point-in Time (PIT) count revealed that over 500 people were homeless in Saskatoon. This year, that number could be as high as 2000.

Harm reduction saves lives. People need supervised consumption sites AND options for recovery - NOT one or the other. By diverting people from the healthcare system, we save about \$10,000 per person, and nearly five times that if they're hospitalized. (CUISR 2019 proxies)

**What are you going to do to eliminate poverty in Saskatoon?**

**What are you going to do to develop affordable rental options for people in Saskatoon?**

**What are you going to do about the growing homeless population?**

**How are you going to support investment in transitional supported housing? What innovative solutions do you have for people who aren't ready for the traditional for-profit housing model?**

**What are you going to do to support access to harm reduction supplies and supervised consumption sites?**

**What are you going to do to support a continuum of care from Harm Reduction to Recovery?**

**DON'T FORGET!**

## Government Jurisdiction Matters

Remember, each government has its own priorities and areas of responsibility. Don't be swayed by candidates making promises on issues outside their jurisdiction. **Refer to the chart on Page 4 and ask candidates how their ideas will be implemented.** Is this within their authority at that level of government? If not, can they really make that promise happen? How might they plan to advocate for change instead?



# Policy Ideas that Impact Money In/Out

**P**

Provincial (SK)

**M**

Municipal (City)

**F**

Federal (Canada)

Policy Issue	Pressing Challenges	Policy Solutions
<p>Currently SK Income Assistance provides shelter benefits far below these costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single \$650</li> <li>• Family(4) \$1065</li> </ul>	<p>Current rates leave people without upwards of 50% of their shelter costs.</p>	<p>Shelter benefits should be tied to the CMHC rental market survey report values. Reinstate direct payment to landlords.</p>
<p>People on Sask Income Supplement (SIS) are allowed to work to a maximum monthly earned income of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single - \$375</li> <li>• Couple without dependent children - \$475</li> <li>• Family - \$500</li> </ul>	<p>It would cost the government very little to <b>change the rates of earned income exemptions</b>.</p> <p>Research clearly shows that people thrive when they are not in survival mode.</p>	<p><b>We could bring SIS recipients up to a living wage by increasing the earned income exemption to \$1700/month, encouraging people to find good jobs and get off SIS.</b></p>
<p>People need to file their taxes to get access to provincial and federal benefits.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The CRA is working on policy that will provide an option for direct filing for people with simple, low income situations.</p>	<p>In 2022, Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre helped low income tax filers and returned over \$20 Million back to the community.</p>	<p><b>Provincial government needs to cease clawbacks of any/all government benefits.</b></p> <p><b>Like in Ontario, waive the provincial income tax (\$575) for people below the market basket measure (page 10)</b></p>
<p>SK has the lowest minimum wage in Canada.</p>	<p>You cannot work full time on minimum wage and NOT live in poverty. Even with your taxes filed and benefits received.</p>	<p><b>Raise the minimum wage to living wage and review annually based on inflation needs.</b></p>
<p>Small employers will need help supporting the minimum wage changes. Large, corporate employers do not.</p>	<p>The City of Saskatoon offsets the cost of living for low wage employers and SIS with incentives like low income leisure passes and transit passes.</p>	<p>Create tax incentives that <b>support small business</b> to achieve this and tax <b>penalties for large corporations</b> who refuse to pay living wages.</p>
<p>Canada needs a Basic Income Guarantee.</p>	<p>75+ years of research indicates that when people have enough money stop being in survival mode - they focus on employment, education and improve their conditions to thrive.</p>	<p><b>The social and financial return on investment for Basic Income is positive.</b> It's time to support people with what they need to thrive.</p>

# Step 5: Recognizing Myths & Misinformation



There is a myth or misconception that people who live in poverty need to "work harder" or "pull themselves up by their boot straps".

In reality, escaping the cycle of poverty isn't about how hard you work; it's about the policies, choices, and opportunities available to you, which are largely determined by the amount of income you have to work with.

**CHOICE:** an act of selecting or making a decision when faced with two or more possibilities.

**OPTION:** a thing that is or may be chosen.



People go about their daily routines managing this balancing act. What we often overlook is that many of the options available are not positive, making it impossible to actively participate in meaningful choices. The ability to balance depends on the conflict between options and choices.

**Think of it like a buffet:** if you have no dietary restrictions, you can choose from any dish. But if you have an allergy, your options are limited, and your choice is reduced.

**If you are vegetarian and all options have meat in them, can you make an actual CHOICE?**



**Options: (1) eat nothing (2) eat meat.**

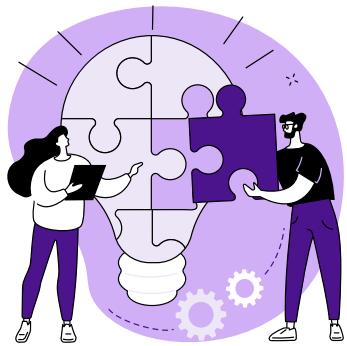
Neither of these options are positive, so in reality you have NO choice, despite having options.

**Now comes the cycle of blame and shame** - if you eat nothing, people may say "I gave you food and you chose not to eat". If they do eat, they might be told, "I gave you food and you chose to overlook your values - you can keep doing that if eating really matters to you."

**This reflects how we think about ineffective policies: rather than looking at the buffet options, we focus on the individual and hold them accountable for "bad choices" made from a set of poor options.**

# Dispelling myths and critical thinking are important in an election cycle.

All political parties share their views on what's important, what they think is happening, and they plan to do about it. Be aware, trust your lived experiences, and ask questions about what you are hearing.



**Your lived experiences and expertise plays an important role in how you process the information you are hearing, reading, and sharing.**

**This lived experience can also create bias.**

We all have personal experiences that shape what we believe, what we value, and how we vote. Keep in mind some of the lessons from this report:

- If you're questioning what you hear or read, make sure to dig deeper ask for more information. You can always ask candidates about their perspectives and how they arrived at them.
- Ask questions. Don't take everything you read or hear as factual. Consider your how your experiences may have developed bias. Question the content and think critically about how the information shapes your perspective(s) on community topics and issues.
- There's a difference between DISINFORMATION and MISINFORMATION. Be cautious of content that is rooted in fear, violence, discrimination, or places blame on individuals.

**DISINFORMATION** is planned lies or fabrications that are deliberately misleading.

**MISINFORMATION** is inaccurate information unintentionally held and/or shared.

**Spreading disinformation thrives on dividing people.**  
It's designed to exploit areas where people are polarized, and fuels mistrust and prejudices.

In order to Eliminate Poverty - we must work together, across all sectors, and with all levels of government.



If you don't have first hand experiences with the issues being discussed, ask a colleague, do some research, or reach out to the SPRP for more information: [SPRPCoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:SPRPCoordinator@gmail.com)



# Step 6: Share what you have learned.

Now that you've thought about the voting process and how your vote can influence those with power, it's time to share that insight with others.

**Sharing your perspectives** in ways that resonate with friends, family, colleagues, and even people you interact with daily can help shift narratives. It sparks engagement in the process and **increases the likelihood others will vote too!**



**DON'T  
FORGET!**

**Voting is the way we start the process to eliminate poverty!**

In the meantime, you can also get involved with community partners, political parties and other volunteer initiatives that help share your perspectives.

Engage in conversations about poverty elimination with other community members, thinking critically about the narratives you are hearing.

You can also stand up and voice your concerns when you hear misinformation being shared.



## Your Vote Matters

Sometimes elections are decided by just a few votes, so make sure yours is counted. Your vote, and the votes of the people you engage with, truly matter.



## CONTACT INFORMATION



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EndPovertyYXE



We value your feedback and insights. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us.

