

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE

SHEET 1 OF 2

THE FOUNDATION OF DEMOCRACY: THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The Québec [Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms](#) recognizes that every person who is legally capable and qualified has the right to be a candidate and to vote in elections. The [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), which applies in Canada, stipulates that every person who holds Canadian citizenship has the right to vote in federal and provincial legislative elections.

Canadian citizens aged 18 years or over can exercise their right to vote freely and confidentially. Moreover, Québec citizens, if they meet the conditions established by law, can vote in school, municipal, provincial and federal elections. The Directeur général des élections du Québec has produced a [Voter's Manual in 35 languages](#) to enable people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English to exercise their right to vote

EQUAL REPRESENTATION

Québec's objective is to achieve equal representation of women and men at all levels of decision making: local, provincial and federal.

Among other initiatives, the Québec government has adopted the [Act respecting the governance of state-owned enterprises](#), which stipulates that the boards of directors of all state-owned enterprises must be composed of an equal number of women and men. The objectives established to achieve this outcome have been attained, as we can see from a [report on gender parity](#) (in French only) published in December 2019. It should be noted that the parity zone provides for a gender parity ratio of 40% to 60%.

Québec society expects gender parity in all places where decisions are made with respect to the advancement of the society, for example, on [municipal councils](#) (in French only), school governing boards (in French only) and boards of [directors of health and social services](#). (in French only).

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE

SHEET 2 OF 2

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Some community human rights organizations work in defence of women's rights through [women's centres](#) (in French only) or [discussion tables of Québec women's groups](#) (in French only).

Organizations have partnered with the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francophonie et de l'Intégration to offer various [support services for immigrants](#); some of these organizations have daycare services.

Volunteering can also be a good way to make connections and add to your network of personal connections. The [Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec](#) (in French only) and [United Way/Centraide](#) include organizations that offer services throughout Québec. A [help and referral service known as 211](#) is accessible day and night in over 100 languages.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Québec encourages the expression of diverse points of view in order to make debate more comprehensive and advance democracy. Freedom of expression is a right protected by the Québec [Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms](#).

Freedom of expression has a very broad scope and includes various ways of expressing one's ideas and opinions: the arts, writing, speaking, picketing during a strike, etc. Having freedom of expression makes it possible to criticize a religion or a political opinion, for example. It also gives people the right to hear and become familiar with the ideas and opinions of others.