



## CAMPAIGN ENCOURAGES IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CITIZENS TO VOTE IN 2019 FEDERAL ELECTION

WHAT: Campaign Launch re: Immigrant and Refugee Citizens' Participation in the 2019 Federal Election  
WHERE: IRCOM (Program Room) | 95 Ellen St.  
WHEN: Wednesday, October 9, 2019 | 10:00AM  
WHO: Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, Ethnocultural Council of Manitoba – Stronger Together, and the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM)

Wednesday, October 9, 2019  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WINNIPEG – Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, in partnership with the Ethnocultural Council of Manitoba – Stronger Together, and the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM) this morning launches its newcomer federal election engagement campaign entitled, “Got Citizenship? Go Vote!” – this is in advance of the October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 Canadian federal election.

The public awareness campaign aims to encourage those of the immigrant and refugee community, who have their citizenship and are 18 years of age and older, to participate in the upcoming federal election.

“The lack of awareness regarding election processes and engagement mechanisms among newcomer voters can lead to a lack of participation,” states South Sudanese youth representative, Mathew Joseph. “However, this campaign of educating and encouraging newcomer voters to vote will help overcome a multitude of barriers and give them responsibility.”

By way of posters, factsheets, a workshop, social media publicity, and videos, the campaign encourages newcomers to inform themselves of their voting rights as naturalized Canadian citizens and ask questions of federal candidates of particular relevance to newcomer communities.



Caption: “Got Citizenship? Go Vote!” Federal Election Voter Information and Mobilization Videos are Translated into 13 Languages

The highlight of the launch today is the release of the campaign’s voter information and mobilization videos. The videos feature members of the newcomer and ethnocultural communities and are translated into 13 languages. Languages include: Amharic, Arabic, American Sign Language, French, Hindi, Mandarin, plain English, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, and Tigrinya. There is also a video developed by newcomer youth. The videos were developed by Nilufer Rahman of Snow Angel Films.

“To many newcomers, language difference and lack of information are some of the barriers to participation in voting,” states Immigration Partnership Winnipeg Public Engagement Lead, Jennifer Chen. “Multi-language videos not only reduce this barrier, but also build personal connections with people. When newcomers see someone who is familiar and from their community talking about election and voting, they can feel personally connected.”

While the focus of the campaign is targeted at immigrant and refugee voters, the campaign also seeks to raise awareness for federal candidates of issues important to the immigrant, refugee and ethnocultural communities, and ensure these communities are considered in their campaigns.

“New Canadians are part of our community. They would like to have their voices captured in decision making but many are not sure how to and where to vote,” states Immigration Partnership Winnipeg Director, Abdikheir Ahmed. “These videos provide an opportunity for newcomers to hear the importance of voting in their own language directly from members of their community. Encouraging new Canadians to vote in their own language makes them feel included, creates a sense of pride and values their place in our community.”

Roughly 25% of the population in Winnipeg are immigrants or refugees and almost 50% (46%) of Winnipeg’s population are first or second generation immigrants or refugees.

In Manitoba, citizens with immigrant or refugee backgrounds make up roughly 15% of the voting population, and roughly 20% across Canada. Citizens with immigrant and refugee backgrounds make up a significant proportion of the voting population and their votes matter!

The “Got Citizenship? Go Vote!” federal election campaign is built off of the success of previous voter engagement campaigns initiated by the organizers during the 2018 Winnipeg Municipal Election and the 2019 Manitoba Provincial Election.

“Got Citizenship? Go Vote!” has been organized by members of IPW’s Inclusion and Civic Engagement Sector Table, the Ethnocultural Council of Manitoba – Stronger Together, and the IRCOM, with the help of many volunteers.

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For all campaign information:

Facebook: Got Citizenship? Go Vote!

Twitter: @GoVoteWinnipeg

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Videographer:

Nilufer Rahman, Snow Angel Films:

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