



Communications Plan

SUBJECT: Registration of 16-17 year old students

The Register of Electors is a database of Nova Scotians who are qualified to vote in provincial elections. It includes the name, date of birth, sex, civic address, and mailing address and whether the elector voted in the latest general election. ENS continually updates the register based on data received from the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, Vital Statistics, extracts of the National Register of Electors from Elections Canada, and through local governments when they use an extract of the register for their elections. An elector's civic address determines the electoral district and polling division in which they reside and the polling location where they vote.

The Register of Electors may only be used for electoral purposes. At the start of the 39th Provincial General Election, the Register included 709,450 registered electors, approximately 93% of the eligible voting population of Nova Scotia¹.

In the 2013 Provincial General election, 57% of the electors aged 18-24 were in the Nova Scotia Register of Electors compared to more than 95% of the electors older than 34 years of age.

Table: Estimated Population Coverage by Age Group, 2013

| Age Group | NS Population ² | Registered Electors | | Register of Electors Coverage ³ |
|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--|
| | Number | Number | Percent Distribution | |
| 18 - 24 Years | 86,653 | 49,770 | 6.91% | 57.44% |
| 25 - 34 Years | 113,855 | 101,827 | 14.14% | 89.44% |
| 35 - 44 Years | 119,006 | 114,351 | 15.88% | 96.09% |
| 45 - 54 Years | 148,303 | 144,971 | 20.13% | 97.75% |

¹ Based on Statistics Canada estimate of Nova Scotia population of Canadian citizens 18 years and above , as of July 1, 2013

² Population of Canadian citizens aged 18 years and above as of July 1, 2013.
Source: Statistics Canada – Post-censal estimates as of July 1, 2013. Based on the 2011 Census counts adjusted for census net undercoverage and the components of demographic growth that occurred since that census.

³ Coverage figures are approximate as population statistics and Registry figures are several weeks out of sync.

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| 55 - 64 Years | 139,957 | 137,548 | 19.10% | 98.28% |
| 65 - 74 Years | 96,512 | 95,400 | 13.25% | 98.85% |
| 75+ Years | 70,377 | 71,119 | 9.88% | 100% |
| Unknown ⁴ | - | 5,091 | 0.71% | - |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>774,663</i> | <i>720,077</i> | <i>100%</i> | <i>92.95%</i> |

Reaching and registering young Nova Scotians who have not voted in a provincial election is difficult. In 2011, the House of Assembly made provision in the *Elections Act* that authorizes Elections Nova Scotia to gather and maintain information about 16 and 17 year olds who would qualify as electors when they become 18 years of age. As well, it provides for Elections Nova Scotia to be provided the personal information held by a public body as required to create, revise, or update the Register of Electors.

Once high school students graduate and leave their family home to work or for post-secondary education, it is very difficult to reach them for registration purposes. Elections Nova Scotia, with the cooperation of the Department of Education and Nova Scotia School Boards, is devising a program to reach students in Nova Scotia schools who are currently 16 years of age or older in anticipation of adding them to the Register of Electors when they become eligible.

The intent of the program is to address the large gap between electors 18-24 years of age and older Nova Scotian electors.

Communications

Elections Nova Scotia will communicate to students, parents and teachers about the pre-registration program starting in fiscal 2015-16.

Working with the Springtide Collective, a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to reconnecting Nova Scotians with the democratic process, ENS will produce two videos in the style of Springtide's 3-minute citizen series. Illustrated by Marguerite Drescher, a visual artist and graphic recorder/facilitator, trained in cultivating vivid expressions for learning, the videos will describe the program as an important "rite of passage" for the students involved. The first video, aimed at students, will indicate that the students do not have to do anything to participate but that they may opt out if they choose. (See attached draft script and storyboard.)

⁴ Unknown category includes electors who did not provide their date of birth.

The second video, produced for parents and teachers, will carry the same message regarding the importance of the program and will also provide information regarding how parents may choose to not have their children participate in the pre-register.

The videos will be hosted on YouTube and the Elections Nova Scotia website and promoted through regular display advertising and social media including Twitter and Facebook.

Elections Nova Scotia will introduce the program in a full-page advertisement in the 20th anniversary edition of Parent-child Guide, a freely distributed family newspaper (10,000 circulation).

As each student reaches 18 years old, ENS will send a “birthday card” congratulating him or her on turning 18 and reminding them that they will be entered into the Register of Electors as eligible to vote. They will have the opportunity to correct/update the information we have on record and, if they choose, to opt out of the registry.

ENS will look for more opportunities to promote the program and the videos and to refresh the communications as time goes by.