

Alberta Provincial Election 2019

Toolkit for ALIGN Association of Community Services

Prepared for



ALIGN
Association of
Community Services

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Elections 101

A provincial election will be happening April 16, 2019

This guide is intended to assist you in engaging with your local candidates during the election. It contains information that will give you tips on how to connect with candidates, what you should discuss, and some key terms that may be useful to you.

It is very important that you as a member of ALIGN get involved at the local level. Not only is your opinion important, the more perspectives a politician can be exposed to, the more informed they can be when they are creating legislation. Further, there is strength in numbers. The hope is that members across the province will engage with their local candidates to spread the message about our association, and Community Services and our elected officials will be much better educated once they are elected.

How do I know who my candidates are?

In the upcoming elections there will be three main parties: the New Democratic Party (NDP), the United Conservative Party (UCP), and the Alberta Party (ABP). There may also be a Liberal, Green, Freedom Conservative, or other candidate in your local electoral district.

1. You can check the Alberta Counsel website (www.albertacounsel.com)
2. Go to www.elections.ab.ca
3. You can also go to the website of each party to find out who their candidate is, as well as much more information such as their party platform, policies, social media information, events, and donation information.

Ways to get more information

Constituency association

This is an organization which supports the party in a specific area. Constituency associations operate year-round to support the local candidate with fundraising and other outreach.

By joining a constituency association you will find out about local events, opportunities to network, volunteer etc.

This can also be a great way to interact with the candidate and share your views.

Party Websites

There will be many ways to get information during the campaign: from the news, social media, and from the campaigns themselves. If you wish to receive information directly from each campaign, then you can register your email address on their website.

The websites for the parties are:

www.albertandp.ca

www.freedomconservativeparty.ca

www.unitedconservative.ca

www.greenpartyofalberta.ca

www.albertaparty.ca

www.albertaadvantageparty.net

www.albertaliberal.com

www.reformalberta.ca

Ways To Connect

Phone Call

You may be able to contact your candidate by calling their campaign office. However, candidates do not typically spend a lot of time there - it's more of a base of operations. You may be able to speak to someone on their campaign team and raise your issues with them and they can pass it along to the candidate. You should also ask for the candidate to return your call so you can speak to them directly.

If you do speak with someone either from the campaign team, or the candidate themselves, you should follow the below steps:

Phone Call Guide

1. Introduce yourself by giving your name, title, and the practice you represent.
2. Explain why you're calling, be brief.
3. Use Talking Points to keep focused while you say a few words about the purpose and aim of your meeting. Emphasize your strength in numbers. Show that others want what you want.
4. Have an "ask" ready and keep it simple. This is where you can bring up the transition to the HPA
5. Thank the candidate for having taken the time from his or her busy schedule to speak with you and discuss these important issues. Be polite and courteous.
6. End the call by offering the candidate your assistance on any matter that may come up on his or her radar and offer to meet to discuss any questions the candidate may have in the future.

Social Media

Social media is a great way to get involved in the election. You can do it from anywhere, it's fast, and you're able to get a point across relatively easily.

There are many platforms that the candidate, and parties, will use during the election. Pick the one you feel most comfortable with. The three main ones however will be Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Facebook will typically be used to advertise events, specific party policies, and other matters that require a little bit of text and/or picture/video. You can interact by liking posts, commenting, or just reading the information.

Twitter is used by candidates and the public to talk with one another using 280 characters or less. This results in shorter points due to the limit. Parties and candidates will typically use twitter to share policies, important events, or just to have a dialogue. You can follow your local candidates, or if you want a general feed of what's happening in Alberta politics and the election you can use the #ableg and #abpoli hashtags.

Instagram will be used a little less as it is primarily used to share photos. But you can still follow your local candidate and the party leaders to keep up to date with what they're doing on the campaign trail.

Events

During an election there are a multitude of events: fundraisers, meet and greets, coffee meetings, debates, etc.

These are all useful ways to connect with candidates. It allows you an opportunity to meet and have an informal conversation where you can get a feel for the candidate and introduce them to your industry and your concerns.

Events can be announced on social media, through newsletters (remember to sign up on the campaign websites), the local paper, or other ways. You can ask the campaign staff to keep you informed of upcoming events. You can also check the Alberta Counsel website which has a calendar of some of the larger political events in the province at www.albertacounsel.com/upcoming_political_events1.

If you do attend an event, make sure that you don't monopolize the candidates time. They are there to meet with as many people as they can so any conversations they have will be brief. Keep to the talking points above and offer to meet with them later if they would like more information.

Have an elevator pitch ready that lasts about 20-30 seconds that summarizes the talking points and gives a brief overview of your practice.

Don't hesitate to introduce yourself, or to talk to them, they want to meet you and hear what your concerns are.

If you do plan to host an event please include the following disclaimer in your invitations to elected officials:

“If you are a public office holder we recognize that you are subject to limitations on receiving gifts. Based on the cost for hosting this event, we estimate the value of goods and services received by you to be approximately \$xx.xx. This value is substantially lower than the \$400 single source threshold for gifts to public office holders. Please contact us with any questions or concerns regarding this.”

Debates

Another key event during an election is a debate. Most local elections will have a debate where the public can attend to hear the different candidates speak to their policies and vision for the future. If you can attend the debate you should make the effort to go. If you do go, prepare a couple questions in advance. There is almost always an opportunity for the audience to ask questions and if you have prepared some in advance you will have a greater opportunity for it to be heard.

Keep any question simple and straight forward, and have it apply to all parties.

In-Person Meeting

The election period is a time of intense activity for candidates with the express goal of meeting as many constituents as possible in the 28 days available prior to the election. As a result, candidates do not take many meetings, but instead focus on door knocking and other community events. If you are able to secure an individual meeting with the candidate, it is important you recognize the time constraints they are faced with. If you are unable to secure an individual meeting you may consider holding an event and inviting candidates. This would be attractive to a candidate if they would be able to meet many constituents while attending your event.

To set up an individual meeting you should send an email to the candidates email address. Wait at least a few days before following up with a phone call to the Campaign Office.

You should include in your invitation who you are, who you represent, why you would like to meet, what your “ask” is, and any logistical details. Your “ask” may be wanting the candidate to support your industry or may just be to educate the candidate.

If possible, you should offer to meet them at their campaign office so as to minimize the amount of time the candidate would need to take to meet with you.

If you require candidate contact information, contact ALIGN.

Meeting Guide

1. Open your meetings by thanking the Candidate for having taken the time from his or her busy schedule to meet with you and discuss these important issues. Be polite and courteous.
2. Introduce yourself by giving your name, title, and the business you represent.
3. Use Talking Points to keep focused while you say a few words about the purpose and aim of your meeting. Emphasize your strength in numbers. Show that others want what you want.
4. Have an “ask” ready and keep it simple.
5. Leave a business card with your contact information and emphasize that your Candidate should not hesitate to contact you or your Board with any questions or concerns.
6. End the meeting by offering the Candidate your assistance on any matter that may come up on his or her radar.

Other

There may be other events such as coffee meetings, meet and greets, breakfasts, or any others. You should approach them all in the same way as above. These types of events tend to be casual affairs that allow for relationship building and easy conversation. They can be an ideal opportunity to connect with candidates and other community members in a relaxed setting. Recognize that you will not be able to monopolize the candidates time. Keep your talking points brief. Offer to meet with them further. And don't hesitate to approach the candidate and have a conversation about community services!

Talking Points

1. Introduction, Who You Are
 - Where you live and how many years you've lived there
 - Any involvement you may have in the community
2. Introduction to ALIGN
 - How are you involved in the community services sector
 - Where is your business
3. The "Ask"
 - Sustainable Funding for Community Services
 - Keep Services in Communities
 - Continuing with the public action plan for a stronger, safer child intervention system
4. Information about your industry
 - What is your economic impact
 - Your role in the economy (jobs created, taxes paid, etc.)
 - What is your community impact

It is important to stick to key messages that you are familiar with and can speak to. Remember, you are an expert, and in order to maintain that reputation you need to speak to what you are confident speaking to.

Key Messages

Your role as an ALIGN member when speaking with candidates, or elected officials, is to present your industry in the best light. It's important to be positive. Sell the candidate on the best aspects of your industry. What makes us great? How are we helping the economy? How are we providing for Albertans and the system? It is important that the candidate gets an idea of the great benefit our industry is to this province.

It's important to keep messaging simple, and remember that consistency is key, the more times an elected official hears the same message the more it will resonate.

It's also important to remember that you are the expert in your field! Use messages and examples specific to your operation and that you are confident speaking to.

Here are some messages that can help, but if something comes up that you don't have an answer for, or aren't sure, take their contact information and say you will get back to them with an answer and reach out to ALIGN; they will provide you with some messaging you can use.

Sustainable Funding for Community Services

The Situation: In Alberta, most child and family services are contracted out by the Government of Alberta and are provided by community agencies (most of whom are ALIGN members). This system saves the Government money because agencies are able to provide services with lower overhead costs than services provided directly by the government. Using qualified local community agencies to deliver these services also helps keep more children in their homes and communities in a safe and effective way.

The Problem: Increasing funding for vulnerable children and families is often not attractive to governments working in four-year election cycles because tangible results take longer to manifest themselves. In Alberta, this has meant an insufficient increase in funding for agencies carrying out this vital work. Standards of care are increasing regularly (as they should) and so are general operating costs for the agencies. Without an increase in funding from the government, many agencies are left with uncertain futures.

The Solution: The Government of Alberta needs to fix the way it determines the amount of funding it provides to community agencies who deliver vital services to Alberta's most vulnerable children and families. Funding should be indexed and grow as standards increase and operational costs rise.

Keep Services in Communities

The Situation: Vulnerable children and families need access to support services in the communities where they live. This can be best achieved by commitment to a service delivery model that utilizes contracts with qualified local community agencies.

Over the last 50 years in Alberta, child and family service agencies have been established in local communities to fill gaps in service not otherwise provided by government or when government could not meet the demand. These agencies have demonstrated that service delivery is most effective and efficient when delivered in communities by contracted agencies.

Through research, partnerships and continuous learning, these agencies have the expertise to provide world-class services consistent with all best practice standards. Additionally, they are both strategic and nimble enough to meet unique needs that arise in their community. Contract agencies have succeeded through economic highs and lows by having strong business models, a focus on efficiency, professionalism and a passion for their work. Communities look to these agencies as resources during good times and bad.

The Problem: A lack of flexible funding and cost of living (COLA) increases. These areas are two of the primary issues in terms of sustainability and keeping our services in our local communities.

The Solution: A commitment by the Government of Alberta to focus on community-based service delivery with families, keeping more children safely in their homes and communities. This is a goal of the recommendations of the Ministerial Child Intervention Panel as published in *A Stronger, safer tomorrow*¹. Community-based service delivery also means that more families are receiving treatment for mental health and addiction issues.

Continuing with the public action plan for a stronger, safer child intervention system – doing our part

The Situation: The Government of Alberta has a responsibility to protect and support the provinces children, youth and their families. Every day there are over 10,000 children and youth who receive child intervention services, and over 60% of those young people are Indigenous. A year long review of the child intervention system occurred, resulting in *A Stronger, Safer Tomorrow: A Public Action Plan for the Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention's Final [Recommendations](#)*. It was an all- party, open and transparent process. There were 26 recommendations as a result of the review. Many of those recommendations and subsequent action involve the service delivery sector as the service providers and community agencies are key to providing the needed supports to families. As key stakeholders to the plan, we can help develop solutions to meet the needs of these children and families in our communities across Alberta.

¹ A Stronger, safer tomorrow: a public action plan for the Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention's final recommendations. <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460140635>. 2018

The Problem: While many priorities have been identified, the program redesigns and reimagining of the system have only just started. It is critical that this work continue beyond the next Election. The actions prioritize; greater understanding of Indigenous world views, cultural and family connections, as well as a collaborative focus on the root causes of involvement in the child intervention system including poverty, homelessness, addiction and mental health. Significant energy, resources and focus needs to remain on these issues for the child intervention system to make the changes it needs to.

The Solution: Indigenous worldviews need to be integrated into strategies, policies and program redesigns to address the inequalities that exist in Alberta and its child intervention system. The service provider sector is currently reviewing our Indigenous cultural understanding and developing a training and expectation framework. All of this work requires support and resources from the Ministry of Children Services.

Cultural and family connections can be strengthened through a well-designed and supported Kinship care program. Kinship care should be used as the first alternative when out of home care is required. This work is only just beginning. As the support providers, agencies need to be involved in that redesign and families need to receive financial support that is current and relevant to today's standards.

We as a service sector understand the importance of working collaboratively with government to co-create a positive future, support families and communities, sustain cultural connections, and support the strengths of each family. Community agencies have been working hard to maintain our high standards of service, including staffing, training, and retention. Adequate funding models and procurement plans are a necessity to continue this work at the quality Alberta's children and families require.

We look forward to working with you to move this critical work forward.

Phrases To Use In Your Messaging

Political parties, and their candidates, tend to use specific words and phrases. In turn, it will resonate with them more if you speak “their language”.

Here are some adjectives and phrases that the NDP and the UCP would typically use:

NDP	UCP
Affordable Better Centralized Sustainable Inclusive Diversification Forward-Looking Positive Solutions Oriented Next Generation Consumer Protection United Looking up Paying off Regular People Balance Future Optimism Inequality Working Fair Accessible Reconciliation Freedom to choose Balancing env. & economy Energy leader Taking \$ out of politics Value for resources	Competition Innovation Efficiencies Cost-cutting Decentralized Self-sufficient Reasonable Practical Common Sense Deregulate Bad for Business Open for Business Alberta Advantage Tax burden Change Family focused Parental choice “Strong and Free” Harmful NDP Policies Regular Albertans Average Albertans Humble Red Tape Political correctness Reignite our economy Prosperity Honest Day’s Work Freedom Pro-development Pro-resource development

Scripts

Meeting Request

Hi, my name is_____.

I am a ___occupation___ and I am a member of ALIGN Association of Community Services.

I live in your riding and would like to meet with you to discuss_____.

I could meet you at your campaign office, or wherever is convenient for you.

When would be a good time?

Voicemail Message

Hi, my name is_____.

I am a ___*occupation*___ and I am a member of ALIGN Association of Community Services.

I live in your riding and would like to meet with you to discuss_____.

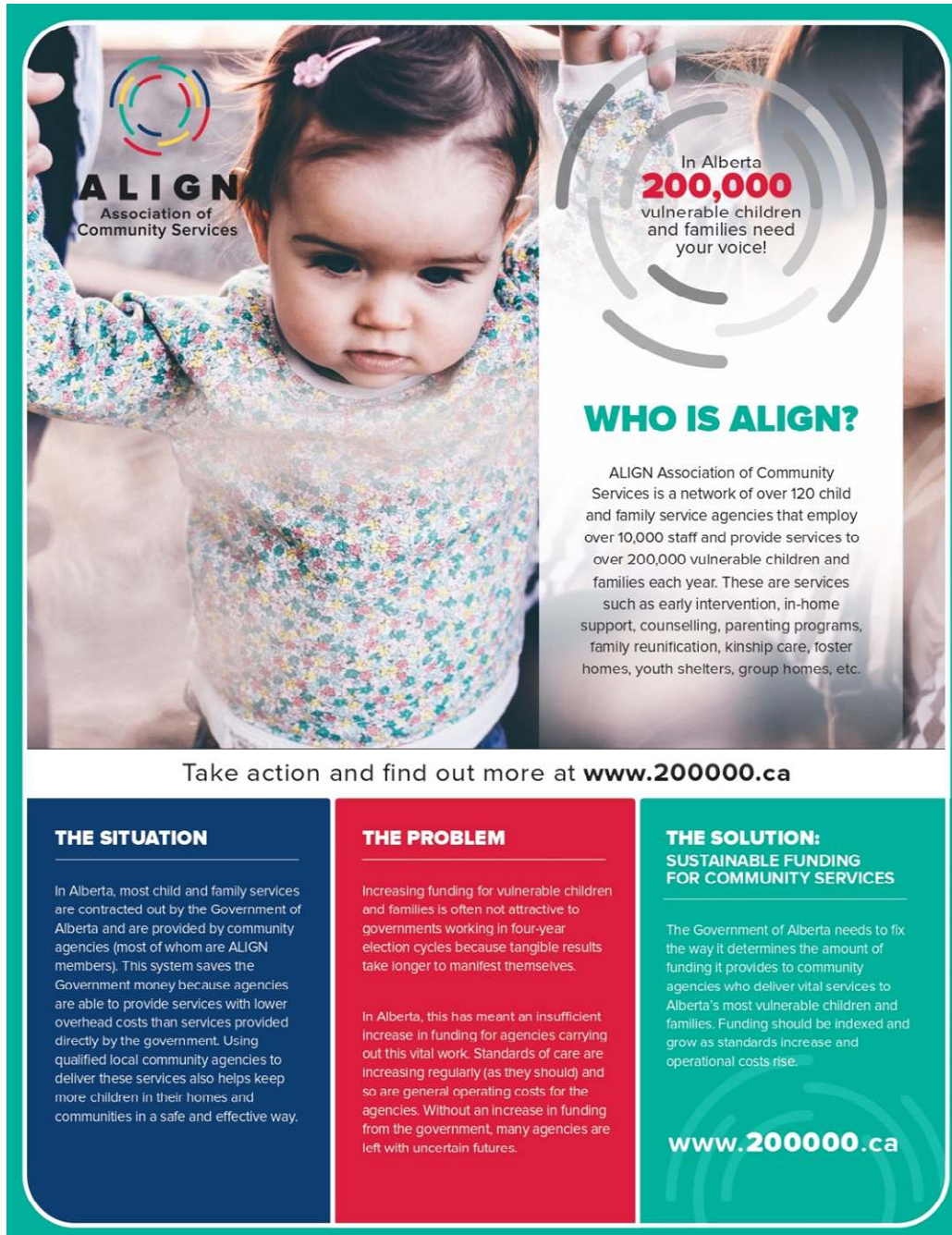
I would like to share some messages with you about our benefits to Alberta.

Please call me back at ___*phone number*___ at your earliest convenience.

Thank you.

Leave Behind

Copies of the following document are available for downloading by contacting the ALIGN office.



ALIGN
Association of
Community Services

In Alberta
200,000
vulnerable children
and families need
your voice!

WHO IS ALIGN?

ALIGN Association of Community Services is a network of over 120 child and family service agencies that employ over 10,000 staff and provide services to over 200,000 vulnerable children and families each year. These are services such as early intervention, in-home support, counselling, parenting programs, family reunification, kinship care, foster homes, youth shelters, group homes, etc.

Take action and find out more at www.200000.ca

THE SITUATION

In Alberta, most child and family services are contracted out by the Government of Alberta and are provided by community agencies (most of whom are ALIGN members). This system saves the Government money because agencies are able to provide services with lower overhead costs than services provided directly by the government. Using qualified local community agencies to deliver these services also helps keep more children in their homes and communities in a safe and effective way.

THE PROBLEM

Increasing funding for vulnerable children and families is often not attractive to governments working in four-year election cycles because tangible results take longer to manifest themselves.

In Alberta, this has meant an insufficient increase in funding for agencies carrying out this vital work. Standards of care are increasing regularly (as they should) and so are general operating costs for the agencies. Without an increase in funding from the government, many agencies are left with uncertain futures.

THE SOLUTION: SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Government of Alberta needs to fix the way it determines the amount of funding it provides to community agencies who deliver vital services to Alberta's most vulnerable children and families. Funding should be indexed and grow as standards increase and operational costs rise.

www.200000.ca

Glossary

Alberta Green Party (Greens)

Far left leaning political party with a particular focus on the environment.

Alberta Liberal Party (Liberal)

Left leaning political party with only one seat held in the last election.

Alberta Party (ABP)

Relatively new party with limited success in previous elections. Centrist on the political spectrum.

Ballot

A piece of paper on which are printed the names of the candidates, their political parties and a place for the voter to indicate the preferred candidate.

Constituency Association

An organization endorsed by a registered party or an independent member of the Legislative Assembly to handle ongoing activities, including fundraising.

Door Knocking

Activity whereby a candidate, or their volunteers, go door-to-door to solicit support and votes

Election Day

The day or days fixed for voting at an election.

Electoral District

One of 87 areas in the province in which a slate of candidates contests a provincial election, and for which a Returning Officer (RO) is appointed and a Member of the Legislative Assembly is elected. Each is assigned a number in the Electoral Divisions Act.

Election Period

The 28-day period following the issuance of the Writs of Election and ending on Election Day.

Freedom Conservative Party (FCP)

Brand new far right wing party with the main goal of securing Alberta independence.

GOTV (Get Out The Vote)

Organized efforts by a political party or campaign to encourage people to vote in an election with the effect of increasing the number of the campaign's supporters who will vote in the immediately approaching election.

New Democratic Party (NDP)

Current party in power with democratic socialist beliefs. Left wing on the political spectrum

Nominated Candidate

A person who is nominated as a candidate for an electoral division, who is nominated by a constituency association of a registered party in an electoral division for endorsement as the official candidate of that party in the electoral division, or who, on or after the date of the issue of a writ for an election in an electoral division, declares the person's candidacy as an independent candidate at the election in the electoral division

Platform (Party Platform)

A collection of beliefs, legislative goals, morals, and ideals. A political party's platform outlines their principles and plans to govern

Polling Place

A location (school, community league, etc.) where one or more polling stations are established for the purpose of voting at an election.

Polling Station

A station provided for electors in one polling subdivision to vote at an election. There may be several polling stations in one polling place.

Polling Subdivisions (PSD)

The units into which electoral divisions are divided for the purpose of effective election administration. There is a polling station established for each polling subdivision, at which a deputy returning officer and poll clerk manage the voting process. Several polling stations may exist in one polling place. Following polling day, all statistical information (voter turnout, percentage of popular vote, etc.) is compiled by polling subdivisions. By legislation, polling subdivisions are limited to 450 electors on average.

United Conservative Party (UCP)

Newly formed right wing political party through the amalgamation of the Progressive Conservatives and the Wildrose.

Writ

A formal written order, issued by the Chief Electoral Officer directing the Returning Officers to conduct elections within their respective Electoral Divisions.