

INTRODUCTION

This toolkit provides guidance on inviting electoral candidates to your Salvation Army Centre or Corps for a visit. These visits offer a meaningful opportunity to build relationships with future elected officials and community leaders, allowing candidates to gain a better understanding of the services provided and the community's needs.

As a registered charity, The Salvation Army is subject to specific rules related to government relations and engagement with electoral candidates, particularly during an election season. This toolkit provides guidance to help ensure these visits are meaningful, appropriate, and conducted in accordance with the applicable rules.

This toolkit includes:

1. Do's and Don'ts of Elections
2. Process to Engage Non-Partisanly
3. Letter Templates for Outreach and Congratulations
4. Guidance on Providing Identification Letters to Clients
5. FAQ

A. DO'S AND DON'TS OF AN ELECTION

DOs (Acceptable Activities)

DO	Details
✓ Keep it Non-Partisan	Invite <u>all</u> candidates to participate. Notify others when one accepts to ensure transparency. Do <u>not</u> host lawn signs or make donations to specific candidates.
Organize and Be Inclusive	Host well-organized, accessible events. Consider needs like translators, childcare, and transportation. Prepare a summary info package for candidates to take with them.
✓ Prepare for Meetings	Research candidates' backgrounds to help tailor your messages; ensure you are using correct titles and pronouns, and take care to acknowledge and thank the staff supporting candidates. Contact Public Affairs for support.
Provide Solutions, Stay Positive	Think ahead about the topics and issues likely to be discussed. Discuss issues informatively—avoid sounding critical. Offer realistic solutions that highlight TSA's expertise and frontline experiences. Contact Public Affairs for support with issue framing and highlighting solutions.
✓ Remember You're Always in Uniform	Whether in a formal meeting or casual conversation, TSA officers and staff are always seen as representing the organization.
✓ Practice Post-Meeting Etiquette	Send a thank-you note after the interaction. Share meeting details and photos (with correct spelling/titles) with Public Affairs and campaign teams.

Use Social Media Responsibly	Keep posts about candidate visits neutral and non-partisan. Post should, thank candidates for their time and discussion, and welcome all candidates to connect. Posts should be shared with your DSPR prior to posting.
Reach Out to Public Affairs	The Public Affairs team can help coordinate meetings, messaging, and ongoing relationship-building with political leaders.
Make the Ask	Invite candidates to engage with TSA post-election—e.g., participate in panels, receive monthly updates, or hold follow-up meetings. Emphasize TSA’s “expert on the ground” role. The Public Affairs team can help identify opportunities and support your engagement.
Encourage Voting	Inspire civic engagement by encouraging everyone to vote and stay informed.
Make the Offer	Offer to provide spiritual care and guidance throughout the campaign process and beyond. This is a difficult and taxing job and we want to be a space of kindness and reprieve in the community.

+ DON'Ts (Prohibited Activities)

DON'T	Details
+ Influence How Someone Votes	Avoid implying or stating who someone should vote for, as well as sharing who you intend to vote for. TSA officers and staff are in respected positions of influence. Encourage anyone who asks for guidance to research all party platforms, pray, and make an informed choice.
+ Invite Only Select Individuals	Only inviting incumbents or front-runners may be seen as an endorsement. Always invite all candidates. Contact Public Affairs if unsure about a candidate.
+ Criticize Individuals or Parties	Never use negative or personal attacks (e.g., “they don’t care,” “that policy is ridiculous”) Keep discussions focused on community needs and potential solutions. Remain respectful and non-partisan in all settings.
+ Forget to Inform Public Affairs	Email your respective PA Manager to let them know who you have met with for our CRM Database.
+ Host Candidates on Election Day	No events or social media posts should occur on Election Day.
+ Use TSA Resources for Partisan Activity	No partisan activity (signs, campaigning, donations, events) using TSA spaces, platforms, or equipment.

+ Allow Staff to Campaign in Uniform or on Duty	No involvement in campaign work while representing TSA.
+ Distribute Biased Materials	Do not share report cards, guides, or other documents that favour or oppose a party or candidate.
+ Post or Link to Partisan Content	TSA channels must remain free of content that shows political bias or endorsement. Monitor and remove any inappropriate posts.

Note: Personal social media accounts by TSA leaders should include a disclaimer such as:
“Views are my own, not of The Salvation Army.”

i Risk Reminder: Engaging in partisan political activities can result in loss of charitable status, affecting TSA’s ability to support and serve communities across Canada.

B. HOW TO ENGAGE NON-PARTISANLY

To ensure a transparent, respectful, and non-partisan approach when inviting candidates to tour your Salvation Army facility or center, follow this engagement process:

1. Extend an Invitation to All Candidates:

Send an invitation to each candidate running in your local electoral district. Ensure the invitation clearly states that the visit is non-partisan and aims to provide insight into the services offered, the needs of the community, and the impact of The Salvation Army’s programs. Emphasize that endorsements will not be given to any candidate or party.

To find your riding and candidates please visit [Voter Information Service - Find your electoral district](#)

2. Notify All Candidates When a Visit is Confirmed:

When a candidate accepts the invitation, promptly inform the other candidates. This ensures transparency and demonstrates your commitment to equal engagement opportunities for all candidates. Encourage them to also visit so all parties are equally informed about your services and community impact.

3. Send Follow-Up Emails to Non-Responding Candidates:

For candidates who do not respond or decline the invitation, send a follow-up message to keep the lines of communication open. Inform them of upcoming events and reiterate that they are welcome to visit at any time during or after the campaign.

4. Send a Thank You to Those Who Tour:

After each visit, send a thank-you letter expressing appreciation for their time and interest. Highlight any key takeaways from the visit and make them aware of future events they may wish to attend. This step reinforces positive relationships and ongoing collaboration.

5. Notify Public Affairs of Visits and/or Visit Requests:

The Public Affairs team tracks the number of visits and who we connect with during an election period. Please notify the Public Affairs Team serving your respective division/geographic area. Public Affairs is always available to answer any questions and provide support.

Current Public Affairs Contacts

Atlantic (NFLD, PEI, NS, NB, QC)	Manager – Luke Orrell luke.orrell@salvationarmy.ca
----------------------------------	---

Ontario	Manager – Chris Yacatto chris.yaccato@salvationarmy.ca
Prairies and Northern Territories	Manager – Jeff Jakubec jeff.jakubec@salvationarmy.ca
BC	Manager – Peter Cheung Peter.Cheung@salvationarmy.ca
<i>If a Party Leader (Mark Carney, Pierre Poilievre, Yves-François Blanchet, or Avi Lewis, or a provincial or territorial political party leader) reaches out to meet with you and/or tour your facility</i>	Forward request to all listed below: • Director of Public Affairs – Major Rick Zelinsky rick.zelinsky@salvationarmy.ca • Assistant Director, Taylor Briscoe Taylor.briscoe@salvationarmy.ca • Your respective DSPR

By following this process, your centre can build meaningful relationships with candidates and future community leaders while ensuring The Salvation Army's non-partisan stance is respected.

WHAT TO SAY

During the visit, your centre can:

- ***Share information about the programs and services offered, including the impacts these services have on vulnerable populations and the community.***
- ***Highlight the specific needs and challenges faced by the local community to foster a deeper understanding and potential future collaboration.***
- ***Offer spiritual care, including a moment of reflection and prayer, to thank candidates for their service and dedication.***
- ***Inform them of upcoming events, how to volunteer for kettles, etc.***

C. EMAIL TEMPLATES

A. INVITATION TO ALL CANDIDATES

Subject: Invitation to Visit [Organization Name]

Dear [Candidate's Name],

On behalf of The Salvation Army [Organization Name], I would like to extend an invitation to visit our centre and learn more about the programs and services we offer to support the [Community/Riding Name] community.

For over 144 years, The Salvation Army has been committed to serving communities across Canada, providing essential programs and services to support those in need. As one of the largest social service organizations in the country, we provide critical support to communities through a range of programs and services and would be pleased to share our expertise and local insights.

As a non-partisan organization, The Salvation Army values the contributions of all individuals who step into the political arena. We congratulate you on answering the call to service and would be honored to share a moment of reflection and blessing with you during your visit.

This invitation has been extended to all candidates, and we will keep your campaign informed if other candidates accept. While we are happy to engage in meaningful dialogue, please note that The Salvation Army does not provide political endorsements.

We would be delighted to arrange a visit at your convenience. Please let us know if you are available, and we will work with your team to schedule a time that works best.

Thank you again for your dedication to serving our community, and we look forward to the opportunity to meet with you.

Warm regards,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Title]

The Salvation Army [Organization Name]

[Contact Information]

B. FOLLOW-UP WHEN ANOTHER CANDIDATE ACCEPTS

Subject: Update: Candidate Visit to [Organization Name]

Dear [Candidate's Name],

Thank you again for considering our invitation to visit The Salvation Army [Organization Name]. We wanted to inform you that [Other Candidate's Name] has accepted our invitation and is scheduled to tour our centre on [Date/Time].

As a non-partisan organization, The Salvation Army extends this invitation to all candidates equally, providing an opportunity to share information about our programs, discuss the needs we see in the community, and highlight the impact of our services.

We would still be delighted to host you at a time that is convenient for your schedule. Please let us know if you would like to arrange a visit, and we will work with your team to coordinate the details.

Thank you again for your dedication to serving our community, and we look forward to the possibility of welcoming you to our centre soon.

Warm regards,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Title]

The Salvation Army [Organization Name]

[Contact Information]

C. **FOLLOW UP FOR NO RESPONSE AND/OR NOT ACCEPTING INVITATION**

Subject: Follow-up: Invitation to Visit The Salvation Army [Organization Name]

Dear [Candidate's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. We wanted to follow up on our invitation for you to visit The Salvation Army [Organization Name] to learn more about the programs and services we provide to the [Community Name] community.

We understand that your schedule during the campaign may be very demanding, and we appreciate the time and effort you are dedicating to public service. While we have not received a response to our invitation, we want to keep the lines of communication open and continue offering opportunities for engagement.

Below is a list of upcoming events at our centre for the remainder of the year. You are welcome to join us at any of these events as a way to connect with our organization and the community:

- [Event Name 1] – [Date/Time/Brief Description]
- [Event Name 2] – [Date/Time/Brief Description]
- [Event Name 3] – [Date/Time/Brief Description]

These events will provide additional opportunities to see the impact of our work firsthand and hear more about the needs of our community.

Thank you again for your dedication to serving our community. We remain committed to working collaboratively with all community leaders to ensure the well-being of those we serve.

Warm regards,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Title]

The Salvation Army [Organization Name]

[Contact Information]

D. THANK YOU FOLLOW UP FOR THOSE WHO TOUR

Subject: Thank You for Visiting The Salvation Army [Organization Name]

Dear [Candidate's Name],

Thank you so much for taking the time to visit The Salvation Army [Organization Name]. It was a pleasure to welcome you to our centre and share more about the programs and services we provide to support the [Community Name] community.

We appreciate your willingness to engage in meaningful conversations about the needs we see in our community and the challenges our organization is working to address. Your visit is a testament to your commitment to understanding and serving the people in this region, and we are grateful for the opportunity to build a relationship with you.

To continue our engagement, we would also like to make you aware of upcoming events at our centre throughout the remainder of the year:

- [Event Name 1] – [Date/Time/Brief Description]
- [Event Name 2] – [Date/Time/Brief Description]
- [Event Name 3] – [Date/Time/Brief Description]

We would be delighted if you are able to attend any of these events to continue learning about our work and further connect with our community.

Thank you again for your visit, and we look forward to working together to support the well-being of all members of our community.

Warm regards,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Title]

The Salvation Army [Organization Name]

[Contact Information]

E. CONGRATULATORY EMAIL/LETTER

Subject: Congratulations [Title] [insert last name]

Dear [Title] [Name],

My name is [Rank][Name] and I am the [title] of The Salvation Army [Ministry Unit] in [Municipality]. (Note if they toured, you can omit the introduction) It is my pleasure to congratulate you on your successful election as [MP/MLA/City Council/Mayor etc.]. We commend your dedication to public service and wish you every success in this important role.

[if visited, insert an anecdote from the visit thanking them again]

For over 144 years, The Salvation Army has been committed to serving communities across Canada, providing essential programs and services to support those in need. As one of the largest social service organizations in the country, we provide critical support to communities through a range of programs and services. Our mission is to meet human needs with compassion, provide support to those in need, and be a transforming force for change in communities across the world.

As you take on this new responsibility, we would be honoured to [continue to (if they toured)] share our expertise and local insights with you on a regular basis, and please know you always have an open invitation to visit [Ministry Unit].

Finally, we know that public service can be demanding. If you ever need a place of kindness and peace, The Salvation Army is here for you, and we would be pleased to offer you spiritual guidance and care.

Once again, congratulations, and our best wishes as you embark on this new chapter of service.

Blessings on you and your work.

Sincerely,
[Your Full Name]
[Your Title]
The Salvation Army [Organization Name]
[Contact Information]

D. GUIDANCE ON PROVIDING IDENTIFICATION LETTERS AND VOUCHING

VOUCHING FOR INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT ID:

- Individuals who are eligible to vote but do not have identification can still vote if they declare their identity and address in writing and have someone who knows them and is assigned to their polling station vouch for them.

PROVIDING A LETTER OF CONFIRMATION OF RESIDENCE

Administrators of shelters, soup kitchens, food banks, and community-based residential facilities, can provide a [Letter of Confirmation of Residence](#).

To provide a letter of confirmation of residence:

- Print off letter template from the link provided above.
- Fill out a letter on behalf of the residing client, including the MU information.
- Sign and Date.
- Provide letter to the resident to be brought to the polling station alongside a second piece of ID.

If you are unsure whether your MU is listed as a *Designated Establishment*, it is incumbent upon you to contact a Returning Officer at [Elections Canada](#) to have your MU added to the list.

E. FAQ

- **Can our Ministry Unit be a polling station for the election?**
 - Yes, send the Elections Canada contract through your usual verification channels for signing off on contracts.
- **An elected official asked to tour our centre, can we host them? Can they talk to our staff, clients, parishioners etc.?**
 - Yes, if you haven't already, invite all the remaining candidates in for a meeting/tour and inform the other candidates that this individual has already visited.
 - We can facilitate a visit/event where the candidate is there to learn from The Salvation Army, but visits are not for campaigning or promoting a candidate or political party.
- **I know you said invite everyone, but one candidate is really problematic, and we don't want them in our centre, what do we do?**
 - Reach out to your respective Public Affairs Manager for guidance.
- **Can the elected official hand out campaign materials or leave behind materials for clients/parishioners/staff etc.**

- No, we cannot display any party materials or provide individuals with materials that attempts to influence their vote. The candidate is there to learn more about the community they will soon be representing, these meetings are not for campaigning.
- **A candidate has asked to rent our space for a campaign event, can we rent to them?**
 - No, this could be seen as an endorsement of a candidate or party.
- **Only 2 of the 4 candidates accepted invites, can we tour only some of the candidates?**
 - Yes, as long as the offer is made to all candidates. That is how we maintain non-partisanship, it is not dependent on every candidate accepting.
- **Can I have a lawn sign on my personal residence?**
 - Yes, as long as you do not have any Salvation Army branded items displayed on the outside of your home, including vehicles, as this would look like an endorsement.
 - ***Rule of thumb: The Salvation Army shield and a candidate/party sign should not appear in the same image.***
- **Can I share political ideas or endorse candidates on my personal social media channels?**
 - Yes, but you need to state that the views shared are your own and not those of The Salvation Army. Be mindful that we are always wearing the shield, therefore, organizational social media policies still apply.
- **Can I share candidate messages that align with our mission on our MU social media?**
 - No, any reposting or sharing of any candidate, party, or campaign materials on official Salvation Army social channels would be an endorsement and is not allowed.
- **Can a candidate attend a church service?**
 - Yes, we encourage you to invite candidates and offer spiritual care to them as they go through this difficult process.
 - However, remind them that they are there to listen and enjoy the service and not campaign with parishioners.
- **What letters do we need to send?**
 - Send the initial invite email to all candidates and follow-up as required.
 - After the election, send a congratulatory email to the winner. Send a letter to all other candidates thanking them for stepping into the political arena and their desire to serve the community.
- **Why do I have to send a letter to those who lose?**
 - Those who engage in politics are often heavily involved in community as volunteers, board members, donors, or may run for another political office. Building relationships with these key individuals is always beneficial.
- **The candidate wants to take a picture with us during the tour, is this allowed?**
 - Yes. Just ensure that they do not have any campaign or party materials in the picture and ask them to share in advance what the caption/text accompanying the picture will be. Share this text with your respective PA Manager and DSPR before giving clearance to post.
- **Can I donate to a candidate?**
 - Yes, as an individual. Churches, including subsidiary groups (knitting clubs, parent-tot groups, etc. that are associated with the church), cannot provide funds to a political campaign.
- **Can I campaign for a candidate?**

- Yes, during non-work hours and in plain clothes (i.e. no Salvation Army branding), and do not hold yourself out as speaking on behalf of or endorsing the candidate on behalf of The Salvation Army.
- **Media has reached out asking us to comment on something a candidate has said, what do we do? OR Media has asked our opinion on a party's platform promise, what do we do?**
 - All media requests should be directed to your DSPR and PA Manager for review and guidance.
- **Can I hand out or hang Elections Canada materials in my MU, including information on how to vote?**
 - Yes, Elections Canada materials are non-partisan and acceptable
- **Can I hand out materials provided by other community or third-party organizations?**
 - No, materials that are partisan from any source are not allowed, this includes third parties.
 - Additionally, subtle partisanship such as flyers supporting a specific policy that is unique to one party, even if it does not mention a candidate or party, is still partisan and not allowed. If you feel the materials are purely educational, please review with your respective PA Manager before displaying or distributing any materials.