



## LEARNING ABOUT THE CANDIDATES

In addition to the legal requirements such as being over 18 years old, all candidates for civic office require certain skills and knowledge to be an effective representative of the people. Your assignment is to better understand the individuals running for public office.

### PART A: The Candidates

Make a list of who is running for election in your municipality. If you live in a community using a ward system or a rural municipality with districts, be sure to group the candidates for each ward or district separately. For each candidate, consider:

- What contributions to the community outside of their elected work would make them a good representative?
- What is the candidate's occupation outside of politics?

### PART B: The Election Platforms

To get elected, politicians should put forth their vision for the community, and they should outline the ways they will achieve their vision. These plans are often called election platforms. Look at each candidate's platform. Guiding considerations include:

- What reasons have they put forth for running for local office?
- Is their platform realistic?
- How do they plan to implement their election promises?
- What are other people and candidates saying about this candidate's stances?
- Does their platform serve the common good of the community, or the special interests of a few?

### PART C: Do Our Candidates Represent Our Community?

Look back to the community profiles created earlier in this unit. Compare your community's diversity to the make-up of the candidates. Characteristics to consider could include:

- age
- gender
- cultural heritage
- occupation
- any other characteristic you deem important.

Once this is completed, consider the following questions:

- How do the candidates compare to the community's diversity?
- If the candidates do not accurately reflect the community as a whole, why do you think that is?
- What barriers do under-represented members of our community face?
- Given the number of candidates running, is it possible for candidates for council to reflect the entire community?
- If it is not possible for candidates for office to reflect the entire community, why is it important that they work to understand the views of all people in the community?

### PART D: Issues Important to You

With your knowledge of the community and your above examination of the various candidates, consider issues important to you.

- Have any of the candidates discussed issues important to you? If so, what has been said or done?
- If you could ask each candidate a question about their platform, what would it be?