

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN



FIELD LEADERSHIP TEAM NEWSFEED Issue Ten: February 25, 2016

This issue of the Newsfeed begins with a message from Dr. Michael Boda, who discusses the next step in Elections Saskatchewan's evaluation of the delivery of the 28th General Election: a survey of the Field Leadership Team and Election Officials. The opening of returning offices is discussed, followed by an update on Take Part. Instructions regarding the closure of Returning Offices on Sundays and Good Friday is then given, and the Writ Period Bulletin is introduced.

Comprehensive Evaluation of Elections SK's Delivery of the 28th General Election: Survey of Field Leadership Team and Election Officials

Following up on two previous articles on our assessment activities at Elections Saskatchewan, I want to outline the final two surveys we have planned for this project: a survey of election day workers and another of you – the Field Leadership Team.

Given your critical role in the process, your feedback on the administration of the election is essential. Likewise, election officials have an insider's knowledge of the election as it takes place "on the ground." We value your opinions and perspectives – they will be useful not only in evaluating the 28th General Election but also in planning for our next election.

As with the survey of the political candidates that I outlined for you in the last Newsfeed article focussing on our assessment project, the surveys of elections officials and the Field Leadership Team will be completed entirely online. The University of Saskatchewan's Social Sciences Research Laboratories (SSRL) will conduct these surveys and analyze the results.

Questions on the Field Leadership Team survey relate to topics such as satisfaction with vendors, interactions with candidates and voters and the quality of support provided by Elections SK's head office. Please know that the survey will be completely anonymous and your responses will be kept confidential. Topics on the election official's survey will be similar in nature but the scope will be narrower and more focused on their experiences delivering voting services at the polls.

The next article related to our election assessment project will outline our plan for testing the integrity of elections operations key controls, primarily by tracking ballot paper handling from inception to storage. If you have questions or comments, please be in touch with Jeff Kress.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Boda
Chief Electoral Officer
Province of Saskatchewan

Setting Up Your Office

By now you will have received your first shipment of election supplies. Please ensure that the materials received match the checklist sent to you by Kelly/Amanda at the warehouse as you unpack. Boxes and containers that are to be opened first will be clearly marked.

If anything is missing from your supplies, please contact the Support Desk at 1-866-249-7186 so that we can send out any missing materials.

Absentee Voter Kit – We have received many absentee ballot applications at head office. We have sent out Form B ballots and all received absentee ballot applications to ROs. It is important that you process these applications as soon as they are received. The absentee ballots should be ready to mail as soon as the writ is dropped. All absentee voter applications received to date should be sent ballots by Canada Post Letter-Post. If you have an absentee ballot application from an inmate at a correctional institution, please place a stamp on the return envelope before mailing.

As you know, voters can visit the returning office as soon as the Writ of Election is issued to apply and vote by absentee ballot. It is very important that you are prepared to receive and process voting by absentee ballot as soon as the writ drops. These materials are contained in the box labeled “Absentee Voter Kit”. You have enough supplies in this kit to serve 200 voters. You also need to find the correct ballot box and voting screen and have a place set aside where the voter can vote in secrecy. Don’t forget to complete the applicable oaths in the poll book as well as accurately recording all applications received, ballot kits sent out, and ballots returned. If you require additional supplies, please contact the Support Desk and additional supplies will be sent to you.

Homebound Voter Kit – These materials are contained in the box labeled “Homebound Voter Kit”. You will have enough supplies in this kit to serve 25 voters. Make sure you have homebound voter applications available in case someone comes in to your office to request one (E-161HB on your USB flashdrive). Voters will also be able to download a copy of this application from the Elections Saskatchewan website. If you require additional supplies, please contact the Support Desk.

Ballot Paper – Form A and B ballot paper **must be stored in a locked cabinet** within the RO office. The absentee ballot box and poll book must also be securely stored each night once a ballot has been issued. Any issues with ballot security must be immediately reported to the support desk.

TAKE PART: Laying the Foundations for Writ Period Recruitment

You will see mentions of attached documents throughout this article. All of the attached documents can be found at the end of this article under the [Attachments](#) subheading.

During the writ period ahead, the FLT will be responsible for hiring more than 10,000 elections workers to support advance voting and election day operations—that works out more than 160 workers per constituency.

For more than a year now, our team in Regina has been positioning Elections SK so that our FLT members will have a ‘head start’ on recruitment once the writ drops, beyond any of our previous election-related recruitment efforts. You know already that we have been forwarding individual names to Returning Officers on an ongoing basis with the expectation that you will engage with these people before the writ drops.

In recent days, Elections SK has continued to actively work on our recruitment campaign. The sign up page for our **Take Part List** (elections.sk.ca/workers)—which has facilitated individuals being able to sign up to work our election—continues to grow each day. A recent advertising and media campaign has led to a significant jump in the number of names on our list, with 2,500 new names being added in the last three weeks alone. The attached **Take Part By the Numbers** sheet offers numbers related to our current situation province-wide with respect to this initiative.

Current Snapshot

Our recruitment efforts are going relatively well in Regina for the most part. Our Saskatoon numbers are not quite as high, but we have seen some good numbers there as well. Constituencies outside of Saskatoon and Regina, particularly in rural areas towards the edges of the province and in the far north, appear to pose our biggest challenges with respect to recruitment and will require additional work. Of course, there are exceptions. We have variations across the province, from as low as 23 workers in one constituency to as high as 193 in another.

Promotional Efforts

We will continue to work centrally to support the FLT’s recruitment efforts scheduled for the writ period. Here are some of the things we have and will be working on:

- Our Outreach & Policy team has been in touch with select media outlets via news releases and has conducted interviews in areas where recruitment numbers are lower;
- Online banner advertisements have been running the past few weeks;
- Our advertising efforts in print and on radio will continue as well regarding recruitment;
- This past week, you may have noticed that we have been reaching out to the provincial major dailies (StarPhoenix and Leader-Post) as well as television stations (CBC, CTV, and Global);

- We have also engaged with radio in some of smaller markets, including the Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation based out of La Ronge;
- Ready-for-print articles have been prepared for community newsletters and for service and faith-based organizations. A sample of one of these is attached;
- Posters are also ready for printing and distribution, as attached, and can be printed from an RO printer or by a community printer.

While responsibility for recruitment will remain in the hands of our FLT, we want to honour our commitment to support your recruitment efforts centrally. We will continue to determine how we can most effectively increase the number on the Take Part list and pass those names along to you. We will continue to run advertisements again from February 29 to March 13, among other initiatives.

Six Recruitment-related “Next Steps” for Returning Officers

We will continue to be in touch with you on a one-on-one basis, particularly in targeted constituencies. We are asking, however, that each Returning Officer take a number of steps **by Monday, February 29** in preparation for your overall recruitment effort that begins once the writ has dropped. These advance efforts will reinforce our work to provide the foundations for your upcoming recruitment work. These are:

- **(#1) Provide us an update on the number of confirmed workers you have been provided via the *Take Part List*:** Previously, our Outreach & Policy folks have been providing each Returning Officer with an up-to-date list of people who have expressed interest in working. You have been instructed to call each person. It’s likely that not everyone you have called will be available to work for you during either advance voting (March 29 – April 2) or on election day (April 4). Could you please provide us with an up-to-date number of those who have confirmed their availability by sending this to communications@elections.sk.ca. (Here’s an example: Arm River has a list of 82 who have signed up on the Take Part List. If you have called all 82 and 74 are confirmed their availability to work, we need a report from you that 74 have confirmed).
- **(#2) Be sure to enter all confirmed worker names and their contact information on the E-113 from your Take Part Constituency List as you prepare:** To be distributed this week to every Returning Officer, the E-113 form has been redesigned in a manner that will help us to monitor staffing through the writ period. Please be sure to enter your workers names and contact information on the E-113 from your Take Part Constituency List.
- **(#3) Enter contacts you know are NOT on the Take Part List here:** We want to be sure to capture every potential worker in the field on our central Take Part List. If a contact from your constituency has NOT appeared on your Take Part Constituency List, please enter their information here: www.elections.sk.ca/workers/RO-form. This web address has been created especially for our FLT to add names to this list. When you do so, these names will show up on subsequent Take Part Constituency Lists that you receive from Head Office.

- **(#4) Send contact information for newsletters, bulletins, website in your constituency in communities:** You are our eyes and ears in the field and know your constituencies well. If you are aware of *community based newsletters, bulletins, or websites* in communities where you expect to need workers, please forward these along to communications@elections.sk.ca.
- **(#5) If you're on the one of the six at-risk recruitment constituencies, special instructions:** We have identified six at-risk constituencies for recruitment using the *Take Part List*. We had to draw the line somewhere, so we've highlighted constituencies that currently have less than 80 workers on the list. We have proactively added extra recruitment advertising for these constituencies, scheduled to begin next week. If you are the returning officer for one of these six constituencies, please provide us an email with the following: (1) Identify specific recruitment risks in your constituency (example: all or just part of the constituency); (2) Offer recommendations on next steps you could take to address those risks, and (3) Provide a timeline on when those actions should be taken. Your suggestions could include (but don't need to be limited to) recommendations such as direct advertising, media interviews with head office staff, reaching out to community contacts that you know personally, etc. Please send these lists to skalcsits@elections.sk.ca.
- **(#6) If you're not on the one of the six at-risk recruitment constituencies, but think you have a recruitment risk we need to know about, special instructions:** In some instances, there might not be much of a difference between constituencies we have identified as at risk and not at risk. We also appreciate that our FLT will know the challenges of their own constituency best. If you believe that there is a recruiting risk in your constituency, please follow the same three steps outlined in (#5) above to skalcsits@elections.sk.ca. We want to hear from you.

As we move ahead together to recruit the more than 10,000 workers needed for our upcoming general election, electoral operations will continue to adjust our support methods before and after the writ drops with respect to recruitment. Our actions will be directed by how our recruitment numbers change. We will also be guided by the number of confirmations we receive from you regarding our Take Part Workers already on the list. Signs of lower numbers of confirmed participants is going to require more work in the shorter term. Finally, the extent and nature of recommendations offered by our Returning Officers with respect to (#5) and (#6) will have an impact.

We'll continue to offer you information in the weeks ahead. For now, thank you all for working with us to identify risks and conduct recruitment centrally with you before the drop of the writ.

Attachments

Take Part By The Numbers, February 25, 2016 (60 KB)

Ready to print Article (274 KB)

Ready to Print Posters (1 MB)

Returning Office Closures: Writ Period Sundays and Good Friday, March 25

The Writ Period will begin soon enough and there are many details to care for over the course of a few short days. During the Writ Period, our stakeholders—voters and candidates alike—will depend on you to provide services, in addition to the good work that you are completing to prepare for the electoral process itself. Getting adequate rest will be important, of course.

With a Writ period that could begin anywhere between March 1 and March 8 (TBD) and continuing on until the Return of the Writs on April 27, Returning Offices will be open to the public six days a week, being closed on Sundays (March 6-if necessary, 13, 20, 27 and April 3, 10, 17, 24).

A decision has also been made to close Returning Offices on Good Friday, March 25. Our Chief Electoral Officer will be working with our stakeholders to ensure that they are aware that our Returning Offices will not be open to the public on Good Friday, but that personnel will be available at Head Office to answer business manager and candidate questions that day via the Candidate/Business Manager Support Line.

Introducing the Writ Period Bulletin

Elections Saskatchewan will be introducing a new communication tool during the Newsfeed that will provide each of you with crucial information on a near-daily basis: The *Writ Period Bulletin*, or the Bulletin for short.

The Bulletin will be presented in a similar format as the Newsfeed, but while the Newsfeed focuses on providing the FLT with general information on various topics, the Bulletin provide key direction on critical processes and time sensitive tasks.

Please check your email daily as you will be receiving both direction and information through this format.