



2021 ELECTION GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY KIT



ABOUT THE RECREATION VEHICLE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

The Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association (RVDA) of Canada is a national, volunteer federation of provincial and regional RVDA associations and their members who have united to form a professional trade association for all businesses involved in the recreation vehicle industry. The core objective of the RVDA of Canada is to bring together and represent the retail businesses involved in the recreation vehicle industry across Canada, thus providing the support and strength to protect and promote the interests and welfare of Canadian RV Dealers, and to maximize the potential of the industry for all involved.

RVing in Canada also has a considerable impact on the Canadian economy. The manufacturing, purchasing, servicing, and use of recreation vehicles contributes billions – both directly and indirectly – to the Canadian economy each year. In 2019, the RV industry supported 67,200 jobs and there was \$6.2 billion in total spending, which generated over \$4.8 billion in added value to the Canadian economy. There are over 4,231 campgrounds operated across Canada, each offering a unique experience for Canadians and international visitors.



ELECTION ADVOCACY

Government relations have always been an important aspect of RVDA's work, and maintaining positive relationships with politicians from all parties, even during elections, is a central tenet of the association. Over the last couple of years, the RVDA has increased its advocacy work, specifically with its meetings with government officials, meetings with other stakeholders in the industry and our yearly RV and Campground Awareness Day attended by a number of Parliamentarians, Senators and key decision-makers.

While meetings in Ottawa are an extremely important part of RVDA's advocacy strategy, it is equally important that RVDA members make an effort to meet with their local candidates during this election period. Remember politicians typically listen the most when their names are on the ballot! Local members are able to provide their candidates with a more specific community perspective on issues related to the RV industry, the tourism industry, small businesses as well as the customers they serve.

The main goal of this grassroots outreach is to discuss issues of concern to your business and highlight issues such as the recovery from COVID-19; the shortage of skilled workers in the RV industry and the critical need to invest in camping and RV infrastructure. While RVDA has also been vocal in its messaging to the government regarding small businesses issues, fair tax practices by CRA, trade concerns, the Association's main focus remains on these issues.

This kit provides instructions for contacting your candidates and preparing for the meeting, key messages and post-meeting actions. Also included is a sample email/letter that can be sent to each candidate's local campaign office that you should feel free to print on your letterhead. If after reviewing the kit's contents you wish to be involved in this local grassroots election outreach or have any questions, please contact Oumar Dicko at oumar@impactcanada.com.

RVDA will also be sharing the names and contact information for all candidates this election and provide assistance if needed to contact them.

KEY ISSUES AND TALKING POINTS

The following are the key issues that the association has advocated on leading to the federal election.

1. COVID-19 Support

- The Canadian economy is reeling from the devastating economic impact of COVID-19. Virtually, all sectors of the economy have been hit hard and no business has been spared.
- The impact of the global pandemic has been particularly severe for the RV sector in Canada. RV sales were down by close to 9 percent last year and inventory shortage remains a serious concern for the outlook of RV sales this year.

Recommendation:

- As the vaccination campaign ramps up across the country, the federal government needs to provide continuous support to struggling businesses and workers until the end of 2021 to ensure long-term business continuity.
- Economists agree that recovery post-crisis will slow and choppy, therefore the government should make investments now to facilitate economic recovery in the next couple of years. The recovery measures need to include incentives for RV purchase and RVing post-crisis as well as investment in RV and camping infrastructure across Canada.



2. Increased Support for Skilled Workers in the RV Industry

- The shortage of skilled workers remains a key concern for the RV industry and COVID-19 has exacerbated the availability of training programs for apprentices.
- Currently, out of 1020 full-time RV service technicians throughout Canada only 424 with Red Seal Designation.
- There are currently only two programs in Canada that offer RV service technician apprenticeship training – in British Columbia and Alberta. Each of these programs provides Red Seal Designation that is accepted nationwide.
- The existing programs reach full enrollment each year and often hold waiting lists for additional several dozen prospective students.
- Training programs are offered in other provinces but they are not accepted as full apprenticeship programs. As a result, few RV service technicians who actually work in the industry are classified as apprentices.
- We applaud the government for the focus on skills and training in the previous budgets. Measure such as Canada Training Benefit, more funding for Skills Canada and the new apprenticeship strategy will help Canadians get the skills they need.
- We look forward to continuing working in close partnership with the government to increase support for skilled workers in the RV industry

Recommendation:

- Due to the geographic constraints of the existing programs, the Government of Canada should create an Apprenticeship Travel Grant that could be used by those who are required to travel in order to undertake an apprenticeship training program. This Grant should be targeted towards those enrolled in programs that are not offered in their city, town or province.
- This Grant should be a taxable cash grant of \$2,000-\$4,000 per person per year in order to provide support for such items as travel costs, lodging, and care arrangements for families.

3. Critical infrastructure in our national parks and tourism investment to support the RV industry is needed

- The Government of Canada should provide targeted and dedicated investment in camping/ RV infrastructure in Canada's National Parks. The 119 Federal campgrounds are comprised of over 10,800 campsites. Of these sites, 7911 or 80% remain unserviced.
- As campground services continue to rise in demand, critical infrastructure needs -such as sizing requirements to accommodate larger RVs and access to appropriate electrical outlets and waste disposal facilities -remain unfunded.

Recommendation:

- As RVing is a large component of tourism, both internationally and domestically, investment in camping and RVing infrastructure will play a crucial role in the overall contributions of the tourism industry to future economic development and prosperity post-COVID-19. Upgrades in infrastructure are essential if we want to be able to ensure the future of this industry and make it more accessible to all Canadians.

SAMPLE EMAIL/LETTER FOR CANDIDATE OUTREACH

(Insert Date)

(Insert Name and Address)

Dear (Insert Candidate Name),

I am a RV dealer in your riding at (Insert Business Name). I employ a number of the constituents of this riding. As a member of the Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association (RVDA) of Canada and a business owner in this riding, I wanted to reach out regarding two key issues of concern in our industry: the shortage of skilled workers in the RV industry and the critical need to invest in camping and RV infrastructure across the country.

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However, the COVID-19 pandemic and challenges such as the shortage of skilled trade workers and the need for increased investment in RV and camping infrastructure remain key concerns.

I would welcome the opportunity to arrange a meeting with you to discuss these important issues in further detail.

Sincerely,

(Insert your Signature)

(Insert your Name, Title and Address)

MEETING POINTERS

1. Be prepared and arrive or log in early for the meeting in order to respect the time of the candidate and organize your thoughts and materials.
2. Remember to turn off your cell phone before the meeting.
3. Address candidates respectfully, do not assume anything about their positions on topics based on their party; approach the discussion as an interested member of the community who wants to discuss solutions to a very important issue.
4. Keep in mind that most politicians will afford you only 30 minutes, so you should be brief and to the point.
5. Open the meeting by thanking the candidate for having taken the time from their busy schedule to meet with you and discuss issues facing your business and the RV and camping industry.
6. Introduce yourselves and the RVDA by giving your name, title and the organization you work for and its contributions to the local community.
7. Remember to leave time for the candidate to ask you questions.
8. Have a concrete request – Ask the candidate to take action, either within their party or in government if they are elected: “Will your party commit to providing more support for skilled trades?”
9. Wrap up the meeting by thanking the candidate. Make sure to add that if they have any further questions, do not hesitate to personally contact you or the association.
10. Complete one feedback form after the meeting and return it to Oumar at oumar@impactcanada.com.
11. Expect the unexpected. The meeting may be cancelled at the last minute or will move to a different time. Campaigns are extremely busy and you will need to accommodate the schedules of the candidates you meet with.
12. **Ask for a picture.** Most candidates use social media and will be more than happy to take a picture with you. They can use it for themselves and we can use it for our own channels.



FEEDBACK FORM

Your name and city/riding:

Name of candidate you met with:

Candidate's political party:

Date of meeting:

General comments and feedback from the meeting:

Please scan and email this form back to Oumar at oumar@impactcanada.com