



Shape Your Community: Why the Upcoming Municipal Elections Demand Our Voice and Action

Written by CFUW Ontario Council President

As the Ontario municipal elections approach, it's time to focus on the level of government that directly shapes our everyday lives.

While federal and provincial politics often capture the headlines, local government makes the decisions that touch our homes and neighborhoods immediately, from public transit, affordable housing, and childcare services to local shelter supports, community safety, public health, and climate action. The issues that matter most to our families and communities are determined locally.

That is precisely why voting in municipal elections is critical, and why CFUW members have a key role to play in getting both the message and voters out.

Local Advocacy Starts at Home: CFUW's mission to advance gender equality, social justice, and education depends heavily on local implementation. When we advocate for accessible spaces, strong community services, and equitable policy frameworks, municipal councils are our primary partners and sometimes our biggest hurdles. Voting ensures we elect leaders who share a vision for inclusive, equitable communities.

Resources to Mobilize Your Community: CFUW Ontario Council encourages all Clubs to foster civic engagement in their local areas. To assist you in bringing non-partisan dialogue to your community, procedures and step-by-step toolkits for hosting **All Candidates Meetings** are available directly on the Ontario Council website. Hosting a meeting is one of the most effective ways to highlight key social issues and ask candidates where they stand on equity and community needs.

Supporting Women Candidates and Rejecting Aggression: Women remain underrepresented in local government. Running for municipal office takes immense courage, dedication, and effort. We must support women who put their names forward, whether that means casting your vote for them, volunteering on their campaign, helping distribute literature, or simply amplifying their message.

Equally important is protecting the democratic space for women leaders. Female candidates across Ontario face an alarming rise in online and in-person harassment, intimidation, and hostility. We cannot remain silent spectators to political aggression. Calling out toxicity and refusing to condone abuse directed at candidates is essential to keeping civic life safe, fair, and welcoming for women.

Take Action

- **Check your voter registration** and confirm your local polling location.
- **Visit the CFUW Ontario Council website** to access resources for running an All Candidates Meeting.
- **Get involved in a campaign** or offer encouragement and practical support to women running locally.
- **Speak up** against harassment and aggression whenever you see it.

Democracy is built from the ground up. Let's lead the change in our communities by making our voices, and our votes, count.