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Political parties' local chapters fail to use websites to connect with Canadians

Few riding associations' websites provide ways to meaningfully engage with politics

Toronto, March 10, 2014—With a federal election anticipated next year, would-be candidates need to start preparing if they hope to win their riding's nomination. Though overseeing the nomination process is one of riding associations' most important roles, charitable think tank Samara shows that only 5 riding associations—or less than 1%—provide any online information on how to become a candidate.

Samara analyzed over 1000 riding association websites and found that while many broadcast information about the national party, far fewer offer ways to get involved. A full 22% of riding associations had no website at all.

Among those associations with websites:

- 96% include instructions to donate to the party or riding.
- While 74% provide information on the party's leader, only 17% provide names of the association's executive.
- 4% share details of past or future meetings.
- Only the NDP and Green Party have websites for associations in all 308 ridings.

“We know that only 35% of Canadians believe that political parties offer a way to get involved in politics. Riding associations are supposed to mobilize people to participate. But to do so, they need to take advantage of digital tools available, and tell prospective members when the meetings are,” said Samara co-founder Michael MacMillan.

Luckily, websites are easy to fix. Samara has created a simple checklist that riding associations can use to make their websites more accessible.

“With a federal election on the horizon, it's important that all Canadians have an opportunity to get involved, and to run for their riding's nomination if interested,” added Samara's Research Manager Jane Hilderman. “Posting information on how to become a candidate or attend meetings is a simple way for riding associations to start improving their websites right now.”

See the complete analysis, an infographic of the results and top website tips for riding associations at <http://www.samaracanada.com/fun-stuff/riding-association-websites-infographic/>

About Samara

Samara is a charitable organization dedicated to improving political participation in Canada. Through research and educational programs, Samara reconnects citizens to politics.

Samara's areas of research include:

- Citizen participation and voting behaviour
- Citizens' attitudes towards politics
- Members of Parliament
- Political parties

Our research and information on our programs can be found at www.samaracanada.com. **We are always available to comment on our areas of research.** You can also follow Samara on Twitter @SamaraCda.