



Association of Municipalities of Ontario

Municipal Rep Day

OPERATIONS GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

This guide is a resource to support locally elected officials looking to engage young residents in classrooms and other community environments in their municipalities.

Local government is the level (order) of government closest to its constituents, and local elected officials have the capacity to make meaningful change in their municipalities. In fact, local governments work to address many of the issues young people are most passionate about including housing, homelessness, climate change, and equitable economic opportunity.

Youth engagement with local government is decreasing and the role of locally elected officials is not well understood. Recognizing this challenge and the importance of reversing this trend through engagement, education and fun, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) developed an initiative supported by resources to assist you in engaging young people in your community and in influencing positive democratic outcomes.

The **AMO Municipal Rep Day** initiative is one way to address youth engagement by sparking interest and education in young people about local government and the issues that affect them in your local community.

WHAT IS MUNICIPAL REP DAY?

AMO's Municipal Rep Day is a **civic education initiative** that supports AMO members on engaging with classrooms in your communities through discussions about the municipal political process and current issues. AMO's Municipal Rep Day is the result of a pilot program developed as part of AMO's Healthy Democracy Project and through the expertise and experience of the team at CIVIX, a national leader in civic education. AMO's Municipal Rep Day offers locally elected officials an opportunity to light the fire for future municipal leaders.

The resources in this toolkit will help you:

- **Engage** with schools and community organizations in your municipality, and educators
- **Prepare** for speaking engagements in schools, with young audiences and community organizations.



THE NEED & SOLUTION

With many municipalities throughout the province experiencing issues like low youth voter turnout and engagement, a program such as Rep Day provides a great opportunity to foster engagement between youth and their elected representatives, as well as the opportunity for positive and inspiring discussions.

Ideally, participating youth will depart each Rep Day engagement with more knowledge about the importance and relevance of municipal government, and you will take away the priorities and concerns of younger constituents.

With the current political climate and state of civil discourse, there is also an increased need for constituents to have respectful dialogue with their elected officials, municipal employees, and people with whom they may disagree with or not understand.



Some other resources from AMO and CIVIX that can be used to engage with youth include:

- [AMO's Democratic Engagement Solutions Bank](#)
- [AMO's Municipal 101](#) is a source of key municipal information
- [CTRL-F](#) is a digital media literacy program to help students evaluate online information
- [PoliTalks](#) builds habits of constructive discussion in classrooms.



ELEMENTS OF AMO'S MUNICIPAL REP DAY



AUDIENCE

Rep Day audiences are typically youth aged 8 to 18. Interested educators are provided with elementary and secondary-level resources that can be adapted for participating groups. These resources can be viewed [here](#).



TIMING

AMO and CIVIX have developed a suggested visit framework for a meeting about one-hour in length. This includes 15 minutes for your introduction, engaging icebreaker prompts, and time for Q&A and discussion between the students and you. This framework can be adapted for shorter or longer visits. Visits can be formatted as shorter back-to-back meetings, or longer sessions.



SETTING

Rep Day typically takes place in schools. As local leadership is a collective effort, the resources and framework could be adapted for wider use with community groups.

SCHOOL OUTREACH

The program ties in well with specific curriculum requirements for Grades 5 and 6, and Grades 10 and 12. It can be helpful to let the school admin know when offering a classroom visit.

The resources are designed for Grades 4–12, with two separate sets of lessons for elementary and high school level students.

SCHEDULING VISITS

We understand that elected officials and schools all have busy schedules. Depending on the size of the group participating in the visit and organizing capacity, elected officials could do one or two visits to the school if their schedule permits. March Break holidays, snow days, end-of-semester assignments and exam schedules are factors to be aware of.

FRAMEWORK

MATERIALS AND AIDES

- Lesson plans, videos and activities are available on [AMO's Healthy Democracy Project webpage](#).
- [Resources are available](#) for educators and elected officials.
- If a school or community group in your municipality is hosting you for a visit, we encourage using these resources to prepare for a more meaningful meeting.
- Elected officials can download and use a [Conversation Guide](#) to help prompt discussions during the visit.
- Many schools and elected officials opt to use the following suggested framework:

1	Welcome (2 min)	Moderator should welcome the elected official and outline the structure of the meeting.
2	Opening Introduction (10-15 min)	<p>Brief introduction statement from the elected official:</p> <p>"What do you think politicians are like?"</p> <p>"Why do you think people decide to run for political office or want to become a politician?"</p> <p>"Show of hands - Have you ever met one of your elected representatives before?"</p>
	Icebreaker Activity - Warm up Statements (5 min)	<p>Include the elected official in an icebreaker activity with the students:</p> <p>Four Corners (instructions on following page)</p> <p>Start with 2-3 light, fun statement and have students move to the corner that represents their response.</p>
3	Personal questions and/or questions about the role and experience as a local council member (15 min)	<p>Start with short answers and personal questions to get better acquainted. For example, these could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you like best about municipality? • Why did you want to run for local government? • How would you describe your job? Is your role a part-time or full-time position? • What is the most rewarding and challenging part of your job? • How do you navigate opposing perspectives and opinions from your constituents as an elected representative? How, if at all, has social media played a part in this? • Do you have any memorable experiences you can share, or projects you have been part of in our community? What different roles within government have you served? <p><i>"Show of hands - Who here has ever thought about running for office?" Discuss more in-depth with those who respond that they have.</i></p>
	Icebreaker Activity - Policy Statements (5 min)	<p>Move on to more meaningful issue statements for the Four Corners activity. Ask the visiting elected official to explain their choice to the group.</p> <p>"What would you do if you were an elected representative?"</p> <p>"Politics can make people upset, which can make it hard to talk to each other. What are some things we can do to make these discussions easier?"</p>

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH EDUCATORS

Municipal Rep Day offers a platform to nurture long-term collaboration between elected officials and educators. Through these meetings, they co-create an enriched learning experience for students to connect real-world politics and governance with curriculum-linked civic education.

Elected officials are able to connect with educators to align their presentation with learning goals specific to each classroom.

Educators bring civic learning to life and prepare their students for the visit by teaching lesson plans and activities. They are also integral in bridging examples of local government with issues relevant to the students, which in turn empowers students to engage in their communities.



RESOURCES FOR READINESS

A successful Municipal Rep Day visit depends not only on participation but also on thoughtful preparation. That's why resources play a key role in ensuring both elected officials and educators are ready to deliver a meaningful experience.



AMO and CIVIX provide a wide range of curated materials, including:

- **Lesson plans** designed to introduce local government in engaging ways
- **Short explainer videos** to introduce key concepts
- **Activity sheets** to encourage hands-on learning and discussion
- **Slide decks** to support structured presentations and classroom engagement

These resources help educators integrate Rep Day into their broader teaching plans and support elected officials in tailoring their presentations to the needs and understanding levels of the students. Utilizing these tools ensures a smoother visit, more confident delivery, and greater student engagement.

All participants are encouraged to review and select the materials best suited for their classroom and community context.

CONSIDERATIONS

FORMAT AND AGENDA

Groups of around 50 students work best for more meaningful discussions with the local representative. The resources can be adapted for larger groups if an auditorium visit is preferred.

The specific agenda of each visit can vary from class to class. Students are encouraged to generate questions based on issues they're currently studying or curious about. For the most meaningful engagement, we suggest that teachers share in advance a list of topics they'd like the visiting official to discuss.

One of the goals of this initiative is to help dispel any misconceptions about politicians and humanize the people and processes of local government. Elected officials are encouraged to lean in and share about any experiences they may have had in their role.

SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

Typically, visits from elected officials are permitted in schools outside of election periods.

Many schools require at least two weeks notice to get approval from the school board. In some cases, the superintendent and school board trustee may need to be present to observe the visit.

If you are interested in visiting a school during an election period, CIVIX suggests connecting with the interested school to host an all-candidates' forum where all candidates are invited, to align with school board policies.

CONSIDERATIONS

STUDENT PRIZES

Some elected officials choose to bring tokens or small giveaways for students who ask or answer questions. These could be tokens like pens, books about your municipality, sunglasses, or stickers. Information about local youth councils are also welcome during the visit.

PRIVACY + SOCIAL MEDIA

To keep the meeting focused on the students, media and parents are discouraged from attending the visit. Depending on the school or organization policy, they may require admin stakeholders to be present at the visit.

It is also important to be aware of any social media policies in place. Many school boards have rules outlining if and how any social media can be captured or posted. Please check with the hosting facilitator prior to the visit. CIVIX has a [social media toolkit available here](#) for your consideration.

CIVIX Municipal Rep Day Hub for municipalities
amo.on.ca/healthy-democracy/civic-education-resources