

# LESSON 6

## POLITICAL PARTIES

The **political spectrum** provides a way to characterize and distinguish between different beliefs, ideologies, political parties and policy ideas.

A linear spectrum is represented as a horizontal line, with the left favouring social equality, government involvement and more social services, and the right favouring tradition, smaller government and lower taxes.

A political party is a group of like-minded individuals with similar goals and political ideology whose intention is to achieve power and create meaningful political change.

Political parties are made up of interested members of the general public. Anyone above the required age (usually 14-years-old) can be a member of a political party. Party members choose their party's leader and local candidates, and help them get elected.

During an election campaign, an organized course of action is taken by a political party, its candidates and campaign teams with the intention to share its vision and ideas.

A political platform is a series of declared principles and policies on jurisdictional issues concerning government and the public.

Candidates and parties use a communications strategy that incorporates different types of media to share their message and platform, including mailings, news coverage, social media, advertising and events.

Elections present an opportunity for citizens to explore key issues and to participate in constructive dialogue about priorities and public policy. This process includes establishing which issues are most important to you and your community, and evaluating how the different political parties will address them.