

GOVERNMENT MATTERS

Government impacts our lives all the time, whether we know it or not. From the water we use, the taxes we pay, the roads we drive on, and the doctors we need. That is why it is essential to understand how our government works, how they make decisions and how you can contact your representatives.

REPRESENTATION MATTERS

Indo-Caribbean Canadians who have served in Government in Canada



Hon. Hassan Yussuff

- Canadian Senator, appointed in 2021
- First Indo-Caribbean person appointed to the Senate
- First person of colour to lead a Canadian union

Dr. Sara Singh

- M.P.P., 2018 – 2022
- First Indo-Caribbean woman elected to the Ontario Legislature
- Named Deputy Leader of the Ontario NDP in 2018

Bas Balkissoon

- M.P.P., 2005 – 2013
- Scarborough/Toronto City Councillor, 1988 – 2005
- First Indo-Caribbean person elected to the Ontario Legislature



Sherene Shaw

- Scarborough Councillor, 1988 – 2003

Ashmeed Khan

- Ajax Councillor, 2018 – 2022

Nirmala Armstrong

- Markham Regional Councillor, 2014 – 2018

TAXES

"You pay taxes... You should know where it goes and how it works."

The Canadian government collects taxes as a source of revenue to pay for social and economic programs. Tax laws are set by both the federal and provincial governments, although the federal government generally controls tax collection through the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

ABOUT US

Voter Organization for Indo-Caribbean Engagement ("VOICE") was established by the Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association.

This not-for-profit organization works to amplify the voices of the community, share information about our culture and heritage, and unify the Indo-Caribbean community. VOICE provides non-partisan information on Canadian politics, government, and civic engagement to the Indo-Caribbean Canadian community.

JOIN US! We are always seeking new members to join our team. Contact us for more details.



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AH WHA DEM AH DO FO ME?

Information Guide for Indo-Caribbean Canadians about Government in Canada

[Ontario Edition]

Presented by:

VOICE

Voter Organization for Indo-Caribbean Engagement
by the Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Role and Responsibilities

- The Prime Minister of Canada heads the federal government based in Ottawa.
- The federal government's responsibilities are listed in the *Constitution Act, 1867*. Examples include postal service, banking, national defence, employment insurance, and criminal law.

How to Find and Access Your Representative

- Canadians are represented in the federal government by a Member of Parliament ("M.P.")
- Each M.P. has a constituency office, which is an office in the community that the public can access.
- To find who your M.P. is and contact information, you can enter your postal code at: www.ourcommons.ca/Members.

Services For You

- M.P.'s can assist you with:
 - Immigration and Citizenship;
 - Canada Pension;
 - Old Age Security;
 - Income Supports (E.I., CPP, CPP-D, Disability Tax Credit);
 - Social Insurance Numbers; and
 - COVID-19 Emergency Supports

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Role and Responsibilities

- Premiers are the head of the provincial/territorial governments.
- Responsibilities for the provinces/territories are listed in the *Constitution Act, 1867*. Examples include education, health care, regional transportation, labour regulations, and municipalities.

How to Find and Access Your Representative

- In Ontario, everyone is represented by a Member of Provincial Parliament ("M.P.P.") at the Ontario Legislative Assembly.
- M.P.P.'s also have constituency offices to service their community.
- To find who your M.P.P. is and contact information, you can enter your full address at: www.ola.org/en/members.

Services For You

- M.P.P.'s can assist you with:
 - Health Cards and OHIP Issues;
 - Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Trillium Drug Program;
 - Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) and Student Grants; and
 - Driver's Licence

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Role and Responsibilities

- Mayors head cities, towns, or townships, which are types of municipalities.
- Municipalities receive authority to make decisions from the provincial government. Examples of their responsibilities include libraries, parks, community water systems, local police and fire services, and roadways.

How to Find and Access Your Representatives

- Most cities and towns in Ontario have a mayor and councillors.
- The mayor serves the entire city or town. Councillors serve smaller regions within a city or town.
- To find your mayor and councillor, you can visit your municipality's website and search for the section about the local council.

Services For You

- Your City/Town Councillor is your local representative and can assist you with:
 - By-law Enforcement;
 - Local Roads and Snow Removal;
 - Noise Complaints;
 - Ontario Works (Social Assistance);
 - Property Taxes;
 - Recreation Services;
 - Police and Fire Service Inquiries; and
 - Land Use and Development