



Dear Municipalities, From Millennials.

June 2017



Why you should care

Voter turnout rates among youth in municipalities are low, and most young people are not consistently engaging in dialogue with their elected officials. However, the topics and policies that municipalities address are often those that youth can relate to in their every day lives. We need Municipalities to step up and reach out to youth in their communities and Apathy is Boring is here to help make that happen.

This resource is made possible thanks to the **Laidlaw Foundation**. It will first provide a portrait of Canadian Millennials today and second, will propose best practices and tools on how to engage with diverse groups of Millennials in order to increase and support youth engagement in municipalities.

What is a Millennial?

Born between
1980-1995



Most **diverse** generation in
our country's history



One of the **largest cohorts** in Canadian history, literally representing Canada's future

Make up more than **1/4 of the Canadian population**

Who are Millennials today?

According to the [Canadian Millennials Social Values Study](#), six different Millennial tribes currently exist in Canada. The table below identifies these tribes and provides a brief description of each tribe's interests and background.

| |  Millennial Population |  Use of Social Media |  Engagement in communities |  Education Level |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Bros and Brittanys | 32 % | Moderate | Low | Low |



Bros and Brittanys like to stay current with the latest trends. They embrace technology and appreciate social connectivity.

More

- + Canadian Born (ethnic white and ethnic Chinese)
- + Largest of the tribes, so tend to define the mainstream
- + Strong representation amongst Quebecers

| |  Millennial Population |  Use of Social Media |  Engagement in communities |  Education Level |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Diverse Strivers | 20 % | Moderate | Moderate | Average |



To **Diverse Strivers**, 'making it' in life, and doing things that bring new and intense experiences are top priorities.

More

- + Most multicultural of the tribes
- + Younger than most other tribes
- + Concentrated in the GTA



Millennial
Population



Use of Social
Media



Engagement in
communities



Education Level

Engaged Idealists

17 %

High

High

High



Engaged Idealists believe that their actions matter, shaping their lives and the world around them.

More

- + Canadian-born (ethnic white)
- + Most female of the groups
- + Solid representation in Ontario and Western provinces



Lone Wolves

16 %

Low

Low

Low



Lone Wolves are seldom involved in community events and rarely feel strongly connected to what's going on in society at large.

More

- + Most ethnically white of tribes and more concentrated in Quebec
- + Lowest education level amongst the tribes
- + Equally likely to be Male or Female



Millennial Population



Use of Social Media



Engagement in communities



Education Level

New Traditionalists

11 %

Moderate

Moderate

High



More

New Traditionalists value traditional modes of etiquette and propriety, have a respect for authority and share an interest in environmental issues.

- + Ethnic mix (predominantly ethnic black)
- + Oldest of the tribes
- + Slightly over-represented in Alberta and Manitoba



Critical Counterculturists

4 %

High

High

High



More

Critical Counterculturists are engaged, critical young people. While Engaged Idealists see the world through a social and emotional lens, the gold standard for Critical Counterculturists is clear-eyed rationality.

- + Mostly not Canadian born (ethnic white)
- + Middle Age Range and strong representation in British Columbia
- + Highest education level amongst the tribes

How do Millennials engage?

COMMUNITY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- + Only 1 Millennial in 4 has been actively engaged in a cause over the past year and less than half belong to a community group.
- + 2/3 of Millennials, in the past year, have not volunteered.
- + Over half of eligible voters say they don't vote for motivational reasons.

INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS

- + One of the top motivational reasons behind low voter turn out rates is a lack of trust in the candidates.
- + 2/3 of Millennials say the support provided for the needs and aspirations of people in their generation from the country's major institutions has been either fair or poor.
- + 3/4 of Millennials do not express strong confidence in the justice system and courts.

INTEREST IN POLITICS

- + Half of Millennials have indicated that they are interested in politics.
- + Of which, over half show an interest in provincial or local politics.
- + Commonly followed topics include issues pertaining to security and safety, and national and international politics.

STAYING INFORMED

- + Millennials make use of a wide variety of media to follow news and current events, with over half following the news at least once or twice per day.
- + The most common online digital sources include social media followed by online news platforms, then online blogs and finally, online commentary shows.
- + Traditional media is also consumed by youth, including television, radio and print newspapers.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- + 2/3 of Millennials deem having full-time steady work essential to being an adult.
- + 3/4 of Millennials place the highest priority on achieving balance between work and their personal life; yet fewer than four in ten Canadian Millennials say they currently have enough money to lead the life they want.
- + Millennial identified constraints to achieving work and career goals include a lack of skills or experience and an unsupportive work environment.

Apathy is Boring's Five Youth Friendly Principles

We have found that the following five youth-friendly principles can act as guidelines to increase youth engagement. They are to:



1. Set out Clear Expectations and Limitations

Youth need realistic timelines and clearly defined responsibilities so that they know what is expected of them. This should include proper lead-time, space for reflection, and time for trial and error. They should be provided with written orientation materials at the beginning of any project.



2. Encourage Creativity and Difference

When setting up partnerships with youth, organizations need to take into account the reality of youth cultures and lifestyles. Remember that youth need to be respected for their abilities, their knowledge, and the diversity they bring to the process. It is crucial to empower youth to speak out when they encounter any form of discrimination within the organization.



3. Make Connections Between Generations

Partnerships work best when connections are made with other demographic groups who have parallel experiences, interests, resources, and networks to share. It is important for youth to be able to work with, learn from, and share their knowledge with people their own age and with adults.



4. Provide Mentorship and Support

Setting up mentorship is a good way of ensuring that communication flows effectively between all those involved in an organization. Mentors should be people who are experienced in the subject matter and are trusted or even chosen by youth.



5. Communicate Openly

Communication means making sure there is space for youth to ask lots of questions and voice concerns. Youth must feel that their opinions and contributions count.

Based on these principles, we recommend the following tools and practices to best support Millennial youth engagement. We've divided our recommendations into five categories in order to best identify concrete actions that can easily be implemented to increase youth engagement.

In light of this information, along with years of consultations that Apathy is Boring has conducted with municipalities, we have identified the following top 10 challenges to Millennial youth engagement.



Top 10 Challenges

ONLINE USE AND ACCESS

1. Lack of social media and online platform use, dated methods of communication.
2. Lack of readily accessible resources such as How-to guides, procedural information and online professional development training opportunities for youth looking to further their knowledge about the city.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

3. Lack of mentorship opportunities, job-shadowing activities and peer support environments.
4. Lack of job opportunities that are well remunerated and attractive to youth wanting to start a career in public service.

YOUTH DECISION-MAKERS

5. Lack of decision-making opportunities for youth. Lack of access to low-barrier participation activities for young adults to get involved with decision-making.
6. Lack of programs designed and created for specific youth groups.

NEW INTERACTIONS

7. Lack of events, training and networking opportunities for staff, interns and volunteers, to facilitate intergenerational partnerships and strengthen existing networks with other individuals involved in the City.
8. Lack of creative spaces for youth within municipal institutions. Lack of flexible procedures promoting change and innovation.

YOUTH PROGRAMMING

9. Lack of programs initiated by youth, for youth and with youth. Lack of measures accessible to youth to not only create new programs but also implement them.
10. Lack of funding to empower youth decision-making and youth led programs.



Top 10 Tools

ONLINE USE AND ACCESS

1. Create low barrier access points

Tools: Social Media, Tweet-a-thon, Webpages and E-newsletters.

As suggested by the [FCM's Youth Engagement Guide](#), you can increase youth engagement by creating spaces where youth can directly interact with municipal leaders, workers and officials such as a Tweet-a-thon or new webpage. Another tool that can be developed is a weekly e-newsletter to keep youth up to date on news in their cities. This e-newsletter should be an initiative for youth by youth. These are examples of low barrier access points for youth and young adults.

2. Create online training modules for and by youth

Tools: Municipal history module, first day on the job training module, and how-to modules.

Create and make available online training modules on leadership, governance and the history of the organisation or municipality. Have youth be the lead on the development of these training materials by asking for their input, design ideas and items that should be covered in the modules. We recommend short videos under three minutes. Shorter training modules for new interns and volunteers are other tools that can be designed and developed by youth.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

3. Create opportunities for intergenerational learning

Tools: Job-shadowing, mentorship programs and workshops.

Cities should host appreciation events and workshops to facilitate making connections between different departments and to strengthen intergenerational partnerships. Implementing formalized mentorship programs are also a great way of allowing youth to learn more about specific tasks and responsibilities.

4. Increase civic learning opportunities for Millennials

Tools: Pick your role for the day, contests & trivia sessions and tailored workshops.

The [FCM's Youth Engagement Guide](#) suggests organizing a "Municipal Democracy Day" including job shadowing that invites young people, based on merit or involvement to

come to City Hall and assume the role of councillors and Mayor. Another option is to have “Mayor of the Day” and “Councillor of the Day” and youth could shadow them for a day and see what they’re doing. The City could endorse a contest about city involvement and participants could win a day at City Hall.

In addition, tailored workshops on engagement should be organized in collaboration with community organizations that speak to different youth groups. These workshops should provide information on the Canadian political system and its impacts on youth from various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. These workshops should be presented by youth.

YOUTH DECISION-MAKERS

5. Encourage youth involvement

Tools: Shorter-term youth seats, tailored workshops and creation of programs for specific youth groups.

In order to provide young people with more opportunities while also creating a space for youth perspectives, shorter-term youth seats on citizen committees and neighbourhood associations should be created. Host a day-long workshop where youth can learn more about ways in which to get involved. Encourage youth to become members of various committees and promote these positions in e-newsletters and on the City’s website.

Know the youth group you’re targeting and create programs that tailor to the needs of this specific group. There’s no one size fits all Millennial, and embodying that means developing different strategies for each sub group of youth.

6. Create opportunities for youth to develop professional skillsets

Tools: Professional Development days, specific skill training sessions and program training.

In order to provide young people with more opportunities while also creating a space for youth perspectives, shorter-term youth seats on citizen committees and neighbourhood associations should be created. Creating a day-long workshop where youth can learn more about ways in which to get involved with community organisations is another option for youth to learn of ways to get involved. Encourage youth to become members of various committees and promote these positions in e-newsletters and on the City’s website.

NEW INTERACTIONS

7. Create opportunities for greater interaction between groups

Tools: Games, fun activities and awareness workshops.

Create spaces for youth and adults to exchange and learn more about current situations youth are facing. Have presentations from community organizations and municipal leaders working with youth from specific backgrounds in order to raise awareness around their realities. For example, host a day where the police and youth can meet and exchange to hear about the different perspectives and opinions from the parties involved.

8. Promote the works of local artists

Tools: Vernissage and free rental spaces to showcase art.

Art is a great way to start conversations, raise awareness and celebrate diverse stories in our communities. It also strongly resonates with youth who are attracted to having various topics showcased in new and unfamiliar ways. Most municipalities own many buildings throughout the city. These locations can prove to be ideal venues for young artists to showcase their talents. It can also be a fun and creative event for youth to help organize and set up.

YOUTH PROGRAMMING

9. Fund programs developed and proposed by youth

Tools: Research stipends and summer programs

This is a great opportunity to hear from various groups of Millennial youth and their ideas. Create summer jobs or give out stipends for young facilitators, graphic designers, researchers and artists to get involved in various programming offered by the City throughout the year. This will empower youth to feel valued for their contributions and will increase their engagement within various city initiatives.

10. Workshop facilitation sessions

Tools: Training sessions on facilitation and presentation skills

More and more, young adults need to know how to present and facilitate meetings and info-sessions. Invite youth from the community to learn tips and tricks from a speaker or municipal leader on how to present and facilitate a workshop. This will empower youth and encourage them to not be shy when taking a stand on issues that they deem important.



To sum up

We hope that this report has been informative and useful. As mentioned earlier, there are many ways in which to get youth involved and engaged as well as multiple resources available to help do so. What we hope sticks with you after reading this is to keep in mind the diverse groups of Millennial youth that currently exist in Canada and more importantly, to interact with them in ways that respond to their interests and their needs.

Interested in a more in depth analysis and consultation process specific to your municipality?

Visit www.youthfriendly.com to see a list of previous clients and send us an email.

Curious to learn more about our youth programming, visit www.apathyisboring.com

If you have any questions about this report, or would like to know more, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at info@apathyisboring.com.



Additional resources

There exists a multitude of youth engagement guides and handbooks including the [Municipal Youth Engagement Handbook](#) developed by the [Federation of Canadian Municipalities](#), which we refer to in this report.

Research and content provided in this report stems from data collected from the Environics Institute's [Canadian Millennials Social Value Study](#) (2017).

[LAIDLAW FOUNDATION](#)

Laidlaw Foundation invests in innovative ideas, convenes interested parties, shares its learning and advocates for change in support of young people being healthy, creative and fully engaged citizens.

The Foundation supports youth-led community change by investing in youth-led projects, where the ideas and strategies have been developed by a group of young people and are based on their lived experiences.



[Laidlaw Foundation](#)



[@laidlawfdn](#)

[ENVIRONICS INSTITUTE FOR SURVEY RESEARCH](#)

The Environics Institute for Survey Research sponsors relevant and original public opinion and social research related to issues of public policy and social change. It is through such research that organisations and individuals can better understand Canada today, how it's been changing, and where it may be heading.

The Environics Institute for Survey Research partnered with The Counselling Foundation of Canada, RBC, The McConnell Family Foundation and Apathy is Boring to conduct a seminal study of Canada's Millennials to understand how members of this generation are taking their place in society through the lens of their social values.



[environicsinstitute.org](#)

[APATHY IS BORING](#)

Apathy is Boring is a national, youth-led charitable organization whose mission is to use art and technology to educate youth about democracy. Since 2004, Apathy is Boring has been engaging young people in their communities and helping create decision-making spaces for youth in organizations across the country.

The Youth Friendly program is designed to provide tools and services for organizations and municipalities to help them stay vibrant while making youth feel important, needed, and engaged.



[Apathy is Boring](#)



[@apathyisboring](#)