

RULES FOR CANDIDATES IN ALBERTA PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS

WHAT IS A 'PARTY CANDIDATE'?

This is a person who has been selected for endorsement by a registered political party to be that party's official candidate for election in an electoral division.

This is usually the result of a nomination contest (or other process) organized by the local constituency association of the political party. Party candidates can be selected months in advance of an election campaign period.

WHAT IS AN 'INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE'?

This is any person who declares their 'independent' candidacy for election to become the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for an electoral division. An independent candidate is not associated with a political party and can only register as a candidate after an election campaign period starts.

HOW LONG IS THE OFFICIAL 'ELECTION CAMPAIGN PERIOD'?

In a scheduled general election year, the election campaign period starts on February 1st and ends 2 months after election day. For non-scheduled provincial elections the campaign period starts on the day election writs are issued.

DO ALL CANDIDATES NEED TO BE REGISTERED?



Yes - every candidate for election must apply for registration with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), and cannot accept contributions or incur campaign expenses unless their registration is accepted. Party candidates must first register when they participate in their party's nomination process; independent candidates must register after the campaign period begins. The registration process requires each candidate to appoint a Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

DO REGISTERED CANDIDATES AUTOMATICALLY GET THEIR NAMES PRINTED ON ELECTION BALLOTS?



No - in order to have their name appear on election ballots used in an electoral division, a registered candidate must file properly endorsed nomination papers, along with a \$500 nomination deposit, with the division's Returning Officer. This must be done between the start of the campaign period and the official close of nominations, usually 10 days after an election is called. Candidates must also appoint an Official Agent (OA) as part of completing their nomination papers.

DOES THE REQUIRED \$500 NOMINATION DEPOSIT GET RETURNED?



The \$500 is refunded to the candidate's campaign if the required 'campaign return' is filed with the CEO by the filing deadline.

WHAT ARE A CANDIDATE'S ENTITLEMENTS?



- Able to access voters list information for use in campaigning and soliciting contributions
- Able to access multiple dwelling sites for campaigning purposes
- Able to appoint up to 4 scrutineers per polling station as representatives
- Able to appoint scrutineers to attend, or personally appear, at all vote counts

WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS TO BE A CANDIDATE?

Canadian citizen, +18 years, resident in Alberta for 6 months prior to the election.



CONTRIBUTION RULES

- Only a person who ordinarily resides in Alberta can make a contribution to a candidate - no union or corporate contributions are permitted
- Candidates and their CFOs cannot accept contributions until the election campaign period officially starts
- Contributions to a candidate's campaign can only be made through the CFO and this includes the candidate's own money
- Contributions from a single contributor cannot exceed \$4K in a calendar year, and this maximum includes combined contributions to any candidate, nomination contestant, constituency association, leadership contestant or political party
- Official contribution receipts must be issued to each person who contributes to a candidate's campaign
- Anonymous contributions of more than \$50 cannot be used
- Contributions must be deposited to a financial institution account which is on record with Elections Alberta
- Non-monetary contributions must be properly valued and recorded



PENALTIES FOR RULE VIOLATION

- Any elected candidate found guilty of a corrupt practice will have the election in which they were elected declared void
- Any candidate who colludes with a third party advertiser to circumvent contribution or spending limits is liable to a fine of up to \$100K
- Failure to file a campaign return by deadline results in an automatic late filing fee of \$500
- Failure to file a campaign return makes both a candidate and their CFO liable to separate fines of up to \$5K
- Contravention of the \$50K spending limit can result in a candidate, or their CFO, being liable to a fine of up to \$5K
- Non-compliance with direction from the Chief Electoral Officer or the Election Commissioner makes a candidate liable to a \$1K fine



SPENDING LIMITS

- Spending limit per candidate is set at \$50K (inflation adjusted at future elections)
- Expenses for a candidate's campaign can only be incurred during the election campaign period
- Advertisements sponsored by a candidate must meet CEO guidelines and indicate who is paying for the ad, include an authorization statement, etc.



FINANCIAL FILING REQUIREMENTS

- Every registered candidate is required to file a 'campaign return' of financial records within 4 months of election day
- Candidates who withdraw, or do not file nomination papers, are also required to file a return
- Contributors who donated more than \$250 must be listed with name/address; total contributions received in amounts less than \$250 per person must be reported
- Candidates with a campaign deficit are required to eliminate that deficit within 3 months of filing
- Contribution and expense details for each candidate are made public
- Candidates must keep all financial records for 3 years following the mandatory filing of their campaign returns
- Campaign funds a candidate holds after an election must be transferred to a registered political entity or held in trust for use at the next election

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

See the [Political Party, Constituency Association and Candidate Guide to the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act](#) published by Elections Alberta. The guide and referenced Act, as well as the [Election Act](#), are all available online at: www.elections.ab.ca