A Candidate's Guide:

Running for Municipal Office in Alberta

Elections during the COVID-19 pandemic

This guide is only applicable for the 2021 general election year

Alberta

NOTE: This guide reflects modifications made to the *Local Authorities Election Act* (*LAEA)* in light of public health orders and/or recommendations from the Chief Medical Officer of Health regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, the information in this guide is specific to the 2021 general election year only.

A Candidate's Guide: Running for Municipal Office in Alberta

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Introduction

Per Ministerial Order MSD:103/20, the following section of the *LAEA* is modified to address challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure municipalities have the tools necessary to adhere to public health orders while conducting the municipal general election in 2021:

- **Section 30(1) is modified to allow the deposit to be provided to the returning officer by in-person payments using a debit card or a credit card.**

This modification is in effect only for the 2021 general election year. For all other election events, please refer to the regular version of this guide.

A copy of the Ministerial Order can be viewed at: qp.alberta.ca

Alberta Education may have another Ministerial Order that is specific for School Board Trustee candidates for the 2021 general election.

This guide is designed to give prospective candidates an understanding of the process and legislative requirements for running for municipal office in Alberta.

It is important candidates read and understand the offences in the *Local Authorities Election Act* as they relate to their campaign. Offences are in place to ensure candidates run their campaigns on a level playing field and to ensure that candidates are being held to a high standard. Offences are not taken lightly, and if found guilty of an offence, candidates can face fines, imprisonment, disqualification from office, and the inability to run in future elections. If there are any questions regarding compliance with the legislation, candidates are encouraged to seek out independent legal counsel.

This guide is not legally binding and we recommend you obtain a copy of the *Local Authorities Election Act* and other relevant statutes and regulations.

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Local Authorities Election Act

The *Local Authorities Election Act* (LAEA) is the main legislation that guides the conduct of a municipal election or by-election. Copies can be obtained through the Alberta Queen's Printer, qp.alberta.ca, 780-427-4952 (toll-free by first dialing 310-0000).

All definitions, procedures and processes outlined in this guide are from the LAEA. Should you require further clarification on any definitions, procedures or processes you are encouraged to review and consult the legislation, ask the returning officer in your municipality, or seek an independent legal opinion. All forms required by legislation can be found in the *Local Authorities Election Act Forms Regulation,* on the Government of Alberta website, or by contacting your municipality.

Municipal Government Act

The *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) is the primary legislation that governs municipalities. Copies can be obtained through the Alberta Queen's Printer, qp.alberta.ca, 780-427-4952 (toll-free by first dialing 310-0000).

Section references noted throughout the document refer to:

- *Local Authorities Election Act,* RSA 2000, c L-21 (LAEA)
- *Municipal Government Act,* RSA 2000, c M-26 (MGA)

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Before Filing Nomination Papers

This section provides a brief overview of what to take into consideration prior to running for municipal office.

Accepting Contributions or Incurring Expenses

As of January 1, 2019, candidates are no longer required to register or file a notice of intent to run with their municipality prior to filing nomination papers.

If candidates have previously filed a notice of intent to run with the municipality they intend to run in, candidates will still be required to file a nomination paper in order to be a candidate under the *Local Authorities Election Act*. As of January 1, 2019, the notice of intent to run no longer enables candidates to accept contributions.

LAEA s.147.22

A candidate may not accept contributions OR incur campaign expenses until the candidate files a nomination paper with the municipality or school board that they intend to run in (with some exceptions under section 147.22(3)). A nomination may not be filed until:

LAEA s.25(2)

- **January 1 of the election year, for general election candidates,**
- **The day a resolution or bylaw is set for a by-election, for by-election candidates.**

LAEA s.21(1)

Are you qualified to become a candidate?

To become a municipal candidate you must be at least 18 years of age on nomination day, a Canadian citizen, and you must have been a resident of the local jurisdiction for the six consecutive months immediately preceding Nomination Day.

LAEA s.21(1)

Qualification Requirements in a Ward System

In a municipality, other than a city, with a ward system, you must be a resident of the ward or the electoral division in which you intend to run for the six consecutive months immediately preceding nomination day.

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LAEA s.21(2)

Qualification Requirements in a City with a Ward System

In a city with a ward system, it is required that you have been a resident of the city for six months immediately preceding nomination day, not necessarily the ward in which you wish to run.

LAEA s.12(b) s.12(h)

Qualification Requirements in a Summer Village

The requirements to become a candidate in a summer village election differ than those in other municipalities. Candidates are encourage to review the LAEA to understand the eligibility requirements in summer villages. Candidates must:

- meet the voter eligibility requirements
    - 18 years or older,
    - a Canadian citizen, and
    - named or have a spouse/partner who is named as owner on the title of property within the summer village), and
- have been a resident of Alberta for the 12 consecutive months immediately preceding Election Day.

It is not necessary to be a full-time resident of the summer village but candidates must meet the requirements to vote in a summer village.

LAEA s.25(1) s.25(2)(a)

When is Nomination Day?

In the case of general elections, Election Day occurs on the third Monday in October every four years. Candidates can begin to file nomination papers on January 1 in the year of the election, up until Nomination Day, four weeks prior to Election Day. If a municipality has passed a bylaw under section 11(2) of the *Local Authorities Election Act*, which allows for Election Day to be held on the Saturday immediately before the 3rd Monday in October, the last day to file nomination papers would then fall on the Saturday, four weeks prior to Election Day. Nomination Day is the last day a person may file a nomination to become a candidate in the election.

***If a senate election or provincial referendum is held in conjunction with the municipal election, municipalities are not permitted to hold their general election on Saturday.**

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LAEA s.25(2)(b)

In the case of a by-election, Election Day will be set through a resolution of council. Candidates can begin to file nomination papers the day following when the resolution was passed up until Nomination Day, four weeks prior to Election Day.

LAEA s.12(a)(i) s.12(d)

In the case of a summer village, Nomination Day must occur in June and/or July and Election Day occurs four weeks following Nomination Day. Nomination Day is set by council resolution.

s.22(1)

Ineligibility for Nomination

No one is eligible to become a candidate under any of the following circumstances:

- if you are the auditor of the municipality;
- if your property taxes are more than $50 in arrears (excluding indebtedness on current taxes, and indebtedness for arrears of taxes for which the person has entered into a consolidation agreement with the municipality);
- if you are in default for any other debt to the municipality in excess of $500 for more than 90 days; or
- if within the previous 10 years you have been convicted of an offense under the *Local Authorities Election Act*, the *Election Act, Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act,* or the *Canada Elections Act*.

MGA s.174(1)(c)

If you are a judge, Member of the Senate or House of Commons of Canada, or Member of the Legislative Assembly, you must resign that position before you take office as a member of a municipal council.

LAEA s.22(1.2)

A person will be ineligible for nomination if they have failed to comply with the campaign finance and disclosure requirements of the LAEA and:

- the secretary (chief administrative officer) transmitted a report in respect to that person, and/or
- the court did not dispense with, or extend the time for compliance.

A person is deemed to be ineligible under these circumstances for either an eight-year period following the day that a report was transmitted by the secretary, or a three-year period following the day the disclosure statement was filed with the municipality (which ever period expires first).

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LAEA s.22(1.1) s.22(5) s.22(5.1)

NOTE: *If you are a municipal employee and you wish to run for local office, or a school board employee running for election as trustee of a school board, you must take a leave of absence without pay as outlined in the LAEA. This point does not apply if you perform duties for a jurisdiction in a volunteer capacity. You may notify your employer on or after July 1 in the election year (on or after the day council passes a resolution setting Election Day in the case of a by-election) but before the last working day prior to Nomination Day. Any employee who requests a leave of absence without pay in accordance with those conditions must be granted it.*

Other Considerations

Time Commitment

The demands on your time while being an elected official can be heavy. You will be elected for a four-year term of office and during that time you will be required to attend:

- regular and special meetings of council;
- council committee meetings;
- meetings of other boards and agencies to which you are appointed as a council representative;
- conferences, conventions, seminars and workshops for training and discussion; and
- other events promoting your municipality.

Time should also be spent reading agenda material and talking with residents, the chief administrative officer and other relevant stakeholders. This work will all be part of the necessary preparation for meetings so you can make informed decisions.

Remuneration

Elected officials generally receive remuneration or other financial compensation for the time and energy they have devoted to their community. As the remuneration varies in each municipality, check with your local municipal office to find out about remuneration for elected officials in your jurisdiction.

Roles and Responsibilities of an Elected Official

As a member of council, you will have the opportunity to significantly influence the future of your community. Your effectiveness as a member of council depends on your ability to be an active member of the team and to respectfully persuade the other members of council to

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adopt and support your view. Decisions of council may only be made by resolution or bylaw and must be made at public meetings, at which a quorum is present. As an elected official, you will also have to find the balance between representing the views of those who elected you and your own individual convictions.

As an individual member of council, you will not have the power to commit your municipality to any expenditure or to direct the activities of the municipal employees alone. Any promise you make as a part of your election campaign that involves municipal expenditures or the activities of employees can only be carried out if you can obtain the support of your fellow council members in carrying out that promise.

The Canadian Constitution grants responsibility for municipal institutions to the provinces. Through a variety of legislation, the Alberta Legislative Assembly has delegated some of its authority to municipal councils. The legislation you will refer to most often is the *Municipal Government Act* as this is the legislation that allows for many decisions that council can make.

MGA s. 7

In accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*, a municipal council may pass legislation in the form of municipal bylaws. These bylaws remain in effect until they are amended or repealed. You will not be starting with a blank slate and creating your ideal municipality from scratch. If you are running with some kind of reform in mind, you will have to become familiar with what exists, how it has been created – by bylaw, resolution or policy – and why it exists before you will be able to start discussing proposed changes.

Municipalities often make local bylaws available to the public through their municipal websites. Otherwise, you can ask for copies at the municipal office.

Administration of a Municipality

As a member of council, it will be your duty to establish policy for your municipality. It is the job of the administration to implement the policy direction. Alberta municipalities have competent and dedicated administrators. The chief administrative officer (CAO) is often said to be the only direct employee of Council, and you will rely on the support, advice and assistance of your CAO if you are to be an effective member of council. The CAO's training, experience and understanding of how and why things have developed the way they have will be an important resource for you.

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How else can I prepare?

The best way to find out what the job is all about is to spend some time reading relevant municipal documents and talking to current members of council. You may also wish to:

- familiarize yourself with local bylaws and municipal legislation;
- read council agendas and minutes;
- observe council meetings from the gallery; and
- talk to municipal staff to find out what other information is available.

It is common practice in many municipalities to publish a prospective candidate's information guide. These guides will provide valuable insight into time commitments, practices and expectations of holding office in that municipality.

Researching now will help you in your campaign and prepare you for assuming office.

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Nomination Papers

This section provides a brief overview of the information included on the nomination paper and the nomination day process.

Form of Nomination

LAEA s. 27

Your nomination must be filed using the required forms (Form 4 – Nomination Paper and Candidate's Acceptance and Form 5 – Candidate Information). Contact the local municipal office to determine where to get the nomination form and to seek advice on filling out the form accurately. The CAO, returning officer, or municipal clerk will be able to help you.

LAEA s.27(1)

What is included in the Form of Nomination?

Generally, your nomination paper must be signed by at least five (5) voters eligible to vote in the election. The signatures collected must be from people who are resident in the municipality on the date of signing the nomination, and include the voter's name, address (street address or legal description of residence) and signature. You may begin to collect signatures at any time but cannot file your nomination papers with the returning officer until January 1 in the year of the election. In the case of a by-election, candidates may begin to file their nomination papers the day following when the resolution was made to set the date. In the case of summer villages, the council is required to set Election Day and nomination day will be four weeks prior to election at the times and location provided for through council resolution. It is often a good idea to obtain more than the required number of signatures in the event that one or more persons were not eligible to sign the nomination form.

LAEA s.27(2)

- Cities with a population of at least 10,000 may pass a bylaw increasing the number of voters' signatures required to a maximum of 100. Ensure you check with the municipality to determine the number of signatures you require for nomination.

LAEA s.27(3)

- If you are seeking election in a municipality with a division or ward system, the voters signing your nomination form must be residents in the ward or division that are you running in.

LAEA s.12(b)

In summer villages, the nominators must be:

- eligible to vote in the election;

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- 18 years of age;
- a Canadian Citizen; and
- either residents or those named on the certificate of title as the person who owns property within the summer village or is the spouse or adult interdependent partner of the person named on the title.

In addition to the signatures, the nomination paper must also be complete with the written acceptance signed in the prescribed form by the person nominated. If a candidate's information changes, that information must be updated with the local jurisdiction, in writing, within 48 hours of that change.

LAEA s.28(4)

The returning officer will not accept the following:

- A nomination that is not completed in the prescribed form.
- A nomination that is not signed by at least the minimum number of persons required to sign the nomination.
- A nomination that is not sworn or affirmed by the person nominated (your municipal office may have information regarding who the Commissioner for Oaths are in your area).
- A nomination that is not accompanied by a deposit (if required by bylaw).

LAEA s.68.1

Official Agent

On the nomination form, you may choose to appoint an elector to be your official agent. This person may act as the signing authority for the campaign bank account and manage aspects of your campaign as directed by you. No candidate may act as an official agent for another candidate.

If you have appointed an official agent, you must include the information on the candidate's nomination form. If, at any time, the information changes or there is a need to appoint a new official agent, the candidate is required to notify the returning officer immediately.

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Nomination Period

Filing the Nomination Form

LAEA s. 27

Once you have completed the nomination form, the next step is to ensure that you file the Nomination Paper and Candidate's Acceptance Form (Form 4), as well as the Candidate Information Form (Form 5) during the nomination period, prior to the final Nomination Day.

LAEA s.25

How do I file my Nomination Form?

Completed nomination forms can be filed with the returning officer at any time beginning on January 1 in the year of the general election and until four (4) weeks prior to Election Day. In the case of a by-election, the returning officer can begin to accept nomination papers the day following the day when the resolution was made my council setting the date for the by-election.

LAEA s. 12(d)

For summer villages, nominations for councillor must be received by the returning officer in June or July (or both), in the year of the general election. The date, time and location of where nomination papers will be accepted must be established by council.

LAEA s.26

Municipalities will advertise in one of three ways:

- in a newspaper, or another publication circulating in the area once a week for two weeks prior to the close of nominations,
- a direct mail-out or delivery of a notice to every residence at least one week prior to the close of nominations, or
- in accordance with their advertisement bylaw.

The advertisement will indicate where and when the returning officer will receive the nominations. It is important to check the advertisement or with your municipality for the time and location to file your nomination papers.

LAEA s.28(3)

Do I have to file my Nomination Form in person?

Nominations shall be submitted to the returning officer, or their designate, at any time during the nomination period. It is best to deliver your nomination form in person; however, anyone may submit your nomination paper on your behalf. If you are unable to submit your

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nomination paper yourself, ensure that the forms are completed fully prior to it being filed with the returning officer because, as the candidate, it is your responsibility for ensuring that your forms are fully completed and meet the requirements for filing under section 27 of the *Local Authorities Election Act*.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is strongly recommended that candidates contact the local jurisdiction office to ask if the building is open to the public to accept nominations in person and if not, to inquire if there are alternative ways to submit the nomination forms. The specific requirement of the *LAEA* to submit nomination forms can be met by having forms mailed or delivered by courier. This could pose a risk for delivery guarantee that candidates should be aware of as it is the responsibility of the candidate to meet the requirements of the *LAEA* and have information submitted to the local jurisdiction office by the deadline on nomination day.

Local jurisdictions can also accept nomination forms at specific times set by the returning officer, by appointment, or at a secure drop box.

LAEA s.29
Ministerial Order No. MSD:130/20

Do I have to pay a deposit to file my Nomination Form?

Municipalities may pass a bylaw requiring a deposit to accompany nominations. The amount fixed in the bylaw may not exceed:

- $1,000 in municipalities with a population over 10,000; and
- $100 in all other municipalities.

When you inquire or pick up the nomination form from the municipality, ensure that you seek clarification on whether a deposit is required and the amount of the deposit.

If a deposit is required, it must be paid, in full, at the time you file your nomination form. A deposit must be payable to the municipality and may be paid using:

- cash,
- certified cheque,
- money order, or
- debit or credit card.

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LAEA s.30

Will I get my deposit back?

Your deposit will be returned to you if you:

- are elected,
- get at least one-half the number of votes of the person elected to office with the least number of votes, or
- withdraw as a candidate within 24 hours of the close of nominations.

LAEA s.32

Withdrawing Nominations

Candidates may withdraw their nomination form at any time during the nomination period and up to 24 hours (48 hours in a summer village) after the close of the nomination period, provided the number of candidates nominated exceeds the number of positions for the office you are seeking.

If candidates choose to withdraw, they must provide written notice, in person, to the returning officer.

The returning officer cannot accept a withdrawal if the number of nomination papers received, equal the number of vacant offices.

LAEA s.31

Insufficient Nominations

In the event that the number of nominations filed is less than the number of vacancies in the municipality, the returning officer will be available to receive nominations the next day from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. This process continues for up to six business days (calendar days in summer villages) until an adequate number of nominations are received. If, at the end of the six-day period, insufficient nominations continue, municipalities are required to contact the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

LAEA s.34

Acclamations

If, by noon on any of the six days described above, the number of candidates nominated equals the number of vacancies in the municipality, nominations will be closed and the returning officer will declare the candidates elected by acclamation (no election will be held).

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LAEA s.35

Requirement for Election

If more than the required nominations are received by noon on any of the days, nominations will be closed and the election will be held according to process.

LAEA s.12(d)

Summer Villages

In the case of a summer village, the returning officer will announce the time and place when further nominations will be received.

Late Filing of Nominations

The returning officer **CANNOT** accept nominations after 12:00 p.m. on Nomination Day (four weeks prior to Election Day). Ensure you check with your municipality on the time and location for filing nomination forms and ensure you file your nomination paper well in advance at the location available. Despite the name of "Nomination Day", it is useful to think of it as a nomination deadline day. There is no need to wait until Nomination Day to file forms and if there is any question of your availability, be sure to file your forms prior to this date.

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Candidate Contributions & Expenses

Candidates are strongly encouraged to read and understand Part 5.1 of the *Local Authorities Election Act* as it pertains to Election Finance and Contribution Disclosure.

Contributions and Expenses

LAEA s.147.1(1)(a)

What are allowable campaign expenses?

At a basic level, a "campaign expense" is an expense a candidate makes in the course of a campaign to help get elected. Technically, this includes any expense incurred, or non-monetary contribution received, by a candidate to the extent that the property or service that the expense was incurred for, or that was received as a non-monetary contribution, is used to directly promote or oppose a candidate during a campaign period. "Campaign expense" includes an expense incurred for, or a non-monetary contribution, in relation to:

- The production of advertising or promotional material,
- The distribution, broadcast or publication of advertising or promotional material in any media or by any other means during a campaign period, including by the use of a capital asset,
- The payment of remuneration and expenses to or on behalf of a person for the person's services as a chief financial officer in any other capacity,
- Securing a meeting place, or
- The conduct of opinion polls, surveys or research during a campaign period.

LAEA s.147.2(4)

Can I self-fund my campaign?

Yes, candidates may choose to entirely self-fund their campaign; however, contribution limits apply to self-funded campaigns. A candidate may contribute up to and including $10,000 to his or her own campaign.

Excluded from the $10,000 would be any amounts that the candidate is reimbursed from the campaign account if it is reimbursed before the end of the campaign period and the funds were used to pay for campaign expenses.

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A candidate takes a risk by making expenditures based on anticipated future contributions, in the event that the future contributions don't materialize.

LAEA s.147.2

Contributions to Candidates

No contributions may be accepted until the nomination period commences (January 1 of an election year for a general election and the day after the resolution/bylaw is passed for a by-election) and a candidate files nomination papers.

*Although contributions cannot be accepted in the campaign period until a person has filed nomination papers, the legislation does provide the ability for a potential candidate to incur expenses and accept minimal contributions outside of the campaign period and prior to filing nomination papers. A person may accept up to $5,000 annually in contributions outside of the campaign period, as well as contribute up to $10,000 of their own funds outside of the campaign period.

LAEA s.147.2(5)

After a person files nomination papers in the campaign period, the person officially becomes a candidate and may accept contributions of up to $5,000 from any person who is ordinarily a resident in Alberta.

Candidates cannot accept contributions from any prohibited organization, including a corporation or unincorporated organization.

Candidates, or those acting on their behalf, should not directly or indirectly solicit contributions if the candidate knows or ought to know that the potential contributor

- does not ordinarily reside in Alberta,
- is a corporation or unincorporated organization, or
- will exceed the contribution limits.

LAEA s.147.3(1)(a) & LAEA s.147.3(1)(c)

A candidate must open a bank account in the name of the candidate or in the name of the campaign as soon as possible after the amount of contributions from any person(s) exceeds $1,000 in the aggregate, including any money paid by the candidate out of their own funds. Money in that account must then only be used for the payment of campaign expenses.

LAEA s.147.1(1)(c) & LAEA s.147.3(1)(e)

Contributions of real property, personal property, goods and services have to be valued. Throughout the duration of the campaign, receipts must be issued for every contribution received, and be obtained for every expense. Receipts will assist candidates in creating itemized expense reports and can be used as proof of contributions.

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LAEA s.147.1(1)(c)

Campaign contributions do not include services provided by a volunteer who voluntarily performs the services and receives no compensation, directly or indirectly, in relation to the services or the time spent providing the services.

LAEA s.147.3(1)(f)

All campaign records of contributions and expenses must be kept for a minimum of three (3) years following the date the disclosure statements were required to be filed. That date is on or before March 1 immediately following a general election, or within 120 days of a by-election.

LAEA s.147.24

Contributions Not Belonging to Contributor

Individuals cannot contribute to a candidate if the funds they are contributing do not belong to that individual, or if the funds were given to the individual by another individual or a prohibited organization (corporations, trade unions, employee organizations, unincorporated organizations) for the purpose of making a contribution to a particular candidate. Candidates shall not solicit nor accept a contribution if they know or ought to know that it is prohibited.

LAEA s.147.23

Anonymous and Ineligible Contributions

If a candidate receives an anonymous contribution, the candidate must return the contribution to the contributor immediately (if the identity of the contributor can be established), or donate the total contribution to a registered charity or the local municipality.

LAEA s.147.31

Fund-raising Functions

"Fund-raising functions" includes any social function held for the purpose of raising funds for an election campaign.

LAEA s.147.31(2)

Candidates must ensure they record the gross income from any fundraising function held for their campaign. In addition, if the function is held by the sale of tickets, the amount of the contribution is to be determined using the following rules:

LAEA s.147.31(3)

- If the individual charge is $50 or less, it is not considered a contribution unless the individual who pays the charge specifically requests it to be a contribution. If a request is made, half of the amount is allowed for expenses and half is considered a contribution. Even if the amount is not considered a contribution, the candidate may choose to still issue a receipt and keep a record of the transaction.

Classification: Public

- If the individual charge is more than $50 but less than $100, $25 is allowed for expenses and the balance is considered to be a contribution.
- If the contribution is more than $100, 25 per cent of the amount is allowed for expenses and the remaining balance is considered to be a contribution.

LAEA s.147.32
LAEA s.147.4(1)(b)

As a part of the candidate's responsibilities, they, or a person acting on their behalf, **must** issue a receipt for every contribution received. If a contribution is in excess of $50, the name and address, and the amount of the contribution must be recorded because it is required to be included with the campaign disclosure statements.

LAEA s.147.33

Loans

Candidates may borrow money only from a financial institution and shall record all loans and their terms. All loans and their terms must be reported accordingly to the local jurisdiction.

Only a person ordinarily resident in Alberta may make a payment on behalf of the borrower (the candidate) in respect to a loan. If the individual is not reimbursed by the borrower (candidate) before the candidate is required to file a disclosure statement, any payment made towards a loan becomes a contribution by that individual and a contribution accepted by the candidate.

LAEA s.147.34

Campaign Expense Limits

The *Local Authorities Election Act* allows for the establishment of a regulation that sets out the amount of money that may be spent by candidates during the campaign period. There is no regulation for the purpose of the 2021 municipal election and therefore candidate spending is not restricted.

LAEA Part 8 s.190-205

Elections Alberta/Election Commissioner

As of August 1, 2019, the Alberta Election Commissioner, under Elections Alberta, has authority in local elections across Alberta. The Election Commissioner may investigate any matter that may constitute an offence under Part 5.1, Campaign Finance and Contribution Disclosure, or Part 8, Third-Party Advertising of the LAEA.

For more information regarding the authority of the Election Commissioner, including contact information, please visit:
www.elections.ab.ca/compliance-enforcement/complaints/.

Classification: Public

NOTE: This guide reflects modifications made to the *Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA)* in light of public health orders and/or recommendations from the Chief Medical Officer of Health regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, the information in this guide is specific to the 2021 general election year.

Campaigning

Once you have filed your nomination form and your candidate's acceptance, there are several things to remember as you campaign to Election Day.

How do I campaign?

There are no "standard" or legislative requirements for campaigning when it comes to municipal elections. A candidate's campaign style will want to match the uniqueness of the municipality to the candidate's personality and available resources.

The purpose of campaigning is to convince the electors you are the best candidate for the position. Candidates have used various strategies, like:

- door-knocking;
- signage;
- brochures or posters;
- participating in local candidate debates or forums;
- social media pages or websites; and
- hosting a meet and greet event.

Is there anything I cannot do during a campaign?

There are a variety of offence provisions included in the *Local Authorities Election Act* that candidates should review and understand.

In addition, it is essential that candidates seek clarification from returning officers relating to campaign activities. Municipalities may have local bylaws that address campaign activities including, but not limited to, the use and placement of campaign signage throughout the municipality.

If candidates require additional interpretation or clarification, they should seek independent legal services if required.

Classification: Public

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LAEA s.116

Bribery

As a candidate, you cannot give, or promise to give, money or any other valuable consideration (such as an office or job) to anyone in return for their vote, or by agreeing to refrain from voting.

It addition, an elector or resident of the municipality cannot accept money or any other valuable consideration in return for voting or not voting during an election.

LAEA s.117

Undue Influence

As a candidate, you cannot use, or threaten to use, violence, injury, damage or intimidation to compel a person to vote or refrain from voting at an election. You cannot obstruct the voting process or obstruct a person from accessing a voting station to vote during an election.

LAEA s.150, 152, 152.1

Canvassing on Election Day

Candidates, official agents, or campaign volunteers cannot canvass or solicit votes in a voting station or on the property used for a voting station on an advance vote or election day. In addition, campaign materials (posters, pins, signage, etc.) cannot be displayed or distributed inside or on the outside of a building used as a voting station.

LAEA s.50

Is there a voters' list?

Municipalities may pass a bylaw allowing for the enumeration and use of a voters' list. You may wish to confirm with your municipality; it is not a common practice to use a voters' list in municipal elections in Alberta.

Classification: Public