



**ELECTIONS BC**

A non-partisan Office of the Legislature

**GUIDE TO  
CAMPAIGN FINANCING FOR  
LOCAL CANDIDATES AND  
FINANCIAL AGENTS IN B.C.**

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# INTRODUCTION

This guide has been developed to assist local candidates and their financial agents to understand their responsibilities and legal obligations under the [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#) (LECFA).

It is the responsibility of all local candidates and their financial agents to ensure they understand and follow the rules. This guide is not considered legal advice by Elections BC. It is based on our current understanding of the legislation.

Where there is inconsistency between this guide and LECFA, LECFA will prevail. If an interpretation of specific circumstances is required, you may wish to consider seeking legal advice.

We encourage all local candidates and their financial agents to read this guide and other compliance materials for local elections on our website ([elections.bc.ca](#)).

We discourage the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to summarize guidance materials or prepare information required under LECFA. Use of AI will not be considered as a mitigating factor in instances of non-compliance.

A link to the [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#) is available on the Elections BC website ([elections.bc.ca](#)) or a printed copy can be purchased from Crown Publications ([crownpub.bc.ca](#)).

# PRIVACY

Elections BC has the authority to collect, use, disclose and dispose of personal information under LECFA and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. This information is used to administer provisions of LECFA.

For information about Elections BC's privacy policies, please visit [elections.bc.ca/privacy](#) or contact the **Privacy Officer, Elections BC** at 1-800-661-8683 or [privacy@elections.bc.ca](mailto:privacy@elections.bc.ca) or PO Box 9275 Stn Prov Govt Victoria, BC V8W 9J6.

## DEFINITIONS

The following key terms have been used throughout this guide. Most of the terms are defined in the [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#).

<p><b>Address for service</b></p>	<p>A mailing address, or email address provided by an individual or organization at which notices and other communications will be accepted as served on or otherwise delivered to the individual or organization.</p> <p>In addition to the required mailing address or email address, an individual or organization may provide an additional address for service. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an email in addition to the mailing address,</li> <li>▪ a mailing address in addition to the email address, or</li> <li>▪ a fax number.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Anonymous contribution</b></p>	<p>A campaign contribution made by an eligible individual whose identity is unknown. An eligible individual cannot contribute more than \$50 anonymously to a single election campaign.</p>
<p><b>Assent voting</b></p>	<p>Voting on a bylaw or other matter for which a local government is required or authorized to obtain the assent of the electors. Assent voting may also be referred to as a “referendum.”</p>
<p><b>B.C. Chief Electoral Officer</b></p>	<p>An independent Officer of the Legislature appointed by the Lieutenant Governor on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly. The B.C. Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for the administration of the provincial electoral process in B.C. and the campaign financing and third party advertising provisions for local elections and non-election assent voting events.</p>
<p><b>Campaign account</b></p>	<p>An account in a savings institution opened by a financial agent exclusively for the purposes of an election campaign.</p>
<p><b>Campaign contribution</b></p>	<p>Generally, a contribution of money, or the value of goods and services provided without compensation to a candidate or elector organization.</p>
<p><b>Campaign contribution limit</b></p>	<p>The maximum value of campaign contributions that an eligible individual may provide.</p>
<p><b>Campaign financing arrangement</b></p>	<p>A written agreement between an elector organization and <b>each</b> endorsed candidate. The arrangement determines how much of the candidate's campaign period expense limit will be shared with their elector organization.</p>

<b>Campaign financing records</b>	The records maintained to complete financial reports required under LECFA.
<b>Campaign period</b>	The period that begins on the 28th day before General Voting Day and ends at the close of voting on General Voting Day.
<b>Campaign period election advertising</b>	During the campaign period of a general local election, the definition of election advertising expands to include communications that take a position on an issue associated with a candidate or elector organization.
<b>Campaign period expense</b>	An election expense that is used in the campaign period. Most campaign period expenses are subject to an expense limit.
<b>Candidate</b>	In relation to obligations applicable under LECFA, an individual who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) intends to become a candidate in an election,</li> <li>(b) is seeking or intends to seek endorsement by an elector organization in relation to an election, or</li> <li>(c) was a candidate.</li> </ul>
<b>Disclosure statement</b>	A document that discloses activities related to campaign financing. All disclosure statements must be filed with Elections BC.  Disclosure statements are commonly referred to as Campaign Financing Reports. Please note: these are different than a "Statement of Disclosure".
<b>Election advertising</b>	Election advertising is any transmission of a communication to the public during the pre-campaign period or campaign period that directly or indirectly promotes or opposes a candidate or an elector organization.
<b>Election area</b>	The defined geographical area where the election is held.
<b>Election expense</b>	Generally, the value of property or services used in an election campaign by or on behalf of a candidate or elector organization to promote or oppose, directly or indirectly, the election of a candidate, or an elector organization.
<b>Election period</b>	The period that begins on January 1 and ends on the 29th day before General Voting Day for general local elections.  For by-elections, the election period starts on the day the office becomes vacant and ends on the 29th day before General Voting Day.
<b>Election period expense</b>	An election expense that is used in the election period.
<b>Elections BC</b>	A non-partisan Office of the Legislature responsible for the administration of the provincial electoral process in B.C. and the campaign financing and third party advertising provisions for local elections and non-election assent voting events.

<b>Elector organization</b>	An organization that endorses or intends to endorse a candidate in an election. An elector organization must be registered with Elections BC prior to endorsing candidates or conducting any financial activity, including accepting contributions or incurring election expenses.
<b>Eligible individual</b>	An individual who is a resident of British Columbia and a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident.
<b>Expense limit</b>	The maximum value of campaign period expenses that a candidate may use in a campaign period.  Endorsed candidates may make all, some or none of their expense limit available to their elector organization.
<b>Filing deadline</b>	The last day (90 days after General Voting Day) a disclosure statement may be filed with Elections BC without a monetary penalty.
<b>Financial agent</b>	A representative that a candidate and elector organization is required to appoint. A candidate may act as their own financial agent or appoint someone else to this position. A candidate or elector organization may not have more than one financial agent at the same time.  Financial agents are responsible for understanding and following the rules under LECFA to avoid penalties such as deregistration, disqualifications, paying for administrative monetary penalties, or committing offences.
<b>Fundraising function</b>	Includes a social function held by, or on behalf of, a candidate or elector organization for the purpose of obtaining funds.
<b>General Voting Day</b>	The final voting day in a general local election, by-election or assent voting event.
<b>Incurring an election expense</b>	Using property or services in such a way that their value is an election expense.
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	A separate local authority in which a general local election, by-election or assent voting event is held (e.g., a municipality, school district or regional district). They are considered separate authorities even if they cover the same geographic area.
<b>Late filing deadline</b>	The last day (120 days after General Voting Day) on which a disclosure statement may be filed by a candidate, elector organization or advertising sponsor with the payment of a penalty fee, unless relief is granted by the Supreme Court.
<b>Local authority</b>	The local authority of a jurisdiction for which an election or non-election assent voting can be held.

<b>Local election officer</b>	An individual appointed by a local authority to conduct a general local election, by-election or non-election assent voting. Local election officers are also called chief election officers.
<b>Market value</b>	The lowest price charged for equivalent property or services in the market area at the relevant time.
<b>Member</b>	An individual or organization who is a member of an organization. This does not include persons who are exclusively financial contributors, customers, subscribers, followers or supporters.
<b>Money</b>	Includes cash, a negotiable instrument (cheque or money order), a payment by credit card, any form of electronic payment or funds transfer, or any other form of monetary payment.
<b>Permissible loan</b>	A loan made by an eligible individual or savings institution to a candidate or elector organization.
<b>Personal expenses</b>	<p>Campaign expenses of a candidate that are paid from or reimbursed to a campaign account. All of the following expenses must be reasonable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) travel to, within or from the election area in which the candidate is running for office</li> <li>(b) lodging, meals and other travel related expenses</li> <li>(c) child or family care if the candidate is usually responsible for</li> <li>(d) expenses related to a disability of the candidate</li> </ul>
<b>Placement cost</b>	The cost of purchasing election advertising space on the internet, including a social media site or website.
<b>Pre-Campaign Period</b>	The period which begins on the 89th day before General Voting Day for a general local election, and which ends on the 29th day before General Voting Day for the election. There is no pre-campaign period for a by-election.
<b>Prohibited contribution or loan</b>	A campaign contribution or loan that is made or accepted in contravention of LECFA. There are monetary penalties for making, accepting or failing to return prohibited contributions or loans.
<b>Production cost</b>	The value of producing election advertising, including fees such as graphic design, video production fees, etc.
<b>Required contribution information</b>	<p>Information that must be recorded for all campaign contributions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) value of contribution,</li> <li>(b) date the contribution was made, and</li> <li>(c) full name, residential address of the contributor.</li> </ul>

<b>Shared election expense</b>	An election expense agreed to be shared by two or more candidates.
<b>Significant contributor</b>	An eligible individual who makes: (a) a campaign contribution having a value of \$100 or more, or (b) multiple campaign contributions to the same candidate or elector organization such that the total value is \$100 or more.
<b>Sponsorship information</b>	An authorization statement that is required to be on most election advertising. It includes the name of the advertising sponsor and appropriate contact information.
<b>Supplementary report</b>	A report that updates Elections BC of changed, added or corrected information to a disclosure statement or financial report that includes a description of the circumstances leading to its submission.
<b>Surplus campaign funds</b>	The balance of money left in the campaign account after all financial transactions are completed.
<b>Third party sponsor</b>	An individual or organization who sponsors or intends to sponsor election advertising independently from the election campaign of any candidate or elector organization.
<b>Transfer</b>	Movements of money, property or services between a candidate and their elector organization.
<b>Value of election advertising</b>	The value of election advertising is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the price paid for preparing and transmitting the advertising (including applicable taxes), or</li> <li>▪ the market value of preparing and transmitting the advertising (including applicable taxes), if no price is paid, or if the price paid is lower than the market value.</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteer</b>	An individual who provides services for no remuneration or material benefit, but does not include: (a) an individual whose employer pays them for the time spent performing the services (b) an individual who is self-employed, if they usually sell or otherwise charge for the services provided

# LOCAL ELECTIONS: SHARED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

General local elections are held every four years in British Columbia. General local elections include elections for:

- mayors and municipal councillors,
- regional district directors,
- school boards trustees,
- specified parks boards,
- local community commissions, and
- the Islands Trust.

Unlike provincial elections, local elections are not managed by one organization.

Each local government is responsible for running its own local elections, including voting, counting, reporting results, and accepting candidate nominations.

Elections BC is responsible for administering the campaign financing and election advertising rules in the [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#) (LECFA).

The [Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs](#) and [Ministry of Education and Child Care](#) also have responsibilities in local elections.

## Who does what

Area of administration	Who is responsible
Voting and ballots	Local election officers in the local jurisdiction
Nomination process	Local election officers in the local jurisdiction
Financial rules for advertising	Elections BC
Campaign financing and disclosure rules	Elections BC
Registration of elector organizations and third party sponsors	Elections BC
Legislation for local elections	Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs Ministry of Education and Child Care

Contact the jurisdiction or the [Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs](#), if you have questions about voting, responsibilities of elected officials, election proceedings, or the rules in the *Local Government Act*, *Community Charter* or *Vancouver Charter*.

Contact the school district or the [Ministry of Education and Child Care](#) if you have inquiries about the *School Act*.

## Local election officers

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Local election officers are appointed by local governments to administer local elections in their jurisdiction. They are responsible for:

- receiving nomination and endorsement documents,
- declaring candidates,
- administering voting opportunities,
- counting votes, and
- reporting election results.

## Elections BC

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Elections BC is a non-partisan, independent Office of the Legislature.

In local elections, Elections BC is responsible for administering campaign financing and election advertising rules under the [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#) (LECFA).

Elections BC does **not** administer voting, counting or results reporting at the local level, including by-elections and non-election assent voting events (also referred to as referenda) held by local election authorities outside of the general local elections cycle.

Elections BC's responsibilities under LECFA include:

- accepting, reviewing and publishing disclosure statements, annual financial reports and supplementary reports
- assisting participants to understand the rules and requirements under LECFA
- registering local advertising sponsors and elector organizations
- undertaking investigations and audits

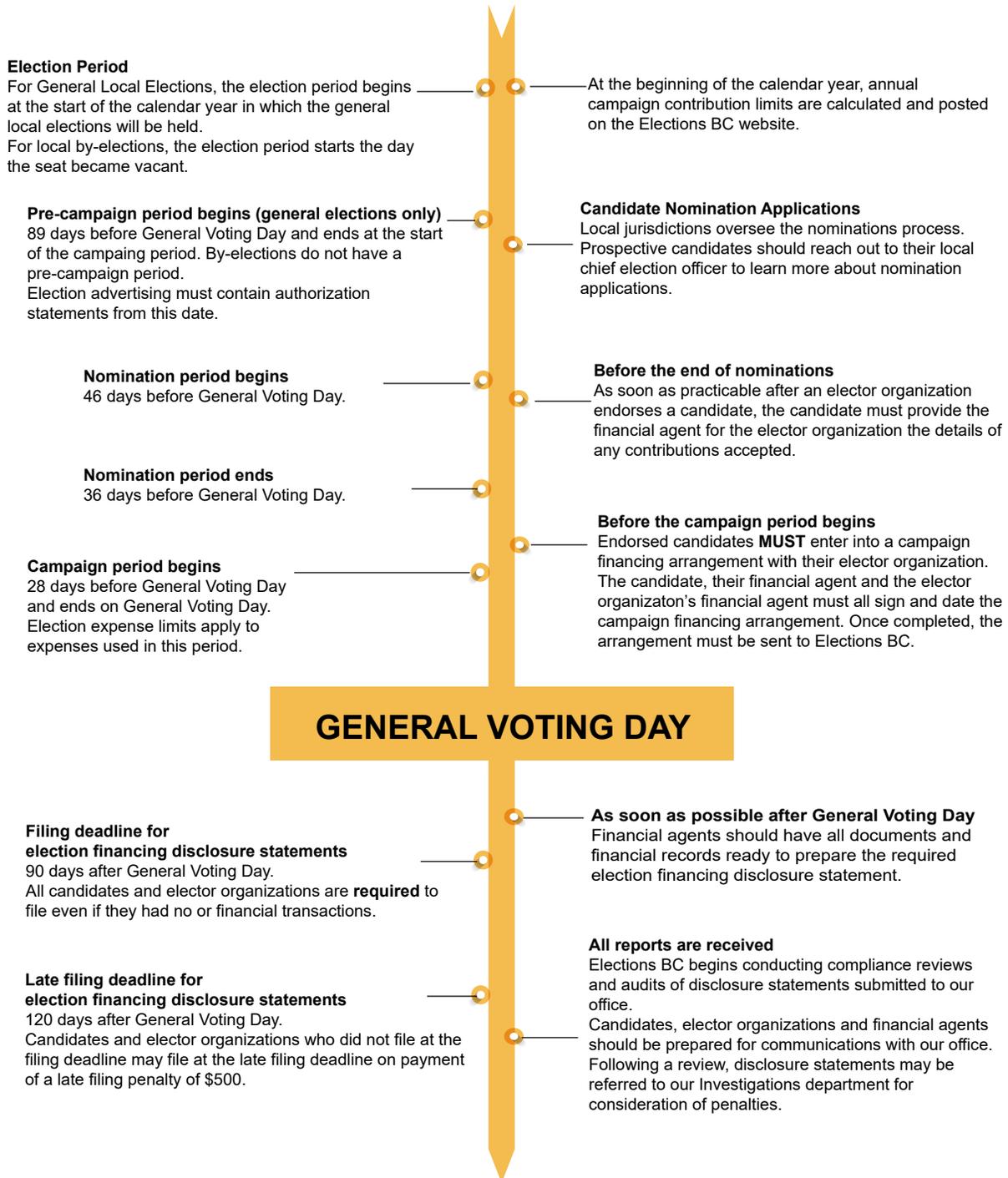
# CAMPAIGN FINANCING

The [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#) (LECFA) has rules for candidates, elector organizations and third party sponsors. This includes disclosure and reporting requirements for campaign financing and election advertising.

## Campaign financing periods

Election Period	Pre-campaign Period	Campaign Period	Filing Period	Assessment Period
→	→	→	→	→
<b>Start of Election Period</b>	<b>Start of Pre-campaign Period</b>	<b>Start of the Campaign Period</b>	<b>Filing Deadline</b>	<b>Assessment Period</b>
<p><b>January 1 for general local elections, or the date the seat becomes vacant for by-elections</b></p> <p>Expenses used in this period must be reported on the campaign financing disclosure statement.</p>	<p><b>89 days before General Voting Day</b></p> <p>Election advertising transmitted to the public must include an authorization statement. Expenses used in this period must be reported on the campaign financing disclosure statement.</p>	<p><b>28 days before General Voting Day</b></p> <p>Definition of election advertising is expanded to include issue based advertising, and limits apply to the value of election expenses used.</p>	<p><b>90 days after General Voting Day</b></p> <p>Campaign financing disclosure statements must be filed with Elections BC.</p>	<p>Elections BC conducts compliance reviews and audits of financial reports, and if non-compliance is identified, the file is forwarded for investigation and possible enforcement.</p>

[s. 10]



Once the disclosure requirements are fulfilled, the candidate must keep all financial records in BC for 5 years.

# FINANCIAL AGENTS

The financial agent is legally responsible for administering the candidate's campaign finances in accordance with LECFA. It is the financial agent's responsibility to know, understand and follow the rules under LECFA to avoid penalties such as disqualifications, administrative monetary penalties, or offences.

A candidate may either act as their own financial agent or appoint another person to this position. If a candidate chooses to act as their own financial agent, all financial agent responsibilities and requirements are theirs.

A candidate can only have one financial agent at a time. However, a financial agent can be the financial agent for more than one candidate or elector organization.

The financial agent must keep records and supporting documentation for all election financing activities, income and expenses. The financial agent is also responsible for ensuring disclosure statements are submitted in accordance with LECFA. Elections BC may request this documentation during the review process.

[s. 17, 22]

## Appointment requirements

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If a candidate is not acting as their own financial agent, **appointments must be made in writing**.

If the appointment or changes are made:

- before the voting results are declared, it must be sent to the local election officer.
- after the results are declared, it must be sent to Elections BC.

Appointment information includes:

- the full name of the financial agent
- the effective date of appointment
- contact information
- address for service
- signatures of the candidate and financial agent

[s. 17]

## Responsibilities of financial agents

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A financial agent is responsible for ensuring compliance with the rules and requirements of LECFA. It is critical that financial agents understand campaign financing rules. To support financial agents, Elections BC provides education and advice about campaign financing and disclosure statements.

Failure to comply with LECFA can result in a penalty or offence. In some cases, the financial agent may be responsible for paying the administrative monetary penalty, and in those cases, the financial agent's name will be published in information related to the contravention. We encourage all financial agents to engage with Elections BC's educational materials.

Financial agents are responsible for:

- Keeping complete and accurate campaign financing records of all transfers, campaign contributions, election expenses, and other financial transactions.
- Opening a separate campaign account for each campaign to which they are appointed.
  - Failure to open a designated campaign account is an offence under LECFA and can result in penalties.
- Ensuring campaign contributions are only received from eligible individuals and documenting the eligibility of the contributors. Contributions from the candidate are subject to the same rules, recording and reporting requirements as any other contributions.
- Ensuring campaign contributions from eligible individuals do not exceed the contribution limit.
  - Contribution limits can be found on our website: [elections.bc.ca/local-contributions](https://elections.bc.ca/local-contributions)
- Ensuring all transactions of money are made through the campaign account(s), including contributions from the candidate to their own campaign.
- Ensuring election advertising contains the required sponsorship information.
- Determining the market value of in-kind contributions and expenses, including from the candidate.
- Accepting and depositing permitted campaign contributions into a correct designated campaign account.
- Incurring, paying, recording and disclosing election expenses.
- Pre-approving all election expenses incurred by others, including the candidate.

- Making and receiving transfers of money between an endorsed candidate's own campaign account and their elector organization.
- Making and receiving in-kind transfers between an endorsed candidate and their elector organization.
- Filing a campaign financing disclosure statement for each campaign the financial agent is appointed for.
- Responding to questions from Elections BC after filing a disclosure statement and filing supplementary reports when required.
- Ensuring all required financial records are given to the candidate after the disclosure requirements are met. Records must be kept by the candidate in BC for 5 years after General Voting Day.

Financial agents may authorize another individual in writing to accept campaign contributions or to pay election expenses if they choose. The authorization **must be in writing** and the authorization kept as a part of the records.

Unless a financial agent provides a personal guarantee, they are not liable for debts or other liabilities of a local candidate or their campaign.

Financial agents may also have other roles, such as campaign manager for a candidate or a responsible principal official for an elector organization.

Elections BC must be notified as soon as possible of changes to the financial agent or their contact information.

[s. 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30]

# CAMPAIGN ACCOUNTS

A campaign account is an account in a savings institution such as a bank, credit union or trust company used exclusively for the election campaign. Candidates must have a campaign account if they intend to incur any election expenses. Even if a candidate does not plan to accept campaign contributions from other individuals and will be self-funding their campaign from their own money, they must still have a designated campaign account. The only time a campaign does not have to open a campaign account is if they have no monetary transaction of any sort.

All monetary transactions (e.g. contributions, transfers and expenses) must go through the dedicated campaign account. Financial agents are encouraged to open campaign accounts as early as possible. If a financial agent has difficulty opening a campaign account, there is a letter on the Elections BC website that can be printed and given to the savings institution.

A campaign account is only valid for the election it was opened in. For example, an account for a general election must not be used for a by-election.

Similarly, if a candidate is running in multiple jurisdictions, they must have a separate campaign account for each campaign. For example, if a candidate is running in both a municipal election and a school board election, they must open two separate accounts. Failure to open a dedicated campaign account for each campaign is an offence.

Candidates **cannot** share an account and an endorsed candidate must have a separate account from their elector organization.

Each campaign account must be in the name of the election campaign. Examples of candidate campaign account names include:

“Alex Smith 2026 Vancouver General Local Election Campaign Account”

“Victoria By-Election Campaign Account of Alex Smith”

Campaign accounts must remain open until all financial transactions have been completed, including the disbursement of surplus funds.

## Credit Card Purchases

The financial agent or those appointed in writing by the financial agent, may approve the use of a credit card for a purchase. However, receipts from the credit card purchase must be kept and submitted to the campaign for reimbursement from the campaign account.

Credit card purchases which are not reimbursed become a contribution from the individual and count towards the contribution limit.

[s. 18]

# VOLUNTEERS

A volunteer is an individual who willingly performs free services for an election campaign. A candidate's campaign may have paid workers and volunteers. Volunteers:

- receive no compensation (directly or indirectly) for their services
- cannot be paid by their employer for working as a volunteer
- can use their vacation time to volunteer
- must be authorized in writing by the financial agent to accept campaign contributions or pay for election expenses
- must not be self-employed and providing services they normally charge for

## When volunteering does and does not count as a contribution

A volunteer's services, or the use of their own property for the campaign do not count as a campaign contribution or election expense. These services do not need to be valued.

### Example

*A volunteer, Miranda, uses their own car to deliver lawn signs and brochures and is not repaid for these expenses from the campaign account. Since the volunteer is using their own property in relation to their volunteer services, the value of using the car and gas is neither a campaign contribution nor an election expense.*

If someone is self-employed and provides services for free that they would normally charge for, it is **not** volunteering. That individual is making a campaign contribution, and the value of their services is an election expense. Financial agents must therefore value, record and disclose that contribution and expense. If the value of the services is more than the contribution limit, the balance must be paid for from the campaign account.

### Example

*Martin is a self-employed communications professional. A candidate wants to prepare for an interview and asks Martin to help as a favour. For a paying client, Martin would normally charge \$150 for three hours of work, but Martin provides the service for free. Martin has made a campaign contribution of \$150, and the candidate has incurred an election expense of \$150. Both the contribution and the expense must be recorded and disclosed by the financial agent.*

[s. 13, 14, Schedule s. 1]

# CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

A campaign contribution is the value of any money, property or services provided without compensation to a candidate for campaign use. A campaign contribution can be made at any time including after the election, provided that the contribution is related to that election campaign.

A campaign contribution can be a donation of money or goods, services, advance, deposit or discount. Campaign contributions of money can be made by cash, cheque, credit card or electronic funds transfer.

If a candidate gives money to their own campaign, it is a campaign contribution and must be recorded and disclosed in the same way as all other campaign contributions. Campaign contributions made by the candidate are subject to contribution limits.

[s.13-13.02]

## Who can make campaign contributions

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Campaign contributions can only be made by eligible individuals. It is an offence to make or accept contributions from ineligible contributors.

An eligible individual is:

- a resident of British Columbia, and
- a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident.

Contributions cannot be made by organizations.

Financial agents are responsible for confirming and documenting the eligibility of contributors and maintaining supporting documents with the financial records.

[Schedule s. 1]

## Making and accepting campaign contributions

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When accepting a campaign contribution, the financial agent or authorized individual, **must** record:

- the value,
- the date the contribution was made, and
- the required contributor information.

Contributions with insufficient information recorded may become prohibited contributions.

The following are rules for making and accepting campaign contributions:

- Campaign contributions must be made to the financial agent or an individual authorized in writing by the financial agent. Individuals who are not authorized in writing by the financial agent must not accept contributions.

### **Example**

*A candidate has a large campaign team and is running multiple campaign events on the same day. The financial agent is running the first event, and the candidate asks a campaign volunteer to run the second event. At the second event, several people want to contribute to the campaign and the campaign volunteer accepts the contributions, collecting the necessary contact information, and passes it on to the financial agent later that day. Since the campaign volunteer was not authorized in writing by the financial agent to accept contributions, these contributions are prohibited and need to be returned to the contributors.*

- Only eligible individuals may make campaign contributions. Financial agents and authorized individuals may only accept contributions from eligible individuals.
- Contributions from corporate accounts, preferential discounts from a company, or contributions from out of province are prohibited. Making or accepting ineligible contributions is an offence and monetary penalties may apply.
- The financial agent must confirm contributor eligibility. If contributions are accepted online through a website, there should be a declaration that the contributor must complete confirming they are an eligible individual.
- Contribution dates are based on when the contribution was accepted, not when it was deposited.
- Contributors must provide information so that financial agents can meet their legal disclosure requirements. The financial agent must keep records of these details even if the contribution was less than \$100 and those details may not need to be reported.

- Financial agents and authorized individuals must ensure that contributions received from eligible individuals do not exceed the contribution limit.
- Campaign contributions of money must be deposited into the relevant campaign's account. If a contributor wants to contribute to more than one campaign, they must make those contributions separately. A contribution must be deposited into the corresponding campaign account.
- Donated (in-kind) property or services must be assigned a market value, recorded and disclosed in the same way as contributions of money. The value of donated property and services counts towards the individual's contribution limit.
- If property or services are provided by an eligible individual to the candidate at less than market value, the eligible individual is making a campaign contribution. The campaign contribution is the difference between the price paid and the market value.
- The value of a candidate's own property used in their own campaign is not a campaign contribution.
- Crowdfunding, or crowdsourcing, through the internet for campaign contributions is permitted. The crowdfunding system must require the contributor to provide the value, the date the contribution was made and the required contributor information, including their residential address, and proof of their eligibility, so the financial agent can record it.
- Anonymous contributions cannot be collected over the internet.

[s. 16, 20, 27, 29]

## Contribution rules

It is important to know which campaign contributions are acceptable, which are prohibited, and which funds, property or services are **not** contributions. All contributions are subject to contributor eligibility requirements and the annual contribution limit.

Acceptable contributions	Prohibited	Not contributions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ money given to a financial agent or an individual they have authorized</li> <li>▪ non-monetary property and services provided to the campaign</li> <li>▪ money given by a candidate to their own campaign within their allowable limit</li> <li>▪ anonymous contributions of \$50 or less</li> <li>▪ a person purchasing goods or services from the candidate for more than market value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ contributions made by organizations and ineligible individuals</li> <li>▪ contributions that exceed the contribution limit</li> <li>▪ giving a contribution to someone other than the financial agent or someone they have authorized</li> <li>▪ making or accepting a campaign contribution, other than a permitted anonymous contribution, without providing or recording the required contributor information, including how the individual meets the eligibility requirements</li> <li>▪ making or accepting indirect campaign contributions</li> <li>▪ making or accepting an anonymous campaign contribution of more than \$50</li> <li>▪ making or accepting a loan from an eligible individual that is over their contribution limit when combined with their contributions</li> <li>▪ not repaying a loan or bill from an organization and the amount becoming a prohibited contribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ services provided by a volunteer including the use of their own property in that role</li> <li>▪ transfers of money, property, or services between an elector organization and its endorsed candidates</li> <li>▪ non-monetary property or services owned by a candidate and provided for use in their own campaign</li> <li>▪ candidate's surplus campaign funds from the last election returned by the jurisdiction</li> <li>▪ free transmission of election advertising if offered equitably to all candidates</li> <li>▪ publishing or broadcasting news, editorials, interviews, columns, letters, debates, speeches or commentaries for free in a periodical, radio or television program</li> <li>▪ publications intended to be sold whether or not there was an election</li> </ul>

## Campaign contribution limits

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All campaign contributions are subject to annual contributions limits. This limit sets the maximum amount eligible individuals may contribute to each campaign during a calendar year. The combined total of any monetary contribution, loans, or services made by an eligible individual to a candidate cannot exceed the contribution limit in a calendar year.

Purchases by candidates and other self-funding activities which are not reimbursed through the campaign account, are contributions and are counted toward the candidate's contribution limit.

If a contributor has exceeded the contribution limit, the excess amount is a prohibited contribution. There are significant monetary penalties for exceeding a contribution limit. It is also an offence to fail to return or remit the funds in the time specified.

Campaign contribution limits are adjusted either by regulation or by changes to the consumer price index (CPI). Adjusted amounts are published on the [Elections BC website](#) and in the *B.C. Gazette*.

### Contribution limits for unendorsed and endorsed candidates

- For **unendorsed** candidates (candidates who are not endorsed by an elector organization) contribution rules change depending on whether it is or is not an election year.
  - In an election year, an unendorsed candidate can contribute up to double the annual campaign contribution limit for their own campaign.
  - In a non-election year, an unendorsed candidate can contribute up to the contribution limit.
- For candidates **endorsed** by an elector organization, the limit applies to the elector organization and all of its endorsed candidates in a jurisdiction as a whole. An eligible individual may not contribute more than the annual limit, **in total**, to the elector organization and its endorsed candidates for each calendar year in each jurisdiction.
- If the eligible individual contributed the full contribution limit to their campaign, they would be unable to contribute to their elector organization. However, the endorsed candidate could contribute 50% of the contribution limit to their campaign and 50% of the contribution limit to their electoral organization.

As soon as practicable after an elector organization endorses a candidate in an election, the financial agent for the candidate must provide to the financial agent for the elector organization all campaign contribution information. This is done to ensure contribution limits are maintained.

[s. 30.04-30.05, 35, Regulation s. 70]

## How to determine the value of the contribution

The value of a campaign contribution is the amount provided by the contributor, including any fees collected by an online payment system. If an individual contributes the maximum annual contribution amount online, and the payment system charges the contributor an extra \$2, the \$2 is now a prohibited contribution provided in excess of the annual limit.

Financial agents must also determine and report the value of in-kind contributions, such as goods and services. In-kind contributions must be reported at market value. Market value is the lowest price charged for an equivalent amount of property or services in the market area at the time.

As an example of valuing donated items at market value, if signs are donated to the campaign, the financial agent will:

- use the receipt if the signs are new, or
- get a quote from a vendor for the same quantity and quality of the signs given if the signs are old.

This quote, or the receipted value, will be saved for the financial records and the value used to determine the value of the contribution and also the value reported as an expense.

**Note:** If the campaign is reusing signs purchased by the candidate during a previous election, the market value will need to be determined as in the example above. The value will be used to report the expense only. There is no contribution in this case as the property already belonged to the candidate.

Foreign currency and cryptocurrency contributions must be valued at the market rate on the date of the contribution and are subject to the same contribution rules as other contributions.

[s. 16, 20, 27, 29]

## Anonymous contributions

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Anonymous contributions of **\$50 or less** are allowed. However, an eligible individual can only give a total of \$50 in anonymous contributions to a campaign. The financial agent must record the value and date of the contribution and how it was received.

An example of an acceptable time to receive anonymous contributions is at a pass-the-hat activity at a fundraiser.

For example, at a fundraising function the financial agent asks Michael, a volunteer for the campaign, to monitor a donation jar at the entrance. As attendees arrive, Michael

observes that eight people make anonymous contributions totaling \$112, and no one donates more than \$50.

Anonymous contributions must be truly anonymous. This means that the financial agent or candidate does not know who made the contribution. A contributor cannot ask for a contribution to be anonymous. Anonymous contributions cannot be collected by crowdfunding or crowdsourcing over the internet.

[s. 26, 29]

## Capital assets

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Capital assets may include buildings, computers, office furniture and equipment. When capital assets are donated by eligible individuals, the contribution is the market value of using the property.

For example, Miriam, an eligible individual, provides office furniture to Anne, a candidate, to use in their campaign office for one month. The furniture is normally rented for \$500 per month. Miriam is making a campaign contribution as an eligible individual to Anne of \$500, the market value of renting the furniture for one month.

[s. 16]

## Required contributor information and other recording requirements for campaign contributions

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Under LECFA, financial agents must keep accurate and detailed records of all financial transactions. Detailed records are important for election transparency, and they make it easier to complete your campaign financing disclosure statement.

Financial agents must record the following for each campaign contribution:

- the full name and residential address of the contributor (and mailing address, if it is different),
- the value of the contribution,
- the date the contribution was made, and
- the contributor's eligibility.

**Note:** A residential address is the eligible individual's **home address**. Mailing addresses such as a PO Box, work address or commercial address do not meet the recording requirements. Contributor addresses will be obscured prior to publication of the report.

There are some circumstances where a financial agent must decline the contribution. A contribution must come from an eligible individual. If a contribution appears to come from an ineligible individual, the financial agent must decline it.

If the contribution appears to come from multiple eligible individuals, the financial agent must decline the group contribution and collect one from each individual wishing to contribute. Indirect contributions are prohibited.

**Example**

*A candidate is campaigning door-to-door and a contributor wishes to write a cheque to contribute up to the contribution limit on behalf of each of their three family members, who all live there but are not presently at home. The contributor is not allowed to make contributions on behalf of other individuals and then be reimbursed by those individuals later, as that is an indirect contribution and prohibited.*

[s. 29]

## Contributions of \$100 or more

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Eligible individuals who make campaign contributions of **\$100 or more** to the same campaigns are significant contributors, and will be reported with full details of each contribution in the disclosure report. The contributions could be either a single donation of \$100 or more, or multiple donations that total \$100 or more. This includes in-kind contributions.

**Example**

*If a contributor gives \$50 in total contributions to a campaign, their name and contribution details are not reported in the disclosure statement, even though these details must be collected in the financial records for the campaign.*

If a contributor gives \$50 one month and then another \$50 a few months later, the contributor's information for both contributions must be reported on the \$100 and over contributions form.

Information about contributors who give a total of \$100 or more must be disclosed in the candidate's disclosure statement This includes:

- full name and residential address of contributor,

- value of contribution, and
- date of contribution.

Elections BC will obscure contributor addresses before publishing disclosure statements.

[s. 29, 49]

## Prohibited contributions

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It is an offence to make or knowingly accept a prohibited contribution and monetary penalties may apply.

If the financial agent becomes aware that a contribution is prohibited, they must return the contribution to the contributor, or an amount equal to its value, within 30 days of becoming aware of the prohibited contribution. Additional monetary penalties may apply if the funds are not returned within 30 days. The return must be from the corresponding campaign account.

If a prohibited contribution cannot be returned, such as an anonymous contribution over \$50, the financial agent must remit it to Elections BC as soon as practicable. Remitted funds can now be paid using the Pay BC Application at (<https://pay.gov.bc.ca>), or by mailing certified cheque or money order.

## Examples of prohibited contributions

- Organizations cannot contribute or offer preferential discounts.

### Example

*A financial agent purchases campaign signs from a local sign shop. The sign shop wants to support the candidate's campaign and gives the candidate a preferential 20% discount. The 20% discount is not available to any other purchaser and would be considered a contribution. As businesses are not eligible contributors, it would be prohibited.*

- Contributions over \$50 that are anonymous are prohibited.

### Example

*A financial agent receives an anonymous contribution of \$75 in an envelope under the door of the campaign office. The full amount is a prohibited contribution and must be remitted to Elections BC.*

- Contributions over the annual contribution limit are prohibited.

**Example**

*Carrie, an eligible individual, has already contributed the maximum annual amount during the calendar year and then makes another contribution of \$300. This \$300 over the contribution limit is prohibited and must not be accepted. If accepted in error, the \$300 must be returned to Carrie.*

- Contributions over the limit may also include candidates or campaigns which overspend.

**Example**

*If a candidate spends \$8,000 during a campaign but only receives \$3,000 in contributions, the remaining \$5,000 in expenses they pay themselves. The \$5,000 the candidate spent of their own money would be a campaign contribution, and the amount over the contribution limit is a prohibited contribution.*

Monetary penalties may be administered for financial agents that accept or fail to return prohibited contributions. These penalties may also be applied to individuals and organizations that make prohibited contributions.

[s. 26, 28, 29, 35, 68.13, 68.14, 68.17, 72.1]

## Indirect contributions

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Indirect campaign contributions are not allowed. This means that individuals may not give money, property or services to another person to make a campaign contribution. This applies to members of the same family.

**Example**

*After a fundraising function, a group of three supporters wish to make campaign contributions, but only one person brought their chequebook. That supporter writes one cheque for \$3,000 and writes that it is on behalf of all three of them in the memo line, and the other supporters agree to pay them back. This is a prohibited contribution because the other supporters did not use their own funds for the contribution. Indirect contributions are prohibited.*

## Public Safety Canada

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Ensuring that contributions come from eligible individuals is an important measure to help prevent foreign interference in local elections. If you become aware of individuals who may be suspicious actors, or of any incidents that could pose concerns related to national security, you may contact Public Safety Canada for guidance on reporting potential foreign interference. More information is available at: <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scr/ frgn-ntrfrnc/hr-en.aspx>.

## Fundraising functions

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A fundraising function includes a social function held by, or on behalf of, a candidate for the purpose of obtaining funds.

Tickets sold for a fundraiser may **only** be purchased by eligible individuals and they cannot be reimbursed for the purchase of tickets. The purchase of tickets by an eligible individual may or may not be a campaign contribution.

- If an eligible individual purchases more than \$50 worth of tickets, it is a campaign contribution.
- If an eligible individual purchases \$50 or less worth of tickets, it is not a campaign contribution.

For example, if one person purchases five tickets at \$20 dollars each, that individual has made a contribution because the total price of the tickets is \$100. If the same individual only purchased two tickets for a total of \$40, then it would not be a contribution.

All money received at a fundraising function must be deposited into the campaign account and disclosed accordingly. Financial agents are not permitted to use cash received at the function to pay for expenses. They must deposit all income from the function into the corresponding campaign account(s) and pay for costs of the function from the campaign account(s) separately.

For example, if a beer and burger fundraiser is held at a pub which will receive half the proceeds of the ticket sales, the pub may not collect the money and then give the elector organization their share of the profit.

Goods or services donated to be sold to raise funds are contributions from the individual who donated them.

If the item sells for market value or below, the sales income is reported as fundraising income. If the donated item sells for over market value, the amount over market value is a contribution from the purchaser.

**Example**

*If an eligible individual donates a laptop to auction at the fundraiser, and the market value for the laptop is \$600, the individual has made a \$600 contribution. If the laptop sells at the auction for \$500, then the sale amount is not a contribution and is recorded as \$500 in other fundraising income.*

*However, if the laptop sells for \$750, the \$600 market value, is other fundraising income, and the \$150 over the market value is recorded as a contribution from the eligible individual who bought the laptop at the auction.*

Any anonymous contributions received at the fundraiser, for example from a pass-the-hat, will also be reported as contributions on the fundraising function form. The financial agent must ensure they track how many people attend the event so they have a number of individuals to report on the disclosure statement.

Income generated from fundraisers must be deposited into the corresponding campaign account(s), and expenses must be paid from the same campaign account(s).

[s. 13, 13.01,16]

## Loans and outstanding debts

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Financial agents may receive loans from eligible individuals and savings institutions for campaign use. A loan which remains unpaid becomes a campaign contribution which may lead to a prohibited contribution.

A loan received from an eligible individual **must be counted towards the contribution limit** for that individual in the calendar year the loan was received.

Financial agents must record the following for each loan received.

- if the loan is received from an eligible individual:
  - the full name and residential address of the lender,
  - the date the loan was made,
  - the amount of the loan, and
  - due date of the loan.
- if the loan is received from a savings institution:
  - the name of the savings institution,
  - date the loan was made,

- amount of the loan,
- due date of the loan,
- interest rate of the loan, and
- the prime rate of interest at the time the loan is made.

Loans to campaigns from savings institutions cannot have a preferential interest rate and the interest rate cannot be less than prime at the time of the loan.

If a financial agent becomes aware that a loan has been accepted in contravention of LECFA, they must return the loan or pay the lender an amount equal to the loan within 30 days. There are monetary penalties for making or accepting prohibited loans.

Any loan or debt that remains unpaid for six months after it becomes due converts into a campaign contribution unless the creditor has started legal proceedings to recover it. Creditors keep their rights to collect the loan or debt past the six month period even if no action to collect is taken.

Prohibited contribution rules apply to loans or debts that become campaign contributions.

[s. 13, 13.02, 18, 22, 27.01-27.02, 30.05, 35, 68.15, 68.16]

## **Other income and transfers received**

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Other deposits that are not campaign contributions or permissible loans are recorded and reported as other income.

All money received by the campaign must be deposited into the campaign account. The financial agent must record the amount, date and purpose of each deposit that goes into the campaign account.

Such deposits include:

- interest earned on the account,
- dividends of shares of a credit union,
- money earned through product sales,
- fundraising income that is not a campaign contribution,
- surplus campaign funds from a previous election returned by the jurisdiction, and
- transfers of money or goods and services between an endorsed candidate and their elector organization. Transfers can be made at any time, including after General Voting Day

If a candidate sought endorsement from an elector organization but was not endorsed, the recording requirements still apply.

For transfers of money between an endorsed candidate and an elector organization, report:

- the date and dollar amount of the transfer
- the name of the elector organization that made or received the transfer

For in-kind transfers between an endorsed candidate and an elector organization, report:

- the date of the transfer
- the market value and a description of the transferred property or services
- the name of the elector organization that made or received the transfer

For example, if an elector organization provides election signs to its endorsed candidate, then the elector organization will report the market value of the signs as a transfer given, and the endorsed candidate will report the same amount as a transfer received.

Because both the giver and receiver are required to report the transfer, the transaction information should be consistently reported by both the endorsed candidate and their elector organization. The financial agent should ensure the value and date of the each transfer is recorded and reported consistently.

[s. 13, 18, 22, 23, Regulation s. 6, 13]

# EXPENSES AND EXPENSE LIMITS

## Election expenses

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An election expense is the value of property or services used in an election campaign by or on behalf of a candidate or elector organization to promote or oppose, directly or indirectly, the election of a candidate or elector organization. This applies whether the item or service was used in the election period, the campaign period, or both.

Goods produced by a candidate from their own property are not campaign expenses if the materials were already owned prior to their decision to run for office.

All election expenses must:

- be approved by the financial agent before they are incurred,
- be paid for by the financial agent or an individual authorized in writing by the financial agent, and
- be paid or reimbursed from the campaign account, including if a candidate pays for an expense from their personal funds. Receipts must be submitted to the financial agent for reimbursement.

Financial agents must maintain accurate and detailed records of all expenses related to the campaign. The records must be complete and accurate to meet the disclosure requirements in LECFA. These records can be requested by Elections BC at any time.

Details for record keeping include:

- total value and description of each election expense
- when each election expense was used (such as election period, campaign period or both)
- total value and description of each payment made from the campaign account, including fundraising expenses, intended election expenses, thank-you parties, etc.

## Valuing election expenses

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The value of an election expense is determined using the price paid or market value.

The following rules apply for determining the value of expenses:

- the price paid for the property or services, including any production costs, or
- if no price is paid or if the price paid is lower than the market value, the market value of the property or services. Market value is the lowest price charged for an equivalent amount of property or services in the market area at the time.

## Valuing reused materials

- It is common for candidates to reuse signs from previous elections. Although no money has been spent from the current campaign, the signs must be valued and reported as an election expense.
- The market value is the cost of buying new materials of the same quality and quantity. A quote should be obtained to determine the current price of the goods.
- If the reused materials are used during the campaign period, the full value must be reported on the disclosure statement as a campaign period election expense subject to limits.
- If there are additional costs to update old or re-used campaign goods, such as adding the sponsorship information, those costs are included in the value of the election expense.

For example, if a campaign reuses 100 signs owned by the candidate from a previous election, the financial agent should get a quote from a sign maker for the price to create 100 new signs of the same size and materials and use this to value the expense for the reused signs. If the quote says that \$350 is the cost to have new signs printed of the same quality and amount, then \$350 will be reported as an expense subject to the limit.

**Note:** There is no amount paid on reused items owned by the candidate, this will create a known source of variance in the reporting between total income and expenses of the campaign.

## Election period and campaign period expenses

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Candidates are subject to expense limits. Exceeding the campaign expense limit carries serious penalties. If an elected candidate exceeds their expense limit, they will lose their seat.

It is important to note that election expenses must be reported for when they are used. Candidates and electoral organizations cannot defer payment of expenses to avoid campaign expense limits.

When calculating expenses, financial agents must report the full value of the expense. This includes material used in production of an item. Incorrect calculations of expenses can result in campaigns exceeding their limits, which is an offence.

### Election period expenses:

- For **general local elections**, the election period begins on January 1st and ends on the 29th day before General Voting Day.
- For a **by-election**, the election period begins on the day the office becomes vacant and ends on the 29th day before General Voting Day.
- Election expenses used in the election period are election period expenses.

### Campaign period expenses:

- The campaign period begins on the 28th day before General Voting Day and ends at the close of voting on General Voting Day.
- Election expenses used in the campaign period are campaign period expenses.

Some expenses are divisible, and can be prorated based on when they are used.

For example, brochures can be apportioned between the election period and the campaign period based on when they were distributed.

#### **Example**

*If the financial agent buys 200 brochures, and 100 are mailed out in the election period, the value of those 100 brochures are reported in the election period and not subject to the expenses limit. If the remaining 100 are mailed out in the campaign period, the value of those 100 will be campaign period election expenses and subject to the expenses limit.*

If only a portion of property or services is used by the campaign, only that portion is an election expense. The unused portion is an intended election expense and is recorded as an other expense.

**Example**

*If a financial agent buys 200 brochures and distributes 100, then half the cost will be reported as an election expense, and the other half as an intended election expense as other expenses.*

Campaigns are permitted to incur expenses after the close of voting such as celebration parties and thank-you cards.

These post campaign period expenses are not subject to expense limits but must be recorded and reported in the disclosure statement as other expenses.

[s.10, 14, 15, 22, 30]

## Examples of Expenses

The list below is of examples only and does not include every type of campaign expense.

Election expenses	Election expenses that are not subject to the limit	Not election expenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ campaign advertising (such as signs, brochures, newspaper ads, etc.)</li> <li>▪ signs reused or repurposed from previous elections</li> <li>▪ costs associated with transmitting election messages to the public (such as postage, website hosting, etc.)</li> <li>▪ professional photographs, videographers, and any other costs associated with the production of advertising</li> <li>▪ holding or attending campaign-related meetings, functions or events (such as costs associated with a campaign rally)</li> <li>▪ paid research and opinion polling and campaigning (such as operating a phone bank)</li> <li>▪ paid canvassing in person, by phone or over the internet</li> <li>▪ campaign office costs</li> <li>▪ bank fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ sign, nomination or damage deposits if they are refunded</li> <li>▪ candidate's personal expenses if paid or reimbursed from campaign account</li> <li>▪ legal or accounting services used to comply with LECFA</li> <li>▪ financial agent services</li> <li>▪ interest on a permissible loan to a candidate's campaign for election period or campaign period expenses</li> <li>▪ expenses that were intended to be used as election expenses but were not, for example leftover brochures that were not distributed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ services provided or goods produced by a candidate from their own property (such as making brochures with materials already owned)</li> <li>▪ services provided or goods produced by a volunteer from their own property (such as canvassing, installing signs, running social media campaign from their own computer, etc.)</li> <li>▪ free media coverage (such as news stories, interviews, current affairs program, etc.)</li> <li>▪ producing, promoting or distributing a candidate's publication if it was planned to be sold whether or not there was an election</li> </ul>

## Expense limits

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Election expense limits are the maximum amounts of campaign period expenses that a candidate may use in a campaign period.

Elections BC publishes and enforces expense limits but is not responsible for their calculation. The Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation calculate the campaign period expense limits for candidates.

All candidates are subject to these expense limits which are based on the office sought and the population of the election area.

Elections BC must publish the expense limits by May 31 in the year of general local elections.

For by-elections, the expense limits for the most recent general local elections apply.

If a candidate exceeds their expense limit:

- Monetary penalties will apply.
- They will lose their seat, if elected.
- They commit an offence.

To find the expense limit for your election area, visit [elections.bc.ca/local-expense-limits](https://elections.bc.ca/local-expense-limits).

[s. 14, 49, 63.01-63.04, 63.05, 63.06, Regulations s. 72-74]

## Campaign financing arrangements

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All candidates who are endorsed by an elector organization **must** have a campaign financing arrangement with their elector organization. Campaign financing arrangement forms can be found on the [Local Forms | Elections BC](#) page.

Elector organizations are not allowed to incur campaign period expenses unless the candidate shares their expense limit with the elector organization under a campaign financing arrangement.

A campaign financing arrangement is a written agreement between an elector organization and each endorsed candidate. The arrangement determines how much of the candidate's campaign period expense limit will be shared with their elector organization.

An endorsed candidate can make all, some or none of their expense limit available to their elector organization to spend on their campaign.

A campaign financing arrangement must be:

- filed with Elections BC directly,
- on the regulated form,
- completed before the start of the campaign period, and
- signed by the candidate, the candidate's financial agent (if applicable) and the financial agent of the elector organization.

The amounts listed for the candidate and the elector organization must equal the total expense limit if the expense limit is to be shared.

### **Amendments or terminations**

Campaign financing arrangements may be amended or terminated. Amendments or terminations must be on Elections BC regulated forms.

- An amendment to the amounts of expense limits available to the elector organization must be made **no later than General Voting Day**.
- A termination of a campaign financing arrangement must be done **before the start of the campaign period**.

**Important note:** A candidate or elector organization must notify their local election officer of a termination of endorsement prior to the start of the campaign period to remove the endorsement from the ballot.

[s. 63.07-63.11, Regulation s. 75-79]

## Shared election expenses

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A shared election expense is when two or more candidates agree to share in an election expense.

Each candidate's campaign must pay for and report their portion of the shared election expense. If one campaign pays for the expense directly, they must be repaid by the other campaign(s) for their portion of the expense. Candidates are not allowed to incur or pay for expenses on behalf of another candidate, and must be repaid or reimbursed for any shared expenses.

If election advertising is co-sponsored by two or more candidates, the sponsorship information for each candidate's financial agent must be on the advertising.

### **Example**

*Two candidates decide to share signs that promote them both equally. The signs cost \$500. Each candidate's financial agent must account for their share (\$250). Each campaign may pay the vendor directly, or one candidate's financial agent may pay the vendor and other candidate's financial agent can pay their \$250 to the financial agent who paid the vendor. All payments and deposits must be made using the candidates' campaign accounts.*

Detailed disclosure of shared election expenses is required. In order to meet these requirements, financial agents for candidates who participated in a shared election expense must record the following:

- the total value of the shared expense
- the value of their candidate's portion
- the names of the other participating candidates

They must also record, as applicable:

- the amount paid to the supplier
- the amount of each reimbursement received from other participating candidates
- the amount of each reimbursement paid to other participating candidates

[s. 16, Schedule s. 1, s. 44, Regulation ss. 12-13, 13, 25-26]

# ELECTION ADVERTISING

The definition of election advertising is broad and applies to advertising conducted by candidates, elector organizations and third party sponsors during the pre-campaign and campaign periods.

Election advertising may include any public communication that directly or indirectly promotes or opposes a candidate or an elector organization during the pre-campaign period or campaign period for a local election.

In the campaign period, election advertising also includes public communications that take a position on an issue associated with a candidate or elector organization.

Election advertising is only regulated during the pre-campaign period and campaign period. Advertising conducted outside of these periods is not subject to election advertising rules. However, advertising activities during the election period and prior to pre-campaign period are still advertising expenses of the campaign and must be recorded and disclosed.

## Examples

Election advertising	Not election advertising
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ television, radio, newspaper or magazine advertisements</li> <li>▪ signs, billboards, posters, bumper stickers or branded clothing or objects</li> <li>▪ newsletters, brochures, mailing inserts or other advertising sent to the public</li> <li>▪ ads on the internet with a placement cost (such as pay-per-click ads, Facebook ads, promoted posts, banner ads, pop-up ads, etc.)</li> <li>▪ phone calls made using an automated system (e.g., robocalls)</li> <li>▪ paid canvassing in person, by telephone or over the internet to attempt to influence how voters vote</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ personal or private communications</li> <li>▪ free media coverage (such as a candidate debate on a local news channel, news stories, radio interviews, etc.)</li> <li>▪ a communication by an individual or group sent directly to their members, employees or shareholders</li> <li>▪ any free communication on the internet (such as Facebook, X, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, etc.) that also was free to produce</li> <li>▪ free person-to-person phone calls and text messages</li> <li>▪ websites or blogs that do not have hosting or production fees</li> <li>▪ producing, promoting or distributing a publication if it was planned to be sold whether or not there was an election</li> </ul>

### **Who is the sponsor of election advertising**

Election advertising must be reported by the advertising sponsor. The sponsor of election advertising is the individual or organization that pays for the communication to be transmitted, unless the cost of transmission is provided as a contribution.

The advertising sponsor must report the value of election advertising which includes all property and services used in preparing and transmitting the advertising to the public (such as materials, transmission fees, design services, taxes, etc.).

For example, if it cost \$500 to produce an advertisement and \$150 to transmit or post the advertisement, then the total cost of the advertisement is \$650.

Election advertising does **not** include:

- messages on the internet that do not, and would not normally, have a placement cost, including free social media posts, websites and videos. Examples of free messages that are not election advertising include personal Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat posts, tweets, YouTube videos and websites
- free personal or private communications (such as private letters, emails, in-person or telephone conversations, etc.)
- free media coverage (such as news stories, editorials, radio interviews, etc.)
- producing, promoting or distributing a publication if it was planned to be sold whether or not there was an election
- a communication by an individual or group sent directly to their members, employees or shareholders
- transmission by an individual, on a non-commercial basis, on the internet, or by telephone or text message, of their personal views

**Note:** The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC) also provides rules for unsolicited telecommunications made by political entities, including candidates and their campaigns. If your campaign is planning to contact the public through unsolicited communications, please ensure you familiarize yourself with the rules available at: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/phone/telemarketing/politi.htm>

It is prohibited for candidates and elector organizations to sponsor election advertising in conjunction with a third party sponsor. Furthermore a third party sponsor must not sponsor election advertising on behalf of a candidate or elector organization.

[s. 7, 9, 16, Regulation s. 10]

## Determining the value of election advertising

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The value of election advertising includes all property and services used in preparing and transmitting the advertising to the public (such as materials, transmission fees, design services and taxes).

The value of election advertising is an election expense. If used during the campaign period, the value is also a campaign period expense and subject to the expense limit.

Election advertising offered free of charge to all individuals and organizations has a market value of zero; however, the value of preparing the advertising is still an election expense.

For example if an advertisement cost \$500 to create but was published on a free platform, then the total cost of the advertising is \$500.

Advertising suppliers are prohibited from giving special discounts to preferred candidates.

## Determining the sponsor of election advertising

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The sponsor of election advertising is the individual or organization that is conducting the advertising.

The candidate is still the sponsor even if the advertising is paid for as a campaign contribution from an eligible individual and the advertising is conducted at the direction of the financial agent.

**Note:** A third party sponsor is an individual or organization that creates and pays for their own election advertising promoting or opposing a candidate or elector organization, or promoting or opposing an issue closely associated with a candidate or elector organization.

## Sponsorship information on election advertising

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Sponsorship information, also known as an authorization statement, is required on most election advertising during the pre-campaign and campaign periods.

Sponsorship information must include:

- the name of the financial agent,
- an indication that it was authorized by the identified financial agent, and
- a B.C. phone number, or B.C. mailing address or email address at which the financial agent can be contacted.

Although there are no size requirements for the sponsorship information, it must be clear and readable.

There are monetary penalties for failing to include sponsorship information. See page 50 for more information.

For example:

- Authorized by Jay Smith, j.smith@email.com
- Authorized by Rae Jones, 250-555-1234

Sponsorship information must be on the election advertising itself and must be in English or understandable to readers of English. If the advertising is in another language, the sponsorship information must also be in that language or understandable to readers of that language.

For example:

Authorized by John Smith, financial agent 604-123-4567

**जॉन स्मिथ, वित्तीय एजेंट द्वारा अधिकृत 604-123-4567**

For internet advertising that has or would normally have a placement cost, the sponsorship information does not need to be on the ad if there is a link that takes the viewer directly to the website, landing page or profile page that contains it.

If a person is paid to canvass voters, either in person, by telephone or over the internet, the canvasser must provide voters with the required sponsorship information.

One-sided election signs must have sponsorship information on the side that contains the advertising. It cannot be on the back of the sign.

If the election advertising is co-sponsored by two or more candidates, the sponsorship information for each candidate's financial agent must be on the advertising.

For example: Authorized by Jay Smith, j.smith@email.com and Rae Jones, 250-555-1234.

# ADVERTISING RESTRICTIONS

## Where and when election signs may be placed

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Elections BC does not regulate where and when signs may be placed. Contact your local government for more information about election sign bylaws in your area.

The [Ministry of Transportation and Transit](#) regulates sign placement on provincial highways. Please refer to the Ministry's policy at [www.Gov.bc.ca/electionsigns](http://www.Gov.bc.ca/electionsigns).

**Important safety note:** Placing election signs by digging or driving stakes into the ground can pose a safety hazard to sign installers and to underground infrastructure (such as gas lines and other utilities). Before placing election signs, you may wish to contact BC One Call at 1-800-474-6886 or see the website at [www.bc1c.ca](http://www.bc1c.ca) to determine if there are risks in your area. This service is free of charge and is not associated with Elections BC.

## Campaigning restrictions on General Voting Day

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Election advertising is not permitted within 100 metres of a voting place while voting is being conducted.

An individual or organization must not transmit election advertising to the public on General Voting Day except for:

- election advertising on the internet as long as the advertising was transmitted to the public before General Voting Day and was not changed before the close of voting.
  - For example, if advertising purchased on a monthly basis and General Voting Day is included in that purchase and cannot be removed, then the advertising will be permitted.
  - It is not permitted to schedule election advertising for General Voting Day, such as paid Facebook posts.
- advertising on the internet that is for the sole purpose of encouraging voters to vote,
- advertising by means of signs, posters or banners outside of the 100 metre restriction, and
- distributing pamphlets outside of the 100 metre restriction.

Permitted on General Voting Day	Not permitted on General Voting Day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ using free social media</li> <li>▪ free person-to-person interactions, such as phone calls, emails, text messages, etc.</li> <li>▪ election advertising on the internet as long as the advertising was not changed on General Voting Day or is solely to encourage voters to vote</li> <li>▪ placing signs or distributing brochures outside of 100 metres of a voting place</li> <li>▪ campaign meetings or rallies outside of 100 metres of a voting place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ scheduling paid ads on the internet including paid social media posts on Facebook, X, Instagram, etc.</li> <li>▪ automated voice calls (robocalls) and automated text messages</li> <li>▪ placing signs or distributing brochures within 100 metres of a voting place</li> <li>▪ television, radio or newspaper ads</li> <li>▪ campaign meetings or rallies within 100 metres of a voting place</li> <li>▪ paid canvassing in person, by telephone or over the internet to attempt to influence how voters vote</li> </ul>

**Note:** Under the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC) rules, unsolicited telecommunications made on behalf of political entities can only occur on General Voting Day between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. (<https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/phone/telemarketing/politi.htm>)

[s. 45]

## Authority to remove election advertising

If election advertising does not include the required sponsorship information, or is conducted by an unregistered third party sponsor, Elections BC may require that the advertising be:

- corrected
- discontinued
- covered
- obscured
- removed
- destroyed

Certain types of election advertising do not require sponsorship information:

- clothing
- novelty items (such as buttons, badges, pins, stickers, bumper stickers, wristbands)
- small items of nominal value that are intended for personal use (such as pens, mugs, magnets, key chains, notepads, business cards)

[s. 44, Regulation s. 20-21]

## SURPLUS CAMPAIGN FUNDS

Surplus campaign funds are the balance of money left in a campaign account after all financial transactions are completed. Financial agents must record the amount of surplus campaign funds remaining and how they deal with them.

If the candidate contributed money to their own campaign, the financial agent can repay the candidate up to the value of those contributions. After the candidate has been reimbursed, any remaining surplus campaign funds must be dealt with as follows:

- **Under \$500:** The financial agent must pay the amount to the candidate or deal with those funds as directed by the candidate.
- **\$500 or more:** The financial agent **must** pay the total amount of the surplus campaign funds (not just the amount over \$500) to the jurisdiction where the candidate ran.

If a candidate who paid surplus funds to a jurisdiction seeks office in the same jurisdiction in the next general local election or an earlier by-election, the jurisdiction must pay the surplus campaign funds, and any accumulated interest, to the candidate's financial agent for use in the new election.

If the candidate does not run for office in the same jurisdiction in the next election, the funds become the jurisdiction's to be used at its discretion.

[s. 24]

# DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

Financial agents are responsible for filing disclosure statements with Elections BC, even if the candidate withdrew, was acclaimed, or had few or no financial transactions. Candidates also have a responsibility to ensure that their financial agents file their disclosure statements.

Disclosure statements are commonly referred to as “campaign financing reports”. These are different than the statement of disclosure which would have been submitted with a candidate’s nomination documents.

A disclosure statement includes information on all campaign contributions, election expenses, transfers, surplus campaign funds and other transactions related to the campaign. A disclosure statement must be filed for every campaign.

All disclosure statements must be completed on Elections BC forms, which can be found on our [Local Forms | Elections BC](#) page.

Candidates who were endorsed by an elector organization must include the most recent copy of their campaign financing arrangement with their disclosure statement.

More information on how to complete disclosure statements and supplementary reports can be found on our website at [Local Guides | Elections BC](#).

[s. 46, 49]

## Submitting the report

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The campaign financing disclosure statement must be received by Elections BC by 90 days after General Voting Day. If the deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, the filing deadline is moved to the next business day.

The cover page must be signed by the candidate and the appointed financial agent (if relevant) for the report to be accepted as filed. Forms can be found on our website at the [Local Forms | Elections BC](#) page.

Failure to file a campaign financing disclosure statement has significant penalties.

If a candidate fails to file a report, they will be disqualified from running for local office until after the next General Local Elections. If the candidate was elected, they will lose their seat and a by-election will need to be held.

If an elector organization fails to file an election report or supplementary report then their endorsed candidates will also be disqualified and those elected will lose their seats. The elector organization will also be deregistered.

An application to the Supreme Court for relief from disclosure requirements may be made.

It is an offence to fail to file a disclosure statement or supplementary report and a candidate or financial agent who fails to file a report is liable to a fine of up to \$10,000 and/ or imprisonment for up to two years.

Names of late filers and non-filers will be published on our website at [elections.bc.ca](https://elections.bc.ca).

To ensure your report is received by Elections BC before the deadline, you may deliver it by:

- **Secure Online Filing Application (SOFA) - (Preferred):** Scanned reports or forms that are filled electronically can be directly uploaded to SOFA which is accessible through *Elections BC Services*. Please note that an account **must** be set up to use SOFA: <https://services.electionsbc.gov.bc.ca/Portal/>
- **Email:** Scanned reports may be sent to [electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca](mailto:electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca).
- **Fax:** Toll-free to 1-866-466-0665.
- **Mail:** PO Box 9275 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9J6.  
A postmark is not acceptable as proof of delivery by the deadline, so ensure reports are mailed well before the deadline.
- **Courier:** Suite 100 – 1112 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K8  
Ensure reports are sent early enough to be received by the deadline.
- **Personal delivery:**
  - Elections BC at Suite 100 - 1112 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K8, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. PST (closed weekends and statutory holidays)

Elections BC will confirm receipt of your report once it have been received. If there are any issues with your submission that prevent it from being accepted, Elections BC may contact you so you can resolve issues before the filing deadline.

[s. 47, 57, 64, 85]

## Late filing

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If an acceptable campaign financing disclosure statement is not received by the filing deadline, the name of the candidate will be published by Elections BC for failure to file a report by the legislated deadline and the local jurisdiction will be notified.

A report may be filed late provided it is received:

- within 30 days of the filing deadline, and
- is accompanied by a \$500 late filing fee.

The late filing fee is payable by cash, money order or certified cheque to the Minister of Finance. Alternatively, you may pay the late filing fee online using PayBC. There are significant penalties if a financial report is not filed by the late filing deadline.

[s. 47]

## Supplementary reports

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If Elections BC advises a financial agent that a supplementary report is required, it must be submitted within 30 days of the notification. Elections BC must also inform the local jurisdiction of any supplementary reports required.

A supplementary report must also be filed if a financial agent becomes aware that information previously disclosed has changed or does not completely and accurately disclose the information required.

A supplementary report is a complete filing of all of the reporting forms. A supplementary report must:

- provide details about the addition, change or correction to the original disclosure statement
- include a description of the circumstances that led to filing the supplementary report
- be in a form approved by Elections BC

[s. 54]

## Requirement for retaining records

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Campaign financing records must be retained in British Columbia until five years after General Voting Day. Failure to keep the records for the legislated time frame is an offence. Elections BC can request these records at any time as a part of their review process.

These records must include:

- copies of the disclosure statements
- records of contributions and required contributor information

- deposit slips
- expense receipts
- cheque registers
- transaction slips
- all other financial records of the campaign

Financial agents must keep all campaign financing records and other material related to the disclosure statement until all disclosure requirements have been fulfilled. After the disclosure requirements are met, the candidate becomes responsible for retaining records and materials.

[s. 22, 86]

## Public information

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Campaign financing reports are made available on the [Elections BC website](#) after the filing deadline. They may also be viewed at the Elections BC office in Victoria.

Prior to publication, LECFA requires Elections BC to redact from the report any addresses or telephone numbers that have been disclosed for candidates and significant contributors.

This requirement does **not** apply to an address or telephone number provided by a financial agent. Since this information is included on the published campaign financing report, financial agents should be aware that this information is publicly visible.

Local jurisdictions must also provide public access to disclosure statements.

Copies of campaign financing reports may be obtained from either Elections BC or the local authorities for a fee.

[s. 58, 59]

# PENALTIES, OFFENCES AND COURT ORDERS FOR RELIEF

Elections BC works closely with participants to help them understand and comply with the local elections campaign financing rules and regulations.

For more information on the investigations process and to see currently posted administrative monetary penalties, see: [elections.bc.ca/events-services/investigations/](https://elections.bc.ca/events-services/investigations/).

Posted monetary penalties can be found here: [elections.bc.ca/events-services/investigations/administrative-monetary-penalties/](https://elections.bc.ca/events-services/investigations/administrative-monetary-penalties/).

A list of disqualified candidates and advertising sponsors is available on the Elections BC website ([elections.bc.ca/local-elections/disqualification-lists](https://elections.bc.ca/local-elections/disqualification-lists)) and at the Elections BC office in Victoria.

[s. 60]

## Court orders for relief

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Financial agents can apply to the Supreme Court for a court order for relief from disclosure requirements, expense limit penalties and administrative monetary penalties.

An application to the Supreme Court for relief from a financial penalty must be filed before the compliance deadline.

Candidates and financial agents applying for court relief may want to consult independent legal counsel about the court process.

For details and timelines on filing for a court order for relief, see sections 66-72 of the [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#) (LECFA).

# RESOURCES

## Election legislation

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Printed versions of local election legislation — including the [Local Government Act](#), the [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#), the [Vancouver Charter](#), the [Community Charter](#), the [School Act](#) and the [Offence Act](#) — are available at public libraries in communities throughout B.C. Printed versions are also available from Crown Publications, Queen's Printer for British Columbia, at:

**Mailing address:**

563 Superior Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1T7

**Phone:** 250-387-6409

**Toll Free:** 1-800-663-6105

**Fax:** 250-387-1120

**Email:** [crownpub@gov.bc.ca](mailto:crownpub@gov.bc.ca)

**Website:** [crownpub.bc.ca](http://crownpub.bc.ca)

## BC Laws

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BC Laws provides free public online access to the current laws of British Columbia. This unofficial current consolidation of B.C. statutes and regulations is updated continually as new and amended laws come into force. Electronic versions of the [Local Government Act](#), the [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#), the [Vancouver Charter](#), the [Community Charter](#), the [School Act](#) and the [Offence Act](#) are available online at [bclaws.ca](http://bclaws.ca).

## QUESTIONS?

For more information:

Phone toll-free	1-800-661-8683
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Or contact Elections BC at:

Mailing address	PO Box 9275 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9J6
Phone	250-387-5305
Fax	250-387-3578
Toll-free fax	1-866-466-0665
Email	<a href="mailto:electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca">electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca</a>
Website	<a href="http://elections.bc.ca">elections.bc.ca</a>

