

Local Elections FAQs

Elections BC's role in local elections

What is Elections BC's role in local elections and assent voting in B.C.?

Elections BC administers campaign financing and advertising rules for local elections and assent voting in B.C., including registering advertising sponsors. Elections BC does not administer nominations or voting for local elections or assent voting.

Who administers local elections in B.C.?

Several authorities administer local general elections, by-elections and assent voting.

Area of administration	Who is responsible
Voting and ballots	Local Chief Election Officers
Nomination process	Local Chief Election Officers
Advertising rules	Elections BC
Campaign financing and disclosure rules	Elections BC
School trustees/school board elections	The Ministry of Education
Legislation for local elections	The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

What do local Chief Election Officers do?

Each jurisdiction in B.C. appoints a local Chief Election Officer to run local elections and assent voting in that jurisdiction. To find contact information for your local Chief Election Officer, search for the name of your local government (city, regional district, municipality, etc.) on the [Organizations page](#) at [CivicInfo BC](#). If you have questions outside of an election, contact your local Chief Administrative Officer. For Boards of Education elections, contact the [secretary treasurer's office](#) in your local school district.

What legislation governs local elections in B.C.?

- [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#)
- [Local Government Act](#)
- [School Act](#)
- [Vancouver Charter](#)
- [Community Charter](#)

The provincial *Election Act* does not apply to local elections in B.C.

Contribution and expense limits

Are there campaign contribution limits in local elections in B.C.?

Yes, contribution limits will be in effect for the 2018 General Local Elections. The contribution limits generally apply as follows:

- An eligible individual may contribute up to \$1,200 per year per campaign to an unendorsed candidate. As an exception, an unendorsed candidate may contribute up to \$2,400 in 2018 for use in their own campaign.
- An eligible individual may contribute up to \$1,200 per year per campaign to an elector organization and its endorsed candidates. As an exception, a group of endorsed candidates may collectively contribute an additional \$1,200 in total in 2018 for use in the campaign of the elector organization and the endorsed candidates. For example, if an elector organization endorses four candidates in one jurisdiction, in 2018 those candidates could each contribute \$1,200 plus an additional \$300 each for a total of \$1,500 per endorsed candidate for campaign use in that jurisdiction.

Contribution limits do not apply to local by-elections and assent voting held before the 2018 General Local Elections.

Are there restrictions on who can make a campaign or sponsorship contribution in local elections and assent voting in B.C.?

Yes, contributor restrictions will apply to the 2018 General Local Elections. Contributions will be prohibited from any corporation, organization or union, or from an individual who is not a resident of B.C. and a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. Contributor restrictions do not apply to local by-elections and assent votes held before the 2018 General Local Elections.

Is there an expense limit for local election candidates and elector organizations?

Expenses limits will apply to the 2018 General Local Elections. Expenses limits do not apply to local by-elections and assent votes held before the 2018 General Local Elections.

- In communities with a population of fewer than 10,000 people, the expense limit is \$10,000 for mayoral candidates and \$5,000 for all other candidates.
- In communities with a population of 10,000 or more, the expense limits are determined using a per-capita formula.
- There is no separate expense limit for elector organizations. An elector organization is required to attribute campaign period expenses to each of its endorsed candidates.

Is there an expense limit for third party advertising sponsors?

Expense limits will apply to the 2018 General Local Elections. Expense limits do not apply to local by-elections and assent votes held before the 2018 General Local Elections. Limits to directed advertising and issue advertising apply to third party advertising sponsors:

- In a community that has a population of fewer than 15,000 people, the directed advertising limit is \$750.
 - In a community that has a population of 15,000 people or more, the directed advertising limit is 5% of the candidate expense limit in the corresponding election area.
 - Issue advertising is not in relation to a specific candidate or elector organization and is limited to \$150,000 overall.
 - A third party advertising sponsor must not spend more than \$150,000 in total in directed and issue advertising.
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Advertising requirements, sponsorship information and signs

What election advertising must include sponsorship information?

- election signs
- newspaper, radio and television ads
- pamphlets, posters and brochures
- automated dialer calls (e.g., robo-calls)
- Internet ads (e.g., pop-ups, pay-per-click, pre-roll videos and banner ads)

Note: If clicking on an Internet ad takes the viewer to a page with the sponsorship information, the statement does not need to be included in the ad itself.

What election advertising does NOT require sponsorship information?

- clothing (e.g., shirts, vests)
- novelty items (e.g., pens, mugs, buttons)
- small items of nominal value intended for personal use (e.g., business cards)

What information must be included in sponsorship information?

For candidates and elector organizations:

- the name of the financial agent
- a B.C. telephone number or B.C. mailing address or an email address
- the words “authorized by”

e.g., Authorized by John Doe, 555-555-5555 For advertising sponsors:

- the name of the sponsor
- a B.C. telephone number or B.C. mailing address or an email address
- the words “authorized by”
- the words “registered sponsor under LECFA”

e.g., Authorized by XYZ Group, registered sponsor under LECFA, xyzgroup@email.ca

e.g., Authorized by Jane Smith, registered sponsor under LECFA, PO Box 123 Victoria, BC V1A 1A2

Where can election signs be placed and where are they prohibited?

Election signs cannot be placed within 100 metres of a voting place during voting. Elections BC does not regulate where signs can be placed. However, local governments may have by-laws that apply. Contact your local city/municipal hall for more information. The Ministry of Transportation also has an election signs policy. Contact your local district transportation manager for more information.

Election advertising on the Internet

Are election messages transmitted over the Internet without a placement cost election advertising?

No. Election messages transmitted over the Internet are election advertising only if they meet the applicable definition of election advertising and have, or would normally have, a placement cost.

A placement cost is the cost of purchasing election advertising space on a social media site or other website. For example, the costs of placing banner ads, pre-roll videos or ads on Facebook or other social media sites are placement costs. The costs related to creating, maintaining and posting messages on a website are not placement costs.

Ad space received for free that normally has a placement cost is election advertising. Messages without placement costs like posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and other social media, emails and websites are not election advertising. See [this bulletin](#) for more information.

Social media rules

Can candidates, elector organizations, advertising sponsors and members of the public use social media on General Voting Day?

Yes. They can use free social media to post messages to their friends and followers. However, they are not allowed to conduct any Internet advertising that has a placement cost, such as pop-up, pay-per-click and banner ads.

General Voting Day rules

What are candidates, elector organizations and advertising sponsors allowed to do on General Voting Day?

- live person-to-person telephone calls
- door-to-door canvassing
- handing out brochures
- placing election or advertising signs or posters
- “mainstreeting” and “sign-and-wave”
- advertising with placement costs on the Internet for the sole purpose of encouraging voters to vote in the election

However, these activities **must not** take place within 100 metres of a voting place.

What are candidates, elector organizations and advertising sponsors NOT allowed to do on General Voting Day?

- sponsor newspaper, television or radio advertising that will run on General Voting Day
- change their existing Internet advertising on General Voting Day
- use automated dialers (e.g., robo-calls) to promote candidates and/or elector organizations

What are media NOT allowed to do on General Voting Day?

Media cannot publish any election advertising via newspaper, radio or television, and cannot publish new election advertising on the Internet. Advertising on the Internet before General Voting Day can remain but must not be changed in any way.

What can media print or air on General Voting Day? Can they interview candidates or run stories about candidates?

Media may publish, without charge, news, editorials, interviews, columns, letters, debates, speeches or commentaries within their bona fide publications, television programs and radio shows. This includes interviews and stories about candidates.

Can media take video or pictures in voting places on General Voting Day?

Elections BC does not administer voting for local elections. Contact your local city/municipal hall or the [Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing](#) at 250-387-4020.

Voting and election results

When do polls open, and where can I go to vote?

Elections BC does not administer voting for local elections. Contact your local city/municipal hall for information specific to your community. Visit [CivicInfo BC](#) to find your municipality's contact information. Visit the [Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website](#) for general information about voting.

Am I eligible to vote, and what ID do I have to bring to voting?

Elections BC does not administer voting for local elections. Contact your local city/municipal hall for information specific to your community. Visit [CivicInfo BC](#) to find your municipality's contact information. Visit the [Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website](#) for general information about voting.

Where can I find election results?

Elections BC does not administer voting for local elections and does not post local elections results. Many local governments post election results on their websites. Visit CivicInfo BC for [province-wide unofficial results](#) for general local elections.