

Local Elections in British Columbia 2018:



What Every Candidate **Needs** to Know





General local elections will be held on **Saturday, October 20, 2018.**

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2018

Have there been any major changes since the 2014 general local elections?

NEW **Yes.** General local elections are now held every four years on the third Saturday of October. In 2018, general elections will be held on Saturday, October 20.

NEW Amendments to the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* are in effect for the 2018 general local elections. Expense limits and campaign contribution limits now apply to candidates and elector organizations during general local elections, and in by-elections following the 2018 general local elections.

Refer to the **Foundational Principles of Responsible Conduct** brochure for information about responsible conduct and expectations for B.C.'s locally elected officials. The brochure is available online at: www.gov.bc.ca/localgov-elected-officials-conduct

What should the public expect from people who run for elected office?

People who are able to lead with *integrity, accountability, and respect* and in *collaboration* with other locally elected officials and local government

staff are essential to the effectiveness and success of a local government.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Who oversees local elections?

Local governments and Elections BC share responsibility for local elections. Local governments (municipalities and regional districts) administer elections and: set voting opportunity dates, times and places; accept nomination documents and nomination deposits; count ballots; announce election results; and, break tied elections.

Elections BC is the non-partisan and independent Office of the Legislature responsible for the administration of the provincial electoral process in B.C. and the campaign financing and third party advertising rules for local elections and non-election assent voting events under the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

Elections BC administers, investigates and enforces the campaign financing disclosure requirements including expense limits, campaign contribution limits and election advertising rules under the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

HOW TO GET STARTED

What jurisdictions hold local elections?

Local elections are held for: municipalities; regional districts; boards of education; specified parks boards; trust areas (Islands Trust); and, local community commissions.

Am I eligible to run for office?

To be eligible to run for office you must:

- be 18 years of age or older on general voting day;
- be a Canadian citizen;
- have been a resident of British Columbia for six months immediately prior to filing nomination documents; and,
- not be disqualified under the *Local Government Act*, or any other enactment from being nominated for, being elected to or holding the office, or be otherwise disqualified by law.



How do I get nominated?

You must be nominated by at least two eligible electors – some local governments may require each candidate to have as many as 25 nominators.

You may also be required to pay a refundable nomination deposit (up to a \$100 maximum) as part of the nomination process. You can confirm specific nomination requirements with your local Chief Election Officer.

Where can I find nomination forms?

Candidate nomination packages are available from your local government.

What are some key nomination requirements?

Local governments generally use standard nomination forms and you are required to provide detailed contact information for you and those people who work for you during your election campaign.

The local Chief Election Officer is an individual appointed by a municipal council or regional district board to conduct a general local election or by-election. The local Chief Election Officer is responsible for overseeing all local election administration activities, including: receiving nomination documents; declaring candidates; administering voting opportunities; counting ballots, and, declaring election results.

You are also required to make a solemn declaration stating that you are aware of, understand, and will comply with the requirements of the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

Where do I file my nomination papers?

You must file your nomination documents with the local Chief Election Officer where you intend to run for office. The nomination deadline is 4 p.m. local time on **Friday, September 14, 2018**.

Who can help me run my election campaign?

Every candidate must have a financial agent. You may appoint an official agent, scrutineers and volunteers to help with your election campaign. Some candidates may also be endorsed by an elector organization.

Financial Agents

Financial agents are responsible for administering campaign finances in accordance with the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*. This includes maintaining records for campaign contributions, election expenses and all other campaign transactions, and filing your required campaign financing disclosure statement with Elections BC within 90 days following general voting day.

Elections BC will send the financial agent the required disclosure statement forms and the *Guide to Local Elections Campaign Financing in B.C. for Candidates and their Financial Agents* shortly after receiving the candidate declaration and appointment of financial agent forms from the local Chief Election Officer. This information will assist you or your financial agent when it is time to disclose your campaign finances.

Every candidate must have a financial agent – candidates are their own financial agent unless they appoint another individual to act as financial agent. You must appoint your financial agent in writing and have their written consent, and the appointment must be made before any election related financial transactions



occur. The written appointment must be submitted to the local Chief Election Officer as part of your nomination documents. The local Chief Election Officer will send your candidate declaration and appointment of financial agent forms to Elections BC.

Official Agents

Candidates may appoint an official agent to represent them during the election process. The official agent can act as your campaign manager or spokesperson or be the point of contact for the people helping on your election campaign. You must appoint your official agent in writing and deliver the appointment (including the name and address of the person) to the local Chief Election Officer as soon as practicable after you have made the appointment.

Scrutineers

Candidates may appoint scrutineers to observe voting procedures and the ballot-counting process. You can appoint one scrutineer for each ballot box used at a voting place during general local elections – the local government may allow you to have more than one scrutineer at each voting place. You must appoint your scrutineers in writing and deliver the appointment (including the name and address of the person) to the local Chief Election Officer as soon as practicable after you have made the appointment.

Volunteers

Candidates may retain volunteers to take on election campaign-related activities (such as preparing and distributing flyers, calling eligible voters and/or handling

logistics). A volunteer who works on your campaign must not receive any payment or remuneration for their services.

Elector Organizations

An elector organization is an organization that endorses or intends to endorse a candidate(s) in local elections and that files endorsement documents with the local Chief Election Officer. An elector organization may endorse you on the ballot by allowing its name, abbreviation or acronym to appear on the ballot beside your name and/or promote your election platform or the organization's viewpoints during its election campaign.

What is a third party sponsor?

Third party sponsors are individuals or organizations that sponsor election advertising independently from candidates and elector organizations during the campaign period. Third party advertising includes advertising for or against a candidate or elector organization and advertising on an issue with which a candidate or elector organization is associated. **Third party sponsors must register with Elections BC.**

ELECTION CAMPAIGN FINANCING

Are there new campaign financing rules?

Yes. Every candidate, elector organization and third party sponsor now has limits on the amount of money they can spend during the campaign period.

Effective October 31, 2017, contribution limits and restrictions apply to campaign contributions made to candidates and elector organizations for the 2018 general local elections and all subsequent general local elections and by-elections.



Refer to Elections BC's *Guide to Local Elections Campaign Financing in B.C. for Candidates and their Financial Agents* for detailed information regarding the new campaign financing rules, available online at: www.elections.bc.ca/lecf

ELECTION CAMPAIGNING

What can I do to get my message out to the voting public?

Election campaigns are generally a planned set of actions, events or initiatives (e.g. public speeches, canvassing, phoning voters, holding events and advertising) designed to raise awareness about you or your election platform with voters.

Key campaign activities you could undertake include: going door-to-door to raise awareness about your campaign; identifying issues important to voters or determining your level of voter support; holding a luncheon or fundraising dinner where voters can listen to your election platform and ask questions; advertising in print, on radio, television or social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram); and/or, putting up signs as a way of "getting your name out there."

It is an election offence to advertise in newspapers or magazines and on the radio or on television on general voting day.

ELECTION ADVERTISING

What are some key election advertising rules for local elections?

Generally, all your election advertising (e.g. signs, posters, brochures and pamphlets) transmitted during the campaign period must include information about who sponsored and authorized the ad. The sponsorship information must be provided in English.

The campaign period starts on **Saturday, September 22, 2018** and ends when voting closes at 8 p.m. local time on **Saturday, October 20, 2018**.

Refer to Elections BC's *Guide to Local Elections Campaign Financing in B.C. for Candidates and their Financial Agents* for detailed information regarding election advertising, available online at: www.elections.bc.ca/lecf

VOTING DAY

Will voters be able to cast their ballots before general voting day?

Yes. At least one advance voting opportunity must be held in every local government ten days before general voting day. The required advance voting opportunity for the 2018 general local elections is **Wednesday, October 10, 2018**.

Many local governments hold more than one advance voting opportunity and may also hold special voting opportunities at hospitals and/or long-term care facilities where people who have limited mobility can vote.

Voting places are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time **Saturday, October 20, 2018** for general voting.

Can I campaign on general voting day?

Yes. You are allowed to campaign on general voting day by:

- advertising on the Internet, as long as the advertising was transmitted to the public before general voting

day and was not changed before being transmitted on general voting day;

- advertising by means of signs, posters, or banners;
- distributing pamphlets; and,
- advertising that encourages people to “get out and vote.”

You are not allowed to advertise in newspapers, magazines, on the radio or on TV on general voting day. You must not campaign within 100 metres of a voting place during voting proceedings.

Can I watch the ballot counting process?

Yes. Candidates can be present during the ballot count. The local Chief Election Officer can tell you the time and location for the final vote count and when the election results will be declared. Ballot counting starts after 8 p.m. local time at the close of voting. Your official agent or a scrutineer may also attend at each location where ballot counting takes place.

When will the election results be announced?

The official election results must be declared by 4 p.m. local time on **Wednesday, October 24, 2018**. Candidates with the most votes will be declared elected.

AFTER THE ELECTION

What do I do if I'm elected?

You must take the oath of office within 45 days after the election results were declared. You must also file a campaign financing disclosure statement with Elections BC within 90 days of general voting day.

Refer to Elections BC's *Guide to Local Elections Campaign Financing in B.C. for Candidates and their Financial Agents* or contact Elections BC directly for more detailed information about campaign financing disclosure requirements.



Are there things I need to do even if I'm not elected?

Yes. You must file a campaign financing disclosure statement with Elections BC even if you were not elected.

ELECTION OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

What happens if I don't comply with all of the election rules?

You could be disqualified from office if you do not file a campaign financing disclosure statement or fail to take the oath of office following local elections.

You may also be subject to penalties of up to \$10,000 and/or two years imprisonment for buying votes, and/or intimidating a voter during general local elections. You will also be prohibited for running for local office for up to seven years if you are found guilty of these offences.

Offences for contravening campaign financing rules are set out in the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

You may also be subject to penalties of up to \$5,000 and/or imprisonment for up to one year for providing and/or distributing false information or campaigning near a voting place on general voting day during general local elections. These penalties could apply whether or not you were elected.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Local government mailing addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and websites are available online from CivicInfoBC at: www.civicinfo.bc.ca/directories

For answers to legislative **questions about municipal and regional district elections** please contact:

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Governance and Structure Branch

Phone: 250 387-4020

Email: LGgovernance@gov.bc.ca

www.gov.bc.ca/localelections

For answers to **questions about the campaign financing disclosure and election advertising rules for candidates** please contact:

Elections BC

Phone: 250 387-5305

Toll-free: 1 855 952-0280 / TTY 1 888 456-5448

Fax: 250 387-3578

Toll-free Fax: 1 866 466-0665

Email: lecf@elections.bc.ca

www.elections.bc.ca/lecf

Full text of the *Local Government Act*, *Local Election Campaign Financing Act*, *Community Charter*, *Vancouver Charter*, *School Act*, and *Offence Act* can be found online at: www.bclaws.ca

Refer to the *Candidates Guide to Local Elections in B.C.* for more detailed information about being a candidate for mayor, councillor, or electoral area director.

The guide is available from local governments throughout B.C. and online at:
www.gov.bc.ca/localelections