



What Every Candidate **Needs** to Know



The next general local election is **Saturday November 15, 2014.**

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2014

Have there been any major changes since the 2011 general local election?

NEW **Yes.** The *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* was brought into force on May 29, 2014. Candidates running for local elections must now comply with the *Local Government Act*, *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* and the *Vancouver Charter* (when running for office in the City of Vancouver) rules.

The *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* increases elections accountability, transparency, compliance and enforcement.

NEW General local elections will be held on the third Saturday in October every four years following the November, 2014 election.

Local governments and Elections BC now share responsibility for local elections. Local governments continue to administer elections and: set voting opportunity dates, times and places; accept nomination documents and nomination deposits; count ballots; announce election results; and, break election ties.



Elections BC now administers, investigates and enforces the campaign financing disclosure and election advertising rules under the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

Elections BC is a non-partisan independent Office of the Legislature that administers 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; park 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 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 nomination deposit (up to a \$100 maximum) as part of the nomination process. You can confirm nomination requirements with your local government.

Where can I find nomination forms?

Candidate nomination packages are available from your local government and are also available electronically.

Are there new nomination requirements?

NEW

Yes. Local governments now 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. You are also required to make a solemn declaration stating that you are aware of, understand, and will comply with 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 **October 10, 2014**.

Who can help me run my election campaign?

All candidates must appoint a financial agent. Some appoint an official agent, scrutineers and volunteers to help with the election campaign. Some candidates may also be endorsed by an elector organization.

Financial Agent

Every candidate must have a financial agent – either you or someone you appoint. Financial agents keep campaign contribution and election expense records, and file the candidate disclosure statement required under the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.



You must appoint your financial agent in writing and have their written consent. The appointment must be submitted with your nomination documents.

It is a campaign financing offence not to have a financial agent.

Your candidate declaration and appointment of financial agent forms will be sent to Elections BC to ensure that you are sent the *Guide to Local Elections Campaign Financing in B.C.*

This guide will assist you when it comes time to disclose your campaign finances.

Official Agent

Candidates may appoint an official agent to represent them in 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.

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 the general local election. The local government may allow you to have more than one scrutineer. You must appoint your scrutineers in writing.

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.

Elector Organizations

Elector organizations generally promote a candidate, "slate" of candidates or a point of view in a general local election. Elector organizations may endorse you on the ballot by allowing their name, abbreviation or acronym to appear on the ballot beside your name.



How do I manage my election campaign contributions and my expenses?

You must open a separate election campaign account as soon as possible after you receive your first campaign contribution or incur your first election expense.

It is a campaign financing offence not to open an election campaign account.

Anonymous contributions over \$50 are not allowed. These contributions must be remitted to Elections BC.

All campaign contributions must be deposited into your election campaign account and every election expense must be paid from that same account.

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. 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

It is an election offence to advertise in print or on radio or television media on general voting day.

raise awareness about your campaign, identifying issues important to voters or determine 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); and/or, putting up signs as a way of “getting your name out there”.

ELECTION ADVERTISING

What’s new about election advertising rules for local elections?

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

Election Proceedings Period
Starts **September 30, 2014**
and ends when voting closes
at 8 p.m. local time on
November 15, 2014.

What is a third party advertiser?

 Third party advertisers are individuals or organizations that conduct election advertising independent from candidates and elector organizations during the **election proceedings period**. Third party advertisers must register with Elections BC and are required to submit a disclosure statement. Third party advertisers were previously known as “campaign organizers”.

VOTING DAY

Will voters be able to cast their ballot 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 2014 general local election is **Wednesday, November 5, 2014.**

Voting places are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time **November 15, 2014.**

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.

Can I campaign on general voting day?

You are allowed to campaign by going to-to-door or by phone on general voting day. **You are not** allowed to advertise in newspapers, magazines, on the radio or on TV during general voting day. You are not allowed to campaign within 100 metres of a voting place on general voting day.

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 can 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 **November 19, 2014.** 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 general local election results were declared. You must also file a candidate

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



disclosure statement with Elections BC within 90 days of general voting day. You may file your disclosure statement up to 120 days after general voting day; however, you will be subject to a \$500 late filing fee.

NEW Your candidate disclosure statement must include a full accounting of your campaign contributions, election expenses, and any monetary transfers between campaign accounts. Your disclosure statement will be published online by Elections BC following the filing deadline. **You may be subject to severe penalties if you do not file a disclosure statement.**

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

Yes. You must file a candidate disclosure statement 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 candidate disclosure statement and/or take the oath of office following the general local election.

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

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 the general local election. 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/11.asp

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

Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development

Governance and Structure Branch

Phone: 250 387-4020

www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/elections_home.htm



For answers to **questions about election advertising, third party sponsors and campaign financing**, please call or email:

Elections BC

Phone: 250 387-5305

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

Email: electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca

www.elections.bc.ca

Refer to the **Candidates Guide to Local Government 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.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/elections_home.htm