

Local Political Parties, Slates and Campaign Expense Limits

When Bill 20 comes into force on Oct. 31, 2024, new regulations under the *Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA)* will introduce Alberta-wide campaign expense limits and enable the creation of local political parties and slates in Edmonton and Calgary. [See a summary of the legislative changes made by Bill 20.](#)

Local Political Parties and Slates Regulation (LPPSR)

Overview

The LPPSR creates rules for the registration, operation and financial administration of local political parties and slates of candidates. These rules are generally aligned with those governing municipal candidates and those for the creation and operation of provincial political parties.

Registration

For the municipal elections scheduled for Oct. 20, 2025, local political parties and slates of candidates may register in Edmonton and Calgary. Registered local political parties will be required to submit a list of endorsed candidates, and the party name will be listed next to the candidates' names on the ballot. Slates are required to submit a list of candidate members, and the slate name will be listed next to the candidate members' names on the ballot. Nominations for the general municipal election in Alberta open Jan. 1, 2025, and close Sept. 23, 2025.

An application to register a local political party in Edmonton or Calgary must include the following:

- Names, addresses, and signatures of 1,000 individuals who:
 - are eligible to vote in an election in that jurisdiction; and
 - are members of the local political party and support the party's registration.
- A list of candidates who have committed to run as endorsed candidates under the party and who, if elected, would make up at least 1/3 of the local council.
- Names of the party's leader, if any, and chief financial officer.
- Financial information including the names of the financial agent, signing authorities, bank account information and a statement of the party's assets and liabilities.

Local political parties and slates must not be affiliated with any provincial or federal political party. A prospective local political party or slate **will not be registered** if its proposed name or abbreviation resembles the name of a political party at the provincial, federal, or local level. Provincial and federal political parties are also prohibited from donating to local political parties.

Local political parties may only register in Calgary and Edmonton for the October 2025 elections. Alberta's government will consider whether they should continue, be expanded to other municipalities, or be terminated, as part of the review of the *LAEA* that routinely follows a general municipal election in Alberta.

Local political parties will not be permitted for school board trustee elections.

Operation

Once registered, a local political party must follow many of the same rules as a provincial or federal party. The LPPSR features provisions to help support the longevity and sustainability of local political parties during non-election years. Unlike campaign expenses, which have established limits for each year of the election cycle, there are no limits on operational expenses for local political parties. Contributions to a local political party can be made within the four-year campaign period. Parties can carry forward campaign funds into the next election cycle.

Contribution rules and financial administration

Similar to the rules for municipal candidates, contributions to a local political party can only be made by Alberta residents and organizations, including unions and corporations. The maximum contribution amount allowed is \$5,000 in the aggregate to all registered local political parties per municipality, per year. No contributions may be made to slates of candidates.

Financial administration rules for local political parties and slates also align with rules for municipal candidates. These rules include:

- A requirement to register with the returning officer prior to accepting contributions or incurring expenses.
- A requirement to submit an annual financial disclosure for each year the local political party accepts contributions or incurs expenses, or the slate shares campaign expenses.
- Offences for not filing an annual disclosure or for accepting illegal donations.

Expense Limits Regulation (ELR)

Overview

In preparation for the upcoming municipal election year, Alberta's government has introduced campaign expense limits for municipal candidates and third-party advertisers across Alberta and similar limits for local political parties in Edmonton and Calgary.

Slates do not have separate expense limits, as the campaign expenses of a slate are shared equally by each member of the slate and are applied to the individual expense limits of the slate's member candidates.

What are campaign expenses?

Under the *LAEA*, campaign expenses are any expense or non-monetary contribution used to directly promote or oppose a candidate during a campaign period. This includes:

- the production of advertising/promotional material and any distribution, broadcasting or publication in the media;
- the salary or expenses for services of a chief financial officer;
- meeting place rentals; and
- conducting election surveys/research.

Campaign expense limits for election years

Upon registration, during a local election year in Alberta:

- Mayoral candidates may spend up to \$1 per person based on the population of the municipality, or \$20,000, whichever is greater.
- Councillor candidates will be allowed to spend:
 - Where there are wards, up to \$1 per person based on the average population of the wards in the municipality, or \$20,000, whichever is greater, or
 - Where there are no wards, up to \$1 per person based on the population of the municipality, or \$20,000, whichever is greater.
- Local political parties will be allowed to spend up to \$1 per person based on the average population of all wards in the municipality, for each ward in which the party has endorsed candidates running.
- Third-party advertisers will be allowed to spend \$0.50 per person based on the population of the municipality during the election year advertising period (May 1 – Oct. 20, 2025).

Campaign expense limits for non-election years

In non-election years, campaign expenses will be limited as follows:

- During the year prior to an election year, all candidates will be allowed to spend up to \$0.50 per person based on the population of the municipality (mayor and councillors in municipalities without wards) or average population of the wards (councillors in municipalities with wards), or \$10,000, whichever is greater.
- Local political parties will be allowed to spend up to \$0.50 per person based on the average population of all wards in the municipality, for each ward in which the party has candidates who have committed to run for election as of November 1.
- Candidates and local political parties will not be allowed to incur expenses during the two years following an election year.