



This document is Elections Canada's guideline OGI 2025-07.

# Political Financing Handbook

for Nomination Contestants and Financial Agents

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February 2025

EC 20182





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# About This Document

## Introduction to the handbook

This handbook is designed to help nomination contestants and their financial agents in the financial administration of the nomination contestant's campaign.

This document is a general guideline issued pursuant to section 16.1 of the *Canada Elections Act*. It is provided for information and is not intended to replace the Act.

Elections Canada will review the contents of this handbook on a regular basis and make updates as required.

**Note:** In this handbook, the term "individual" refers to a Canadian citizen or permanent resident when used in the context of contributions or loans.

## What's new?

Release	Where	Title	Summary
February 2025	Chapter 9 Chapter 10 Chapter 13 Chapter 16	Security expenses reported as nomination contest expenses Other personal expenses Security expenses reported as other campaign expenses Sale of capital assets	Added content on security as a nomination contest expense, personal expense or other nomination campaign expense, as per OGI 2024-05, <i>Security Expenses of Registered Parties, Candidates and Contestants</i> .
January 2025	All	n/a	Contribution limits for 2025 updated in tables and examples.
	Chapter 3	Paid leave for a nomination contestant is not a contribution	Corrected to state that paid leave during the contest period (rather than the election period) is not a contribution.
		Accepting and recording contributions	Clarified the rules for recording a contributor's home address.
	Chapter 7	Determining the contribution amount when contributors receive a benefit Fundraising expenses Typical fundraising activities	Revised content on calculating contributions received during fundraising, based on OGI 2024-03, <i>Fundraising</i> .
	Chapter 9	Security expenses	Added a new section and reference to forthcoming OGI 2024-05, <i>Security Expenses of Registered Parties, Candidates and Contestants</i> .

## Contact information

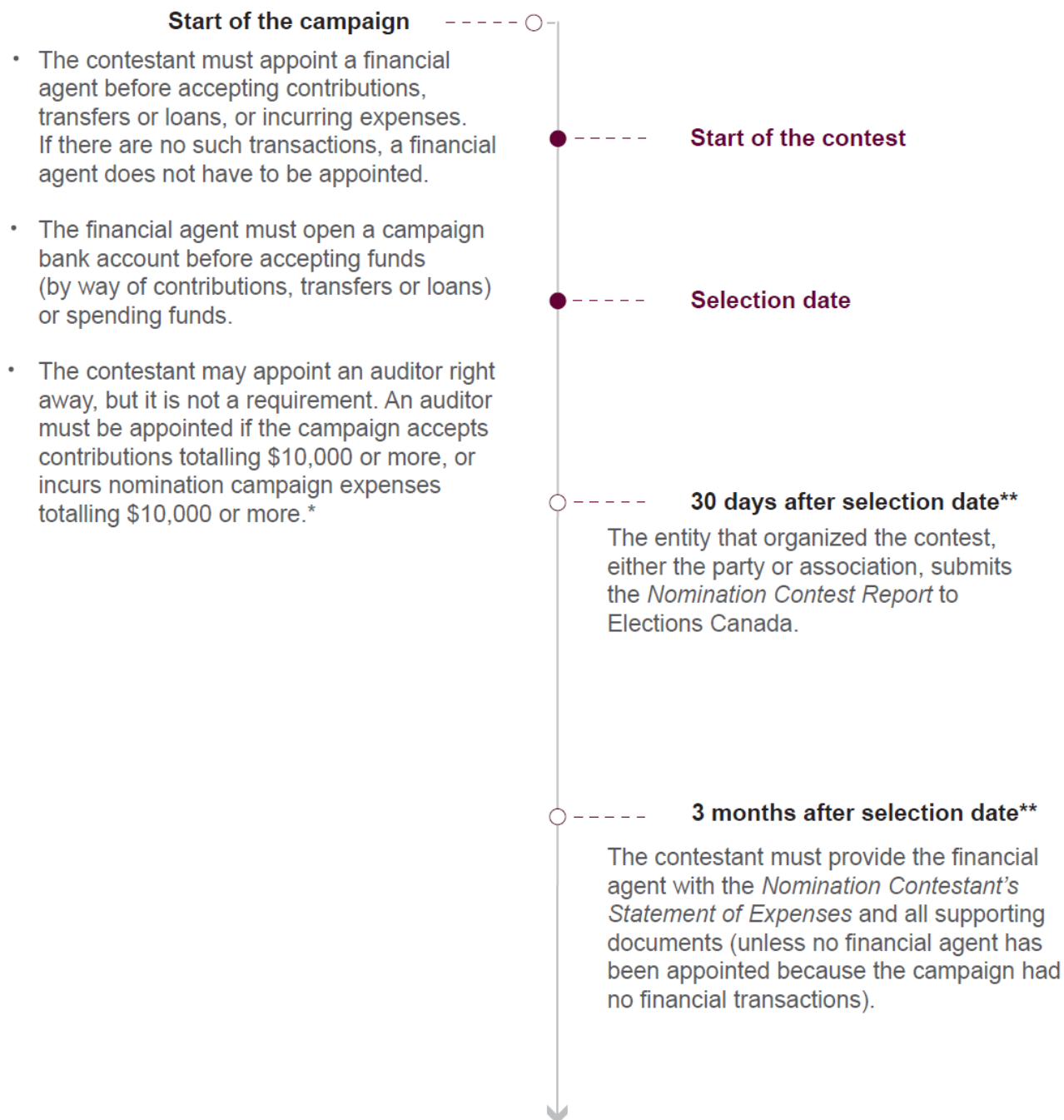
<b>Website</b>	elections.ca
<b>Political Entities Support Network</b>	<p><b>Telephone</b> 1-800-486-6563 TTY: 1-800-361-8935</p> <p><b>Email</b> Political financing and registration questions: <a href="mailto:political.financing@elections.ca">political.financing@elections.ca</a></p> <p>Portal and election support: <a href="mailto:csep-pesc@elections.ca">csep-pesc@elections.ca</a></p> <p><b>Regular hours</b> Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern time)</p>
<b>Elections Canada General Enquiries</b>	<p><b>Telephone</b> 1-800-463-6868 TTY: 1-800-361-8935</p>
<b>Mail</b>	30 Victoria Street Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0M6

# 1. Reference Tables and Timelines

*This chapter presents quick reference tools for nomination contestants and financial agents. It covers the following topics:*

- *Important deadlines for the nomination contestant's campaign*
- *Limits on contributions, loans and loan guarantees*
- *Transfers—types and rules*
- *Important reminders for nomination contestants and their financial agents*

## Important deadlines for the nomination contestant's campaign



\*Transfers that the contestant sends to affiliated political entities are not nomination campaign expenses. A non-refundable contest fee charged by the party is a nomination campaign expense.

\*\*If the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it, a reference to the selection date in this section is to be read as election day.

**Variable dates**

If a claim or loan is paid in full after the campaign return is filed, the financial agent must submit an updated return within 30 days after the final payment.

**4 months after selection date\*\***

If the campaign accepted contributions totalling \$1,000 or more, or incurred nomination campaign expenses totalling \$1,000 or more,\* the financial agent must submit to Elections Canada:

- *Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return* and all supporting documents
- *Nomination Contestant's Statement of Expenses* and all supporting documents
- auditor's report, if the campaign reached the \$10,000 threshold to appoint an auditor

**19 months after selection date\*\***

If the campaign still has unpaid claims or loans 18 months after the selection date, the financial agent must submit the *Nomination Contestant's Statement of Unpaid Claims and Loans 18 or 36 Months After the Selection Date*.

**37 months after selection date\*\***

If the campaign still has unpaid claims or loans 36 months after the selection date, the financial agent must submit the *Nomination Contestant's Statement of Unpaid Claims and Loans 18 or 36 Months After the Selection Date*.

**Variable date**

The financial agent must dispose of any surplus of funds within 60 days after receiving the notice of estimated surplus from Elections Canada, then close the bank account. They must submit the *Nomination Contestant's Statement of Surplus / Amended Campaign Return* and all supporting documents within seven days after disposing of the surplus.

\*Transfers that the contestant sends to affiliated political entities are not nomination campaign expenses. A non-refundable contest fee charged by the party is a nomination campaign expense.

\*\*If the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it, a reference to the selection date in this section is to be read as election day.

## Limits on contributions, loans and loan guarantees

Limits on contributions, loans and loan guarantees		
Political entity	2025 annual limit	Limit per election called between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2025
To each registered party	\$1,750*	n/a
In total to all the registered associations, nomination contestants and candidates of each registered party	\$1,750*	n/a
In total to all leadership contestants in a particular contest	\$1,750*	n/a
To each independent or non-affiliated candidate	n/a	\$1,750*

**Notes**

- Only individuals who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents can make contributions.
- The contribution limits apply to total contributions, the unpaid balance of loans made during the contribution period, and the amount of any loan guarantees made during the contribution period that an individual is still liable for. The sum of these three amounts cannot exceed the contribution limit at any time during the relevant contribution period.
- A nomination contestant is permitted to give an additional \$1,000 in total per contest in contributions, loans and loan guarantees to their own campaign.
- A candidate is permitted to give a total of \$5,000 in contributions, loans and loan guarantees to their campaign. A candidate is also permitted to give an additional \$1,750\* in total per year in contributions, loans and loan guarantees to other candidates, registered associations and nomination contestants of each party. (This includes contributions to the registered association in the candidate's electoral district and contributions to the candidate's own nomination campaign.)
- A leadership contestant is permitted to give a total of \$25,000 in contributions, loans and loan guarantees to their campaign. A leadership contestant is also permitted to give an additional \$1,750\* in total per year in contributions, loans and loan guarantees to other leadership contestants.

\*The limits increase by \$25 on January 1 in each subsequent year.

## Transfers—types and rules

This table shows the allowable monetary and non-monetary transfers between related registered political entities.

		TO									
		Nomination Contestant		Leadership Contestant		Candidate		Registered Electoral District Association		Registered Party	
		Monetary	Non-monetary	Monetary	Non-monetary	Monetary	Non-monetary	Monetary	Non-monetary	Monetary	Non-monetary
FROM	Nomination Contestant	No	No	No	No	Yes <sup>1</sup>	No	Yes <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes	No
	Leadership Contestant	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Candidate	Yes <sup>3</sup>	Yes <sup>3</sup>	No	No	No <sup>4</sup>	No <sup>4</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Registered Electoral District Association	No	Yes <sup>5</sup>	No	Yes <sup>5</sup>	Yes <sup>6</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Registered Party	No	Yes <sup>5</sup>	No <sup>7</sup>	Yes <sup>5</sup>	Yes <sup>6</sup>	Yes	Yes <sup>8</sup>	Yes <sup>8</sup>	n/a	n/a

- 1 A nomination contestant may transfer funds (but not property or services) to a candidate of the same party in the electoral district in which the nomination contest was held. After election day, monetary transfers are allowed only to pay claims and loans related to the candidate's campaign.
- 2 A nomination contestant can only transfer funds to the registered electoral district association that held the nomination contest.
- 3 Candidates may transfer property, services and funds to their own nomination contestant campaign for the same election.
- 4 Candidates in a superseded by-election may transfer property, services and funds to their campaign for the general election.
- 5 Non-monetary transfers must be offered equally to all contestants.
- 6 Monetary transfers other than trust funds are allowed. After election day, monetary transfers are allowed only to pay claims and loans related to the candidate's campaign.
- 7 Directed contributions are the only exception: they may be transferred to the leadership contestant.
- 8 Registered parties may transfer property, services and funds to electoral district associations, whether registered or not.

**Note:** Independent or non-affiliated candidates may not send or accept transfers of funds, property or services to or from other political entities.

## Important reminders for nomination contestants and their financial agents

This infographic presents some of the basic rules for a nomination contestant's campaign.



### Roles Within Your Campaign

- ✓ Appoint a financial agent before doing any financial transactions. Appoint an auditor once you reach \$10,000 in contributions or expenses (or earlier).
- ✓ Replace the financial agent or auditor without delay if they can't continue in their role.
- ✓ Check the eligibility rules in Chapter 2 before appointing or replacing the financial agent or auditor.
- ✓ Different people can incur and pay different types of expenses. Check the rules in Chapter 8 before entering into contracts or spending funds.
- ✓ Only the financial agent can accept contributions and send or accept transfers.



### Expenses Limit

- ✓ Know the nomination contest expenses limit for your electoral district. It is posted on the Elections Canada website in the Political Entities section.



### Bank Account

- ✓ The financial agent must open a separate bank account for the nomination campaign (if transactions are expected).
- ✓ The bank account can be opened before the nomination contest is called.
- ✓ Every monetary transaction must go through the bank account, except some payments of litigation and personal expenses.



### Contributions and Other Resources

- ✗ Don't accept contributions:
  - from any source other than a Canadian citizen or permanent resident
  - over an individual's contribution limit
  - in cash over \$20
- ✓ Issue receipts for contributions over \$20.
- ✓ Different sources can give different amounts of loans and loan guarantees. Check the rules in Chapter 4 before accepting loans or guarantees.
- ✗ Don't accept transfers from the registered party or a registered association, except property or services that are offered equally to all contestants.



### Record Keeping

- ✓ For any expense under \$50, keep proof of payment plus a record of the nature of the expense.
- ✓ For any expense of \$50 and over, keep a copy of the invoice (or other document evidencing the expense) and proof of payment.
- ✓ Save electronic bank statements and other paperless records that you might lose access to later.
- ✓ Check Chapter 14 for the full list of supporting documents to keep.



## Reporting After the Selection Date

- ✓ Your campaign has to submit reports:
  - 3 months after the selection date (contestant's statement of expenses to the financial agent)
  - 4 months after the selection date, \* if required (financial return, contestant's statement of expenses and auditor's report)
  - 19 and 37 months after the selection date\* (if you have unpaid claims and loans)
  - within 30 days after paying a claim or loan in full (updated financial return)
- ✓ Submit a financial return and contestant's statement only if you reached \$1,000 in contributions or expenses.
- ✓ Submit an auditor's report if you reached \$10,000 in contributions or expenses. Be sure to give your auditor enough time to do their work before the deadline.
- ✓ Submit supporting documents with your returns.
- ✓ Check Chapter 14 for details on reporting.

\*If the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it, these deadlines change to 4, 19 and 37 months after election day.



## Closing Out the Campaign

- ✓ If you have unpaid claims and loans, pay them within 36 months after the selection date.\*
- ✗ Don't pay a claim or loan past 36 months unless you have authorization from Elections Canada or a judge.
- ✓ Close the bank account after completing all financial transactions.
- ✓ Within 60 days after receiving a notice of surplus funds from Elections Canada:
  - dispose of the surplus to an eligible political entity and notify Elections Canada within 7 days
  - close the bank account and send the final bank statement to Elections Canada

\*If the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it, this deadline changes to 36 months after election day.



## 2. Starting and Closing the Nomination Campaign

*This chapter describes the steps to start and close a nomination contestant's campaign. It covers the following topics:*

- *Starting the nomination contestant's campaign*
- *Roles and appointments—financial agent and auditor*
- *Closing the nomination contestant's campaign*

### Starting the nomination contestant's campaign

The steps to starting the nomination contestant's campaign are presented below in their most common order. Some steps are mandatory and have to be done before others.

#### 1. Party or association decides to hold a nomination contest

A nomination contest is a competition to select a person who will be proposed to a registered party for endorsement as its candidate in an electoral district.

A registered party or a registered association may decide to hold a nomination contest at any time. Elections Canada only needs to be notified within 30 days after the selection date.

#### 2. Check the eligibility rules

The registered party or registered association holding the contest sets the requirements that any person must meet to be a nomination contestant.

Under the *Canada Elections Act*, people in the following positions have to step down once they become nomination contestants:

- auditors of candidates, nomination contestants, leadership contestants, registered parties or electoral district associations
- financial agents of nomination contestants

#### 3. Appoint financial agent

The nomination contestant must appoint a financial agent before:

- accepting a contribution, loan or transfer
- incurring a nomination campaign expense

However, if the contestant's campaign is not accepting contributions, transfers or loans or incurring nomination campaign expenses, the contestant does not have to appoint a financial agent.

#### 4. Appoint auditor

A nomination contestant who has accepted contributions totalling \$10,000 or more, or incurred nomination campaign expenses totalling \$10,000 or more, must appoint an auditor without delay.

Note that transfers that the contestant sends to affiliated political entities are not nomination campaign expenses.

## 5. Open bank account

The financial agent has to open a separate bank account to be used exclusively for the contestant's campaign.

The account has to be with a Canadian financial institution or an authorized foreign bank, as defined by the *Bank Act*.

The financial agent must be named as the account holder, as follows: (name), financial agent. For example: "Peter Raymond, financial agent".

It is also acceptable to add the contestant's name to the name of the bank account. For example: "Peter Raymond, financial agent for Anne Thomas".

**Note:** The *Access to Banking Services by a Nomination Contestant's Financial Agent* package, available on the Elections Canada website, provides information and a template memorandum from the contestant to facilitate opening a campaign bank account.

All monetary transactions in relation to the campaign have to go through the campaign bank account, except when personal or litigation expenses are paid directly by a person or group using non-campaign funds (see chapters 10 and 12).

Keep a copy of all bank statements, cancelled cheques and deposit slips, either paper or digital, for submission to Elections Canada after the contest.

The bank account has to remain open until the campaign fulfills all financial obligations.

**Note:** The bank account opened for the nomination contest cannot be subsequently used for a candidate's election campaign. The candidate's campaign must open a new bank account to accept or spend funds for the election, even before the election period starts.

## 6. Start incurring expenses and accepting contributions, loans or transfers

The campaign can start incurring expenses and accepting contributions, loans or transfers before the start date of the nomination contest, as long as the contestant has a financial agent and a bank account.

From a political financing perspective, a person is deemed to be a nomination contestant from the date a contribution or a loan is accepted or a nomination campaign expense is incurred.

A person remains a nomination contestant until the campaign fulfills all financial reporting requirements.

## Role and appointment process—financial agent

Nomination contestant's financial agent		
<b>Role summary</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The financial agent is responsible for administering the contestant's financial transactions and reporting those transactions to Elections Canada as required by the <i>Canada Elections Act</i>.</li> <li>The contestant may have only one financial agent at a time.</li> <li>The financial agent's role continues until the contestant's campaign fulfills all financial reporting requirements.</li> </ul>		
<b>Who is eligible?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Canadian citizen who is at least 18 years old	✓	
Corporation or partnership		✗
Candidate or nomination contestant		✗
Election officer or member of the staff of a returning officer		✗
Undischarged bankrupt		✗
Auditor appointed as required by the <i>Canada Elections Act</i>		✗
Person who does not have the capacity to enter into contracts in the province or territory in which the person ordinarily resides		✗
<b>Appointment process</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The contestant has to appoint a financial agent before the campaign can accept contributions, loans or transfers or incur nomination campaign expenses.</li> <li>The financial agent has to sign a statement consenting to act in that capacity.</li> <li>The registered party or association that ran the contest usually reports the initial appointment of a financial agent using the <i>Nomination Contest Report</i>.</li> <li>A financial agent who steps down from their role should notify the contestant so that the contestant can appoint a replacement.</li> <li>If for any reason the financial agent is no longer able to continue in that role, the contestant must appoint a new financial agent without delay and notify Elections Canada within 30 days. The notice has to include a signed consent from the new financial agent.</li> <li>Use the <i>Report of Updated Information—Nomination Contestant</i> to report any changes.</li> <li>Although it is not a legal requirement, a financial agent should be experienced in managing finances. The role requires a strong ability to control, record and administer financial transactions as well as to create financial reports.</li> </ul>		

## Role and appointment process—auditor

Nomination contestant's auditor		
<b>Role summary</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the campaign accepts contributions totalling \$10,000 or more, or incurs nomination campaign expenses totalling \$10,000 or more, the auditor has to examine the campaign's financial records and give an opinion in a report as to whether the financial return presents fairly the information contained in the financial records on which it is based.</li> <li>The auditor has a right to access all documents of the campaign, and may require the contestant or the contestant's financial agent to provide any information or explanation that is necessary to enable the auditor to prepare the report.</li> </ul>		
<b>Who is eligible?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Person who is a member in good standing of a corporation, an association or an institute of provincially accredited professional accountants (CPA designation)*	✓	
Partnership of which every partner is a member in good standing of a corporation, an association or an institute of provincially accredited professional accountants (CPA designation)*	✓	
Candidate or their official agent		✗
Election officer or member of the staff of a returning officer		✗
Chief agent of a registered party or an eligible party		✗
Registered agent of a registered party		✗
Financial agent or electoral district agent of a registered association		✗
Leadership contestant, their financial agent or a leadership campaign agent		✗
Nomination contestant or their financial agent		✗
Financial agent of a registered third party		✗
<b>Appointment process</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The nomination contestant has to appoint an auditor without delay after the campaign accepts contributions totalling \$10,000 or more, or incurs nomination campaign expenses totalling \$10,000 or more. Note that transfers that the contestant sends to affiliated political entities are not nomination campaign expenses.</li> <li>The auditor has to sign a statement consenting to act in that capacity.</li> <li>The registered party or association that ran the contest usually reports the initial appointment of an auditor using the <i>Nomination Contest Report</i>.</li> <li>An auditor who steps down from their role should notify the contestant so that the contestant can appoint a replacement.</li> <li>If for any reason the auditor is no longer able to continue in that role, the contestant must appoint a new auditor and notify Elections Canada without delay. The notice has to include a signed consent from the new auditor.</li> <li>Use the <i>Report of Updated Information—Nomination Contestant</i> to report any changes.</li> <li>The contestant may have only one auditor at a time.</li> </ul>		

\*Provincially or territorially legislated accounting bodies may require auditors to meet other professional criteria in order to perform this role, such as holding a public accounting licence in the province or territory where the political entity is based. This should be discussed with the auditor before the appointment.

## Closing the nomination contestant's campaign

The steps to closing the nomination contestant's campaign are presented below in their most common order. Some steps may have to be done more than once.

### 1. Fulfill reporting obligations

The nomination contestant's campaign must fulfill all reporting obligations before it can close the campaign.

No reporting to Elections Canada is required if the campaign accepted contributions totalling less than \$1,000 and incurred nomination campaign expenses totalling less than \$1,000. (Note that transfers that the contestant sends to affiliated political entities are not nomination campaign expenses.)

See the **Reporting obligations after the selection date** and **Additional reporting** tables in Chapter 14, **Reporting**.

### 2. Manage unpaid claims and loans

Claims and loans must be paid within 36 months after the selection date (or election day, if the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it). An updated campaign return must be submitted within 30 days after the final payment of a claim or loan.

If a claim or loan is still unpaid 36 months after the selection date (or election day, as described above), the financial agent or the contestant has to seek authorization from Elections Canada or a judge before paying it.

See Chapter 15, **Managing Unpaid Claims and Loans**.

### 3. File amended return(s)

An amended contestant's return has to be filed with Elections Canada to correct errors or omissions, or to report new transactions.

Corrections or revisions might be requested by Elections Canada, or by the contestant or financial agent.

See the **Additional reporting** table in Chapter 14, **Reporting**.

### 4. Dispose of surplus

After all financial obligations have been met, the campaign must dispose of any surplus of funds (including from the sale of its capital assets) and fulfill the surplus reporting obligations.

The surplus must be transferred to the official agent of the candidate affiliated with the registered party in the same electoral district, the registered association that held the nomination contest or the registered party.

See Chapter 16, **Disposing of Surplus**.

### 5. Close bank account

Once all unpaid claims, loans, other financial obligations and any surplus have been dealt with, the financial agent has to close the campaign bank account.

The financial agent has to send the final bank statement to Elections Canada.

**Note:** The bank account opened for the nomination contest cannot be subsequently used for a candidate's election campaign. The candidate's campaign must open a new bank account to accept or spend funds for the election, even before the election period starts.



## 3. Contributions

This chapter defines what is and is not a contribution, explains the rules for administering contributions and provides practical examples. It covers the following topics:

- What is a contribution?
- What is commercial value?
- Who can contribute to whom and how much?
- Are paid leave, volunteer labour, sponsorship or advertising contributions?
- What are the rules for contribution receipts, anonymous contributions and ineligible contributions?

### What is a contribution?

A contribution is donated money (monetary contribution) or donated property or services (non-monetary contribution).

Monetary contribution	Non-monetary contribution
A monetary contribution is an amount of money provided that is not repayable.  Monetary contributions include cash, cheques or money orders, credit card or debit card payments, and online payments (other than contributions of cryptocurrency).	The amount of a non-monetary contribution is the commercial value of a service (other than volunteer labour) or of property, or the use of property or money, to the extent that it is provided without charge or at less than commercial value. This includes contributions of cryptocurrency and forgone interest on loans.

### What is commercial value?

Non-monetary contributions are recorded at commercial value. Commercial value, in relation to property or a service, is the lowest amount charged at the time that it was provided for the same kind and quantity of property or service, or for the same use of property or money, by:

- the person who provided the property or service (if the person who provided it is in that business), or
- another person who provides that property or service on a commercial basis in the area (if the person who provided the property or service is not in that business)

**Note:** If the commercial value of a non-monetary contribution is \$200 or less, and it is from an individual not in that business, the contribution amount is deemed to be nil.

### Examples

1. David, who is not in the business of renting office supplies, lends the nomination contestant a projector and screen for a week. The financial agent has to determine the commercial value of this non-monetary contribution by checking with local suppliers to see how much they would charge for renting similar equipment for the same period. If that amount is greater than \$200, a non-monetary contribution must be reported. If it is \$200 or less, the contribution is deemed nil and does not have to be reported.
2. Paula, a self-employed web designer, offers to design the nomination contestant's website and does not charge for the service. This is a non-monetary contribution from Paula. The commercial value is equal to the lowest amount she normally charges for the same kind of service of similar scope.

## Who can contribute?

Only individuals who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada can make a contribution to a registered party, a registered association, a candidate, a leadership contestant or a nomination contestant.

Contributions can be accepted from minors, but political entities should consider whether the person is contributing willingly and using their own property or money.

**Note:** Corporations, trade unions, associations and groups cannot make contributions.

## Limits on contributions, loans and loan guarantees to a nomination contestant

This table displays the limits for nomination contestants. The limits for all entities are available in Chapter 1, **Reference Tables and Timelines**.

Limits on contributions, loans and loan guarantees to a nomination contestant	
Political entity	2025 annual limit
In total to all the registered associations, nomination contestants and candidates of each registered party	\$1,750*
<b>Notes</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Only individuals who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents can make contributions.</li><li>• The contribution limits apply to total contributions, the unpaid balance of loans made during the contribution period, and the amount of any loan guarantees made during the contribution period that an individual is still liable for.</li><li>• The sum of these three amounts cannot exceed the contribution limit at any time during the relevant contribution period.</li></ul>	
There are some exceptions to the limits on contributions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A nomination contestant is permitted to give an additional \$1,000 in total per contest in contributions, loans and loan guarantees to their own campaign.</li><li>• A candidate is permitted to give a total of \$5,000 in contributions, loans and loan guarantees to their campaign. A candidate is also permitted to give an additional \$1,750* in total per year in contributions, loans and loan guarantees to other candidates, registered associations and nomination contestants of each party. (This includes contributions to the registered association in the candidate's electoral district and contributions to the candidate's own nomination campaign.)</li></ul>	
*The limits will increase by \$25 on January 1 in each subsequent year.	

### Examples

1. Indra makes a \$1,000 monetary contribution to a nomination contestant in March. The next month, she makes a non-monetary contribution with a commercial value of \$750 to the same contestant. Indra has now reached the limit for contributions to all candidates, nomination contestants and registered associations of that registered party for that year.
2. Max decides to contribute \$1,750 to the registered party he supports. In addition, he makes a \$750 contribution to the party's registered association in his riding. In the same year, he makes a \$1,000 contribution to a nomination contestant of that party in his riding. With that, Max reaches the annual limit for contributions to the registered party as well as the annual limit for contributions to any combination of candidates, registered associations and nomination contestants of the registered party. He could still make a contribution to political entities of other registered parties.
3. Clara made a \$1,750 contribution in her riding to the registered association of the party she supports. Later that year, the party holds a nomination contest in Clara's riding and she makes a \$1,750 contribution to one of the contestants. The financial agent of the contestant, however, is aware of the contribution made to the association and returns the cheque to Clara because, with the earlier contribution, she has reached her annual limit.

**Note:** It is important that financial agents of electoral district associations and nomination contestants, and official agents of candidates, communicate about contributions, loans and loan guarantees because the yearly contribution limit applies to the total amount of these.

4. Peter gave a \$1,750 loan to a candidate in his riding early in the year. The full amount is still outstanding on December 31. Consequently, Peter could not have made another loan, contribution or loan guarantee that year to a candidate, registered association or nomination contestant of the same party. The sum of contributions, loans and loan guarantees cannot exceed the contribution limit at any time during the relevant contribution period.
5. Trudy is running as a candidate in an election and wants to contribute the maximum amount to support herself. She contributed \$2,725 to her nomination campaign in the previous year. In the current year, she contributes \$5,000 to her electoral campaign and \$1,750 to the registered association in her riding. She also contributes \$1,750 to the registered party. With this, Trudy reaches the contribution limit for her electoral campaign and the annual limit on contributions to the registered party and any combination of candidates, registered associations and nomination contestants of the registered party.

**Note:** These examples use the limits in effect for 2025.

### Paid leave for a nomination contestant is not a contribution

An employer can give an employee a paid leave of absence during a contest period to allow the person to be a nomination contestant. The paid leave is not a contribution.

## Volunteer labour is not a contribution

### What is volunteer labour?

Volunteer labour is any service provided free of charge by a person outside of their working hours, excluding a service provided by a self-employed person who normally charges for that service.

Volunteer labour is not a contribution.

### Who is eligible to volunteer?

Any person can volunteer for a political entity, even if they are not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

But a self-employed person cannot volunteer a service they would normally charge for. That is a non-monetary contribution and not volunteer labour. The person would have to be an eligible contributor under the contribution rules and stay within their contribution limit.

People who work on-call or variable hours can volunteer for a political entity, as long as they are not self-employed in the field and their employer has not instructed them to work for the political entity while receiving standby pay or other compensation.

Volunteer labour cannot be provided by corporations, trade unions, associations or groups, though individual employees or members can independently choose to volunteer.

**Note:** To know whether a person is an employee or self-employed, ask if they receive a salary or wages, payroll deductions and a T4 slip from their employer or corporation at tax time. If they do, the person is an employee for the purpose of the *Canada Elections Act* and can volunteer in the same capacity as their line of business, outside their working hours.

### Examples

1. Nana, who is employed as a teacher, offers to work for the nomination contestant's campaign in the evenings, making phone calls to party members. This is volunteer labour and therefore is not a contribution.
2. Alex, a self-employed graphic designer, offers to design a flyer for the nomination contestant free of charge. Because Alex is self-employed and normally charges for that service, the flyer design is not volunteer labour. The commercial value of the service has to be recorded as a non-monetary contribution. In this case, the commercial value is the lowest amount Alex normally charges for that service.
3. Beatrice is employed by a corporation and is paid to be on standby every weekend. During these hours, while waiting to be called by her employer, she works on the nomination contestant's communications strategy for free. This is volunteer labour. However, if the corporation had instructed Beatrice to help the campaign while being paid, the services provided would be an ineligible contribution from the corporation.

## Paying volunteers for part of their work

Volunteers can be paid for part of their work, but the paid work is not volunteer labour. An agreement must be in place before the work is performed. It can specify incentive- or performance-based terms of remuneration rather than a fixed rate.

Once an agreement is in place, the campaign is liable for the related expenses.

For work performed during the contest period, compensation is almost always a nomination contest expense. Before the contest period, it is occasionally a nomination contest expense. It is never a nomination contest expense after the contest period. Please see **Campaign workers and related expenses** in Chapter 9, **Nomination Contest Expenses**, for details on timing of work and expense reporting.

If the campaign gives monetary compensation (other than nominal gifts) to volunteers without a prior agreement being in place, it will be considered an inappropriate use of campaign funds that would need to be returned.

Nomination contestants cannot pledge to pay their volunteers or pay an honorarium on condition that the campaign has sufficient funds after the contest. This would constitute a gift rather than compensation and be subject to the \$200 nominal gifts threshold (see the next section).

An invoice is required for payments of \$50 and over, setting out the nature of the expense. Because compensation expenses can vary widely, it is advisable to also have a written agreement or other documentation about a volunteer's compensation to support all amounts being reported. Failure to adequately support the expenses may result in follow-up enquiries by Elections Canada auditors. In the absence of evidence, the payments may be considered an inappropriate use of campaign funds that would need to be returned.

**Note:** If the campaign pays its workers, it may have to issue T4 or T4A slips to them for income tax purposes. See the Canada Revenue Agency website for more information.

### Examples

1. Sam works full-time as an administrative officer on the staff of a member of Parliament. When the member runs in a nomination contest for the next election, in order to volunteer for the campaign, Sam takes an unpaid leave of absence (or paid, if the leave was earned under regular terms of employment that do not specify leave for the purpose of helping a political entity). The contestant offers Sam a fixed amount of \$1,000 for the hours he will work during the contest period. The financial agent puts this agreement in writing at the start of the campaign, and the amount is a nomination contest expense that has to be reported.
2. Suzanne is being paid to manage a nomination contestant's social media accounts during the contest period. Suzanne has signed an agreement that lists the tasks she will perform and her hourly wage. Often, when she has finished her paid work, Suzanne volunteers for the campaign. This is an acceptable combination of paid and volunteer work. The expenses incurred under the agreement are nomination contest expenses that have to be reported. The volunteer labour is not reported.
3. The financial agent pledges to give Saul, a volunteer who works every day, \$700 if the campaign has money left at the end of the contest. If the financial agent makes this payment, which was conditional on sufficient funds, it is not compensation but a gift that is subject to the \$200 nominal gifts threshold. The payment over \$200 is an inappropriate use of campaign funds that would need to be returned.

## Nominal gifts and thank-you parties

The nomination contestant's campaign can give each volunteer nominal gifts up to a total value of \$200 and throw a thank-you party without this being considered compensation. The nominal gifts can be monetary, such as an honorarium, or non-monetary. The associated costs are other nomination campaign expenses and are not subject to the expenses limit.

If the campaign gives gifts to volunteers above the nominal gift threshold, it will be considered an inappropriate use of campaign funds that would need to be returned.

Keep in mind that capital assets valued over \$200 that the campaign no longer needs cannot be given as gifts. They must be sold as part of the surplus disposal.

### Examples

1. After the contest, the campaign holds a pizza party for its volunteers. They are each given a \$50 travel bag and a \$100 gift card in appreciation of their hard work. The cost of the gifts and thank-you party is an other nomination campaign expense not subject to the expenses limit.
2. The financial agent decides to give a volunteer, Saul, \$200 at the end of the contest. This is an acceptable nominal gift (and is the maximum that Saul can receive in total gifts from the campaign). The \$200 is an other nomination campaign expense that is not subject to the nomination contest expenses limit.

### OGI reference

For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2019-01, *Volunteer Labour*, on the Elections Canada website.

## Sponsorship or advertising at a political event is a contribution

A transaction involving the receipt of money by a political entity in exchange for advertising or promotional opportunities directed at members or supporters of the political entity is not recognized as a commercial transaction. Any money received as part of such an arrangement is to be treated as a contribution that is subject to the contribution limit and eligibility rules.

### Example

The nomination contestant's campaign holds a golf tournament as a fundraiser. The campaign encourages individuals to sponsor a hole: for \$200, they can have their names printed on a small sign attached to the flag pole. The full amount paid by each individual is a contribution to the nomination contestant. The campaign does not ask corporations or unions to sponsor a hole because only individuals can make contributions.

## Accepting and recording contributions

Only the financial agent can accept contributions to the nomination contestant's campaign.

The tables below summarize some important points about accepting and recording contributions received in different scenarios.

Where a home address is required below, please note the following:

- A mailing address can be accepted if it is the address that the contributor regularly uses to receive mail for their household (for example, a general delivery address in a rural area).
- An address that is both the contributor's home and business address is valid as a home address.
- The campaign does not have to validate each address, but it should specifically request a home address from contributors. This will limit the issues that may need to be resolved when Elections Canada audits contributions.

Contribution range	What to keep in mind
\$20 or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be accepted as an anonymous contribution.</li> </ul>
Over \$20 and up to \$200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contributor's full first and last names must be recorded. Initials cannot be accepted.</li> <li>• A contribution receipt must be issued.</li> </ul>
Over \$200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contributor's full first and last names must be recorded. Initials cannot be accepted.</li> <li>• The contributor's home address must be recorded. A business address cannot be accepted in its place.</li> <li>• A contribution receipt must be issued.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Note:</b> When contributions from an individual to a particular contestant reach a total of over \$200 for the contest, their name, partial address and contribution amounts disclosed in the financial return will be published on the Elections Canada website.</p>	

Contribution method	What to keep in mind
By e-transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If only the contributor's name is available in the bank record, contact the individual for other required information.</li> </ul>
Online payment service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An online processing fee might apply.</li> <li>• The full contribution amount has to be recorded as a contribution, and the processing fee has to be recorded as an other nomination campaign expense.</li> </ul> <p>For example, if the campaign receives a \$500 contribution through an online payment service and the net deposit to the campaign bank account is \$490, the financial agent has to record and issue a receipt for a contribution of \$500 and record an other nomination campaign expense of \$10.</p>
Untraceable instrument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We recommend that campaigns only accept contributions made by way of a traceable instrument.</li> <li>• A campaign may wish to reject contributions made by money order, bank draft or prepaid credit card, unless it is confident of the contributor's identity and that the contributor has used their own funds.</li> </ul>

Contribution source	What to keep in mind
Joint bank account (cheque)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is generally reported under the name of the individual who signed the cheque.</li> <li>• If the cheque is accompanied by written instructions signed by both account holders indicating how the contribution is to be allocated to the contributors, the contributions are to be reported in accordance with that agreement.</li> </ul>
Joint bank account (credit card)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a contribution is made by credit card, and the credit card balance will be paid from a joint bank account, the contribution is generally reported under the name of the cardholder.</li> <li>• A contribution can be made on the same credit card by a person who shares the joint bank account but is not the named cardholder. However, the campaign should get certification that the contributor is using their own funds (for example, by adding a checkbox with this certification to its online contribution system).</li> </ul>
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The partnership has to provide the following information in writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– names and home addresses of each contributor</li> <li>– the voluntary nature of each contribution</li> <li>– who it is intended for</li> <li>– the amount of each contribution</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The instructions must be signed and dated by each contributor.</li> <li>• Each contributing partner should reduce their next draw of income from the partnership by the amount of their contribution.</li> </ul>
Unincorporated sole proprietor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It must be recorded in the individual's name (not the business name), using the contributor's home address when an address is required.</li> </ul>

## Accepting contributions of cryptocurrency

A contribution of cryptocurrency is non-monetary and not eligible for a tax receipt.

The contribution amount is the commercial value of the cryptocurrency at the time that it was received. There are two ways to determine the commercial value:

- If the transfer passed through a payment processor (such as BitPay) that provided an exchange rate, use that rate.
- If the transfer did not go through a payment processor or no exchange rate was provided, use a reasonable rate on a major exchange platform (such as Coinbase) at the time closest to when the transfer was sent. The valuation must be readily ascertainable and verifiable.

Political entities should set up a two-step process to identify contributors of over \$20 and record transaction information from the blockchain so that contributions can be audited.

A transaction in cryptocurrency will almost always involve a processing fee. The full amount sent by the individual is a contribution to the political entity, and the processing fee is an expense.

For contributions up to \$200, if the contributor is not in the business of selling cryptocurrencies, the contribution amount is deemed nil. But the contributor must still be eligible under the contribution rules. Over \$20, the campaign must keep a record of the contributor's name.

In all instances, campaigns should be mindful of the rules in the *Canada Elections Act* against circumventing contribution rules and watch for unusual amounts or patterns in contributions that they receive.

#### **OGI reference**

For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada’s interpretation note 2019-12, *Cryptocurrencies*, on the Elections Canada website.

### **Issuing contribution receipts**

A receipt has to be issued for each monetary contribution over \$20 or non-monetary contribution over \$20 that is not deemed nil. Only the financial agent can provide official receipts for contributions.

**Note:** Contributions made to the nomination contestant’s campaign are not eligible for tax receipts.

We recommend that the financial agent use Elections Canada’s Electronic Financial Return (EFR) software to issue receipts. EFR is free and can be accessed from the Political Entities Service Centre.

#### **Example**

Clara contributed \$500 to the registered association of the party she supports. Later in the same year when the association holds a nomination contest, Clara contributes \$300 to Peter, a nomination contestant. She will receive a tax receipt for \$500 from the registered association and an official receipt (not valid for tax purposes) for \$300 from Peter’s campaign.

### **Determining the date a contribution is made**

As most contribution limits apply per calendar year, the date a contribution is made is important. It is also important for reporting purposes because this same date will be used as the “date received” in the contestant’s return.

The date a contribution is made is generally the date the contribution is in the hands of the financial agent. There are exceptions for contributions made by regular mail, by post-dated cheque and electronically.

<b>How contribution is made</b>	<b>Date contribution is made</b>
In person	The date the contribution is in the hands of the financial agent.
By regular mail	The date of the postmark on the envelope. If the postmark is not legible, the contribution is made on the date the financial agent receives the mail. The campaign should keep the stamped envelope as part of its records.
Post-dated cheque by any means	The date on the cheque.
Electronically (e-transfer, credit card, PayPal, etc.)	The date the contributor initiates the transaction. If the transaction is post-dated, the contribution is made on the date specified by the contributor.

### **Examples**

1. On December 23, 2024, Lucy goes to the campaign office and gives a cheque in the amount of \$300, dated for the previous day. The financial agent deposits the cheque on January 10, 2025. The contribution is made on December 23, 2024. The financial agent issues a receipt for 2024, and the amount counts toward Lucy's 2024 contribution limit.
2. Hassim makes an e-transfer to the nomination contestant's campaign on December 23, 2024, but the financial agent does not process the amount until January 10, 2025. The contribution is made on December 23, 2024. The financial agent issues a receipt for 2024, and the amount counts toward Hassim's 2024 contribution limit.
3. The financial agent receives a cheque from Janelle in the mail on January 5, 2025. The cheque is dated December 28, 2024, and the postmark on the envelope is December 30, 2024. The contribution is made on December 30, 2024. The financial agent issues a receipt for 2024, and the amount counts toward Janelle's 2024 contribution limit.
4. The financial agent receives a cheque from Andrew and deposits it in the campaign bank account. A few days later, when checking the account online, the financial agent notices that the bank has charged the account a fee because the cheque did not have sufficient funds. No contribution has been made and the bank charge is an other nomination campaign expense. If Andrew issues a new cheque later, the contribution is made on the date associated with the new contribution.

### **Recording anonymous contributions**

If anonymous contributions of \$20 or less are collected during an event related to the campaign, the financial agent has to record:

- a description of the function at which the contributions were collected
- the date of the function
- the approximate number of people at the function
- the total amount of anonymous contributions accepted

Anonymous contributions of \$20 or less may also be received outside the context of a particular function. In that case, the financial agent has to keep track of the total amount collected plus the number of contributors.

### **Example**

Campaign volunteers organize a wine and cheese event one evening and invite local residents. Approximately 40 people show up. During the evening, one of the organizers passes a basket around to collect cash contributions from the attendees. She informs the guests about the contribution rules: a maximum of \$20 can be accepted from any one individual as an anonymous cash contribution. At the end of the evening there is \$326 in the basket.

The organizer remits the contributions to the financial agent after the event, along with the following details: a description and the date of the event, the approximate number of people who attended (40), and the amount collected in anonymous contributions (\$326). The financial agent records the event details, deposits the amount into the campaign bank account and reports the contributions in the campaign return.

## Remitting anonymous contributions that cannot be accepted

If the financial agent receives a contribution that is:

- over \$20 and the name of the contributor is not known, or
- over \$200 and the name and home address of the contributor are not known

the financial agent has to send the ineligible amount (that is, the amount over \$20 or \$200) without delay to Elections Canada.

Contributions can be remitted to Elections Canada by cheque payable to the Receiver General for Canada (by mail to 30 Victoria Street, Gatineau, Quebec, K1A 0M6) or by bank transfer. To send a bank transfer, contact Elections Canada's Political Entities Support Network for account information and instructions.

## Ineligible contributions

The financial agent is responsible for ensuring that contributions are in accordance with the rules set out in the *Canada Elections Act*.

The following contributions are ineligible:

- cash contributions over \$20
- contributions from corporations, trade unions, associations and groups
- contributions that exceed the limit
- indirect contributions (no individual can make a contribution that comes from the money, property or services of another person or entity)
- contributions from a person who is not a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident
- contributions an individual makes as part of an agreement to sell goods or services, directly or indirectly, to a registered party or a candidate (for example, a nomination contestant cannot accept a contribution that was a condition for a candidate to buy signs from a local dealer for the election)

## Returning ineligible or non-compliant contributions

The financial agent must not accept a contribution that exceeds the limit and should not accept any other type of ineligible contribution.

The financial agent has to return or remit a contribution (or the excess amount of an over-the-limit contribution) within 30 days of becoming aware that:

- it is ineligible, or
- it was received as part of a regulated fundraising event for which the publication or reporting requirements were not complied with

An ineligible or non-compliant contribution must be returned to the contributor or remitted to Elections Canada, based on whether or not it was used. If the contribution is unused, it is returned to the contributor. If it was used or is impossible to return, it is remitted to Elections Canada.

A monetary contribution is considered used if the campaign's bank account balance fell below the ineligible amount at any time after the contribution was deposited into the bank account.

Contributions can be remitted to Elections Canada by cheque payable to the Receiver General for Canada (by mail to 30 Victoria Street, Gatineau, Quebec, K1A 0M6) or by bank transfer. To send a bank transfer, contact Elections Canada's Political Entities Support Network for account information and instructions.

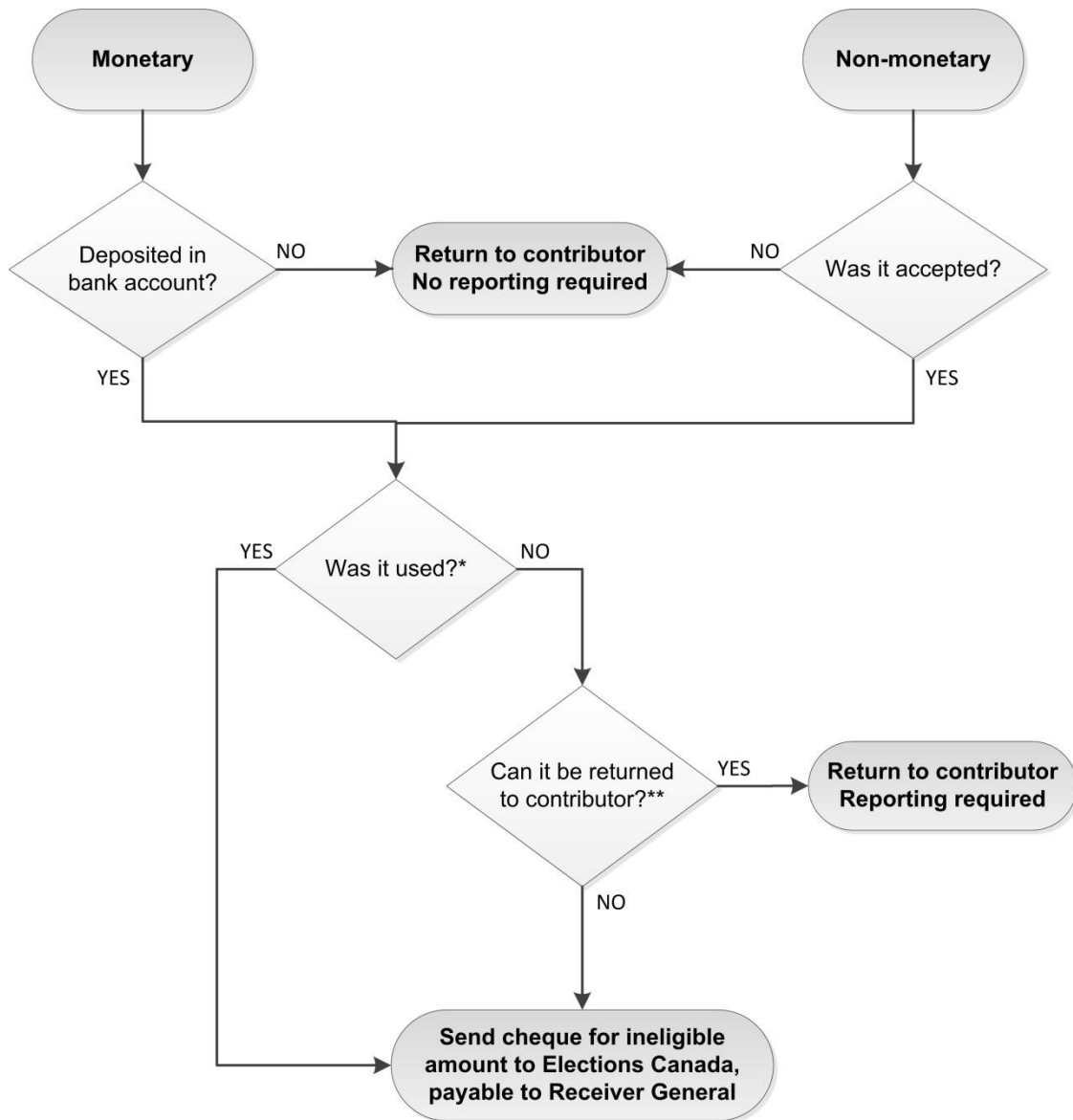
Flowchart 1 explains how to administer ineligible or non-compliant contributions in different scenarios.

### Examples

1. The financial agent deposits a cheque for \$950 from a contributor. When he enters the contribution in the books, he notices that the same person has already contributed \$1,000 to the nomination contestant's campaign. Within 30 days, assuming the money has not been spent, the financial agent has to issue a cheque for the excess amount, \$200, and send it to the contributor. He records a returned contribution of \$200.
2. The financial agent receives a cheque for \$2,000 from a contributor. As this is obviously an over-contribution, the financial agent cannot deposit the cheque. She sends it back to the contributor uncashed, and no reporting is required.
3. An individual makes a non-monetary contribution to the campaign by offering the use of office equipment for a week. The financial agent later realizes that the commercial value of renting the same office equipment is \$1,775, which is higher than the contribution limit. The equipment was used during the contest period, so he sends a cheque for the excess amount of \$25 to Elections Canada, payable to the Receiver General for Canada. He records a contribution of \$1,750, a returned contribution of \$25 and a nomination contest expense of \$1,775.
4. The financial agent receives a notice from Elections Canada a couple of months after the contest period. It states that a person who contributed \$1,000 to both a registered association of the party and the nomination contestant exceeded the annual limit by \$250 with the contribution to the nomination contestant. Since the deposit date of the contribution, the campaign's bank account balance had fallen below the ineligible amount of \$250 and the funds were therefore used. The financial agent must remit \$250 within 30 days of becoming aware of the contravention. To obtain funds, she could organize a fundraising event or, if the nomination contestant later became a candidate, the official agent could transfer funds to the nomination contestant's campaign from the candidate's campaign. Once the money is available, the financial agent sends a cheque for the excess amount to Elections Canada, payable to the Receiver General for Canada. She records a returned contribution of \$250.

**Note:** These examples use the limits in effect for 2025.

### Flowchart 1: Returning ineligible or non-compliant contributions



\*A monetary contribution was used if the campaign bank account balance fell below the ineligible amount at any time after the contribution was deposited into the bank account.

\*\*For example, the contributor's address is known and there are no obstacles to prevent the return.



## 4. Loans

*This chapter discusses eligible sources of loans and how different loans and interest are reported. It covers the following topics:*

- *Getting a loan*
- *Types of loans*
- *Loan interest*
- *Repaying a loan*

### Getting a loan

Loans are used as a source of financing. The financial agent has to manage campaign finances properly to ensure that all loans are repaid.

Nomination contestants may receive loans from either a financial institution or an individual who is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. Loans from any other person or entity are not permitted.

A written loan agreement must accompany all loans.

### Loans from financial institutions

There is no limit to the amount a campaign can borrow from a financial institution. Note however that if the financial institution requires a loan guarantee, only individuals who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents can guarantee the loan. The amount an individual guarantees is subject to the individual's contribution limit.

If the loan does not go straight from the financial institution to the campaign bank account, but instead goes through the contestant or another individual as an intermediary, this is not a loan from the financial institution. It is a loan from the contestant or other individual. See **Loans from individuals** below.

**Note:** A financial institution must charge a fair market rate of interest on loans made to nomination contestants. Any forgone interest resulting from the financial institution charging a lower interest rate would constitute a non-monetary contribution from an ineligible contributor.

### Example

The campaign is planning to borrow \$17,500 and the bank requires a guarantor for the loan. Because guarantees from individuals are subject to the contribution limit, the campaign needs at least 10 individuals to guarantee the requested amount. Each guarantor is limited to guaranteeing \$1,750 of the total loan amount.

**Note:** This example uses the limits in effect for 2025.

## Loans from individuals

An individual can lend money to a campaign as long as the total of the individual's contributions, the unpaid balance of loans made that year and the amount of any outstanding loan guarantees made that year does not at any time exceed the contribution limit in the calendar year.

If an individual (including the contestant) obtains a personal loan from a financial institution and lends those funds to the campaign, the lender is the individual and not the financial institution. The loan amount would be subject to the individual's contribution limit. When the contestant takes out a loan to fund their campaign, the original personal loan from the financial institution must be guaranteed by their personal property.

**Note:** An individual cannot use the money, property or services of another person or entity to make a loan to a nomination contestant, if the other person or entity provided those resources to make the loan possible.

### *Example*

Khaled made a \$750 contribution to Christine's nomination campaign. In addition, he takes out a \$1,000 personal loan from his bank and lends it to the campaign. With that, Khaled has reached the annual limit for contributions to any combination of candidates, registered associations and nomination contestants of the registered party.

**Note:** This example uses the limits in effect for 2025.

## Types of loans

### Term loan

A term loan is repaid in regular payments over a set period. It may be either a fixed rate loan, allowing the borrower to lock in at a specific interest rate, or it may be a variable rate loan, where the interest rate fluctuates over time. The term should end no later than three years after the selection date (or election day, if the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it).

### Demand loan

A demand loan is a loan with no specific payment deadline. It is due whenever the lender demands to be repaid. We recommend that the written loan agreement for a demand loan include a maximum term for the repayment that ends no later than three years after the selection date (or election day, if the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it).

## Overdraft protection and line of credit

When a campaign uses overdraft protection or a line of credit, it is reported as a loan. If the financial institution requires a guarantee, only individuals who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents can guarantee the overdraft or line of credit. The amount an individual guarantees is subject to the individual's contribution limit.

For an overdraft or line of credit, the financial agent has to report the following information:

- the amount of the loan
- the name and address of the financial institution
- the interest rate charged
- the full name and address of any guarantors and the amounts they have guaranteed
- for a line of credit where funds were transferred into the bank account before being used, the dates and amounts of any payments of principal and interest
- the unpaid balance at the end of each calendar year and as of the date of the return

The amount of the loan is calculated as follows:

- for an overdraft, it is the maximum amount overdrawn
- for a line of credit where funds were transferred into the bank account before being used, it is the sum of all transfers to the bank account
- for a line of credit where funds were paid directly to the supplier, it is the maximum amount drawn (and this is reported as an overdraft rather than a line of credit)

### **Example**

The campaign bank account has overdraft protection of \$1,000. The account goes into overdraft by \$200 and the financial agent pays back \$100 within the same day. Later on that day, the financial agent withdraws another \$400 from the same account, bringing the highest amount overdrawn during the contest period to \$500. The overdraft amount to be reported is \$500. The financial agent has to report this amount in the **Statement of operating loans** section of the contestant's return.

## Loan interest

Interest incurred on loans is a nomination campaign expense, whether it is paid or accrued.

Interest incurred during the contest period is a nomination contest expense, while interest incurred before or after the contest period is an other nomination campaign expense.

If the interest rate on a loan from an individual is lower than the market interest rate, the financial agent will need to record the forgone interest as a non-monetary contribution from the individual.

**Note:** If the loan is from an individual who is not in the business of lending money and the forgone interest on the loan is \$200 or less, the non-monetary contribution is deemed to be nil.

## Repaying a loan

Loan repayments may be made any time up to 36 months after the selection date (or election day, if the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it). Authorization is not required from Elections Canada or a judge before making these payments.

See Chapter 15, **Managing Unpaid Claims and Loans**.

**Note:** Loan repayments have to be reported for all types of loans except overdraft protection and lines of credit used to pay suppliers directly.



## 5. Transfers

This chapter explains the rules and procedures for accepting and sending transfers. It covers the following topics:

- *What is a transfer?*
- *Transfers sent to the nomination contestant*
- *Transfers sent by the nomination contestant*
- *Party memberships purchased by the campaign*
- *Irregular transfers*

### What is a transfer?

A transfer is a provision of funds, property or services between specified political entities of the same political affiliation. Where specifically permitted under the *Canada Elections Act*, a transfer is not considered to be a contribution, and contribution rules therefore do not apply.

Monetary transfer	Non-monetary transfer
A monetary transfer is a transfer of funds.	A non-monetary transfer is a transfer of property or services. The amount of a non-monetary transfer is the commercial value of the property or service.  Unlike non-monetary contributions from individuals not in the business of providing that property or service, a non-monetary transfer has to be reported even if its commercial value is \$200 or less.

Transfers are permitted only between related political entities (registered party, electoral district association, candidate and leadership or nomination contestant) of the same political affiliation.

However, not all types of entities are authorized to provide all types of transfers. For a quick reference guide to eligible and ineligible transfers, see the **Transfers—types and rules** table in Chapter 1, **Reference Tables and Timelines**.

**Note:** If an invoice requiring payment is prepared by one political entity and sent to its related political entity, together with the original supplier invoice representing the commercial value of the goods or services provided, this is not a transfer but a sale of goods or services from one entity to another.

### Transfers sent to the nomination contestant's campaign

Only the financial agent can accept transfers on the campaign's behalf. The following transfers may be accepted by the nomination contestant's campaign:

- property or services from the registered party or from any registered association of the registered party, as long as it is offered equally to all contestants
- property, services or funds from a candidate to themselves in their capacity as a nomination contestant in respect of the same election

### **Example**

The registered association creates a web page on its site for each nomination contestant for use during the contest period. The commercial value of creating the web pages is \$150 per contestant. The association sends each contestant a copy of the original supplier invoice for \$150 and reports a non-monetary transfer of \$150 to each contestant. Each contestant reports a non-monetary transfer from the registered association and a nomination contest expense of \$150.

**Note:** Transfers may not be accepted from provincial parties or electoral district associations of provincial parties. Transfers from a registered provincial division of a federal registered party are considered transfers from the registered party.

**Note:** A non-monetary transfer is “offered equally” if the same property or service is offered, even if the commercial value is different for each recipient. For example, an association can offer all nomination contestants free travel to the nomination meeting from different parts of the riding.

## **Transfers sent by the nomination contestant’s campaign**

Only the financial agent can send transfers on the campaign’s behalf.

The following transfers may be sent by the nomination contestant’s campaign:

- funds to a candidate of the same party in the electoral district in which the nomination contest was held (after election day, this is allowed only to pay claims and loans related to the candidate’s campaign)
- funds to the registered association that held the nomination contest
- funds to the registered party

### **Example**

Clara won a nomination contest and has started her election campaign. Clara’s financial agent from the nomination campaign transfers \$3,000 to the official agent for her election campaign to help with early expenses.

## **Party memberships purchased by the nomination contestant’s campaign**

Voting in a nomination contest is generally restricted to party members. For this reason, a nomination contestant’s campaign will sometimes buy party memberships for its supporters. This is not prohibited by the *Canada Elections Act*. When a nomination campaign pays for memberships, the payment is recorded as a transfer to the registered party and is not subject to a limit.

More commonly, a campaign will collect party membership fees from individuals, deposit the funds into its bank account and then send the funds to the registered party. This transaction is also a transfer and is not subject to a limit. If the membership fee is no more than \$25 per year for a period of no more than five years, the individuals have not made contributions and the registered party does not need additional information from the campaign. Above those thresholds, the campaign will need to provide the registered party with details to record contributions from the individuals.

**Note:** Some registered parties have internal rules that prohibit contestants from buying memberships for supporters. Campaigns should be aware of the rules that apply to their contest.

## Irregular transfers

The *Canada Elections Act* specifies the types of transfers that are permitted and not treated as contributions. Elections Canada refers to non-permitted transfers of funds, property or services as “irregular transfers.”

When the nomination contestant’s campaign sends or accepts an irregular transfer, the consequences will depend on the sender, recipient and transfer type. In some cases, irregular transfers will be treated as contributions; in other cases, they will be dealt with according to other rules in the Act.

The tables below explain the consequences of irregular transfers between affiliated political entities only.

### Irregular transfers sent by the nomination contestant’s campaign

Recipient of irregular transfer sent by nomination contestant	Transfer type	Consequence
Candidate in same electoral district	Monetary, after election day other than to pay claims	Prohibited transfer with offence for sender; not a contribution
Candidate in other electoral district	Monetary	Improper surplus disposal with offence for sender; not a contribution
Candidate	Non-monetary	If capital asset, improper surplus disposal with offence for sender; not a contribution*
Nomination contestant Leadership contestant	Any	Illegal contribution
Registered association that did not hold the contest	Any	Improper surplus disposal with offence for sender; not a contribution
Registered association that held the contest Registered party	Non-monetary	If capital asset, improper surplus disposal with offence for sender; not a contribution*

\*Remaining non-capital assets or services can be provided to the candidate, association or party, but they must either be sold to that political entity or contributed by the contestant as a personal non-monetary contribution.

#### Example

Portia won a nomination contest and is now a candidate. Her nomination campaign sends a video used in the contest to her electoral campaign for reuse in the election period. This is not an allowable transfer. The video is not a capital asset, so there is no offence for the sender. However, Portia’s electoral campaign must buy the video from the nomination campaign at its commercial value or accept the video as a personal non-monetary contribution from Portia (if she stays within the \$5,000 limit on contributions to her own electoral campaign).

## Irregular transfers sent to the nomination contestant's campaign

Sender of irregular transfer accepted by nomination contestant	Transfer type	Consequence
Nomination contestant Leadership contestant	Any	Illegal contribution
Candidate, other than from own campaign for same election	Any	Illegal contribution*
Registered association Registered party	Monetary	Prohibited transfer with offences for sender and recipient; not a contribution
Registered association Registered party	Non-monetary, not offered equally to all contestants	Prohibited transfer with offence for sender; not a contribution

\*If the transfer is non-monetary and the candidate offered it equally to all contestants, it is not a contribution. It may be an improper surplus disposal.

### **Example**

A nomination contestant's campaign accepts funds from a candidate's campaign in an adjacent riding. This is not an allowable transfer. It is an illegal contribution. Within 30 days of becoming aware of the contravention, the financial agent must return the contribution to the sender (if unused) or remit the amount to Elections Canada.

### **OGI reference**

For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2022-02, *Irregular Transfers Between Affiliated Political Entities*, on the Elections Canada website.

## 6. Other Cash Inflows

This chapter explains how to report cash inflows to the campaign bank account other than contributions, loans and transfers. It covers the following topics:

- Non-contribution portion of fundraising revenues
- Bank interest
- Refunds from suppliers
- Returned portion of advances
- Proceeds from the sale of assets

**Note:** All monies flowing through the campaign bank account have to be reported.

Inflow type	Description	Example
Non-contribution portion of fundraising revenues	<p>The inflows for fundraising activities such as ticketed events, auctions and the sale of branded goods often consist of two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the contribution portion, and</li> <li>• the other inflow, which is the difference between the selling price and the contribution</li> </ul>	<p>John Smith holds a ticketed fundraiser in support of his campaign. The ticket price for the fundraiser is \$200, and the fair market value of the benefit received is \$75. The contribution made by each ticket purchaser is \$125.</p> <p>The amount to be recorded as other inflow is the fair market value of the benefit received—that is, \$75.</p>
Bank interest	Interest earned on the campaign bank account is other inflow.	At the end of the month, the bank deposits \$1.50 of interest into the campaign bank account. The financial agent has to record this amount as other inflow.
Refunds from suppliers	<p>If a refund is received from suppliers, the refunded amount is other inflow.</p> <p>The refunded amount may also need to be offset from the original nomination contest expense or other expense, and classified as an amount not included in nomination contest expenses since it is not an expense subject to the limit.</p>	<p>The financial agent purchases 20 reams of paper for use in the campaign office, at a total cost of \$60. Near the end of the campaign, the financial agent returns 5 unused reams of paper and receives a \$15 refund from the supplier. The financial agent has to record this amount as other inflow.</p> <p>The \$15 is also offset from the original expense in the expenses section and classified as an amount not included in nomination contest expenses.</p>

Inflow type	Description	Example
Returned portion of advances	<p>If the campaign advanced funds for petty cash, travel or other expenses, the unused returned portions are other inflows.</p>	<p>The financial agent gives \$200 to an authorized person for travel expenses. At the end of the campaign, there is \$50 left over and the financial agent deposits this amount into the campaign bank account. The financial agent records the \$50 as other inflow.</p>
Proceeds from the sale of assets	<p>If the campaign sells any of its assets, the amount received is other inflow.</p> <p>The sale proceeds do not reduce the commercial value of the asset, which is the lower of the purchase price or the cost to rent a similar asset.</p>	<p>At the beginning of the campaign, the financial agent purchases two brand new computers, at a cost of \$2,000. After the selection date, the financial agent sells the two computers for the amount of \$1,500. This amount is recorded as other inflow.</p>

## 7. Fundraising

*This chapter explains what portion of an amount given during a fundraising activity is a contribution and clarifies when fundraising expenses are nomination contest expenses. It covers the following topics:*

- *Determining the contribution amount when contributors receive a benefit*
- *Fundraising expenses*
- *Regulated fundraising events*
- *Typical fundraising activities (sale of branded goods, auctions, ticketed events, non-ticketed events and draws)*

### **Determining the contribution amount when contributors receive a benefit**

**If a nomination contestant's campaign receives funds, property or services from a contributor and gives them a benefit in return, is there a contribution?**

When a contributor receives a benefit, there is often still a contribution to report, but the contribution amount may be only a portion of the full amount given. The general rule is to deduct the value of the benefit from the amount given to arrive at the contribution amount. For example: \$100 amount given – \$25 value of benefit = \$75 contribution.

However, there are other factors to consider, as explained below. It is possible that the full amount given will be a contribution.

### **Are commercial transactions also subject to the fundraising rules?**

No, the fundraising and contribution rules do not apply to commercial transactions. These are transactions that take place outside of a political context, where the political entity is equivalent to any participant in the market and the buyer pays no more than the value of the item. An example is a campaign that sells assets at a retail market price after a contest.

#### *OGI reference*

For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2017-06, *Contributions and Commercial Transactions*, on the Elections Canada website.

### **What is considered a benefit?**

A benefit could be property (for example, a T-shirt or dinner), the use of property, services or another benefit that a contributor receives in exchange for their contribution. It may be received immediately or promised for the future.

### **How is the value of a benefit determined?**

There may be more than one acceptable way to determine the value of a benefit, depending on the type of fundraising activity. For example, the value may be the campaign's actual cost for the property or service, its commercial value (when originally received as a contribution or transfer), its appraisal value or its price in the retail market. By retail market, we mean an open and unrestricted market, where buyers are not influenced by political considerations.

For ticketed fundraising events, benefits must be valued in a specific way. It is described in the **Typical fundraising activities** section below, along with the most practical ways to value the benefit for other fundraising activities.

### What if the benefit has no ascertainable value?

If a campaign provides a benefit whose value cannot be reasonably ascertained, there is no amount to deduct. The full amount given is a contribution.

### What if the benefit is access to a politician?

If the benefit is access to a politician or other political actor, the full amount given is a contribution, even if the campaign has established a value for access. Such a payment is usually made to show partisan support and to buy influence or goodwill. It is therefore subject to the contribution rules.

### What if the benefit is not significant (below the nominal threshold)?

Often, the value of the benefit provided to a contributor is not significant. The benefit is provided to thank the contributor and may also serve to promote the campaign. When the value of a benefit is not significant (for example, a campaign pin received in exchange for a large contribution), it is usually ignored and the full amount given is a contribution. This simplifies reporting because it does not require a benefit to be deducted.

To know whether a benefit is significant, it must be checked against the “nominal threshold” (or *de minimis* threshold). A benefit is significant only if its value exceeds 10% of the amount given or \$75, whichever is less. If the contributor receives multiple small benefits, their values are added together to determine whether the overall benefit is significant.

The nominal threshold does not apply to:

- cash or near-cash items, such as gift certificates
- benefits that are the object of a ticketed fundraising event, such as the meal at a ticketed fundraising dinner

Those benefits are never considered to be nominal; their value is always deducted.

The use of the nominal threshold to decide whether a benefit is significant aligns with the Canada Revenue Agency’s guidance.

#### Examples

1. In exchange for making a \$40 contribution, contributors receive a T-shirt with the nomination contestant’s campaign logo. The value of the T-shirt is \$10. In this case, since the value of the T-shirt exceeds 10% of the amount given, \$10 is deducted from the amount given. The contribution is \$30.
2. Contributors who make a \$100 contribution receive a keychain with the nomination contestant’s campaign logo. The value of the keychain is \$5. In this case, since the value of the keychain does not exceed the lesser of 10% of the amount given and \$75, no benefit is deducted from the amount given. The contribution is \$100.
3. Contributors who make a \$100 contribution receive a \$5 gift card. Even though the value of the gift card is less than 10% of the amount given, gift cards are never considered to be nominal. The \$5 value is deducted from the amount given, and the contribution is \$95.

**Note:** In examples 1 and 2, there may be different ways to calculate the value of the benefit, depending on the type of fundraising activity. See the **Typical fundraising activities** section below for more information.

#### OGI reference

For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada’s interpretation note 2024-03, *Fundraising*, on the Elections Canada website.

## **Fundraising expenses**

### **Are any fundraising expenses excluded from nomination contest expenses?**

Even though fundraising helps to promote nomination contestants, some expenses for property or services that are used to raise funds during the contest period are excluded from nomination contest expenses. They are:

- contribution processing fees
- expenses for a fundraising activity, other than expenses for advertising or promotional material or expenses for a non-ticketed fundraising event

Although the above expenses are not nomination contest expenses, they must be reported as other nomination campaign expenses in the campaign return.

### **What are contribution processing fees?**

They are expenses that the campaign incurs to process contributions, which may include bank charges, credit card processing fees, fees for other payment services (such as PayPal), salaries of fundraising staff and salaries for data entry when contributions are received.

### **What fundraising expenses are nomination contest expenses?**

Any expense related to promoting a fundraising activity during a contest period is a nomination contest expense. For example, expenses for these activities during a contest period are considered to be nomination contest expenses:

- producing and distributing invitations to a ticketed fundraiser
- procuring and distributing promotional items, such as pens or T-shirts
- producing and mailing a letter or pamphlet that solicits contributions
- producing and using a script for telephone calls that solicit contributions

### **Is there a nomination contest expense when the activity is not directly linked to fundraising?**

Expenses for promotional activities that are not directly linked to fundraising are nomination contest expenses, if the activities take place during a contest period. In these cases, incurring an expense and accepting a contribution are separate transactions.

For example, expenses for these activities are considered to be nomination contest expenses, despite having a fundraising component:

- non-ticketed events held to promote a nomination contestant, where contributions are also solicited
- door-to-door promotion of a nomination contestant, where contributions are also solicited (in this case, salaries or other amounts paid to canvassers are nomination contest expenses)
- contacting electors by phone or by other means to promote a nomination contestant, where contributions are also solicited (in this case, salaries paid to staff are nomination contest expenses)

## Regulated fundraising events

### What is a regulated fundraising event?

A regulated fundraising event is an event that meets all these conditions:

- it is organized to financially benefit a registered party with a seat in the House of Commons (or, during a general election, a party that had a seat on dissolution) or one of its affiliated entities
- it is attended by one of these prominent people: the party leader, the interim leader, a leadership contestant or a federal Cabinet minister (minister of the Crown or minister of state)
- at least one person had to pay or contribute over \$200 to attend or to have another person attend

**Note:** Events held in person, online or by telephone are all potentially regulated. A prominent person is "attending" if they are present at the event in real-time. By contrast, if they are present only by prerecorded video or audio message, they are not attending the event.

It excludes the following events:

- a leadership debate
- a party or leadership convention
- a donor appreciation event at a party or leadership convention
- an event where at least one person gave over \$200 to attend or to have another person attend but no part of these amounts was a contribution

Flowchart 3 can be used to check whether a fundraising event is regulated.

Any person can attend an event, even if they are not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident, as long as they did not make a contribution in order to attend. For example, an eligible contributor can pay to bring a foreign guest.

**Note:** Fundraising events organized after an election or a contest for the financial benefit of a candidate or a contestant continue to fall under these rules.

### Are leadership contestants after a contest period and ministers during an election still prominent attendees?

Leadership contestants continue to be contestants and prominent attendees after the contest period, until they have fulfilled their reporting obligations (for example, after they have paid their claims and loans, disposed of surplus and closed the bank account).

Leadership contestants should wait for confirmation from Elections Canada, following its review of their financial returns, that they are no longer prominent attendees.

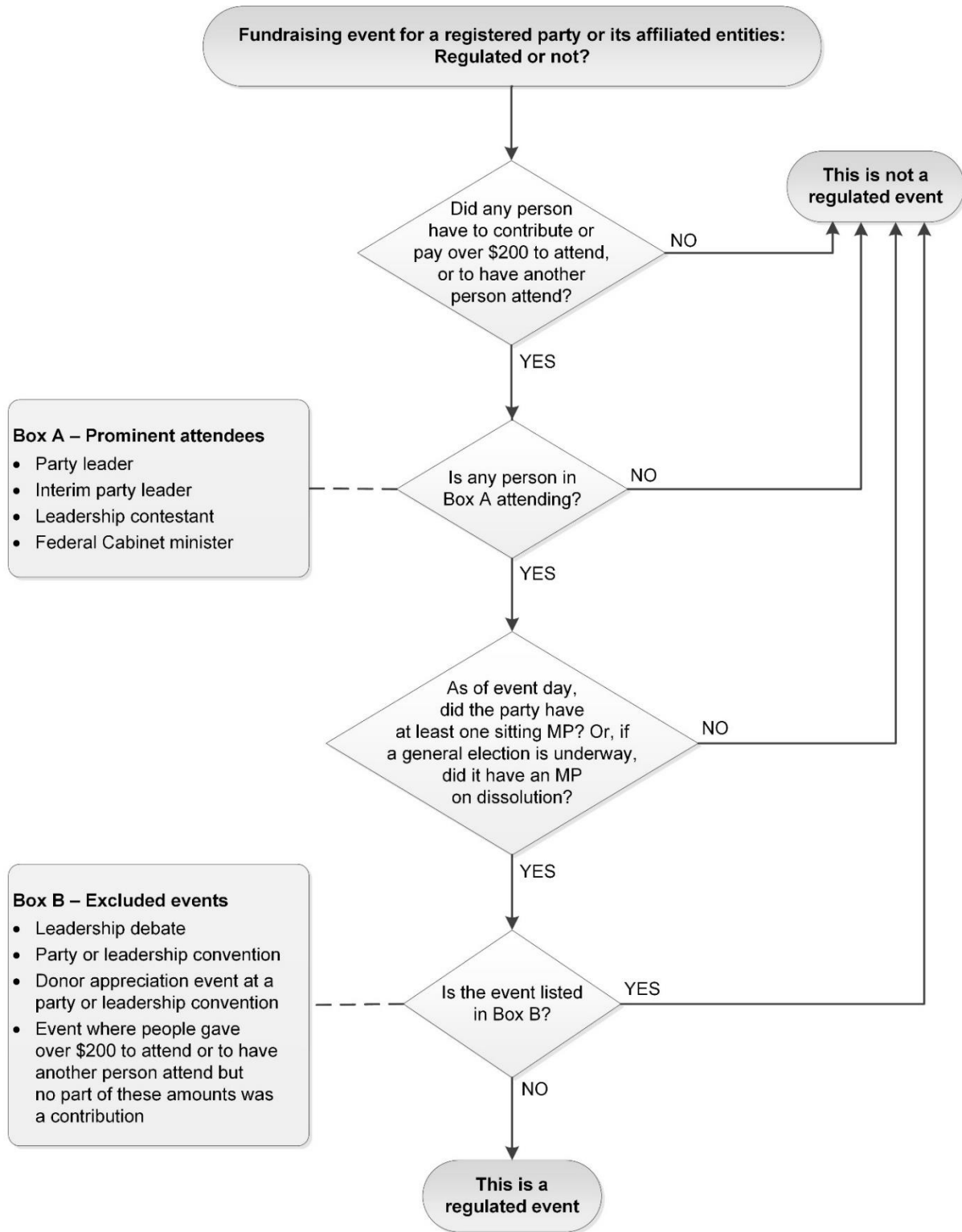
Ministers continue to be prominent attendees during an election.

**Note:** A regularly updated list of leadership contestants who are prominent attendees is available on the Elections Canada website under Political Financing > View Regulated Fundraising Events.

### **Examples**

1. Barbara paid the \$250 ticket price to attend a wine and cheese organized to benefit a nomination contestant. The guest of honour is a federal Cabinet minister who supports the contestant. This is a regulated fundraising event. Even though Barbara's contribution is only \$190 after the benefit is deducted, the event is still regulated because the ticket price was over \$200 and part of the payment was a contribution.
2. Mehdi paid the \$225 entrance fee to play in a baseball tournament organized to benefit a nomination contestant. The contestant is attending but there will be no prominent attendees from the party. This is not a regulated fundraising event.
3. A nomination contestant's campaign charges \$250 for participants to join a virtual event held on a videoconferencing platform. A Cabinet minister who supports the contestant will also be online, interacting with attendees. This is a regulated fundraising event.
4. The nomination contestant's campaign sells tickets to its fundraising dinner with the party leader for \$150 each. Jim buys a table of tickets for \$1,200 and brings his family. Even though he paid more than \$200 total for himself and his guests, no single person was required to pay over \$200 to attend. This is not a regulated fundraising event. This event would be regulated if a person had to buy a whole table.

**Flowchart 3: Regulated fundraising events**



## Nomination contestant's role in providing information about a regulated fundraising event

When a fundraising event is regulated, the registered party has to follow certain disclosure rules to avoid forfeiting contributions received as part of the event.

If the nomination contestant's campaign was involved in the event, it may need to provide the party with information so that the party can follow the disclosure rules.

<p>If all or part of the event was organized by the registered party</p>	<p>The nomination contestant's campaign has no official role to play in providing information to the party.</p>
<p>If all of the event was organized by the nomination contestant's campaign or other persons or entities</p>	<p>The nomination contestant's campaign and other organizers have to give the party the information it needs to follow the disclosure rules. See details in the next section.</p> <p>Information must be provided far enough in advance of the disclosure deadline that the party has time to publish or report on it.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> If an event was organized by more than one nomination campaign, they should coordinate sending information to the party.</p>

## Information to provide outside and during a general election

The registered party needs information at different times, based on whether a regulated fundraising event is held outside or during a general election.

<b>What to send the party for events held outside a general election</b>	
<b>Before the fundraising event</b>	<b>After the fundraising event</b>
<p>Provide this information so that the party can publish an event notice 5 days before the event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• event date and time</li> <li>• event location, including all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– venue name (e.g. name of a commercial venue or, for a private residence, the words “private residence”)</li> <li>– municipality, province or territory, and postal code</li> </ul> </li> <li>• name of each entity or person that the event is organized to financially benefit</li> <li>• name of each prominent attendee whose attendance makes the event a regulated event (e.g. party leader)</li> <li>• required amount of contribution or payment to attend</li> <li>• individual to contact for more information about the event</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Five days' notice means that if an event is held on a Saturday, the latest day to give notice is Monday of that week. For events held virtually, the venue name can be “online” or “teleconference.” No address needs to be provided.</p>	<p>Provide this information so that the party can submit a report to Elections Canada within 30 days after the event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• same information required in an event notice (excluding the individual to contact for event information)</li> <li>• name of each person or entity that organized the event or part of it</li> <li>• name, municipality, province or territory, and postal code of attendees aged 18 or older (some exceptions apply*)</li> </ul>

## What to send the party for events held during a general election

### Before the fundraising event

No information is required

### After the fundraising event

Provide this information for each event held during the election period so that the party can submit a single report to Elections Canada within 60 days after election day:

- event date and time
- event location, including all of the following:
  - venue name (e.g. name of a commercial venue or, for a private residence, the words “private residence”)
  - municipality, province or territory, and postal code
- name of each entity or person that the event was organized to financially benefit
- name of each prominent attendee whose attendance made the event a regulated event (e.g. party leader)
- required amount of contribution or payment to attend
- name of each person or entity that organized the event or part of it
- name, municipality, province or territory, and postal code of attendees aged 18 or older (some exceptions apply\*)

**Note:** For events held virtually, the venue name can be “online” or “teleconference.” No address needs to be provided.

\*In addition to minors, attendees are not listed in the reports if they attended solely for the following purposes:

- to assist someone with a disability
- as an employee involved in organizing the event
- as part of a media organization or as a freelance journalist
- as a member of security or support staff for the prominent attendee who led to the event being a regulated event
- to provide volunteer labour

**Note:** If the nomination contestant’s campaign is aware of changes to the information it provided, it must notify the party as soon as possible so that the event notice or report can be updated.

**Note:** For virtual events, it may be difficult to control attendance and produce an accurate list of attendees. Organizers should exercise due diligence so that an accurate report of all attendees can be filed. For example, they could advise people who sign up for an event that attendance is being published and that the link or phone number to attend is for their use only.

### Examples: Event notices on a party website

#### 1. Fundraising dinner (event name is optional)

January 1, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.  
ABC Restaurant, Ottawa, ON, A0A 0A0

In support of: Contestant X  
Featuring: the Honourable Mary Marcel  
Tickets: \$250

More information: Paul Parcel at paul@contestant-x.ca

2. **Donor appreciation event\*** (*event name is optional*)

January 2, 2025, at 7:30 p.m.  
ABC Event Space, Vancouver, BC, A0A 0A0

In support of: Contestant Y  
Featuring: Sally Sorel and Gavin Gorel  
Contribution: \$150–\$500  
More information: Paul Parcel at 1-800-000-0000

\*Other than a donor appreciation event at a party or leadership convention, which would not be a regulated fundraising event.

**Note:** For the party website notice to be compliant, **all** the elements required for disclosure **must** appear in the notice at least five days before the event. The elements must then be adjusted as soon as feasible if the information is incorrect or has changed.

## Returning contributions for non-compliance with disclosure rules

If the disclosure rules are not followed, the political entity that received monetary or non-monetary contributions in respect of the regulated fundraising event must return them to the contributor or remit their amount to Elections Canada.

Any of these circumstances may require contributions to be returned:

- outside a general election, the registered party fails to publish an event notice or notify Elections Canada about the event five days before it is held
- the registered party fails to submit a report by the deadline or extended deadline, or includes the name or address of a person excepted from the list of attendees (for example, a minor)
- an organizer fails to give the registered party information about an event in time for the party to publish an event notice or submit a report, or provides the name or address of a person excepted from the list of attendees (for example, a minor)
- an organizer fails to notify the registered party of changes to the information it provided
- the registered party fails to update an event notice on its website or a report to Elections Canada when it becomes aware of changes to the information

Where the non-compliance relates to incorrect information in an event notice or report, updating the notice or correcting the report as soon as feasible after becoming aware of the change or incorrect information will in most cases bring the party into compliance, so that contributions do not have to be returned. However, this is not the case if the event notice on the party website was missing information five days before the event.

## Determining the contribution amount to return

When contributions must be returned, the amount to return to each contributor or remit to Elections Canada is the contribution received from the individual in respect of the regulated fundraising event.

Both of these amounts must be returned to the contributor or remitted to Elections Canada, where applicable:

- the contribution amount, received through a ticket sale or entrance fee, that entitled the person to attend the event (that is, the ticket price or entrance fee less the fair market value of the benefit that the person was entitled to receive)
- any contribution received from the contributor during the regulated fundraising event

See the **Ticked fundraising events** section below for information about calculating the contribution amount when benefits are received.

The table below explains how different scenarios affect the return of contributions.

Scenario	Return of contributions for a non-compliant event
Participants were entitled to attend a donor appreciation event based on a previous contribution of \$250.	The previous contributions are not returned. Only additional contributions collected during the event must be returned.
Participants were entitled to attend an event by paying a \$250 ticket price.	The contribution amounts from ticket sales must be returned. Any additional contributions collected during the event must also be returned.
An event has a mix of participants who bought a ticket, made a previous contribution or attended for free.	All contributions received from ticket sales or collected during the event must be returned, even if some participants paid \$200 or less to attend. The previous contributions are not returned.

See **Returning ineligible or non-compliant contributions** in Chapter 3, **Contributions**, for more information on the process that needs to be followed when returning contributions.

#### *OGI reference*

For a detailed discussion of these topics, please refer to Elections Canada's guideline 2023-01, *Regulated Fundraising Events*, and interpretation note 2022-04, *Disclosing the Location of a Regulated Fundraising Event*, on the Elections Canada website.

## Typical fundraising activities

This section explains how to manage various fundraising activities.

### Sale of branded goods

#### How is the contribution calculated from the sale of branded goods?

The value of the branded good is generally deducted from the selling price to arrive at the contribution amount.

The way to value the branded good and calculate the contribution depends on its selling price and the price of a comparable item in the retail market, as explained below. By retail market, we mean an open and unrestricted market, where buyers are not influenced by political considerations.

Selling price is similar to the retail market price	Selling price is higher than the retail market price
<p>When the campaign sells the branded good for a price that is similar to the price of a comparable item in the retail market:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The value of the branded good is the campaign's selling price.</li><li>• Because the selling price and value are the same, there is no contribution to report.</li><li>• Any profit from the sale is reported by the campaign as an other cash inflow.</li></ul> <p>The campaign could use its actual cost for the item as the item's value, if it is similar to the retail market price, but this method may be less practical since it may result in small contributions that must be reported rather than no contributions.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> This activity must not be used to circumvent the contribution rules. For example, a campaign cannot sell a large number of items to one buyer as a way to bring in excess, untraceable or illegal contributions.</p>	<p>When the campaign sells a branded good for a price that is higher than the price of a comparable item in the retail market:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The value of the branded good is the price of a comparable item in the retail market.</li><li>• Because the selling price is higher than the value, the buyer is making a contribution that will need to be reported.</li><li>• The contribution amount is the selling price less the price of a comparable item in the retail market.</li></ul> <p>Check against the nominal threshold: If the benefit's value does not exceed 10% of the amount given or \$75, whichever is less, then the benefit is considered nominal. Do not deduct its value to arrive at the contribution amount.</p>

#### If there is a contribution from the sale of a branded good (i.e. the selling price is higher than the retail market price), is a receipt required?

Because campaigns need to issue receipts for contributions over \$20, the sale of a branded good will require a receipt under the *Canada Elections Act* only when the selling price less the retail market price exceeds \$20.

If a buyer purchases multiple items, a receipt must be issued when the total sale amount (per sales transaction) less the total value of items purchased exceeds \$20. For example:

- An individual buys three cups from the campaign's online store. Each cup results in a \$10 contribution. A receipt for \$30 must be issued.
- An individual buys two cups from the campaign's online store. Each cup results in a \$10 contribution. A receipt does not have to be issued. The \$20 contribution is reported under anonymous contributions of \$20 or less.

Keep in mind that, if the campaign’s selling price is similar to the price of a comparable item in the retail market, there are no contributions to report and no receipts to issue (unless the campaign uses its actual cost as the value of the benefit—see the question above).

### What nomination contest expenses are reported?

The expenses incurred to produce and distribute branded goods (i.e. promotional material) that are distributed during a contest period are nomination contest expenses.

<b>Examples</b>
<p>1. A nomination contestant’s campaign sells coffee cups with the campaign logo for \$15, which is similar to the price of comparable cups in the retail market. There are no contributions to report from the sale of the cups.</p> <p>2. A nomination contestant’s campaign sells coffee cups with the campaign logo for \$40. The campaign determines that the price of similar cups in the retail market ranges from \$15 to \$25. Since \$40 is more than the price in the retail market, the sale of a cup will result in a contribution. The campaign can use the higher retail price, \$25, as the value of the cup. As a result, the contribution is \$15 (\$40 – \$25).*</p> <p>*Check against the nominal threshold: Since the \$25 value exceeds \$4 (10% of the \$40 given), the benefit is significant, and the nominal threshold does not apply. The value of the benefit is deducted from the amount paid to arrive at the contribution amount.</p>

## Auctions

### How are contributions calculated from the donation and sale of auction items?

An auction may lead to contributions from both the donor of the property or service that is auctioned and the winning bidder. The calculations for each situation are different.

<b>Donor’s contribution</b>	<b>Winning bidder’s contribution</b>
<p>The donor of a property or service that is being auctioned has made a non-monetary contribution. The contribution amount is the commercial value of the donated property or service.</p> <p>Commercial value is the lowest amount charged at the time that it was provided for the same kind and quantity of property or service, or for the same use of property or money, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the person who provided it (if the person who provided the property or service is in that business), or</li> <li>another person who provides that property or service on a commercial basis in the area (if the person who provided the property or service is not in that business).</li> </ul> <p>If the commercial value of a non-monetary contribution is \$200 or less, and it is from an individual not in that business, the donor’s contribution amount is deemed to be nil.</p>	<p>The buyer of an auctioned property or service has made a monetary contribution only if the winning bid exceeds the value of the property or service. The contribution amount is the winning bid less the value of the property or service.</p> <p>There are several acceptable ways to value the benefit. These ways are likely the most practical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the property or service was donated or transferred, the value is the same amount that was recorded for the contribution or transfer. (If the contribution was deemed nil, use the value before it was deemed nil.)</li> <li>If the property or service was not donated or transferred, the value is its retail price or appraisal value.</li> </ul> <p>For an auctioned property or service whose value is not ascertainable, the full amount of the winning bid is a contribution.</p> <p>Check against the nominal threshold: If the benefit’s value does not exceed 10% of the amount given or \$75, whichever is less, then the benefit is considered nominal. Do not deduct its value to arrive at the contribution amount.</p>

## What nomination contest expenses are reported?

When an auction is held during a contest period, most expenses incurred by the campaign to buy property or services that will be auctioned are not nomination contest expenses. They are excluded because they fall under the category of fundraising expenses.

However, because expenses for producing and distributing promotional material are specifically included as nomination contest expenses, if any of the auctioned items promote the nomination contestant (such as branded goods), expenses incurred by the campaign for such items are nomination contest expenses.

### Examples

1. An individual donated a painting to a nomination contestant for sale at the campaign's fundraising auction. A local art dealer appraised the painting at \$450. During the auction, the winning bid for the painting was \$600.

The contribution amounts are as follows:

- The donor of the painting made a \$450 non-monetary contribution to the campaign.
- The winning bidder made a monetary contribution equal to the amount paid less the value of the painting:  $\$600 - \$450 = \$150$ .\*

In addition, \$450 (the painting's commercial value) is an other nomination campaign expense not subject to the nomination contest expenses limit.

\*Check against the nominal threshold: Since the \$450 value exceeds \$60 (10% of the \$600 given), the benefit is significant, and the nominal threshold does not apply. The value of the benefit is deducted from the amount paid.

2. An individual (who is not in the business of selling office furniture) donated an office chair to a nomination contestant for sale at the campaign's fundraising auction. Locally, the retail price for the chair was \$150. During the auction, the winning bid for the chair was \$250.

The contribution amounts are as follows:

- The donor of the chair made a non-monetary contribution to the campaign that is deemed to be nil (since the commercial value is \$200 or less, and the chair was provided by an individual not in the business of selling chairs).
- The winning bidder made a monetary contribution equal to the amount paid less the value of the chair:  $\$250 - \$150 = \$100$ .\*

Because the contribution of the chair was deemed nil, the chair is not reported as a nomination campaign expense.

\*Check against the nominal threshold: Since the \$150 value exceeds \$25 (10% of the \$250 given), the benefit is significant, and the nominal threshold does not apply. The value of the benefit is deducted from the amount paid.

## Ticketed fundraising events

### What is a ticketed fundraising event?

It is an event that is held for the primary purpose of soliciting monetary contributions through ticket sales or mandatory entrance fees, such as a dinner or a golf tournament.

If the primary purpose of the event is not to raise funds, and the nomination contestant's campaign anticipates that its event expenses will be higher than ticket revenue, see the **Other ticketed events** section below.

### How are contributions calculated for a ticketed fundraising event?

The amount of a ticket buyer's monetary contribution is the ticket price less the value of the benefit that the bearer is entitled to receive. There are specific ways to value certain benefits at a ticketed fundraising event, as described below.

Ticketed fundraising dinner	Ticketed golf tournament
<p>The benefit for each ticket buyer includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• if the event is held in a rented venue, the cost of the room rental and catering (prorated)</li><li>• if the event is held in a restaurant, the amount the restaurant would normally charge for the meal (it is acceptable to take into account group or banquet rates)</li><li>• if the event is held in a private residence, the value of a comparable meal; no value is attributed to the use of an individual's private residence</li><li>• door prizes (prorated) (check against the nominal threshold)</li><li>• complimentary items such as pens or keychains (check against the nominal threshold)</li><li>• rental of audiovisual equipment and other general expenses (prorated)</li></ul>	<p>The benefit for each ticket buyer includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• green fee (excluded for golf club members whose green fees are already paid)</li><li>• cart rental</li><li>• meal</li><li>• complimentary items (check against the nominal threshold)</li><li>• door and achievement prizes (prorated) (check against the nominal threshold)</li><li>• rental of audiovisual equipment and other general expenses (prorated)</li></ul>
<p><b>Note:</b> The value of producing and distributing materials promoting the event, including ticket printing, is not part of the benefit because attendees do not gain from such activities.</p>	

### What number of attendees is used to prorate the benefit?

The value of the benefit is prorated based on the expected number of attendees rather than the actual number of attendees. For example, if food valued at \$500 is ordered for 50 people but only 40 people attend, the prorated benefit per person is still \$10 (\$500 / 50 people).

Elections Canada has taken this position because a fixed value is important in terms of contribution limits: it is necessary to determine the amount of the ticket buyer's contribution in advance of the event so that individuals do not unknowingly exceed their limit.

**Note:** The expected number of attendees used in the calculation has to be reasonably supported by evidence (e.g. size of room rented, number of meals ordered).

### What nomination contest expenses are reported?

When a ticketed fundraising event is held during a contest period, most expenses incurred by the campaign are not nomination contest expenses. They are excluded because they fall under the category of fundraising expenses.

However, because expenses for producing and distributing advertising or promotional material are specifically included as nomination contest expenses, any such expenses incurred before or during the fundraising event are nomination contest expenses. This includes expenses for promoting the event, printing tickets, and producing and distributing promotional items.

#### Examples

1. A nomination contestant's campaign holds a ticketed fundraising dinner in a rented venue. Fifty attendees are expected, and tickets are sold at \$150 each. The event includes dinner, a pen with a logo for each attendee, and hockey tickets as a door prize. The campaign incurs the following expenses:

- room rental: \$500 ( $\$500 / 50 = \$10$  per attendee)
- catering: \$1,500 ( $\$1,500 / 50 = \$30$  per attendee)
- live band: \$300 ( $\$300 / 50 = \$6$  per attendee)
- audio equipment: \$150 ( $\$150 / 50 = \$3$  per attendee)
- hockey tickets: \$400 ( $\$400 / 50 = \$8$  per attendee)
- pen with logo: \$500 ( $\$500 / 50 = \$10$  per attendee)

The contribution amount for each ticket buyer is determined as follows:

Ticket price	\$150
<b>Less:</b>	
Room rental	\$10
Catering	\$30
Band	\$6
Audio	\$3
Hockey tickets*	\$8
Pen with logo*	<u>\$10</u>
Contribution amount	<b>\$83</b>

\*Check against the nominal threshold: The total value of benefits received that are not the object of the fundraising dinner (the hockey tickets and pen) is \$18. This exceeds \$15 (10% of the \$150 given). Therefore, the benefit is considered significant, and the nominal threshold does not apply. The value of these benefits is deducted from the ticket price.

2. A golf tournament is held during the contest period to raise funds for the nomination contestant's campaign. Participants are charged \$300, and 100 individuals are expected to attend. The campaign incurs the following expenses:

- green fees: \$5,000 ( $\$5,000 / 100 = \$50$  per participant)
- cart rental: \$4,000 ( $\$4,000 / 100 = \$40$  per participant)
- golf shirt with party logo: \$1,500 ( $\$1,500 / 100 = \$15$  per participant)
- door and achievement prizes: \$300 ( $\$300 / 100 = \$3$  per participant)
- mailing promoting the event: \$800

The contribution amount for each participant is determined as follows:

Participation fee	\$300
<b>Less:</b>	
Green fee*	\$50
Cart rental	\$40
Golf shirt**	—
Prizes**	—
Contribution amount	<b>\$210</b>

\*If a participant is a golf club member and would not be charged a green fee, the cost of that benefit is not deducted from the participation fee. The contribution amount is \$260.

\*\*Check against the nominal threshold: The total value of benefits received that are not the object of the golf tournament (the golf shirt and prizes) is \$18. This does not exceed \$30 (10% of the \$300 given) or \$75. Therefore, the benefit is not considered significant, and the nominal threshold applies. The value of these benefits is not deducted from the participation fee.

As well, the \$800 promotional expense is a nomination contest expense. The balance of the tournament expense is an other nomination campaign expense not subject to the nomination contest expenses limit.

**Note:** If participants are given the opportunity to sponsor a hole at a golf tournament, rules and restrictions apply. See **Sponsorship or advertising at a political event is a contribution** in Chapter 3, **Contributions**.

## Other ticketed events

### What is an “other” ticketed event?

It is a ticketed event that is primarily held for promotional purposes rather than to raise funds. The nomination contestant’s campaign anticipates that its event expenses will be higher than ticket revenues—it charges a ticket price or entrance fee simply to offset some of the costs.

### How are contributions calculated for an other ticketed event?

The contribution amount is the difference between the amount paid by the individual and the commercial value of any tangible benefits received.

Tangible benefits include such things as meals, drinks and gifts directly received by the attendee. The general expenses incurred by the campaign in holding the event, such as room or audiovisual equipment rental, are not deducted from the ticket price.

### What nomination contest expenses are reported?

When a nomination contestant’s campaign holds this type of event during a contest period, the expenses incurred are nomination contest expenses because they relate to producing and distributing promotional material. They are not directly linked to soliciting contributions.

**Note:** Ticketed events held for promotional purposes may still be regulated fundraising events, even if fundraising is not their primary purpose. See the **Regulated fundraising events** section above.

## Non-ticketed events

### What is a non-ticketed event?

It is an event for which no tickets are sold (and no entrance fee is charged at the door), but where contributions are solicited and received.

### How are contributions calculated for a non-ticketed event?

Contributions received at non-ticketed events are simply recorded at the amount given.

The contribution is not reduced by the value of any benefit received (e.g. food or drink) because attendees would have received the benefit whether or not they contributed. In this case, giving a contribution and receiving a benefit are unrelated transactions for political financing purposes.

### What nomination contest expenses are reported?

When a nomination contestant’s campaign holds a non-ticketed event during a contest period, the expenses incurred are nomination contest expenses because they are not directly linked to soliciting contributions.

#### **Example**

A nomination contestant’s campaign organizes a free event during the contest period. Light refreshments and appetizers are served while Christine, the nomination contestant, outlines her platform and answers questions. Participants have the opportunity to make a contribution to Christine’s campaign. Any contributions received are recorded at the amount given. The costs of the food, beverages, room rental, etc., are nomination contest expenses, together with the cost of flyers distributed during the evening.

## Draws

### How are contributions calculated from draws or other lotteries?

An individual who buys a ticket for a draw is making a contribution equal to the ticket price. A portion of the prize value is not deducted from the ticket price because a value cannot be attached to the hope of winning.

### What nomination contest expenses are reported?

For campaigns promoting a draw during a contest period, the expenses incurred for its promotion are nomination contest expenses, regardless of when the draw occurs.

### Is a licence required to hold a draw?

The campaign should consult provincial or territorial regulations before organizing draws or other lotteries. In jurisdictions where draws are permitted, a licence from the province or territory may be required.

#### **Example**

A nomination contestant's campaign sells tickets for a draw at \$50 each. The value of the prize to be won is \$600. When an individual buys a ticket, the full amount given is a contribution. No benefit is deducted.

## 8. Nomination Campaign Expenses

*This chapter takes a broad look at nomination campaign expenses and how they are administered. It covers the following topics:*

- *What are nomination campaign expenses?*
- *How do they relate to non-monetary contributions and transfers?*
- *Who can incur and pay nomination campaign expenses?*
- *What invoices have to be kept?*

**Note:** The financial agent is responsible for administering expenses and keeping receipts and invoices, as required by the *Canada Elections Act*.

### What are nomination campaign expenses?

#### Definition

The *Canada Elections Act* defines a nomination campaign expense of a nomination contestant as an expense reasonably incurred as an incidence of the nomination contest, regardless of when the expense was incurred.

There are five categories of nomination campaign expenses:

- nomination contest expenses
- nomination contestant's personal expenses
- nomination contestant's travel and living expenses
- nomination contestant's litigation expenses
- other nomination campaign expenses, including auditor fees

It is important to understand the differences between the expense categories and the way each is administered. The chart below gives an overview, and the next five chapters provide details on each one.

## Nomination campaign expenses: overview

Nomination campaign expenses	Examples	Who can incur?	Who can pay and from what source? <sup>1</sup>	Spending limit?
<b>Nomination contest expenses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flyers</li> <li>Office supplies</li> <li>Surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial agent</li> <li>Contestant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial agent from campaign bank account</li> </ul>	
<b>Contestant's personal expenses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Childcare</li> <li>Expense related to a disability of the contestant or a dependant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial agent</li> <li>Contestant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial agent from campaign bank account</li> <li>Contestant from own funds, including from another source<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	
<b>Contestant's travel and living expenses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel</li> <li>Lodging</li> <li>Meals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial agent</li> <li>Contestant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial agent from campaign bank account</li> <li>Contestant from own funds<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	
<b>Contestant's litigation expenses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extension requests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial agent</li> <li>Contestant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial agent from campaign bank account</li> <li>Contestant from own funds, including from another source<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	
<b>Other nomination campaign expenses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rent outside contest period</li> <li>Contribution processing fees</li> <li>Contest fees</li> <li>Auditor's fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial agent</li> <li>Contestant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial agent from campaign bank account</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> A person authorized by the financial agent can pay petty expenses from the petty cash. The financial agent must set the maximum amount that may be paid.

<sup>2</sup> The contestant's personal or litigation expenses can be paid directly by another person or group, with the contestant's consent. This is considered to be a payment from the contestant's own funds. It is not a contribution but must still be reported in the contestant's return.

<sup>3</sup> If not repaid by the campaign, this is a contribution from the contestant and is subject to the limit.

## What qualifies as a nomination campaign expense?

Nomination campaign expenses include:

- amounts paid
- liabilities incurred
- the commercial value of donated property and services (other than volunteer labour)
- the difference between an amount paid or liability incurred and the commercial value of the property or services (when they are provided at less than their commercial value)

The amount charged to the campaign is a nomination campaign expense. Generally this amount is the commercial value of the property or service received.

Commercial value, in relation to property or a service, is the lowest amount charged at the time that it was provided for the same kind and quantity of property or service or for the same use of property or money by:

- the person who provided the property or service (if the person who provided it is in that business)
- another person who provides that property or service on a commercial basis in the area (if the person who provided the property or service is not in that business)

In other words, commercial value is generally the amount charged in a store for an item or a service.

### **Examples**

1. The campaign rents office furniture from an office equipment rental company for four months. The amount charged for the rental is the commercial value, and it is a nomination campaign expense.
2. Wendell, a self-employed web designer, offers to design the nomination contestant's website for a discounted price. He charges \$400 instead of his regular fee of \$700. The commercial value, which is the amount Wendell normally charges for his work (in this case \$700), is a nomination campaign expense. The difference between the commercial value and the actual amount paid (\$300) is a non-monetary contribution from the web designer.

## What does not qualify as a nomination campaign expense?

These penalties under the *Canada Elections Act* do not count as nomination campaign expenses:

- an administrative monetary penalty imposed on the campaign
- an amount to be paid under a compliance agreement signed with the Commissioner of Canada Elections, solely as a result of that agreement
- an amount to be paid under an undertaking provided to the Commissioner of Canada Elections, solely as a result of that undertaking

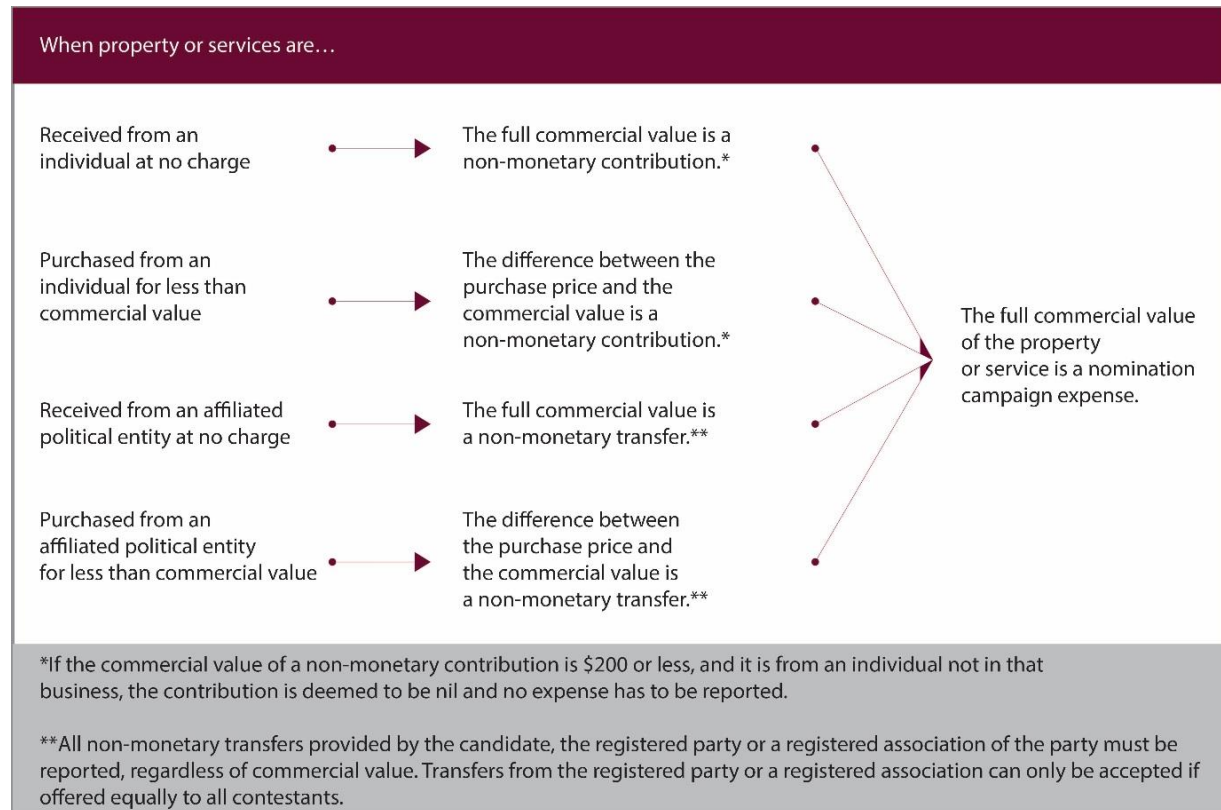
This means that the penalties cannot be paid using the contestant's campaign funds. Almost any other source of funds can be used to pay the penalties, including payment by a registered party or association.

Because a penalty is imposed on an individual in their personal capacity, if a party or association, another person, a corporation or a group pays the penalty for the individual, it is not reported as a transfer or contribution. The payment does not have to be offered equally to other contestants. The individual should be mindful of any conflict of interest regulations that may apply to their situation if the penalty is being paid by a corporation or group.

## Non-monetary contributions and transfers are also expenses

The nomination contestant's campaign incurs an expense when it accepts a non-monetary contribution or a non-monetary transfer.

Keep in mind that if a service is provided free of charge by an eligible volunteer, there is no contribution and no expense. See **Volunteer labour is not a contribution** in Chapter 3, **Contributions**, for details.



### Examples

1. After the contest starts, Simon donates office supplies—packages of paper, ink cartridges and binders—to the campaign. Buying the same items in the local stationery store would cost \$300; therefore, this is the commercial value of the donated goods. The financial agent has to record the following: \$300 as a non-monetary contribution from Simon and \$300 as a nomination contest expense.
2. The registered association that is holding the contest provides all contestants with free mailing envelopes and postage. The financial agent uses the items to distribute campaign flyers during the contest period. The association paid \$1,000 for the items and provides the financial agent with copies of the original supplier invoices. The financial agent has to record the following: a non-monetary transfer of \$1,000 from the association and a nomination contest expense of \$1,000.

**Note:** Some examples in the handbook use “cost” as the amount of an expense. This is because most purchases are made at a retail price. However, if a campaign pays less than a retail price, the expense to report for the property or service is its full commercial value.

## Who can incur expenses?

Only the financial agent and the nomination contestant can incur nomination campaign expenses.

An expense is incurred when the campaign becomes legally obligated to pay. The timing will vary based on how the property or service is procured. For example:

- Where a written contract is executed, such as an office lease or a loan agreement, the expense is incurred when the contract is signed.
- Where there is no written contract, the expense is incurred when a verbal agreement is reached. Generally, this is when property or services are ordered or, for retail purchases, at the point of sale.

For a non-monetary contribution of property or services, the expense is incurred when the campaign accepts the contribution.

## Who can pay expenses?

Only the financial agent can pay nomination campaign expenses in most cases. There are three exceptions:

- The nomination contestant can pay their personal expenses, travel and living expenses, and litigation expenses.
- Any other person or group can pay the contestant's personal expenses or litigation expenses, with the contestant's consent.
- A person authorized in writing by the financial agent can pay petty expenses for office supplies, postage, courier services and other incidentals from the petty cash. (The financial agent must set the maximum amount that may be paid.)

## Property or services provided by the registered party or a registered association

Contestants may receive property or services from the registered party or any registered association of the party. These can be received as non-monetary transfers if they are offered equally to all contestants or can be paid by the contestant's campaign.

If the property or service is being paid by the contestant's campaign, a copy of the original supplier invoice as well as the invoice from the party or association must be included with the contestant's return. The documentation should confirm the amount reported in the contestant's return.

### **Example**

The registered association in the contestant's riding offers to sublet its office to the campaign for three months. The association charges the campaign the same amount as its own rental cost for the period. The association must send an invoice to the contestant's campaign together with its original rental agreement. The rent paid by the contestant is a nomination campaign expense. The registered association has to report the income in its financial statement at the end of the fiscal year.

## Invoices

All invoices have to be submitted to the financial agent.

The nomination contestant should send invoices for their personal expenses, travel and living expenses, or litigation expenses to the financial agent only after preparing the *Nomination Contestant's Statement of Expenses*.

If an expense of \$50 or more was incurred as an incidence of the contest, the financial agent must keep a copy of the supplier invoice (or other document evidencing the expense) setting out the nature of the expense. Once it is paid, the financial agent must also keep the proof of payment.

If an expense of less than \$50 was incurred as an incidence of the contest, the financial agent must keep a record of the nature of the expense. Once it is paid, the financial agent must also keep the proof of payment.

For payments made from the petty cash, the person who is authorized to pay petty expenses has to provide the financial agent with the documents mentioned above within three months after the date the petty expense was incurred.

## 9. Nomination Contest Expenses

*This chapter explains what nomination contest expenses are, describes how limits are calculated and applied, and gives examples of typical nomination contest expenses. It covers the following topics:*

- *What are nomination contest expenses?*
- *Who can incur and pay nomination contest expenses?*
- *Limits on nomination contest expenses*
- *Typical nomination contest expenses (advertising expenses, Internet communications, voter outreach, and expenses related to the campaign office and workers)*
- *Use of parliamentary resources (staff and websites)*

### What are nomination contest expenses?

A nomination contest expense is:

- any cost incurred or non-monetary contribution received by a nomination contestant to the extent that the property or service that the cost was incurred for, or that was received as a non-monetary contribution, is used to directly promote or oppose a nomination contestant during a nomination contest
- any non-monetary transfer received from a registered party or a registered association of the registered party to the extent that the property or services are used to directly promote or oppose a nomination contestant during a nomination contest

The concept of “directly promoting or opposing a nomination contestant” is not limited to advertising. It is to be understood broadly and includes expenses for running a campaign, such as office rental, telecommunication services, etc.

This means that most expenses reasonably incurred for property or a service used during the contest period are nomination contest expenses, unless they:

- fall into another category (see an overview in Chapter 8, **Nomination Campaign Expenses**)
- are non-promotional fundraising expenses (see Chapter 7, **Fundraising**)

The nomination contest period starts on the contest start date and ends on the selection date as indicated in the nomination contest report provided by the registered association or the registered party that held the contest.

### Who can incur and pay nomination contest expenses?

The financial agent and the nomination contestant can incur nomination contest expenses.

Only the financial agent is allowed to pay nomination contest expenses, other than petty expenses paid from the petty cash with the financial agent’s written authorization.

## Limits on nomination contest expenses

The *Canada Elections Act* imposes a limit on nomination contest expenses to facilitate a level playing field among contestants.

The limit applies to each contestant's nomination contest expenses in the electoral district in which they are seeking the party's endorsement. The limit applies to the total of all nomination contest expenses, whether paid, unpaid, or accepted as non-monetary contributions or transfers.

The nomination contestant and the financial agent have to respect the nomination contest expenses limit. They cannot enter into contracts or incur nomination contest expenses that exceed the limit.

It is highly advisable to agree on an expense approval process; this will help ensure that the nomination contestant and the financial agent are informed and co-operate when incurring expenses. An expense approval process and a campaign budget created at the beginning of the campaign help to manage finances effectively.

## How are the limits calculated?

The limit allowed for a nomination contestant in an electoral district is:

- 20% of the limit that was allowed for a candidate's election expenses during the last general election in that electoral district (excluding any increase for a longer election period), or
- in any other case, the amount determined by Elections Canada

The registered party or registered association holding the nomination contest informs the contestants about the nomination contest expenses limit. The information is also available on the Elections Canada website in the Political Entities section.

**Note:** The *Canada Elections Act* does not provide for a reimbursement of nomination contest expenses.

## Typical nomination contest expenses

The following are examples of typical nomination contest expenses.

### Advertising expenses

#### General rule

Advertising is the transmission to the public of an advertising message promoting or opposing a nomination contestant.

Expenses incurred for advertising conducted during the nomination contest period, including the cost of production and distribution, are to be reported as nomination contest expenses.

#### Examples

1. The financial agent purchases flyers before the contest starts and mails them to party members in the riding during the contest period to promote the contestant. The expense for the flyers—including their design, printing and distribution—is a nomination contest expense.
2. The contestant's campaign hires a media firm to place banners on websites and social media platforms during the contest period, directing users to a video posted on YouTube. The placement cost for the banners is a nomination contest expense, together with all expenses related to designing and developing the video.

#### Pre-election period: partisan advertising and information to be held in an online registry

Nomination contests will sometimes take place in the pre-election period of a fixed-date general election, starting from June 30 until the election period begins. A nomination contestant's advertising during that period may fall into the category of partisan advertising.

Partisan advertising is the transmission to the public during the pre-election period of an advertising message that promotes or opposes the election of a nomination contestant. Advertising is not partisan advertising if it promotes or opposes a contestant only by taking a position on an issue with which the contestant is associated. However, it will be partisan advertising if the ad promotes or opposes the contestant in any other way, including by showing a logo or linking to a web page that identifies the contestant.

If conducted online, partisan advertising may be subject to registry requirements.

Regulated online platforms (that is, websites or applications that meet certain criteria for monthly visitors or users) have to maintain a registry of political advertising. When a nomination contestant's campaign purchases partisan advertising online, to make sure it complies with the law, it should:

- inform the platform that it is conducting political advertising
- ask if the platform is regulated by the rules in the *Canada Elections Act* and needs information for its registry (unless the platform has already made this clear)

If the platform is regulated, the campaign must provide it with:

- an electronic copy of the advertisement
- the name of the financial agent who authorized its distribution on the platform

The platform must publish this information in its registry from the day the ad runs until two years after election day.

**Note:** If the campaign pays a social media influencer to post a partisan advertising message on the influencer's account in a pre-election period, the advertising does not have to be captured in an online platform registry.

## Websites and web content

Nomination contestants often create websites and social media accounts specifically for their campaigns, either during or in the lead up to a contest. Pre-existing websites and social media accounts might also be used to promote the contestant during the contest period.

The following table shows when a website or web content that remains online during the contest period is a nomination contest expense, taking into account the purpose of the material.

Type of website or web content	Nomination contest expense
Campaign's website and social media accounts	<p>The expenses incurred for the campaign website itself—including its design, hosting and maintenance—are nomination contest expenses.</p> <p>Expenses to produce and distribute content on the website or social media accounts are also nomination contest expenses. Because the site and accounts exist for the purpose of the campaign, all content that is online during the contest period counts as a nomination contest expense, regardless of when it was posted.</p> <p>If content was produced entirely or in part using volunteer labour, only the actual expense incurred by the contestant is a nomination contest expense. This may include materials, equipment rental or paid labour.</p>
Contestant's personal website and social media accounts	<p>A contestant's pre-existing personal website is a nomination contest expense if it is used for the purpose of the campaign. Elections Canada will accept the current commercial value of an equivalent website as the commercial value of a pre-existing website.</p> <p>Expenses to produce and distribute content on the website or social media accounts for the purpose of the campaign are also nomination contest expenses. Pre-existing content is only an expense if it was posted for the purpose of the campaign or promoted during the campaign.</p> <p>The expenses are also non-monetary contributions from the contestant. However, if the contestant did not incur any expenses for the website or web content, there is no expense or contribution to report.</p>
Parliamentarian's website or social media accounts	See the <b>Use of parliamentary resources</b> section below.

### Examples

1. A group page has been created for the contestant on a free social networking site. Volunteers manage the page and post articles related to the nomination contestant. As long as the volunteers are helping outside their regular working hours and are not self-employed in the business of managing social media, the volunteer labour is not an expense.
2. The financial agent hires a media firm to post content on the contestant's website, promoting the campaign. All expenses related to designing, developing and posting the content are nomination contest expenses.

3. The contestant has a personal X account and continues to post from that account during the contest period. Sometimes she posts about her campaign. If the contestant is posting for free, there is no expense to report.

#### *OGI reference*

For a detailed discussion of a similar topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2018-04, *Pre-existing Web Content of Registered Parties in an Election*, on the Elections Canada website.

## **Voter contact calling services**

Voter contact calling services are services involving the making of calls during an election period for any purpose related to an election, including:

- promoting or opposing a nomination contestant or any position on an issue with which a contestant is associated
- encouraging electors to vote or to refrain from voting
- providing information about the election, including information about voting hours and the location of polling stations
- gathering information about how electors voted in past elections, or will vote in the election, or their view on a nomination contestant or on any issue with which a contestant is associated
- raising funds for a nomination contestant

Expenses incurred for voter calls conducted during the election period, including the cost of production and distribution, are nomination contest expenses.

**Note:** The nomination contestant's campaign must register with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) if it uses a calling service provider or automatic dialing-announcing device to make voter calls during an election period. Refer to the CRTC's Voter Contact Registry web page for details.

## **Mass text messaging**

When a nomination contestant's campaign sends mass text messages during the contest period to promote or oppose a contestant, the expenses incurred for production and distribution are nomination contest expenses.

While they may result in nomination contest expenses, text messages sent by a contestant's campaign are generally not regulated by the CRTC under Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation. The messages are covered only if they are commercial in nature, excluding a text whose primary purpose is to solicit a contribution. This means that text messages promoting or opposing a contestant, asking for an elector's vote or asking for a contribution are not subject to CRTC rules.

There is also no requirement to identify the sender under the *Canada Elections Act*, though we recommend it as a best practice.

**Note:** For more information on text messaging, please refer to the CRTC's web page entitled "Frequently Asked Questions About Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation."

## Voter databases, surveys and research

### Voter databases

An expense that a nomination contestant's campaign incurs for the use of voter database software during a contest period is a nomination contest expense. The table below shows how to determine the nomination contest expense, based on the software arrangement.

The campaign must also report an "other" nomination campaign expense if it incurs expenses to use voter database software outside the contest period.

If the registered party or a registered association offers a contestant access to its voter database software, either the access must be offered equally to all contestants or the contestant must be invoiced for the expense to avoid an irregular transfer.

Software arrangement	Political entity	Nomination contest expense
Political entity has an ongoing contract with a supplier for use of the database software	Contestant with their own software	Amount charged by the supplier for ongoing use, prorated for the contest period
	Contestant using the registered party's software	Amount charged by the supplier for additional access per contestant, prorated for the contest period
	Contestant using a registered association's software	Amount charged by the supplier to the association for ongoing use, prorated for the contest period
Political entity owns the database software outright (customized or off-the-shelf solution)	Contestant with their own software	Commercial value of renting a similar asset for the contest period* or actual purchase price, whichever is less
	Contestant using the registered party's software	Commercial value of the party renting additional access per contestant during the contest period (building on the commercial value of the party renting software for itself)*
	Contestant using a registered association's software	Commercial value of renting a similar asset for the contest period* or actual purchase price, whichever is less
*The commercial value is the lowest amount that a supplier would normally charge for the use of database software with equivalent functions (e.g. generates canvassing lists) and capacity (e.g. holds information on 10,000 electors) over the contest period. A quote should be obtained from a subscription-based software supplier.		

### Examples

1. A nomination contestant's campaign subscribes to a voter database service from June 1 to August 30 (92 days) in a contest year at a cost of \$500 per month. The contest period runs for 30 days during that time. The financial agent reports a nomination contest expense of \$489.13 (3 months x \$500 / 92 days x 30 days) for use of the database software during the contest period. The remaining amount, \$1,010.87, is reported as an other nomination campaign expense for days outside the contest period.
2. A nomination contestant's campaign creates a voter database using off-the-shelf software at a cost of \$100 before the contest period. The financial agent reports a nomination contest expense of \$100 for use of the database software during the contest period.

## Surveys and research

Whether an expense for a survey or research is a nomination contest expense depends on when it was conducted. The date that a campaign conducts a survey or research is the date that it receives the data. If the contestant's campaign conducts a survey or research:

- during the contest period, it is a nomination contest expense
- outside the contest period, it is not a nomination contest expense but an other nomination campaign expense, even if the data is used during the contest period

Expenses to add data to a database and clean the data during the contest period, and for system support during the contest period, are also nomination contest expenses.

### **Examples**

1. A nomination contestant's campaign engages Election Polling Inc. to conduct a survey of party members in the riding for \$1,500. The campaign receives the survey data during the contest period. The financial agent reports a nomination contest expense of \$1,500.
2. Before a contest period, a nomination contestant's campaign pays a data broker \$5,000 for two sets of data. The campaign receives the first set immediately and the second set after the contest period starts. The financial agent reports an other nomination campaign expense of \$2,500 and a nomination contest expense of \$2,500.

## Data from an external source

When a nomination contestant's campaign receives data for free or at a discount from an external source, it is accepting a contribution.

An external source is a person or group other than:

- the registered party and its registered associations, if the data is offered equally to all contestants
- a person providing volunteer labour to the nomination contestant (see **Volunteer labour is not a contribution** in Chapter 3, **Contributions**)

If an external source is an ineligible contributor or an individual who would exceed their contribution limit, the campaign must be invoiced for the data at commercial value. The commercial value is the lowest amount charged by a business for a dataset with a similar number of entries and data fields and with a similar level of quality and currency.

If the external source is not in the business of selling data and collected data specifically for the nomination contestant, the invoiced amount must be the actual expenses incurred.

### **Example**

During a contest period, an advocacy group offers a nomination contestant's campaign its members list. The list is a spreadsheet with names, addresses and phone numbers of 100 people who support an issue that the contestant is associated with. The advocacy group is an ineligible contributor, so the contestant's campaign cannot accept this list for free. However, the campaign determines that an equivalent dataset would be sold by a broker for \$500 and asks the advocacy group to invoice that amount. The financial agent pays and reports a nomination contest expense of \$500 for the data.

### **OGI reference**

For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2022-03, *Voter Databases and Election Expenses*, on the Elections Canada website.

## Capital assets

Under the *Canada Elections Act*, a capital asset is any property with a commercial value of more than \$200 that is normally used outside a nomination contest other than for the purposes of a contest (for example, computers, software, printing equipment and furniture).

If the contestant's campaign purchases a capital asset and uses it during the contest period, the nomination contest expense is the lower of the commercial value of renting a similar asset for the same period or the purchase price.

For non-capital assets such as office supplies, the purchase price must be recorded as a nomination contest expense.

Capital assets might be received in the form of a contribution from an individual. In that case, the commercial value of the asset is a non-monetary contribution. If the asset was used during the contest period, the nomination contest expense is the lower of the commercial value of renting a similar asset for the same period or the purchase price. The remaining amount, if any, is an other nomination campaign expense.

**Note:** Amortization may not be used as a method of calculating the commercial value of the use of the asset.

**Note:** Capital assets acquired during the campaign must be disposed of at the end of the campaign. They must be sold at fair market value and the funds transferred to the candidate affiliated with the party in the electoral district in which the contest was held, to the registered association that held the contest or to the registered party. The assets themselves cannot be transferred.

### Examples

1. The contestant's campaign rents two computers from a local office supplier for \$500 during the contest period. The rental agreement is for two months (61 days) and extends 15 days past the end of the contest period. The cost of renting the computers during the contest period is a nomination contest expense, and it is calculated as follows:  $\$500 / 61 \times (61 - 15) = \$377.05$ . The remaining amount, \$122.95, is recorded as an other nomination campaign expense.
2. The financial agent pays \$100 at a garage sale for the purchase of a printer for the campaign. The commercial value of renting a similar printer during the contest period would have been \$150. The financial agent records \$100 as a nomination contest expense since the purchase price, \$100, is lower than the rental rate.
3. A volunteer uses his personal laptop to do work for the campaign during the contest period. The commercial value of renting a similar laptop for the 40-day contest period would be \$80. This is a non-monetary contribution from the volunteer. However, because the amount is \$200 or less and the volunteer is not in the business of providing electronics, the non-monetary contribution is deemed to be nil and there is no expense to report.

## Rental of a campaign office

The campaign may rent an office for the nomination contestant's campaign. Only the portion of the rent used during the contest period is a nomination contest expense. The portion of the rent used before and after the contest period is an other nomination campaign expense.

### **Example**

The campaign rents an office on March 1, two weeks before the contest period starts. The selection date is April 30. The rental agreement is for two months and the rent is \$300 a month.

The nomination contest expense to be recorded is the rent for the month of April, plus the rent for 17 days in March:  $\$300 + (17 / 31 \times \$300) = \$464.52$ . The remaining amount, \$135.48, is recorded as an other nomination campaign expense.

## Installation and other office expenses

The expense incurred to install items used during the contest period is a nomination contest expense even if the installation takes place before the contest is called, as long as the item itself is a nomination contest expense. Installation expenses cannot be prorated.

Other office expenses include the cost of buying office supplies, such as paper or toner cartridges, or supplying refreshments during meetings.

### **Example**

The campaign pays \$500 in labour for a worker to install telephones, computers and printers in the office before the contest starts. The full \$500 is a nomination contest expense because the installed equipment is used during the contest period.

The campaign also pays a monthly rate of \$200 for telephone usage. The prorated cost for days during the contest period is a nomination contest expense, while the prorated cost for days outside the contest period is an other nomination campaign expense.

## Cell phones

A nomination contestant's campaign might provide the contestant and workers with cell phones for use during the contest period. If the campaign supplies the phones, the nomination contest expense is the cost of the cell phones and monthly usage plans, prorated for the length of the contest period, plus any additional fees.

If personal cell phones are used during the contest period, there are two ways that the expenses may be accounted for:

- Contestants or workers may ask the campaign to reimburse expenses that they incurred because of the contest. These costs are nomination contest expenses for days during the contest period.
- Contestants or workers may make a non-monetary contribution of the use of their phone. If the incremental expenses that they incurred because of the contest are \$200 or less (for example, additional fees per monthly phone bill) and the person is not in the business of providing cell phone service, then the contribution amount is deemed to be nil and no expense is reported.

### **Examples**

1. The nomination contestant's campaign rents cell phones for its workers at a cost of \$30 per day over a 40-day contest period. The rental company charges a usage fee per transaction. The nomination contest expense is \$1,200 (40 x \$30) plus any transaction fees incurred on days during the contest period. Any costs for days outside the contest period are other nomination campaign expenses.
2. Ling, a contestant, uses her own cell phone for campaigning during a 40-day contest period. On top of her usual monthly fee, she incurs an extra \$100 for data overage while campaigning door to door. Because the incremental expense that she incurred for the contest is \$200 or less, Ling could make a non-monetary contribution of the data overage, and it would be deemed nil. However, the campaign agrees to reimburse the \$100 and reports it as a nomination contest expense.

## **Campaign workers and related expenses**

The nomination contestant's campaign may have to report various nomination contest expenses related to their paid workers and volunteers: incidental expenses, travel and living expenses, and compensation.

### **Incidental expenses of campaign workers**

Whether campaign workers are volunteering or being paid, some incidental expenses related to their work, such as for local transportation and refreshments, are nomination contest expenses.

If a worker pays for incidentals and is not reimbursed, the amount is a non-monetary contribution and an expense. However, if the amount is \$200 or less and the individual is not in the business of providing that property or service, the non-monetary contribution is deemed to be nil and no expense has to be reported. Each incidental expense is measured individually against the \$200 threshold to determine whether the contribution is deemed nil.

The campaign may provide gift cards to its workers specifically to cover incidental expenses, such as gas and food, during the contest period. These gift cards are reported as nomination contest expenses, not as gifts to workers. To support the expenses, workers who make a purchase of \$50 or more with a gift card should get an invoice (or other document evidencing the expense) showing the date, amount and items purchased, while workers who make a purchase of less than \$50 with a gift card should record the date, amount and nature of the expense.

### **Examples**

1. Late one night during the contest period, volunteers help in the campaign office to prepare hundreds of flyers for mailing. A volunteer orders pizza and pays the pizza delivery person \$85 with their personal credit card. The campaign reimburses the volunteer a few weeks later. The amount of \$85 is a nomination contest expense.
2. A volunteer is driving around in her own car to deliver flyers during the contest period. She pays \$30 to fill up her car. If the amount is not reimbursed by the campaign, the volunteer made a non-monetary contribution. However, because the amount is less than \$200, the non-monetary contribution is deemed to be nil and no expense has to be reported.
3. The campaign gives 10 volunteers a \$50 gift card each to buy meals while they help during the contest period. The volunteers use their gift cards to make multiple purchases under \$50. They record the date, amount and nature of each expense, and give these records to the financial agent. The financial agent submits the records, along with the invoice and proof of payment from the original purchase of the gift cards, as supporting documents with the financial return.

## Travel and living expenses of campaign workers

Campaign workers, whether volunteering or being paid, might travel to help at campaign events during the contest period.

No matter when the travel happens, if the work performed at the destination is a nomination contest expense, the travel expense in both directions is a nomination contest expense. This includes return trips after the selection date.

Temporary lodging and meals (or per diems) are also a nomination contest expense but only for days during the contest period.

It is advisable to have a written agreement or other documentation about a campaign worker's travel and living expenses to support all amounts being reported. In the absence of evidence, the payments may be considered an inappropriate use of campaign funds that would need to be returned.

When a worker is sharing transportation with the nomination contestant, some of the cost may be a nomination contest expense and some may be the contestant's travel and living expense. See Chapter 11, **Nomination Contestant's Travel and Living Expenses**.

Travel and living expense of campaign workers	Timing	Reported as
Travel to and from destination	Days during or outside contest period	Nomination contest expense
Lodging and meals	Days during contest period	Nomination contest expense
	Days outside contest period	Other nomination campaign expense

**Note:** If a worker pays for travel and living related to the campaign and is not reimbursed, the amount is a non-monetary contribution and a reportable expense. However, if the amount is \$200 or less and the individual is not in the business of providing that property or service, the non-monetary contribution is deemed to be nil and no expense is reported.

**Note:** If workers have travelled to a particular destination for a purpose unrelated to the contest and help with the campaign while there, only incremental expenses incurred to help are nomination contest expenses.

### Examples

1. The campaign rents a bus to transport volunteers to one of the nomination contestant's speaking events during the contest period. It spends \$600 on the rental and another \$100 on refreshments for the volunteers. The \$700 is a nomination contest expense.
2. A campaign worker in a remote part of the riding travels to campaign headquarters on contest day to help with get-out-the-vote activities. The contestant's campaign paid for the train ticket there, and the worker has offered to pay for the return trip after contest day. The expense in each direction is \$250. The campaign records a nomination contest expense of \$500, even though the return trip is after the contest period, and a non-monetary contribution of \$250 from the worker.

## Compensation of workers

The campaign may choose to pay compensation to the financial agent or other campaign workers, including paying volunteers for part of their work.

If a campaign worker is not receiving regular pay (i.e. a salary or hourly wage), please see information on paying volunteers for part of their work under **Volunteer labour is not a contribution** in Chapter 3, **Contributions**.

For work performed during the contest period, compensation is almost always a nomination contest expense. Before the contest period, it is occasionally a nomination contest expense. It is never a nomination contest expense after the contest period. The table below provides examples.

An agreement must be in place before the work is performed. Once an agreement is in place, the campaign is liable for the related expenses.

An invoice is required for payments of \$50 and over, setting out the nature of the expense. Because compensation expenses can vary widely, it is advisable to have a written agreement or other documentation about a campaign worker's compensation to support all amounts being reported. Failure to adequately support the expenses may result in follow-up enquiries by Elections Canada auditors. In the absence of evidence, the payments may be considered an inappropriate use of campaign funds that would need to be returned.

Timing	Compensated work: examples	Reported as	Why
<b>Before contest period</b>	Planning, budgeting, creating contact lists	Other nomination campaign expense	Research-style activities are nomination contest expenses only during the contest period
	Canvassing homes, distributing flyers one week before the contest period	Other nomination campaign expense	The communication has been fully transmitted before the contest period
	Installing signs, designing flyers for use during the contest period	Nomination contest expense	The communication will be used during the contest period to promote/oppose a contestant
<b>During contest period</b>	General campaign work	Nomination contest expense	Most work during the contest period is done to promote/oppose a contestant
	Processing contributions	Other nomination campaign expense	Certain fundraising work is excepted from nomination contest expenses (see Chapter 7)
<b>After contest period</b>	Any work	Other nomination campaign expense	Work done after the contest period does not promote/oppose a contestant during a contest period

### Example

Leslie, a nomination contestant, is paying her financial agent \$500 for work done before the contest period, including budgeting, signing contracts and preparing lists of volunteers. The \$500 is an other nomination campaign expense. A portion of the \$500 could be a nomination contest expense if the output of the work, such as a campaign website, voter contact script or launch party, is tied to a specific activity during the contest period. Leslie is paying her financial agent another \$1,000 for general work during the contest period. The \$1,000 is a nomination contest expense.

## High-profile campaigners and invited guests

Parliamentarians, candidates or celebrities will sometimes campaign with a nomination contestant at in-person events. The contestant might also invite a high-profile guest to play an official role in an event.

When it comes to expenses, high-profile campaigners and guests are treated in the same way as campaign workers. This means their travel and living expenses associated with the event are nomination contest expenses. Any compensation paid to them (or the commercial value of a service that they are not eligible to provide as a volunteer) is also a nomination contest expense.

If they have travelled to a particular destination for purposes unrelated to the contest and help with the campaign while there, only incremental expenses incurred to help are nomination contest expenses.

Some celebrities charge appearance fees to take part in events, though as individuals they often make the personal choice to participate for free in other events. As with any individual, if a celebrity is self-employed as a speaker but chooses to express their personal political views at a nomination contestant's event without being paid, they may do so without making a non-monetary contribution.

However, there is a difference when the celebrity is asked to provide a service other than speaking or appearing, such as participating as an emcee or a performer. In that case, the commercial value of the service is a nomination contest expense, whether paid by the contestant or contributed by the celebrity.

Note that a celebrity's participation in a contestant's event is not captured as a third party partisan activity, since the contestant organizes the event and reports the expenses.

### **Examples**

1. The nomination contestant invites Faiza, a celebrity who sometimes charges for speaking engagements, to give a speech at a campaign rally. Faiza supports the contestant and can choose to speak for free. She does not have to charge for her participation or make a contribution of its commercial value. Faiza did not have to travel to attend the event, and the campaign incurred no additional expenses for her to participate. There is no contribution or nomination contest expense to report for her participation.
2. Clydie G, a famous Canadian musician, is touring during the contest period and plays a show in Vancouver. The next day, he flies to Victoria to join a nomination contestant on stage at a rally and performs a song. He then flies back to continue his tour. The cost of the round-trip flight is \$400. It is a nomination contest expense that must be paid by the contestant or contributed by Clydie G. For the performance itself, because Clydie G is self-employed as a musician, he cannot volunteer the service. The commercial value of the performance is a nomination contest expense that the contestant must pay or Clydie G must contribute.
3. A senator plans to go door-knocking with a nomination contestant from her home province. The senator was already in the province, but she pays \$200 in gas to drive to the contestant's riding. This is a non-monetary contribution from the senator. Because it is \$200 or less, it is deemed nil and no expense is reported.

## Security expenses reported as nomination contest expenses

A nomination contestant's campaign might incur mandatory or discretionary security expenses in relation to the contest. There is some flexibility in how these expenses are reported.

An expense for general campaign security may be categorized as:

- a nomination contest expense (subject to the expenses limit), or
- an other nomination campaign expense (not subject to the expenses limit)

This includes security for the campaign office, events and campaign workers. It includes both physical security and cybersecurity.

If security expenses are incurred for the contestant's own security or the security of their family, see **Other personal expenses** in Chapter 10, **Nomination Contestant's Personal Expenses**.

If the campaign intends to report a security expense as an other nomination campaign expense, see **Security expenses reported as other campaign expenses** in Chapter 13, **Other Nomination Campaign Expenses**.

### Example

Mylène, a nomination contestant, wants to put in place basic security for the contest. Her campaign installs an alarm system at the campaign office (\$800 for installation and monitoring) and cybersecurity monitoring on the office network (\$1,500 for 10 users) during the contest period. The financial agent is not concerned about the impact of this security on the nomination contest expenses limit, and he reports a total of \$2,300 in nomination contest expenses. The expenses are subject to the limit.

### OGI reference

For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2024-05, *Security Expenses of Registered Parties, Candidates and Contestants*, on the Elections Canada website.

## Use of parliamentary resources

Nomination contestants who are parliamentarians might sometimes make use of parliamentary resources, such as websites and office staff, for their nomination campaigns.

The use of parliamentary resources during the contest period is a nomination contest expense. If the expense is not paid by the campaign, the use of the resource is a non-monetary contribution from the parliamentarian and is subject to the contribution limit.

**Note:** The House of Commons' *Members By-law* should be consulted as it may place limitations on certain uses of parliamentary resources (available on the Parliament of Canada website).

### OGI reference

For a detailed discussion of a related topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2020-04, *The Use of Member of Parliament Resources Outside of an Election Period*, on the Elections Canada website.

## Staff of a parliamentarian

If employees on the staff of a parliamentarian engage in political activities to support the parliamentarian as a nomination contestant during the contest period, the salaries of these persons are nomination contest expenses and, if not paid by the campaign, are non-monetary contributions from the parliamentarian.

However, if the employees work on the contestant's campaign outside their normal working hours or are on unpaid leave (or paid, if the leave was earned under regular terms of employment that do not specify leave for the purpose of helping a political entity), their involvement is volunteer labour and is therefore neither a nomination contest expense nor a non-monetary contribution.

## Website and social media accounts of a parliamentarian

Nomination contestants may have websites and social media accounts that are designed and maintained using parliamentary resources.

If the nomination contestant uses the website for the purpose of their campaign, its commercial value—including design, maintenance and hosting—is a nomination contest expense. Elections Canada will accept the current commercial value of an equivalent website as the commercial value of a pre-existing website.

Expenses to produce and distribute content on the website or social media accounts for the purpose of the campaign are also nomination contest expenses. Pre-existing content is only an expense if it was posted for the purpose of the campaign or promoted during the campaign.

## Parliamentary database of a member of Parliament

A member of Parliament who is running as a nomination contestant might use information on electors from their parliamentary database to promote their nomination. The campaign has to report the commercial value of the data as a personal contribution from the member, subject to their contribution limit, unless it is paid by the campaign. It is also a nomination contest expense or an other nomination campaign expense, depending on when the data was shared with the campaign.

The commercial value is the lowest amount charged by a business for a dataset with a similar number of entries and data fields and with a similar level of quality and currency. Any compensation paid to staff from the parliamentary budget to do campaign database work must also be reported.

### **Example**

A nomination contestant, who is a member of Parliament, arranges for data to be transferred from their parliamentary database to their campaign database before the contest period starts. This is a personal non-monetary contribution from the member to their campaign. The financial agent reports the commercial value of an equivalent list sold by a broker as the amount of the contribution and as an other nomination campaign expense. **Note:** The House of Commons *Members By-law* should be consulted as it may place limitations on this type of activity.



## 10. Nomination Contestant's Personal Expenses

*This chapter discusses the nomination contestant's personal expenses and reporting requirements. It covers the following topics:*

- *What are the contestant's personal expenses?*
- *Who can incur and pay the contestant's personal expenses?*
- *Typical personal expenses (care and disability expenses, other personal expenses)*

### What are the contestant's personal expenses?

Personal expenses of the nomination contestant include the following types of expenses listed in the *Canada Elections Act* and reasonably incurred in relation to the nomination contest, both during and outside the contest period:

- childcare expenses
- expenses related to the provision of care for a person with a physical or mental incapacity for whom the contestant normally provides such care
- in the case of a contestant who has a disability, additional personal expenses that are related to the disability
- other personal expenses—that is, all personal expenses other than those in the preceding categories, including personal security expenses

The contestant's personal expenses do not count against the nomination contest expenses limit.

**Note:** The contestant's personal expenses must be new expenses or increases in normally incurred expenses. In other words, they are expenses that the contestant incurred only because there was a nomination contest.

## Who can incur and pay the contestant's personal expenses?

Only the nomination contestant or the financial agent can incur the contestant's personal expenses.

Anyone can pay the contestant's personal expenses. They can be paid:

- by the financial agent from the campaign bank account
- by the contestant using their own funds, including funds provided by another person or group for that purpose
- by any person or group directly, using their own funds, with the contestant's consent

The following table explains different scenarios for paying personal expenses other than from the campaign bank account.

Payment scenario and expense category	What to keep in mind
Contestant pays <b>any personal expense</b> and intends to be repaid by the campaign	The campaign has to repay the contestant within 36 months after the selection date (or election day, if the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it). After that date, the repayment cannot be made without prior authorization from Elections Canada or a judge.
Contestant or others pay <b>care or disability</b> expenses and do not intend to be repaid	The contestant, other person or group makes the payment without going through the campaign bank account. It is not a contribution but must still be reported in the contestant's return.
Contestant or others pay <b>other personal</b> expenses and do not intend to be repaid	Same as above. The campaign can accept unlimited payments for these expenses. (Note: This rule is different when it comes to a candidate's other personal expenses, which are subject to a limit.)

## Typical personal expenses

The following are examples of typical personal expenses that the nomination contestant might incur in relation to their campaign.

### Childcare

The nomination contestant might engage in campaign activities during the daytime, evenings or weekends. If the contestant would normally be at home caring for a child at these times, the expense for additional childcare incurred as an incidence of the contest is a personal expense of the contestant.

Childcare may include daycare, babysitting services, day camps and tutoring, when these expenses have been incurred only because of a nomination contest.

#### *Examples*

1. Raffi, a nomination contestant, has officially launched his campaign for a nomination contest that will be held later in the year. He has sole care of his child on weekends. When he goes canvassing one Saturday, Raffi leaves his child with a babysitter for three hours. The expense for the babysitter is a personal expense of the contestant.
2. Santina, a nomination contestant, has a child who is normally in daycare five days a week. This care continues during the contest period. As there is no additional cost because of the contest, there is no personal expense to report.
3. Marvin, a nomination contestant, normally helps his child with homework in the evening. His campaign activities prevent him from providing this support during the contest, so he hires a tutor for two nights a week. The expense for this tutoring is a personal expense of the contestant.

### Care for a person with a physical or mental incapacity

If the nomination contestant normally provides care for a person with a physical or mental incapacity, additional care might be needed for the times when the contestant is engaged in campaign activities. The expense for additional care is a personal expense of the contestant.

### Expenses related to a disability

In the case of a nomination contestant with a disability, the additional expenses related to the disability that are reasonably incurred as an incidence of the contest are personal expenses of the contestant.

#### *Examples*

1. Ana, a contestant, has a disability that requires the services of a caregiver when she travels. The caregiver accompanies Ana on trips in the riding. The expenses of this additional care are personal expenses of the contestant.
2. Boris, a contestant, has a disability that requires him to use accessible forms of transportation. He regularly travels from home to his campaign office and to campaign events using accessible taxis. The expenses for the taxis are personal expenses of the contestant rather than travel and living expenses.

## Other personal expenses

This category includes personal expenses other than those in the preceding categories.

This is the category in which to report items such as costs of dry cleaning and personal grooming. All the items reported must be for expenses that the contestant would not normally incur if there was no nomination contest.

### Personal security

Security expenses incurred to protect the contestant or their family in relation to a contest are also other personal expenses. This includes close protection and home security, such as alarm systems, security guards and secure renovations.

There are two circumstances in which security expenses may not have to be reported:

- Security expenses paid by a legislative or government body are not reported, unless the contestant receives a secure service that is also available without the security element. In that case, the commercial value of the unsecured service is reported as an expense.
- Contestants who regularly use private security outside a contest only have to report the additional security expenses that they incur because of the contest.

**Note:** On an exceptional basis, contestants may report general security that protects both them and others outside their family (for example, campaign workers) as an other personal expense. This is possible if the security is in place primarily for their own protection.

### Example

Clarice, a nomination contestant, is uneasy about online threats against her early in the contest period. Clarice's campaign installs an alarm system at her home (\$800 for installation and monitoring). The campaign hires a personal security guard for Clarice while she travels in the riding and attends events (\$2,400 for 30 hours). The financial agent reports a total of \$3,200 in other personal expenses. These expenses are not subject to the nomination contest expenses limit, and they do not have to be paid from the campaign bank account.

### OGI reference

For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2024-05, *Security Expenses of Registered Parties, Candidates and Contestants*, on the Elections Canada website.

## 11. Nomination Contestant's Travel and Living Expenses

*This chapter discusses the nomination contestant's travel and living expenses and reporting requirements. It covers the following topics:*

- *What are the contestant's travel and living expenses? What are not?*
- *Who can incur and pay the contestant's travel and living expenses?*
- *Use of travel reward points*
- *Typical travel and living expenses (meals and incidentals, temporary lodging and transportation)*

### What are the contestant's travel and living expenses?

The nomination contestant's travel and living expenses include the following types of expenses reasonably incurred in relation to the contestant's campaign, both during and outside the contest period:

- transportation
- temporary lodging
- meals and incidentals

The contestant's travel and living expenses do not count against the nomination contest expenses limit.

**Note:** The contestant's travel and living expenses must be new expenses or increases in normally incurred expenses. In other words, they are expenses that the contestant incurred only because there was a nomination contest.

### What are not the contestant's travel and living expenses?

The expenses of campaign workers and volunteers accompanying the nomination contestant on trips during the contest period, or assisting the contestant during events, are not the contestant's travel and living expenses. They are nomination contest expenses subject to the limit.

See **Campaign workers and related expenses** in Chapter 9, **Nomination contest expenses**.

#### **Examples**

1. The contestant rents a car to travel in the riding and meet with voters during the contest period. The car rental and fuel costs are recorded as travel and living expenses of the contestant. The expenses for the contestant's lodging and meals during the trip are also travel and living expenses. The contestant travels with his campaign manager, who is a volunteer. The expenses associated with the campaign manager's lodging and meals during the trip are nomination contest expenses.
2. The contestant's campaign rents a bus for \$800 to transport the contestant and volunteers to an event during the contest period. The contestant could have rented a car for \$60. The campaign can choose to report \$800 as a nomination contest expense, or it can report \$60 as the contestant's travel and living expense (not subject to the limit) and the remaining \$740 as a nomination contest expense.

## Who can incur and pay the contestant's travel and living expenses?

Only the nomination contestant or the financial agent can incur the contestant's travel and living expenses.

Only the contestant or the financial agent is allowed to pay the contestant's travel and living expenses. They can be paid:

- by the financial agent from the campaign bank account
- by the contestant using their own funds

The following table explains the different scenarios for contestants paying their own travel and living expenses.

Payment scenario	What to keep in mind
Contestant pays a travel and living expense and <b>intends to be repaid</b> by the campaign	The campaign has to repay the contestant within 36 months after the selection date (or election day, if the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it). After that date, the repayment cannot be made without prior authorization from Elections Canada or a judge.
Contestant pays a travel and living expense and <b>does not intend to be repaid</b>	When contestants use their own funds to pay travel and living expenses, and they are not repaid by the campaign, it is a non-monetary contribution from the contestant to the campaign. The contribution rules apply.

## Use of travel reward points

Nomination contestants may have accumulated travel points from reward programs in their personal or professional lives. If a contestant uses the points to cover or subsidize their campaign travel expenses, they are making a contribution to the campaign. The contribution amount is the commercial value of the property or services acquired with the points.

To not have the points count as a contribution, the campaign must repay the commercial value to the contestant.

## Typical travel and living expenses

The following are examples of typical travel and living expenses that the nomination contestant might incur in relation to their campaign.

### Meals and incidentals

The nomination contestant might spend long hours away from home because of the campaign. Additional expenses for the contestant's meals and incidentals incurred as an incidence of the contest are travel and living expenses.

#### **Example**

The contestant orders a \$30 dinner while travelling in the riding because of the campaign. This is a travel and living expense of the contestant. His day-to-day meals consumed at home, on the other hand, are not a travel and living expense because meals are consumed regularly outside the contest period.

**Note:** Per diems (daily allowances) cannot be claimed as a contestant's travel and living expenses. Only actual paid expenses are considered. Per diems may be reported as a nomination contest expense if they are part of the contestant's compensation agreement.

### Temporary lodging

The nomination contestant might stay in a hotel while travelling in the electoral district for the campaign or might relocate temporarily to the electoral district if they normally live elsewhere. The expense for the contestant's temporary lodging incurred as an incidence of the contest is a travel and living expense.

### Transportation

The nomination contestant might need to travel within or outside the electoral district for the campaign, using a vehicle or other method of transportation. The expense for the contestant's transportation incurred as an incidence of the contest is a travel and living expense.

If the contestant uses a personal vehicle for travel, they may submit:

- receipts for gas and other expenses, or
- a mileage log

The mileage log should contain the following information: the date of travel, point of origin, destination, kilometres travelled and purpose of travel. We recommend that campaigns use the kilometric rates established by the National Joint Council's *Travel Directive* to calculate the expense.

**Note:** A contestant's travel claim has to be either for actual expenses, such as gas and rental costs, or else for mileage. The claim cannot be for both.



## 12. Nomination Contestant's Litigation Expenses

This chapter discusses the nomination contestant's litigation expenses and reporting requirements. It covers the following topics:

- What are the contestant's litigation expenses?
- Who can incur and pay the contestant's litigation expenses?

### What are the contestant's litigation expenses?

Litigation expenses of a nomination contestant are expenses for any of the following related to the campaign:

- an application to a judge related to the financial administration of the campaign (extension requests, relief from the obligation to file a corrected return, payment authorizations, etc.)
- an appeal or judicial review related to the requests or applications above

Litigation expenses do not count against the nomination contest expenses limit.

### Who can incur and pay the contestant's litigation expenses?

Only the nomination contestant or the financial agent can incur the contestant's litigation expenses.

Anyone can pay litigation expenses of the contestant. They can be paid:

- by the financial agent from the campaign bank account
- by the contestant using their own funds, including funds provided by another person or group for that purpose
- by any person or group directly, using their own funds, with the contestant's consent

The following table explains different scenarios for paying litigation expenses other than from the campaign bank account.

Payment source	What to keep in mind
Contestant pays a litigation expense and <b>intends to be repaid</b> by the campaign	The campaign has to repay the contestant within 36 months after the selection date (or election day, if the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it). After that date, the repayment cannot be made without prior authorization from Elections Canada or a judge.
Contestant or others pay a litigation expense and <b>do not intend to be repaid</b>	The contestant, other person or group makes the payment without going through the campaign bank account. It is not a contribution but must still be reported in the contestant's return.

**Note:** After sending the *Nomination Contestant's Statement of Expenses* to the financial agent, if the contestant or others pay a litigation expense, the contestant must send details of the expense and proof of payment to the financial agent as soon as possible. The financial agent will need to submit a revised contestant's return. See **Additional reporting** in Chapter 14, **Reporting**.



## 13. Other Nomination Campaign Expenses

*This chapter discusses nomination campaign expenses other than nomination contest, personal, travel and living, and litigation expenses. It provides examples of typical expenses in this category. It covers the following topics:*

- *What are “other” nomination campaign expenses?*
- *Who can incur and pay “other” nomination campaign expenses?*
- *Typical “other” expenses (contest fees, compensation paid to the contestant, fundraising expenses, unused inventory, loan interest outside the contest period, auditor’s fees, preparing reports and replacing damaged property)*

### What are “other” nomination campaign expenses?

Some nomination campaign expenses, which are reasonably incurred as an incidence of the contest, do not fit into any specific expense category. They are called “other” nomination campaign expenses and are not subject to a limit.

### Property or services used before or after the nomination contest

Expenses for property or services used before or after the nomination contest are nomination campaign expenses if they were incurred as an incidence of the contest. Some expenses are not part of the campaign at all. The table below can help a campaign decide how to categorize an expense.

Property or services used before the contest period starts	Property or services used after the selection date
<p>The campaign should ask:</p> <p>If the contestant had <b>not</b> planned to participate in a future contest, would the expense <b>still</b> have been incurred?</p> <p>If <b>yes</b>, there is no nomination campaign expense to report.</p> <p>If <b>no</b>, then there is a nomination campaign expense to report. If the expense is not a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal expense (Chapter 10), or</li> <li>• travel and living expense (Chapter 11)</li> </ul> <p>then it is an other nomination campaign expense.</p>	<p>The campaign should ask:</p> <p>Was the expense reasonably incurred because of the contest?</p> <p>If <b>no</b>, there is no nomination campaign expense to report.</p> <p>If <b>yes</b>, then there is a nomination campaign expense to report. If the expense is not a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal expense (Chapter 10)</li> <li>• travel and living expense (Chapter 11), or</li> <li>• litigation expense (Chapter 12)</li> </ul> <p>then it is an other nomination campaign expense.</p>

**Note:** The contest start date and selection date are indicated in the nomination contest report provided by the registered association or the registered party that held the contest.

### Examples

1. The campaign rents an office on March 1, two weeks before the contest period starts. The selection date is April 30. The rental agreement is for two months and the rent is \$300 a month. The nomination contest expense to be recorded is the rent for the month of April, plus the rent for 17 days in March:  $\$300 + (17 / 31 \times \$300) = \$464.52$ . The remaining amount, \$135.48, is recorded as an other nomination campaign expense.

2. After the selection date, the contestant invites volunteers to a thank-you party. Although the event is outside the nomination contest period, the expense is incurred as an incidence of the nomination contest. Accordingly, the expense has to be reported as an other nomination campaign expense.

## Who can incur and pay “other” nomination campaign expenses?

The financial agent and the nomination contestant can incur other nomination campaign expenses.

Only the financial agent is allowed to pay other nomination campaign expenses, other than petty expenses paid from the petty cash with the financial agent’s written authorization.

## Typical “other” expenses

### Nomination contest fees

Nomination contestants might be required to pay a contest entry fee to the registered party or the registered association organizing the contest. This fee is an other nomination campaign expense.

As an other nomination campaign expense, the contest fee must be paid by the financial agent from the campaign bank account. If the contestant pays the fee from their personal account, it must be reimbursed by the campaign or accepted as a non-monetary contribution.

If a non-refundable contest fee is \$1,000 or more, contestants will automatically have to file a nomination campaign return (unless they withdraw before the selection date).

**Note:** When a refundable compliance deposit is required, it is recorded as a transfer to the registered party or association rather than as an expense. If the deposit is refunded to the contestant, it is recorded as other cash inflow rather than as a transfer back to the contestant.

### Compensation paid to the contestant

Reasonable compensation may be paid to the nomination contestant from the campaign bank account. It is an other nomination campaign expense.

It is advisable to include a written contract or other documentation with the contestant’s return about any compensation paid. In the absence of evidence, the payment of salaries may be considered an inappropriate use of campaign funds that would need to be returned.

### Fundraising expenses

Some fundraising expenses are other nomination campaign expenses rather than nomination contest expenses, even if the fundraising takes place during the contest period. See **Fundraising expenses** in Chapter 7, **Fundraising**, for more information.

**Note:** Expenses associated with the production and distribution of advertising and promotional materials related to a fundraising activity are nomination contest expenses to the extent that the advertising and promotional materials are used during the contest period.

#### *Example*

The campaign holds a ticketed fundraising dinner during the contest period. The expenses incurred for the venue rental, food, drinks and entertainment are other nomination campaign expenses. The expenses incurred to promote the event are nomination contest expenses.

## Interest on loans before and after the contest period

Interest accrued on loans before and after the contest period is an other nomination campaign expense.

## Unused inventory

After the contest, the nomination contestant's campaign may have promotional items that were never used during the contest period and remain in inventory.

The expense for these unused items is not a nomination contest expense but an other nomination campaign expense. This is the case except for unused signs promoting the contestant, which are always treated as nomination contest expenses.

Unused inventory should be sold at commercial value. The funds are then transferred to the candidate in the electoral district, the registered party or the registered association that held the contest.

### **Example**

During the contest period, 18,000 flyers are distributed and 2,000 remain in the campaign office unused. The purchase price of the 2,000 flyers is reported as an other nomination campaign expense.

## Security expenses reported as other campaign expenses

A nomination contestant's campaign might incur mandatory or discretionary security expenses in relation to the contest. There is some flexibility in how these expenses are reported.

An expense for general campaign security may be categorized as:

- a nomination contest expense (subject to the expenses limit), or
- an other nomination campaign expense (not subject to the expenses limit)

This includes security for the campaign office, events and campaign workers. It includes both physical security and cybersecurity.

If security expenses are incurred for the contestant's own security or the security of their family, see **Other personal expenses** in Chapter 10, **Personal expenses**.

If the campaign intends to report a security expense as a nomination contest expense, see **Security expenses reported as nomination contest expenses** in Chapter 9, **Nomination Contest Expenses**.

### **Example**

Wei, a nomination contestant, is particularly worried about threats against the campaign office in the last week of the contest period. The campaign wants to hire a security guard for 24-hour surveillance of the office for 7 days (\$4,000), but it may cause Wei to exceed his nomination contest expenses limit. To prevent the limit from becoming a barrier to security, the financial agent reports the \$4,000 security expense as an other nomination campaign expense. It is not subject to the nomination contest expenses limit. It must be paid from the campaign bank account or accepted as a contribution (up to the contribution limit).

### **OGI reference**

For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2024-05, *Security Expenses of Registered Parties, Candidates and Contestants*, on the Elections Canada website.

## Auditor's fees

A nomination contestant's campaign that needs to file an auditor's report will receive a subsidy for audit fees. Elections Canada pays the subsidy directly to the auditor once it has:

- received the *Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return*, auditor's report and a copy of the auditor's invoice
- reviewed the contestant's return

The auditor's subsidy is calculated as follows:

- the amount indicated on the auditor's invoice to a maximum of \$2,583\* or 3% of the contestant's nomination contest expenses—whichever is less
- a minimum of \$430.50\*

\*These amounts have been adjusted for inflation from the base amounts of \$1,500 and \$250. They are in effect for contests with a selection date between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025.

**Note:** Campaigns that pay the auditor in full before Elections Canada issues the subsidy will need to recover the subsidy from the auditor.

**Note:** If the auditor's subsidy is less than the total fee charged by the auditor, the difference is an other nomination campaign expense, and the contestant's campaign is responsible for paying the remaining amount.

### Example

The financial agent submits the auditor's invoice for \$500 with the *Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return* and other required documents. The total amount of the contestant's nomination contest expenses is \$7,200. The auditor is entitled to receive 3% of that amount as a subsidy payment. However, 3% of \$7,200 (\$216) is less than the minimum amount payable. Accordingly, Elections Canada will authorize payment of the minimum amount of \$430.50. The financial agent pays the remaining \$69.50 to the auditor from campaign funds and reports the amount as an other nomination campaign expense.

## Preparation of reports

Expenses associated with fulfilling the various reporting obligations set out in the *Canada Elections Act* are other nomination campaign expenses.

### Example

The expense for a courier service used one month after the selection date to send the contestant's return has to be reported as an other nomination campaign expense.

## Replacement or repair of damaged property

A nomination contestant's campaign might incur unanticipated expenses during a contest period because of property damage, including to a campaign vehicle or office equipment. The expenses to repair property, or to obtain an equivalent replacement for the property or for the service it provided, are other nomination campaign expenses rather than nomination contest expenses. This is because the repair or replacement is not being used to promote the contestant beyond the original expense.

If the replacement has upgraded features that are used to further promote the contestant and has a higher commercial value than the original property, then the difference needs to be reported as a nomination contest expense.

### ***Example***

The contestant's campaign buys tablets for use during the contest period at a cost of \$150 each. One tablet breaks when it falls off a desk and can no longer be used. The campaign purchases an exact replacement at a cost of \$175. The original expense of \$150 is a nomination contest expense. The second expense of \$175 is an other nomination campaign expense, which is not subject to the spending limit.



## 14. Reporting

*This chapter describes the financial reports that must be completed and submitted by set deadlines under the Canada Elections Act. It covers the following topics:*

- *Reporting obligations after the selection date*
- *Additional reporting*
- *Supporting documents*
- *Submitting reports to Elections Canada*
- *Requesting a filing deadline extension*

*For a timeline of all reporting obligations, see Important deadlines for the nomination contestant's campaign in Chapter 1, **Reference Tables and Timelines**.*

**Note:** Financial returns submitted to Elections Canada are published, in whole or in part, on the agency's website.

## Reporting obligations after the selection date

Reports in this table must be submitted to Elections Canada, unless otherwise noted. Forms and instructions are available on the Elections Canada website.

Report	Description	Who is responsible
<b>3 months after selection date</b>		
<p><b>Nomination Contestant's Statement of Expenses</b> (EC 20175)</p> <p>Signed, with all supporting documents</p>	<p>The statement lists the contestant's personal, travel and living, and litigation expenses that were reasonably incurred in relation to the contest and have not been reimbursed by the campaign.</p> <p>It must be completed even if the expenses were nil (unless no financial agent was appointed because the campaign had no financial transactions).</p>	<p>Nomination contestant</p> <p>Submitted to financial agent</p>
<b>4 months after selection date<sup>1</sup></b>		
<p><b>Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return</b> (EC 20171) (if applicable)<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Signed, with all supporting documents</p>	<p>The campaign return includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• campaign information and declaration, signed by the contestant and the financial agent</li> <li>• revenues and other inflows</li> <li>• expenses and other outflows</li> <li>• unpaid claims and loans</li> <li>• bank reconciliation</li> </ul>	<p>Financial agent</p>
<p><b>Nomination Contestant's Statement of Expenses</b> (EC 20175) (if applicable)<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Signed, with all supporting documents</p>	<p>The financial agent must submit the expenses statement with the <i>Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return</i>.</p>	<p>Financial agent</p>
<p><b>Auditor's report</b> (if applicable)<sup>3</sup></p>	<p>After the financial agent has completed the campaign return, the auditor has to examine the financial records and give an opinion in a report as to whether the contestant's return presents fairly the information contained in the financial records on which it is based.</p>	<p>Auditor and financial agent</p>
<p><b>Auditor's invoice</b> (if applicable)<sup>3</sup></p>	<p>Prepared and signed by the auditor.</p>	<p>Auditor and financial agent</p>
<p><sup>1</sup> If the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it, the deadline is four months after election day.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> Required if the campaign accepted contributions totalling \$1,000 or more, or incurred nomination campaign expenses totalling \$1,000 or more. (Note that transfers that the contestant sends to affiliated political entities are not nomination campaign expenses.)</p> <p><sup>3</sup> Required if the campaign accepted contributions totalling \$10,000 or more, or incurred nomination campaign expenses totalling \$10,000 or more. (Note that transfers that the contestant sends to affiliated political entities are not nomination campaign expenses.)</p> <p>It is very important to give the auditor enough time to properly audit the <i>Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return</i> before the deadline.</p>		

## Additional reporting

In some cases, reporting obligations continue well past the selection date. The campaign might still have unpaid claims or loans, or need to correct an error in the contestant's return. The following table summarizes these additional reporting requirements.

**Note:** If the selection date falls with an election period or within 30 days before it, a reference to the selection date in the table below is to be read as election day.

Report	Description	Deadline	Who is responsible
<b><i>Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return</i></b> (EC 20171)			
Corrected or revised, as requested by the nomination contestant or financial agent	The contestant or the financial agent may become aware of a need to make a correction or report new transactions in a return that has been filed. In that case, the contestant or the financial agent has to submit a written request for authorization to file a corrected or revised return.	30 days after the correction or revision was authorized	Nomination contestant or financial agent
Corrected or revised, as requested by Elections Canada	On review, Elections Canada may request the financial agent to correct or revise the campaign return.	Within a period specified by Elections Canada	Financial agent
Updated after the final payment of a claim or loan	The financial agent must send an updated <i>Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return</i> indicating the source of funds used to pay the claim or loan.	30 days after a claim or loan is paid*	Financial agent
<b><i>Nomination Contestant's Statement of Unpaid Claims and Loans 18 or 36 Months After the Selection Date</i></b> (EC 20001)			
Statement as of 18 months after the selection date	This statement is required if the campaign still has unpaid claims and loans 18 months after the selection date.	19 months after selection date	Financial agent
Statement as of 36 months after the selection date	This statement is required if the campaign still has unpaid claims and loans 36 months after the selection date.	37 months after selection date	Financial agent
*Claims and loans must be paid within 36 months after the selection date. Authorization is required from Elections Canada or a judge to pay claims or loans more than 36 months after the selection date.			

## Supporting documents

A nomination contestant's campaign must keep a variety of supporting documents as a detailed record of its financial transactions. The documents must then be submitted with the financial return.

Supporting documents include the following:

- bank statements
- deposit slips
- copies of contribution cheques, copies of e-transfers received and statements from online contribution systems
- copies of contribution receipts
- loan agreements (including terms, conditions and repayment schedules)
- invoices and proof of payment (cancelled cheques, copies of e-transfers sent, etc.) for expenses of \$50 and over
- proof of payment and a record of the nature of the expense for expenses under \$50
- salary agreements
- mileage logs
- other relevant documents

**Note:** Be sure to save electronic bank statements and other paperless records that the campaign might lose access to later.

## Submitting reports to Elections Canada

Financial forms and instructions are available on the Elections Canada website.

Elections Canada has developed free software to assist with the preparation of financial returns: the Electronic Financial Return (EFR) software. The EFR software can be accessed from the Political Entities Service Centre.

The EFR software is updated regularly. Check for the latest version before preparing a return.

**Note:** Using EFR to complete or update the *Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return* makes reporting much easier because EFR validates the entries and creates a submission file with the required fields populated.

### Options for submitting reports to Elections Canada

#### Option 1—Online (Political Entities Service Centre)

##### Log in

- Log in to the Political Entities Service Centre or create a new account at [csep-pesc.elections.ca](http://csep-pesc.elections.ca).
- Click on the Electronic Financial Returns tab.

##### Campaign return

- Upload the submission files created by the EFR software (in PDF and XML formats) and any supporting documents.
- Follow the on-screen steps to apply digital consent and submit the return.

##### Any other report

- Where signatures are required, sign the pages by hand and scan the report.
- Upload the report (in PDF format) and any supporting documents.

##### Note

- Other forms of electronic submission may not be accepted. If you are not using the Political Entities Service Centre to apply digital consent, handwritten signatures are required.
- The campaign can print a confirmation of its submission and track the status in the Political Entities Service Centre.
- When submitting online, there is no need to send physical copies by mail. We recommend keeping a copy of all documents submitted for six years after the contest.

#### Option 2—Mail or fax

##### Any financial reports

- Where signatures are required, sign the pages by hand.
- Send the reports to Elections Canada by courier, mail or fax.
- Send supporting documents to Elections Canada by courier or mail.

##### Address

Elections Canada  
30 Victoria Street, Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0M6

##### Fax

Political Financing  
1-888-523-9333 (toll-free)

##### Note

- We recommend keeping a copy of all documents submitted for six years after the contest.

## Requesting a filing deadline extension

### Reports eligible for an extension

The *Canada Elections Act* specifies deadlines for submitting reports. The financial agent or the nomination contestant may apply for an extension if they cannot submit a report on time.

If only a few invoices or receipts are missing, campaigns should submit the mandatory documents on time and send the missing documentation later.

As well, the return should be filed on time even if some claims and loans are unpaid. An updated return can be submitted later.

The following table explains which documents are eligible for an extension and from whom.

<b>Nomination contestant reports—extension requests</b>			
<b>Report</b>	<b>Extension from Elections Canada</b>	<b>Additional extension from Elections Canada</b>	<b>Extension from a judge</b>
<b><i>Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return</i></b>			
Original submission, including the auditor's report (if required)	Yes	No	Yes
Updated after the final payment of a claim or loan at any time after the selection date	Yes	No	Yes
Corrected or revised, as requested by the nomination contestant or the financial agent	Yes	Yes	No
Corrected or revised, as requested by Elections Canada	No	No	No*
<b><i>Nomination Contestant's Statement of Unpaid Claims and Loans 18 or 36 Months After the Selection Date</i></b>			
Statement as of 18 months after the selection date	Yes	No	Yes
Statement as of 36 months after the selection date	Yes	No	Yes
*Corrections or revisions requested by Elections Canada are not eligible for extensions and must be filed within the specified period. However, the financial agent or the nomination contestant can apply to a judge to be relieved of the obligation of complying with the request.			

### Submitting an extension request to Elections Canada

To apply for an extension from Elections Canada, the financial agent or the nomination contestant may use the *Request for Extension of Filing Deadline* form. The request must be received by Elections Canada no later than two weeks after the filing deadline.

**Note:** Only a judge may grant an extension requested more than two weeks after the deadline has passed.

Elections Canada will grant an extension unless the financial agent's failure to provide the document was deliberate or was the result of a failure to exercise due diligence.

If Elections Canada refuses to authorize an extension or if the financial agent or nomination contestant is unable to file the required documents within the extended period, the nomination contestant or the financial agent may apply to a judge for an extension.

### Submitting an extension request to a judge

To apply for an extension from a judge, an application must be submitted to one of the courts listed below. Any of the courts can be applied to, no matter where the campaign has its headquarters.

A copy of the application must be sent to Elections Canada by email or fax.

If the campaign sends a draft of its application to Elections Canada before filing it with the court, Elections Canada staff will verify whether the request will enable the campaign to fulfill its obligations and provide a letter confirming that it has been notified of the application.

Province or territory	Court that can receive the application
Alberta	Court of King's Bench of Alberta
British Columbia	Supreme Court of British Columbia
Manitoba	Court of King's Bench of Manitoba
New Brunswick	Court of King's Bench of New Brunswick
Newfoundland and Labrador	Trial Division of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador
Nova Scotia	Supreme Court of Nova Scotia
Nunavut	Nunavut Court of Justice
Ontario	Superior Court of Justice of Ontario
Prince Edward Island	Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island
Quebec	Superior Court of Quebec
Saskatchewan	Court of King's Bench of Saskatchewan
Northwest Territories	Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories
Yukon	Supreme Court of Yukon

In the application, the campaign has to request a new deadline for submitting the documents to Elections Canada. Sometimes the new deadline will be for a past date. This happens when a campaign submitted its mandatory documents late before requesting an extension and is now regularizing its filing.

<b>Extension to future date</b>	<b>Extension to past date (retroactive)</b>
<p>The campaign can request any reasonable date as the new filing deadline, based on its circumstances.</p> <p>Make sure the date chosen gives the campaign enough time to meet its obligations; otherwise, a new application will need to be filed with the court.</p>	<p>The campaign must request the date that all mandatory documents were received by Elections Canada as the new filing deadline.</p> <p>Please contact the Political Entities Support Network to get the correct date.</p>

**Note:** If the campaign is not using a lawyer to prepare its application, it may wish to contact the registrar of the court for information on the process or ask a legal clinic for sample documents.

## 15. Managing Unpaid Claims and Loans

*This chapter explains the rules for administering the campaign's unpaid claims and loans at different times after the nomination contest. It covers the following topics:*

- *Repaying claims and loans within 36 months*
- *Repaying claims and loans after 36 months*
- *Requesting authorization for a payment*
- *Reporting unpaid claims and loans*

**Note:** The usual deadline for paying claims and loans is 36 months after the selection date. But if the selection date falls within an election period or within 30 days before it, the deadline changes to 36 months after election day.

### Repaying claims and loans within 36 months

Claims and loans must be paid within 36 months after the selection date (or election day—see note above). If a claim or loan remains unpaid from the time the original return is filed to 36 months after the selection date (or election day):

- the financial agent does not require authorization from Elections Canada or a judge before paying it
- after the final payment of each claim or loan, the financial agent has to file an updated *Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return* within 30 days of the payment
- the updated return must indicate the source of funds used to pay the claim or loan

#### **Example**

The campaign still has 10 unpaid claims after filing the nomination contestant's return. Later that year, it receives contributions and uses the funds to pay 8 claims in full and 2 claims in part. Within 30 days, the financial agent files an updated return to report the contributions and final payment of the 8 claims. The next year, it receives a transfer from the candidate's campaign and makes the final payments on the last 2 claims. The financial agent files another updated return within 30 days.

**Note:** A campaign with many unpaid claims may wish to pay them in groups so that it can submit fewer updates. It cannot wait until the end of the 36 months to report on all final payments made since the return was filed.

### Repaying claims and loans after 36 months

If a claim or loan is still unpaid 36 months after the selection date (or election day—see note above):

- the financial agent or nomination contestant has to seek authorization from Elections Canada or a judge before paying it
- after the final payment of the claim or loan, the financial agent has to file an updated *Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return* within 30 days of the payment
- the updated return must indicate the source of funds used to pay the claim or loan

Elections Canada may impose any terms or conditions it considers appropriate on the authorized payment.

## Requesting authorization for a payment

The following persons may submit a written application to be paid or to pay a claim or loan later than 36 months after the selection date (or election day—see note above):

- the claimant or lender
- the financial agent
- the nomination contestant

The application should be made using the *Request for Authorization to Pay an Unpaid Claim or Loan* form on the Elections Canada website.

The request should include the campaign's bank account statement, showing that the campaign has sufficient funds to make the payment.

## Reporting unpaid claims and loans

The nomination contestant's campaign will have to provide different updates on the status of payments if the campaign has unpaid claims or loans after filing the original *Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return*.

For details about reporting unpaid claims and loans, see the **Additional reporting** table in Chapter 14, **Reporting**.

## 16. Disposing of Surplus

This chapter explains what a surplus of campaign funds is, the rules for disposing of a surplus after all financial obligations have been met, and how to report the disposal. It covers the following topics:

- What is a surplus?
- Sale of capital assets
- Notice of surplus from Elections Canada
- How to dispose of a surplus

### What is a surplus?

The surplus amount of nomination campaign funds is the amount by which the contestant's nomination campaign revenues exceed the total of the nomination campaign expenses paid from the campaign bank account and transfers made by the contestant's campaign.

$$\text{Surplus} = \text{Nomination campaign revenues} - \left( \text{Nomination campaign expenses} + \text{Transfers} \right)$$

The amount of the surplus should equal the money left in the campaign bank account after all the financial obligations have been met.

Nomination campaign revenues	Nomination campaign expenses	Transfers made
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monetary contributions made to the nomination contestant</li> <li>• Any other amount deposited into the campaign bank account that was received by the nomination contestant for their nomination campaign and is not repayable, including bank interest and refunds from suppliers</li> </ul>	<p>For the purpose of calculating the surplus, this includes all expenses paid using funds from the campaign bank account</p>	<p>Any funds the nomination contestant's campaign transfers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the candidate of the same party in the electoral district where the contest was held</li> <li>• the registered association that held the nomination contest</li> <li>• the registered party</li> </ul>

**Note:** Surplus only relates to transactions that went through the campaign bank account. If some personal or litigation expenses were paid using outside funds, exclude them from the calculation.

## Sale of capital assets

A capital asset is any property with a commercial value of more than \$200 that is normally used outside a nomination contest other than for the purposes of a contest.

If the campaign has any capital asset whose acquisition constitutes a nomination campaign expense, the financial agent must sell the asset at fair market value and include the funds in the surplus disposal.

In the case of security expenses, some capital assets cannot be detached from an office or personal residence—for example, security film on windows or secure doors. When the asset cannot be sold for this reason, it has a fair market value of \$0 and does not have to be disposed of.

**Note:** Capital assets must be sold and the funds transferred to a specified political entity. The assets themselves cannot be transferred.

## Notice of estimated surplus from Elections Canada

After Elections Canada reviews the nomination contestant's return, it may determine that the nomination contestant has a surplus of campaign funds. Elections Canada sends a notice about the estimated amount of the surplus to the nomination contestant's financial agent.

The financial agent has to dispose of the surplus within 60 days of receiving the notice.

## How to dispose of a surplus

Surplus nomination campaign funds have to be transferred to:

- the official agent of the candidate affiliated with the registered party in the same electoral district
- the registered association that held the nomination contest, or
- the registered party

The financial agent has to report the disposal by submitting the *Nomination Contestant's Statement of Surplus / Amended Campaign Return* within seven days after disposing of the surplus.

**Note:** The statement of surplus must be filed even if a *Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return* was not required for the campaign.

The financial agent might also use this form to report financial transactions that occurred since the original contestant's return was submitted. Elections Canada will treat new transactions reported in the *Nomination Contestant's Statement of Surplus / Amended Campaign Return* as a request to correct or revise the *Nomination Contestant's Campaign Return* and will update the return accordingly.

**Note:** Elections Canada publishes the notice referring to the disposal of the surplus on its website.

For details about closing the nomination contestant's campaign, please see **Closing the nomination contestant's campaign** in Chapter 2, **Starting and Closing the Nomination Campaign**.