Elections Canada

This document is Elections Canada's **draft** guideline OGI 2026-02.

Political Financing Handbook

for Electoral District Associations and Financial Agents

December 2025

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elections.ca

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About This Document

Introduction to the handbook

This handbook is designed to help electoral district associations and their financial agents in the financial administration of the association.

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
December 2025	All	n/a	Contribution limits for 2026 updated in tables and examples.
	Chapters 1 and 10	Reporting obligations of an electoral district association Reporting obligations after registration and during the fiscal year	Added a reminder that the annual financial return is not required if the association had been registered for less than six months on December 31.
	Chapter 2	Roles and appointments within the association	Clarified that the same person cannot be both the chief executive officer and financial agent.
		Activities and obligations after receiving a notice of deregistration	Clarified that outstanding contribution receipts (not valid for tax credit purposes) must still be issued after deregistration.
	Chapter 3	Activities conducted by others in coordination with the association may be contributions	New section added about activities or transactions that involve external actors.
		Accepting and recording contributions	Added a reminder to be cautious when accepting anonymous contributions. Added guidance about contributions received through crowdfunding.
	Chapter 4	Repaying and reporting unpaid loans	Added details on reporting loan repayments.

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Release	Where	Title	Summary
	Chapter 5	Transfers sent by or to an unregistered electoral district association	New section added to highlight the transfer rules for unregistered associations.
	Chapter 6	What is a regulated fundraising event?	Clarified that a prominent guest who was not expected may still cause an event to be regulated.
		Typical fundraising activities	Added references to fundraising examples developed with the Canada Revenue Agency.
	Chapters 8 and 9	What is partisan advertising? Partisan advertising in various situations Election advertising on behalf of the candidate or party	Expanded the list of examples of what is and is not advertising. Clarified that taglines must be added to pre-existing advertising that remains in place.
		Various sections	Clarified that the words “paid for by” cannot be used in place of “authorized by” in a tagline.
	Chapter 10	Submitting reports to Elections Canada	Clarified that documents cannot be left in a dropbox or cloud storage for Elections Canada to retrieve.
		Requesting a filing deadline extension	Added a time limit for submitting requests to a judge, as per *Sachan v. Chief Electoral Officer*.
		Reporting a nomination contest	New section added to explain when a contest needs to be reported.

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Contact information

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

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1. Reference Tables and Timelines

This chapter presents quick reference tools for electoral district associations and financial agents. It covers the following topics:

- *Reporting obligations of an electoral district association*
- *Limits on contributions, loans and loan guarantees*
- *Transfers—types and rules*
- *Important reminders for registered associations, financial agents and electoral district agents*

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Reporting obligations of an electoral district association

This infographic presents the reporting obligations of electoral district associations in different circumstances.



Application for registration

To apply for registration, an association must appoint a financial agent and an auditor, and then submit the *Application to Register an Electoral District Association*, including the party leader's declaration certifying that it is an association of the party.



Statement of assets and liabilities

Within six months after it is registered, an association must submit the *Registered Association's Statement of Assets and Liabilities*.



Updates to registry information

Within 30 days after a change to the information or a new appointment, a registered association must submit the *Registered Association's Changes to Registry Information*.



Annual reports

No later than May 31 each year, a registered association must submit:

- the *Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return*, if required[1]
- an auditor's report on the financial return, if required[2]
- the *Registered Association's Annual Confirmation of Registry Information*
- the *Contributions to a Registered Party or to a Registered Association—Information Return* to the Canada Revenue Agency



Nomination contest report

If a registered association holds a nomination contest, it must submit the *Nomination Contest Report* **within 30 days** after the contest.



Reports after deregistration[3]

Within six months after being deregistered, an association must submit the *Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return* and, if required, an auditor's report. A report must be submitted for:

- the current fiscal period up to the date of deregistration, and
- any previous fiscal period for which a financial return is outstanding.

[1] The financial return is not required if, as of December 31 of the previous year, the association had been registered for less than six months. See the section **Reporting requirements soon after registration** in Chapter 2.

[2] An auditor's report is required if the registered association accepted contributions totalling $10,000 or more, or incurred expenses totalling $10,000 or more, in a fiscal period. Audit fees and transfers that the association sends to affiliated political entities do not count toward the $10,000 threshold.

[3] If the financial agent resigns but is not replaced, they are still responsible for submitting returns that were due before they resigned. If they were replaced, they are no longer responsible for submitting returns but may be held liable for contravening a filing obligation while they were the agent.

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Limits on contributions, loans and loan guarantees

Limits on contributions, loans and loan guarantees		
Political entity	**2026 annual limit**	**Limit per election called between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2026**
To each registered party	$1,775*	n/a
In total to all the registered associations, nomination contestants and candidates of each registered party	$1,775*	n/a
In total to all leadership contestants in a particular contest	$1,775*	n/a
To each independent or non-affiliated candidate	n/a	$1,775*

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 $1,775* 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 $1,775* 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[1]	No	Yes[2]	No	Yes	No
	Leadership Contestant	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Candidate	Yes[3]	Yes[3]	No	No	No[4]	No[4]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Registered Electoral District Association	No	Yes[5]	No	Yes[5]	Yes[6]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Registered Party	No	Yes[5]	No[7]	Yes[5]	Yes[6]	Yes	Yes[8]	Yes[8]	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.

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Important reminders for registered associations, financial agents and electoral district agents

This infographic presents some of the basic rules for registered associations.



Roles Within Your Association

- ✔ Some roles can only be filled by certain people or groups. Check the eligibility rules in Chapter 2 before appointing or replacing your agents or auditor.
- ✔ Replace the financial agent or auditor without delay if they can't continue in their role.
- ✔ Report appointments and changes to your information in Elections Canada's registry within 30 days.
- ✔ Only the financial agent and authorized electoral district agents can accept contributions or loans, incur expenses and pay expenses.
- ✔ Only the financial agent can send or accept transfers.



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.
- ✔ Issue tax receipts only if your party leader has authorized it and only for monetary contributions.



Working with Your Affiliated Entities

- ✔ Get authorization from your party or its candidates' official agents before incurring expenses on their behalf. You can't incur election expenses on your own.
- ✔ Keep your finances separate and traceable. Record transfers or charge for property or services that you send to an affiliated entity.
- ✖ Don't transfer funds to a candidate after election day unless they are using it to pay campaign debts.
- ✖ Don't transfer funds to a nomination contestant or leadership contestant. Only transfer property or services if they are offered equally to all contestants in the contest.
- ✔ Check the partisan advertising rules in Chapter 8 in the year of a fixed-date general election. Your advertising may impact your party.



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.

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Reporting

- Your association has to submit reports:
  - 6 months after registration
  - every year on May 31
  - 30 days after it holds a nomination contest
  - 6 months after deregistration
- Make sure the current financial agent signs your financial return (by hand or digitally through the Political Entities Service Centre) and is listed in Elections Canada's registry.
- Check Chapter 10 for details on reporting.

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2. Registration

This chapter presents information for electoral district associations on the registration process and changes in status. It covers the following topics:

- *Why become a registered electoral district association?*
- *Voluntary and involuntary deregistration of a registered association*
- *Activities and obligations after receiving a notice of deregistration*
- *Roles and appointments—chief executive officer, financial agent, electoral district agents and auditor*

Why become a registered electoral district association?

An electoral district association is defined as an association of members of a political party in an electoral district.

There are several advantages to registering as an electoral district association with Elections Canada. An association has to register if it wants to perform financial tasks such as:

- accepting contributions
- issuing tax receipts, once it has written authorization from the party leader
- transferring funds, property or services to other political entities (see restrictions in the **Transfers—types and rules** table in Chapter 1, **Reference Tables and Timelines**)
- accepting surplus funds from a nomination contestant (if the association held the contest), from a candidate in the same electoral district or from a leadership contestant

A registered party can have at most one registered association in an electoral district.

Applying for registration

To apply for registration, the chief executive officer of the association has to fill out the form *Application to Register an Electoral District Association* and send it to Elections Canada.

The form explains what information and signatures to include, notably:

- the financial agent's contact information and signed consent to act in that role
- the auditor's contact information and signed consent to act in that role
- a signed declaration from the registered party leader, certifying that the association is an electoral district association of the party

After reviewing the application, Elections Canada will inform the party and the association that:

- the association is registered in the Registry of Electoral District Associations, or
- the association did not meet all the requirements but may try to make the necessary modifications to qualify

An association becomes registered on the date it is entered in the registry. It remains registered as long as it continues to meet the requirements for staying registered, including mandatory reporting.

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Reporting requirements soon after registration

In the months after an association is registered, it must establish its first fiscal period to determine when its first annual financial return is due. It must also submit a statement of its assets and liabilities.

Establishing the first fiscal period after registration

A registered association's fiscal year must be a calendar year (January 1 to December 31). But its first fiscal period after registration may be longer or shorter than one year.

Depending on the date of registration, the length of a registered association's first fiscal period must be modified to end on December 31. It may not be less than 6 months or more than 18 months.

The first annual financial return will be due either in the first or second year after registration.

Examples

1. An association is registered on June 30, 2025. Its first fiscal period will end on December 31, 2025, six months after registration. Its first annual financial return will be due on May 31, 2026.
2. An association is registered on July 1, 2025. Its first fiscal period will end on December 31, 2026, 18 months after registration. Its first annual financial return will be due on May 31, 2027.

Submitting the association's statement of assets and liabilities

Within six months after the association is registered, it must submit the *Registered Association's Statement of Assets and Liabilities*. The statement lists the association's assets and liabilities as of the day before the effective date of registration.

Voluntary and involuntary deregistration of a registered association

Voluntary deregistration

There are two ways that a registered association may be voluntarily deregistered:

- The registered association can ask to be deregistered. The request must be made in writing and signed by the chief executive officer and financial agent.
- The registered party can ask to have an association deregistered. The request must be made in writing and signed by the party leader and two party officers.

Note: Elections Canada cannot process a request for voluntary deregistration during an election period.

Involuntary deregistration

There are many reasons that a registered association may be involuntarily deregistered:

- The registered party is deregistered, which means its registered associations are too.
- The registered party merges with another party. All associations of the merging parties are deregistered.
- The electoral district boundaries of the association's electoral district are redrawn, and the association does not file a notice to continue under the new boundaries.
- The registered association fails to meet its reporting obligations (see details below).

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Failure to meet reporting obligations: risk of deregistration

Elections Canada may deregister a registered association if it fails to provide:

- a statement confirming the validity of its registry information or a report of changes by May 31 each year
- any document required to inform Elections Canada about a change in its registry information or any new appointment within 30 days of the event
- the *Registered Association's Statement of Assets and Liabilities* within six months after the effective date of registration
- the *Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return* and, if required, the auditor's report by May 31 each year
- a nomination contest report within 30 days after the contest selection date

Elections Canada will first notify the association's chief executive officer and financial agent of the failure to meet the obligation. It will ask the association to:

- correct the omission within 30 days of receiving the notice, or
- satisfy Elections Canada that the omission was not the result of negligence or a lack of good faith

Note: Elections Canada also sends a copy of this notice to the leader and the chief agent of the association's registered party.

If the association does not correct the omission but instead satisfies Elections Canada that the omission was not the result of negligence or a lack of good faith, Elections Canada may:

- exempt the association in whole or in part from complying with the obligation, or
- specify a new deadline to comply with the obligation

Deregistration process

If a registered association is deregistered:

- Elections Canada sends a notice to the association with the effective date of deregistration. This date will be at least 15 days after the notice date.
- A copy of the notice is sent to the registered party of the association.
- The notice is published on Elections Canada's website and in the *Canada Gazette*.

Activities and obligations after receiving a notice of deregistration

Activities after receiving a notice of deregistration

An association that receives a notice of deregistration should be aware of restrictions that will apply as of the effective date of deregistration indicated in the notice. A deregistered association is no longer allowed to:

- accept contributions
- issue tax receipts (it must issue outstanding receipts for contributions accepted while it was registered, but the receipts are not valid for tax credit purposes)
- accept surplus funds from other political entities
- transfer funds, property or services to other political entities (unless it was deregistered because the electoral district boundaries were redrawn or its party merged with another, in which case it can transfer property or funds to the registered party or a registered association of the party within six months after the new boundaries or merger take effect)

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A registered association that has been notified of its impending voluntary or involuntary deregistration can, before the effective date of the deregistration, transfer assets to:

- its registered party
- another registered association of the party
- in certain circumstances, a candidate endorsed by the party
- a nomination contestant or leadership contestant of the party (if the transfer is non-monetary and offered equally to all contestants)

There is no obligation on a registered association that is facing deregistration to transfer its assets, and only the financial agent can send transfers on the association's behalf. After the deadline to send transfers, remaining untransferred assets are removed from the political system.

Note: A new association cannot simply assume the untransferred assets of a deregistered association. Assets must be transferred to an eligible political entity as an intermediary.

Example

A registered association receives a notice from Elections Canada on June 1 that it will be deregistered on June 30. No later than June 29, the financial agent transfers the association's funds from its bank account to the registered party's bank account. The financial agent transfers the association's non-monetary assets (property) to the registered party by reporting an outgoing transfer dated no later than June 29 in its financial return.

After June 30, a new association of the party applies to Elections Canada for registration in the same electoral district and takes over the association's bank account, if it so chooses. The registered party transfers the funds and property to the new association, if it so chooses. The party can send these transfers at any time, whether or not the association has been effectively registered.

Mandatory reporting after deregistration

The financial agent of a deregistered association remains responsible for filing the *Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return* and, if required, the auditor's report within six months after deregistration. Financial returns must be filed for:

- the fiscal period in which the association became deregistered, ending on the day of its deregistration
- any other fiscal period for which the association has not filed a return

OGI reference

For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2022-01, *Assets of Deregistered Electoral District Associations*, on the Elections Canada website.

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Roles and appointments within the association

Role and appointment process—chief executive officer

Association's chief executive officer		
Role summary		
• The chief executive officer is responsible for certifying forms related to the association's registration, including when there is a change in the association's registry information. • The chief executive officer co-signs the registered association's application for deregistration.		
Who is eligible?	**Yes**	**No**
Anyone	✓	
Appointment process		
• The association has to appoint a chief executive officer before applying for registration. • The association may have only one chief executive officer at a time. • The same person cannot be both the chief executive officer and financial agent of the association because the two roles are sometimes required to act jointly. • A chief executive officer who steps down from their role should notify the association so that it can appoint a replacement. • Use the form *Application to Register an Electoral District Association* to report the initial appointment. • Use the form *Registered Association's Changes to Registry Information* to report updates after registration.		

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Role and appointment process—financial agent

Association's financial agent

Role summary

- The financial agent is responsible for administering the association's financial transactions and reporting those transactions to Elections Canada as required by the *Canada Elections Act*.
- The financial agent is responsible for accepting and sending transfers on behalf of the association. This responsibility cannot be delegated to an electoral district agent.
- The financial agent should open a bank account to be used exclusively for the registered association's finances.
- The financial agent co-signs the registered association's application for deregistration.
- After deregistration, the financial agent's role continues until the association fulfills all financial reporting requirements.

Who is eligible?	Yes	No
Canadian citizen who is at least 18 years old and who lives or has lived in Canada	✓	
Corporation incorporated under the laws of Canada or a province	✓	
Person who is a member of a partnership that has been appointed as an auditor for a registered party	✓	
Person who is a member of a partnership that has been appointed as an auditor for a political entity other than a registered party		✗
Candidate		✗
Election officer or member of the staff of a returning officer		✗
Undischarged bankrupt		✗
Auditor appointed as required by the *Canada Elections Act*		✗
Person who does not have the full capacity to enter into contracts in the province or territory in which the person ordinarily resides (e.g. a dissolved corporation)		✗

Appointment process

- The association has to appoint a financial agent before applying for registration.
- The financial agent has to sign a statement consenting to act in that capacity.
- The association may have only one financial agent at a time.
- The same person cannot be both the chief executive officer and financial agent of the association because the two roles are sometimes required to act jointly.
- If for any reason the financial agent is no longer able to continue in that role, the association 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.
- A financial agent who steps down from their role should notify the association so that it can appoint a replacement.
- 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.
- Use the form *Application to Register an Electoral District Association* to report the initial appointment.
- Use the form *Registered Association's Changes to Registry Information* to report updates after registration.

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Role and appointment process—electoral district agents

Association's electoral district agents		
Role summary		
• Electoral district agents may be authorized by the registered association to do one or more of the following: – accept contributions or loans on the association's behalf – issue contribution receipts, including tax receipts (if the party leader has authorized the association to issue tax receipts) – incur or pay the association's expenses • Electoral district agents cannot be authorized to accept or send transfers on behalf of the association. That is the financial agent's responsibility. • Authorized electoral district agents may share signing authority with the financial agent over the registered association's bank account.		
Who is eligible?	**Yes**	**No**
Canadian citizen who is at least 18 years old and who lives or has lived in Canada	✓	
Corporation incorporated under the laws of Canada or a province	✓	
Person who is a member of a partnership that has been appointed as an auditor for a registered party	✓	
Person who is a member of a partnership that has been appointed as an auditor for a political entity other than a registered party		✗
Candidate		✗
Election officer or member of the staff of a returning officer		✗
Undischarged bankrupt		✗
Auditor appointed as required by the *Canada Elections Act*		✗
Person who does not have the full capacity to enter into contracts in the province or territory in which the person ordinarily resides (e.g. a dissolved corporation)		✗
Appointment process		
• The appointment of electoral district agents is optional. • The registered association may appoint any number of electoral district agents at any time. • Within 30 days of appointing one or more agents, the registered association has to send Elections Canada: – the names and addresses of the new electoral district agents – the terms and conditions of the appointments – certification of the appointments by the financial agent • Use the form *Registered Association's Changes to Registry Information* to report these appointments and updates.		

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Role and appointment process—auditor

Association's auditor		
Role summary		
• If in a fiscal period the registered association receives contributions totalling $10,000 or more, or incurs expenses totalling $10,000 or more, the auditor has to examine the association's financial records and give an opinion in a report as to whether the annual return presents fairly the information contained in the financial records on which it is based. • The auditor has a right to access all documents of the association, and may require the financial agent to provide any information or explanation that is necessary to enable the auditor to prepare the report.		
Who is eligible?	**Yes**	**No**
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)*	✓	
Any candidate or 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		✗
Appointment process		
• The association has to appoint an auditor before applying for registration. • The auditor has to sign a statement consenting to act in that capacity. • If for any reason the auditor is no longer able to continue in that role, the association must appoint a new auditor without delay and notify Elections Canada within 30 days. The notice has to include a signed consent from the new auditor. • A registered association may have only one auditor at a time, but the same person can be the auditor for more than one registered association. • An auditor who steps down from their role should notify the association so that it can appoint a replacement. • Use the form *Application to Register an Electoral District Association* to report the initial appointment. • Use the form *Registered Association's Changes to Registry Information* to report updates after registration.		

*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.

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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 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 association 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 registered association'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.

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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 registered association

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

Limits on contributions, loans and loan guarantees to a registered association

Political entity	2026 annual limit
In total to all the registered associations, nomination contestants and candidates of each registered party	$1,775*

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.

There are some exceptions to the limits on contributions:

- 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 $1,775* 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.)

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

Examples

1. Max decides to contribute $1,775 to the registered party he supports. In addition, he makes a $775 contribution to the party's registered association in his riding. When a federal election is called in the same year, he makes a $1,000 contribution to the candidate representing the 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.

2. Indra makes a $1,000 monetary contribution to a registered association in March. The next month, she makes a non-monetary contribution with a commercial value of $775 to the same association. Indra has now reached the annual limit for contributions to any combination of candidates, registered associations and nomination contestants of that registered party.
3. Clara made a $1,775 contribution in her riding to the registered association of the party she supports. Later that year an election is called and Clara makes a $1,775 contribution to the candidate representing the party in her riding. The official agent of the candidate, 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. No reporting is required because the contribution was not accepted (that is, it was not deposited into the campaign bank account).

   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 $1,775 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.

Note: These examples use the limits in effect for 2026.

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.

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Examples

1. Nana, who is employed as a teacher, offers to work in the evenings in the registered association's office to answer the phone and help with general office duties. This is volunteer labour and is therefore not a contribution.
2. Alex, a self-employed graphic designer offers to design a pamphlet for the registered association free of charge. Because Alex is self-employed and normally charges for that service, the pamphlet 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.

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.

Note: If the association 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. Suzanne is being paid to manage the association's social media accounts. 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 association. This is an acceptable combination of paid and volunteer work. The expenses incurred under the agreement are expenses that have to be reported. The volunteer labour is not reported.
2. Sam works full-time as an administrative officer on the staff of a member of Parliament. He volunteers to help organize the association's annual fundraising dinner. Since some of the work will take place during Sam's regular working hours, he takes 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). The association offers Sam a fixed amount of $200 for the hours he will work during what would be his regular working hours. The financial agent puts this agreement in writing, and the amount is reported as an expense of the association.

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 registered association holds a golf tournament as a fundraiser. The association 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 association. The association does not ask corporations or unions to sponsor a hole because only individuals can make contributions.

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Activities conducted by others in coordination with the association may be contributions

General rule

People or groups other than regulated political entities will sometimes conduct activities that benefit a registered association. As a general rule, if an external actor acts independently of the association, there is no contribution.

However, if the association works with the external actor, the activity may be a contribution.

If the external actor directly provides goods or services to the association, this is clearly a contribution. As well, if an activity was coordinated with the association, the expense that the external actor incurs for the activity may be a non-monetary contribution. Any such contribution will be subject to all the contribution rules, including the contribution limit and the prohibition on anyone other than an individual who is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident making a contribution.

Note: The following are indicators of what is and is not coordination that results in a contribution being made, but each situation is different and must be evaluated based on all relevant facts. As a best practice, registered associations should act independently of third parties to avoid accepting possibly illegal contributions.

The coordination of an activity that benefits the registered association may result in a contribution if the association did one or more of the following:

- requested or suggested that the external actor undertake the activity
- was materially involved in decisions about the activity
- gave the external actor information about the plans or needs of the association that influenced how the external actor organized or undertook the activity

On their own, the following types of coordination do not result in a contribution:

- the external actor publicly supports the association
- the association gives the external actor information about the party's policy positions
- the association gives the external actor publicly available information
- the association and members of an external group attend the same event or invite one another's members to an event

Note: In cases where there was no coordination because the registered association was not aware of the activity, or did not act in a manner that would indicate that it accepted the contribution, an external actor may nevertheless be contravening the prohibition against circumventing the contribution limits or the restrictions on the source of contributions. This would be the case, for example, if the external actor assumed the costs related to soliciting contributions for the association or, as a supplier, provided an exclusive discount to the association without revealing that it was not available to others.

During a pre-election or election period, if members of the registered association are engaging with external actors on behalf of a candidate's campaign, some situations that are not coordination may still be collusion.

For more information, see Chapter 16, **Interacting with Third Parties in the Pre-Election and Election Periods**, in the *Political Financing Handbook for Candidates and Official Agents*.

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Accepting and recording contributions

Only the financial agent and authorized electoral district agents can accept contributions to the registered association.

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 association 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	• It can be accepted as an anonymous contribution. • The association should watch for unusual patterns in contributions of $20 or less that it receives. These contributions must not be used to circumvent an individual's limit or contributor eligibility rules.
Over $20 and up to $200	• The contributor's full first and last names must be recorded. Initials cannot be accepted. • A contribution receipt must be issued. • To issue a tax receipt, the agent must also record the contributor's home address. A business address cannot be accepted in its place.
Contributions over $200	• The contributor's full first and last names must be recorded. Initials cannot be accepted. • The contributor's home address must be recorded. A business address cannot be accepted in its place. • A contribution receipt must be issued.
Note: When contributions from an individual to an association reach a total of over $200 in a fiscal year, their name, partial address and contribution amounts disclosed in the financial return will be published on the Elections Canada website.	

Contribution method	What to keep in mind
E-transfer	• If only the contributor's name is available in the bank record, contact the individual for other required information.
Online payment service	• An online processing fee might apply. • The full contribution amount has to be recorded as a contribution, and the processing fee has to be recorded as an expense. For example, if the registered association receives a $500 contribution through an online payment service and the net deposit to the association's bank account is $490, the financial agent has to record and issue a receipt for a contribution of $500 and record an expense of $10.

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Contribution method	What to keep in mind
Online crowdfunding service	• These services are treated the same way as online payment services. • All the general rules apply for contributor eligibility, contribution limits, recording contributor information and issuing receipts. • If only the contributor's name and email are provided by the crowdfunding service, contact the individual for other required information.
Untraceable instrument	• We recommend that associations only accept contributions made by way of a traceable instrument. • An association 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.

Contribution source	What to keep in mind
Joint bank account (cheque)	• It is generally reported under the name of the individual who signed the cheque. • 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.
Joint bank account (credit card)	• 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. • 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 association 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).
Partnership	• The partnership must provide the following information in writing: – names and home addresses of each contributor – the voluntary nature of each contribution – who it is intended for – the amount of each contribution • The instructions must be signed and dated by each contributor. • Each contributing partner should reduce their next draw of income from the partnership by the amount of their contribution.
Unincorporated sole proprietor	• It must be recorded in the individual's name (not the business name), using the contributor's home address when an address is required.

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Use of the registered association's online contribution system

The candidate's campaign might use the registered association's website to process online contributions, since associations often already have the necessary resources in place.

If a contribution is processed through the registered association's website to the association's bank account, the contribution is made to the registered association. The association issues the receipt and transfers the contribution amount to the candidate's campaign.

Keep in mind that the registered association's website is an election expense of the candidate if it is used for the campaign during the election period. See **Registered association's existing website or web content** in Chapter 9, **Working with Other Entities During the Election Period**, for more information.

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.

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.

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.

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 association must keep a record of the contributor's name.

In all instances, associations 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.

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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 or authorized electoral district agents can provide official receipts for contributions, including tax receipts. Tax receipts can be issued only for monetary contributions.

Note: The registered association must obtain written authorization from the leader of the registered party before issuing tax receipts.

We recommend that the financial agent use Elections Canada's Electronic Financial Return (EFR) software to issue all 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 an election was called, Clara contributed $300 to Peter, a candidate in her riding. Clara will receive a receipt for $500 from the registered association and a receipt 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 association'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.

How contribution is made	Date contribution is made
In person	The date the contribution is in the hands of the financial agent or an authorized electoral district 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 agent receives the mail. The association 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.

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Examples

1. On December 23, 2025, Lucy goes to the registered association's office and gives a cheque in the amount of $300, dated for the previous day. The financial agent deposits the cheque on January 10, 2026. The contribution is made on December 23, 2025. The financial agent issues a receipt for 2025, and the amount counts toward Lucy's 2025 contribution limit.
2. Hassim makes an e-transfer to the registered association on December 23, 2025, but the financial agent does not process the amount until January 10, 2026. The contribution is made on December 23, 2025. The financial agent issues a receipt for 2025, and the amount counts toward Hassim's 2025 contribution limit.
3. The financial agent receives a cheque from Janelle in the mail on January 5, 2026. The cheque is dated December 28, 2025, and the postmark on the envelope is December 30, 2025. The contribution is made on December 30, 2025. The financial agent issues a receipt for 2025, and the amount counts toward Janelle's 2025 contribution limit.
4. The financial agent receives a cheque from Andrew and deposits it in the registered association's 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 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 association, the financial agent or an authorized electoral district 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 or an electoral district agent has to keep track of the total amount collected plus the number of contributors.

Example

Volunteers of the registered association 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 association's bank account and reports the contributions in the annual return.

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Remitting anonymous contributions that cannot be accepted

If the financial agent or an authorized electoral district 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 and the electoral district agents are 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, an association cannot agree to buy the candidate's signs from a local dealer in exchange for a contribution)

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Returning ineligible or non-compliant contributions

The financial agent or authorized electoral district 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 association'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.

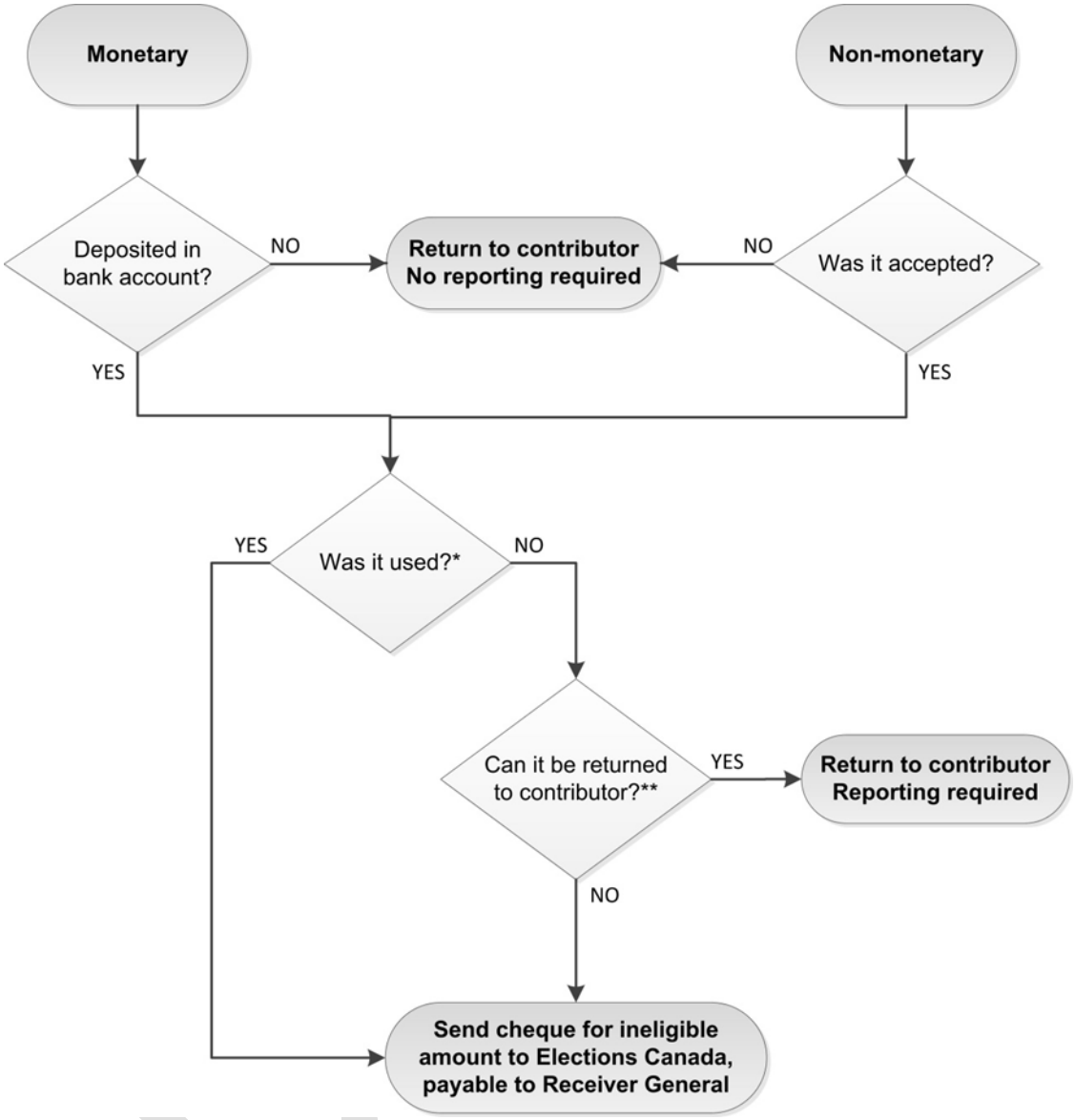
Examples

1. The financial agent of a registered association deposits a cheque for $975 from a contributor. When he enters the contribution in the books, he notices that the same person has already contributed $1,000 in that year. 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.No reporting is required because the contribution was not accepted (that is, it was not deposited into the association's bank account).
3. An individual makes a non-monetary contribution to the association 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 $2,000, which is higher than the contribution limit. The equipment was used, so he sends a cheque for the excess amount of $225 to Elections Canada, payable to the Receiver General for Canada. He records a contribution of $1,775, a returned contribution of $225 and an expense of $2,000.
4. The financial agent receives a notice from Elections Canada a couple of months after the reporting deadline. It states that a person who contributed $1,000 to both the registered association and the candidate exceeded the annual limit by $225 with the contribution to the association. Since the deposit date of the contribution, the registered association's bank account balance had fallen below the ineligible amount of $225 and the funds were therefore used. The financial agent must remit $225 within 30 days of becoming aware of the contravention. To obtain funds, she could organize a fundraising event, request a transfer from the registered party, or request that the registered party repay the $225 on the registered association's behalf. 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 $225.

Note: These examples use the limits in effect for 2026.

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Flowchart 1: Returning ineligible or non-compliant contributions



*A monetary contribution was used if the association's 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 the registered association's finances properly to ensure that all loans are repaid.

Registered associations may receive loans from either a financial institution or an individual who is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. Registered associations may also receive loans from their registered party or from another registered association. Loans from any other person or entity are not permitted.

A written loan agreement must accompany all loans.

Note: The financial agent has to report details of all loans in the annual financial return, including names and addresses of lenders and guarantors, loan and guarantee amounts, interest rates, and payment dates and amounts. If any information changes, the financial agent must send an update to Elections Canada without delay.

Loans from financial institutions

There is no limit to the amount a registered association can borrow from a financial institution. However, if the financial institution requires a loan guarantee beyond the association's own assets, only the registered party, another registered association, or 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.

Note: A financial institution must charge a fair market rate of interest on loans made to registered associations. 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 registered association is planning to borrow $17,750 and the bank requires a guarantor for the loan. Because guarantees from individuals are subject to the contribution limit, the association needs at least 10 individuals to guarantee the requested amount. Each guarantor is limited to guaranteeing $1,775 of the total loan amount. Alternatively, the registered party or another registered association of the same party may guarantee the whole amount.

Note: This example uses the limits in effect for 2026.

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Loans from the registered party or from another registered association

There is no limit to the amount a registered association can borrow from the registered party or from another registered association of the party. The registered party or another registered association can also guarantee loans obtained from financial institutions. There is no limit to the amount the registered party or a registered association can guarantee.

Loans from individuals

If an individual obtains a personal loan from a financial institution and lends those funds to the registered association, the lender is the individual and not the financial institution. The loan amount would be subject to the individual's contribution limit.

An individual can lend money to a registered association 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 for the calendar year.

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

Example

Khaled made a $775 contribution to the registered association. In addition, he takes out a $1,000 personal loan from his bank and lends it to the association. With that, Khaled has reached the annual limit for contributions to any combination of registered associations, candidates and nomination contestants of the registered party.

Note: This example uses the limits in effect for 2026.

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.

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.

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Overdraft protection and line of credit

When the association uses overdraft protection or a line of credit, it is reported as a loan. If the financial institution requires a guarantee, only the registered party, another registered association of the party, or 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 during the fiscal year
- 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 during the fiscal year
- for a line of credit where funds were paid directly to the supplier, it is the maximum amount drawn during the fiscal year (and this is reported as an overdraft rather than a line of credit)

Example

The registered association's 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 that year to $500. On December 31 the account is no longer in an overdraft position.

The maximum overdraft amount to be reported in the registered association's annual financial return is $500, while the balance on December 31 to be reported is nil.

Loan interest

The financial agent has to record the interest rate of each loan in the *Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return*.

Interest incurred on a loan is an expense, whether it is paid or accrued.

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.

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Repaying and reporting unpaid loans

There is no time limit for a registered association to repay its loans.

However, the registered association's annual financial return must include the following schedules related to unpaid loans:

- statement of unpaid loans
- statement of previously reported loans that have been paid in full since the last fiscal period
- statement of loan repayments that are overdue by 18 months or more (e.g. a monthly payment that is 18 months overdue)

The return must also detail any loan repayments made during the fiscal year that meet all these conditions:

- the repayment was made on a **new** loan received during the same fiscal year (repayments in later years are not reported unless the loan is paid in full that year)
- the loan type is **not** overdraft protection
- the loan type is **not** a line of credit used to pay suppliers directly (this is reported as an overdraft rather than a line of credit—see **Types of loans** above)

Note: A candidate's unpaid loan, if written off by the lender, may need to be assumed by the registered association.

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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 registered association*
- *Transfers sent by the registered association*
- *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. This includes forgone interest on loans. 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.

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Transfers sent to the registered association

Only the financial agent can accept transfers on the registered association's behalf. The following transfers may be accepted by a registered association:

- property, services or funds from the registered party or from any registered association of the registered party
- property, services or funds from a candidate of the registered party it is affiliated with
- funds from a nomination contestant to the registered association that held the nomination contest
- funds from a leadership contestant of the registered party it is affiliated with

If the registered association receives property or services from an affiliated political entity for less than the commercial value, the financial agent has to report the difference as a non-monetary transfer from the affiliated political entity.

Example

After election day, the candidate's campaign transfers 100 unused signs and 750 recovered signs to the registered association. The commercial value of the 850 signs is calculated by the candidate's campaign, and the registered association reports the amount as a non-monetary transfer from the candidate.

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.

Transfers sent by the registered association

Only the financial agent can send transfers on the registered association's behalf.

The registered association may transfer property, services or funds to the following political entities:

- the registered party it is affiliated with
- another registered association of the registered party
- a candidate

The registered association may transfer property or services, but not funds, to the following political entities:

- a nomination contestant, if the non-monetary transfer is offered equally to all contestants
- a leadership contestant, if the non-monetary transfer is offered equally to all contestants

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, the association can offer all leadership contestants free travel to a leadership debate from different parts of the country.

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For transfers to a candidate, the following should be kept in mind:

- before an election is called, transfers from the association to a candidate are allowed as long as:
  - the candidate has appointed an official agent
  - in the case of monetary transfers, the official agent has opened a campaign bank account
- after election day, monetary transfers from the association to a candidate are allowed only to pay claims and loans related to the candidate's campaign

Example
The registered association purchases tablets and transfers them to the candidate. The financial agent sends a copy of the original supplier invoice to the candidate's campaign and reports the commercial value of the tablets as a non-monetary transfer. The candidate's official agent reports the same commercial value as an electoral campaign expense and as a non-monetary transfer from the registered association.

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 registered association 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 for irregular transfers between affiliated political entities only.

Irregular transfers sent by the registered association

Recipient of irregular transfer sent by association	Transfer type	Consequence
Nomination contestant Leadership contestant	Monetary	Prohibited transfer with offences for sender and recipient; not a contribution
Nomination contestant Leadership contestant	Non-monetary, not offered equally to all contestants	Prohibited transfer with offence for sender; not a contribution

Example
A registered association sends funds to its preferred contestant in the party's leadership contest. This is not an allowable transfer. Both the financial agent who sent the funds and the financial agent who accepted them have committed an offence.

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Irregular transfers sent to the registered association

Sender of irregular transfer accepted by association	Transfer type	Consequence
Nomination contestant in contest **not** held by association	Any	Improper surplus disposal with offence for sender; not a contribution
Nomination contestant in contest held by association	Non-monetary	If capital asset, improper surplus disposal with offence for sender; not a contribution*
Leadership contestant	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 association, but they must either be sold to the association or contributed by the contestant as a personal non-monetary contribution.

Example

After holding a nomination contest, a registered association accepts tablets valued at $300 each from a contestant's campaign. This is not an allowable transfer. It is an improper disposal of surplus by the contestant that will need to be corrected. To properly dispose of the tablets, which are capital assets, the campaign should have sold the tablets at fair market value and transferred the proceeds of the sale to the association or party.

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.

Transfers sent by or to an unregistered electoral district association

Transfers sent by an unregistered association

An electoral district association that is not registered with Elections Canada **cannot** send transfers to its affiliated political entities. Funds, property or services sent by an unregistered association to a registered party, registered association, candidate or contestant are ineligible contributions.

There is one exception: An association that was deregistered because the electoral district boundaries were redrawn or its party merged with another can transfer property or funds to the registered party or a registered association of the party within six months after the new boundaries or merger take effect.

Transfers sent to an unregistered association

An electoral district association that is not registered with Elections Canada can receive transfers only from its registered party. No other political entity can send transfers to an unregistered association.

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6. Fundraising

This chapter explains what portion of an amount given during a fundraising activity is a contribution. It describes the general rules and provides practical examples. The chapter covers the following topics:

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

Note: For the rules about organizing a fundraising activity for a candidate's campaign during an election period, see Chapter 9, **Working with Other Entities During the Election Period**.

Determining the contribution amount when contributors receive a benefit

If a registered association 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 an association that sells assets at a retail market price.

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 association'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.

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What if the benefit has no ascertainable value?

If a registered association 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 registered association 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 association. When the value of a benefit is not significant (for example, a party 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 party 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 party 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.

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What is different when calculating the eligible amount of a contribution to issue a tax receipt?

There are some unavoidable differences in how the Canada Revenue Agency requires the eligible amount of a contribution to be calculated for tax credit purposes compared with how a contribution is calculated for political financing purposes. The differences are the following:

- A registered association may have to deduct a set of “advantages” that is different from the “benefits” used to calculate a contribution for political financing purposes.
- The value of the “advantage” for tax credit purposes may be different from the value of the “benefit” for political financing purposes, even if it is the same property or service.
- A contribution under the *Canada Elections Act* will not always be eligible for a tax credit under the *Income Tax Act* (for example, if the advantage has no ascertainable value).
- References to Canada Revenue Agency guidance on calculating the eligible amount of a contribution are included in the **Typical fundraising activities** section below.

What is the effect of these differences when issuing a tax receipt?

To issue an official receipt that is valid for both political financing and tax credit purposes, a registered association must calculate and report up to four amounts:

- the benefit amount for political financing purposes
- the contribution amount for political financing purposes
- the advantage amount for tax credit purposes
- the eligible amount of the contribution for tax credit purposes



Elections Canada
EC 20024 (06/2024)

Reçu pour une contribution faite à une association de circonscription enregistrée | **Receipt for a contribution to a registered electoral district association**

N° de reçu / Receipt no.

Contribution reçue le / Contribution received — jj dd | mm mm | aaaa yyyy

Reçu émit le / Receipt issued — jj dd | mm mm | aaaa yyyy

Description de l’avantage / Description of advantage and benefit

Échantillon / Sample

Nom complet et adresse domiciliaire du donateur / Full name and home address of contributor

Agence du revenu du Canada : canada.ca/organismes-bienfaisance-dons
Canada Revenue Agency: canada.ca/charities-giving

Avis de confidentialité
Une entité politique recueille des renseignements personnels pour délivrer le reçu de contribution exigé au par. 366(1) de la *Loi électorale du Canada*. Ces renseignements sont communiqués à Élections Canada et peuvent être publiés sur son site Web relativement au rapport financier d’une entité politique. Élections Canada conserve vos renseignements dans le fichier de renseignements personnels Élections PPU 010, décrit à elections.ca. Vous pouvez consulter, le cas échéant, la politique de l’entité politique délivrant un reçu sur l’utilisation et la protection de vos renseignements.

– =

Montant monétaire donné / Monetary amount given — Avantage reçu – LIR / Advantage received – ITA — Montant admissible aux fins de l’impôt – LIR / Amount eligible for tax purposes – ITA

Avantage reçu – LEC / Benefit received – CEA — Montant de la contribution – LEC / Amount of contribution – CEA

☐ Reçu valide aux fins de l’impôt sur le revenu / Receipt valid for income tax purposes

☐ Reçu **NON** valide aux fins de l’impôt sur le revenu / Receipt **NOT** valid for income tax purposes

Association de circonscription enregistrée / Registered electoral district association

Parti enregistré / Registered party

Nom de l’agent autorisé / Name of authorized agent — Signature de l’agent autorisé / Signature of authorized agent

Privacy notice
Personal information is collected by a political entity to issue a contribution receipt, as required by subs. 366(1) of the *Canada Elections Act*. Information from the receipt is shared with Elections Canada and may be published on its website as part of a political entity’s financial return. Your information as held by Elections Canada is associated with personal information bank Elections PPU 010, described at elections.ca. The political entity issuing the receipt may have a policy that you can consult on how it uses and protects your 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.

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, further below, 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.

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What happens if a prominent attendee shows up unexpectedly?

There is no exception in the law for unexpected guests. If a prominent person shows up unexpectedly, and the other conditions for regulation are met, it is a regulated fundraising event.

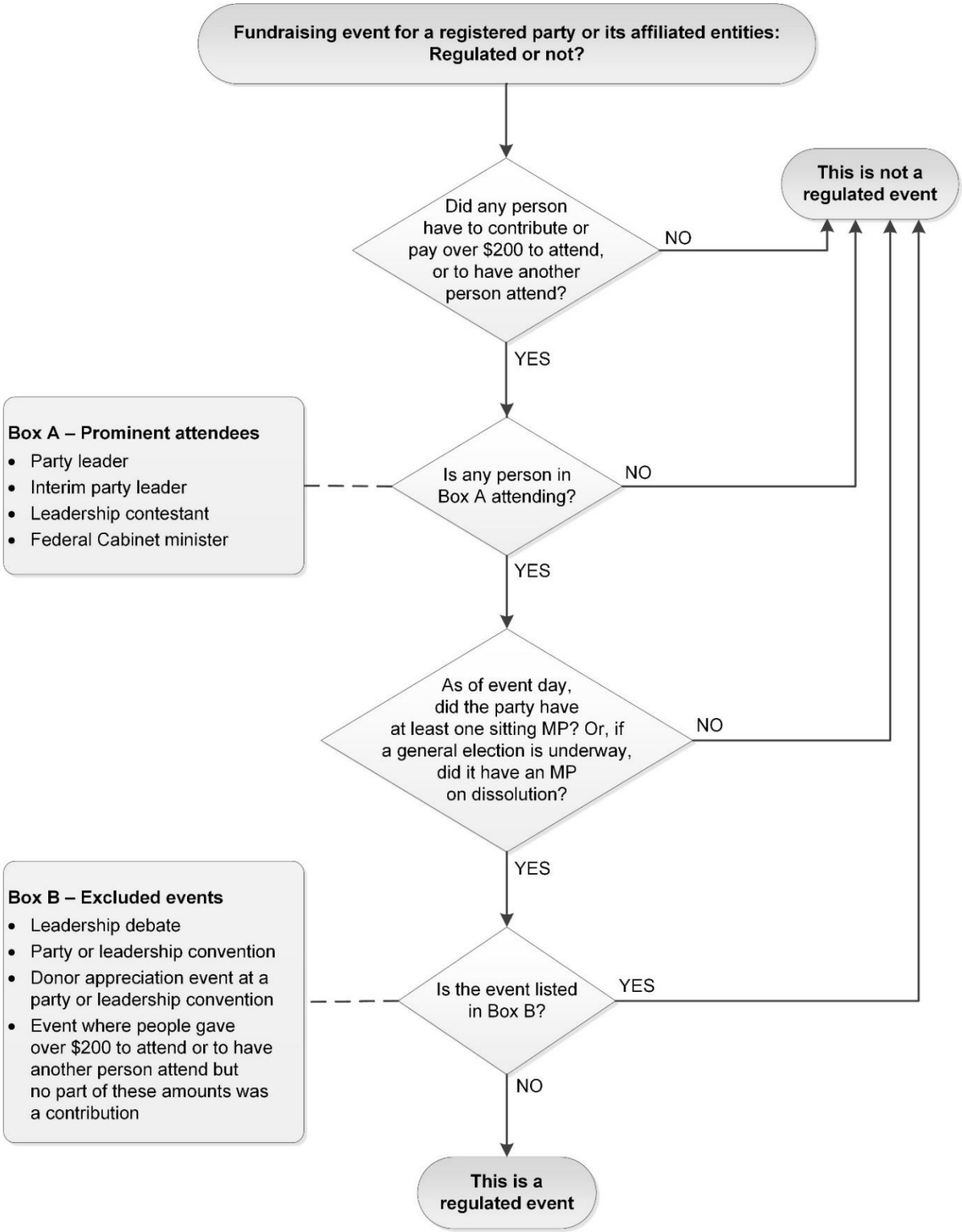
All the disclosure rules and penalties for non-compliance apply, as explained below. This includes the party's obligation to give five days' notice for an event outside a general election. If a prominent person attends without the notice being given, all contributions received in respect of the event are forfeited.

Examples

1. Barbara paid the $250 ticket price to attend a wine and cheese event organized by the registered association. The guest of honour is a federal Cabinet minister. 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 by the association to benefit a candidate. The candidate is attending but there will be no prominent attendees from the party. This is not a regulated fundraising event.
3. The registered association charges $250 for participants to join a virtual event held on a videoconferencing platform. A leadership contestant of the party will be online, interacting with attendees. This is a regulated fundraising event.
4. The registered association 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.
5. A registered association is holding an end-of-year donor appreciation event for people who contributed $1,000 or more to the association or the local candidate, or in combination to both. The interim party leader will be in attendance. This is a regulated fundraising event.
6. As a thank-you to contributors, the registered association and party leader hold a teleconference with individuals who regularly contribute $1,500 or more per year. This is a regulated fundraising event.

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Flowchart 3: Regulated fundraising events



Registered association'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 registered association was involved in the event, it may need to provide the party with information so that the party can follow the disclosure rules.

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

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.

What to send the party for events held outside a general election

Before the fundraising event	After the fundraising event
Provide this information so that the party can publish an event notice 5 days before the event: • 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 is organized to financially benefit • name of each prominent attendee whose attendance makes the event a regulated event (e.g. party leader) • required amount of contribution or payment to attend • individual to contact for more information about the event **Note:** 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.	Provide this information so that the party can submit a report to Elections Canada within 30 days after the event: • same information required in an event notice (excluding the individual to contact for event information) • 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*)

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What to send the party for events held during a general election	
Before the fundraising event	**After the fundraising event**
No information is required	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 registered association 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, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.
   ABC Restaurant, Ottawa, ON, A0A 0A0

   In support of: Electoral District Association X
   Featuring: the Honourable Mary Marcel
   Tickets: $250

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

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

   January 2, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.
   ABC Event Space, Vancouver, BC, A0A 0A0

   In support of: Electoral District Association 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.

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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 this topic, 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.

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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
When the registered association sells the branded good for a price that is similar to the price of a comparable item in the retail market: • The value of the branded good is the association's selling price. • Because the selling price and value are the same, there is no contribution to report. • Any profit from the sale is reported by the association as other revenue. The association 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. **Note:** This activity must not be used to circumvent the contribution rules. For example, an association cannot sell a large number of items to one buyer as a way to bring in excess, untraceable or illegal contributions.	When the registered association sells a branded good for a price that is higher than the price of a comparable item in the retail market: • The value of the branded good is the price of a comparable item in the retail market. • Because the selling price is higher than the value, the buyer is making a contribution that will need to be reported. • The contribution amount is the selling price less the price of a comparable item in the retail market. 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.

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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 a registered association needs 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 association's online store. Each cup results in a $10 contribution. A receipt for $30 must be issued.
- An individual buys two cups from the association'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 association'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 association uses its actual cost as the value of the benefit—see the question above).

Examples

1. A registered association sells coffee cups with the riding name and party 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.
2. A registered association sells coffee cups with the riding name and party logo for $40. The association 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 association can use the higher retail price, $25, as the value of the cup. As a result, the contribution is $15 ($40 – $25).*

   *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.

Canada Revenue Agency reference

For the sale of branded goods, the Canada Revenue Agency does not have specific guidance about determining the contribution amount that is eligible for a tax credit. See the general guidance in Income Tax Folio S7-F1-C1, *Split-Receipting and Deemed Fair Market Value* on the Canada Revenue Agency website.

Also see side-by-side Elections Canada and Canada Revenue Agency examples in the guide Fundraising Activities: Comparative Examples for Political Financing and Tax Credit Purposes on the Elections Canada website.

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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.

Donor's contribution	Winning bidder's contribution
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. 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: • the person who provided it (if the person who provided the property or service 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). 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.	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. There are several acceptable ways to value the benefit. These ways are likely the most practical: • 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.) • If the property or service was not donated or transferred, the value is its retail price or appraisal value. For an auctioned property or service whose value is not ascertainable, the full amount of the winning bid is a contribution. 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.

Examples

1. An individual donated a painting to a registered association for sale at the association'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 association.
   - 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 reported as a fundraising activity expense in the association's annual statement of revenues and expenses.

   *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.

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2. An individual (who is not in the business of selling office furniture) donated an office chair to a registered association for sale at the association'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 association 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, there is no expense to report.

   *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.

Canada Revenue Agency reference

For auctions, the Canada Revenue Agency has established somewhat different criteria than those mentioned above to determine the contribution amount that is eligible for a tax credit. See Income Tax Folio S7-F1-C1, *Split-Receipting and Deemed Fair Market Value* > Charity Auctions on the Canada Revenue Agency website.

Also see side-by-side Elections Canada and Canada Revenue Agency examples in the guide Fundraising Activities: Comparative Examples for Political Financing and Tax Credit Purposes on the Elections Canada website.

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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 registered association 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
The benefit for each ticket buyer includes: • if the event is held in a rented venue, the cost of the room rental and catering (prorated) • 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) • 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 • door prizes (prorated) (check against the nominal threshold) • complimentary items such as pens or keychains (check against the nominal threshold) • rental of audiovisual equipment and other general expenses (prorated)	The benefit for each ticket buyer includes: • green fee (excluded for golf club members whose green fees are already paid) • cart rental • meal • complimentary items (check against the nominal threshold) • door and achievement prizes (prorated) (check against the nominal threshold) • rental of audiovisual equipment and other general expenses (prorated)
Note: 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.	

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).

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Examples

1. A registered association 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 association 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
Less:	
Room rental	$10
Catering	$30
Band	$6
Audio	$3
Hockey tickets*	$8
Pen with logo*	$10
Contribution amount	**$83**

   *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.

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2. A golf tournament is held to raise funds for the registered association. Participants are charged $300, and 100 individuals are expected to attend. The association 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
Less:	
Green fee*	$50
Cart rental	$40
Golf shirt**	–
Prizes**	–
Contribution amount	**$210**

   *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.

   The $800 promotional expense is not part of the benefit received.

   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**.

Canada Revenue Agency reference

For ticketed fundraising events, the Canada Revenue Agency factors in different advantages with different values than those mentioned above to determine the contribution amount that is eligible for a tax credit. See Income Tax Folio S7-F1-C1, *Split-Receipting and Deemed Fair Market Value > Fundraising guidelines* on the Canada Revenue Agency website.

Also see side-by-side Elections Canada and Canada Revenue Agency examples in the guide Fundraising Activities: Comparative Examples for Political Financing and Tax Credit Purposes on the Elections Canada website.

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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 registered association 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 association in holding the event, such as room or audiovisual equipment rental, are not deducted from the ticket price.

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.

Canada Revenue Agency reference
The Canada Revenue Agency does not differentiate between regular and "other" ticketed events. To determine the contribution amount that is eligible for a tax credit, use the same guidelines as for a ticketed fundraising event. See Income Tax Folio S7-F1-C1, *Split-Receipting and Deemed Fair Market Value* > Fundraising guidelines on the Canada Revenue Agency website.

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.

Example
A registered association organizes a free event one evening. Light refreshments and appetizers are served while a speaker outlines the association's policy positions and answers questions. Participants have the opportunity to make a contribution to the association. Any contributions received are recorded at the amount given.

Canada Revenue Agency reference
The Canada Revenue Agency does not differentiate between ticketed and non-ticketed events. To determine the contribution amount that is eligible for a tax credit, use the same guidelines as for a ticketed fundraising event. See Income Tax Folio S7-F1-C1, *Split-Receipting and Deemed Fair Market Value* > Fundraising guidelines on the Canada Revenue Agency website. Also see side-by-side Elections Canada and Canada Revenue Agency examples in the guide Fundraising Activities: Comparative Examples for Political Financing and Tax Credit Purposes on the Elections Canada website.

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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.

Is a licence required to hold a draw?

The registered association 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 registered association 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.

Canada Revenue Agency reference
For draws, the Canada Revenue Agency's guidance indicates that none of the contribution amount is eligible for a tax credit. See Income Tax Folio S7-F1-C1, *Split-Receipting and Deemed Fair Market Value* > Lotteries/raffles on the Canada Revenue Agency website. Also see side-by-side Elections Canada and Canada Revenue Agency examples in the guide Fundraising Activities: Comparative Examples for Political Financing and Tax Credit Purposes on the Elections Canada website.

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7. Registered Association's Expenses

This chapter takes a broad look at a registered association's expenses and how they are administered. It covers the following topics:

- *Who can incur and pay the registered association's expenses?*
- *How do expenses relate to non-monetary contributions and transfers?*
- *Providing property or services to another entity*
- *What invoices have to be kept?*
- *Repaying and reporting unpaid claims*
- *Auditor's fee*

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

Who can incur expenses?

Only the financial agent and authorized electoral district agents can incur registered association expenses.

An expense is incurred when the association 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 association accepts the contribution.

There is no limit to the amount of expenses a registered association may incur for property or services it uses, but the expenses must be reported in the association's annual financial return.

Example

The financial agent distributes flyers outside of an election period to promote an information session held at the registered association's office. Expenses incurred for the flyers, including the cost of production and distribution, are reported as expenses of the registered association.

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Who can pay expenses?

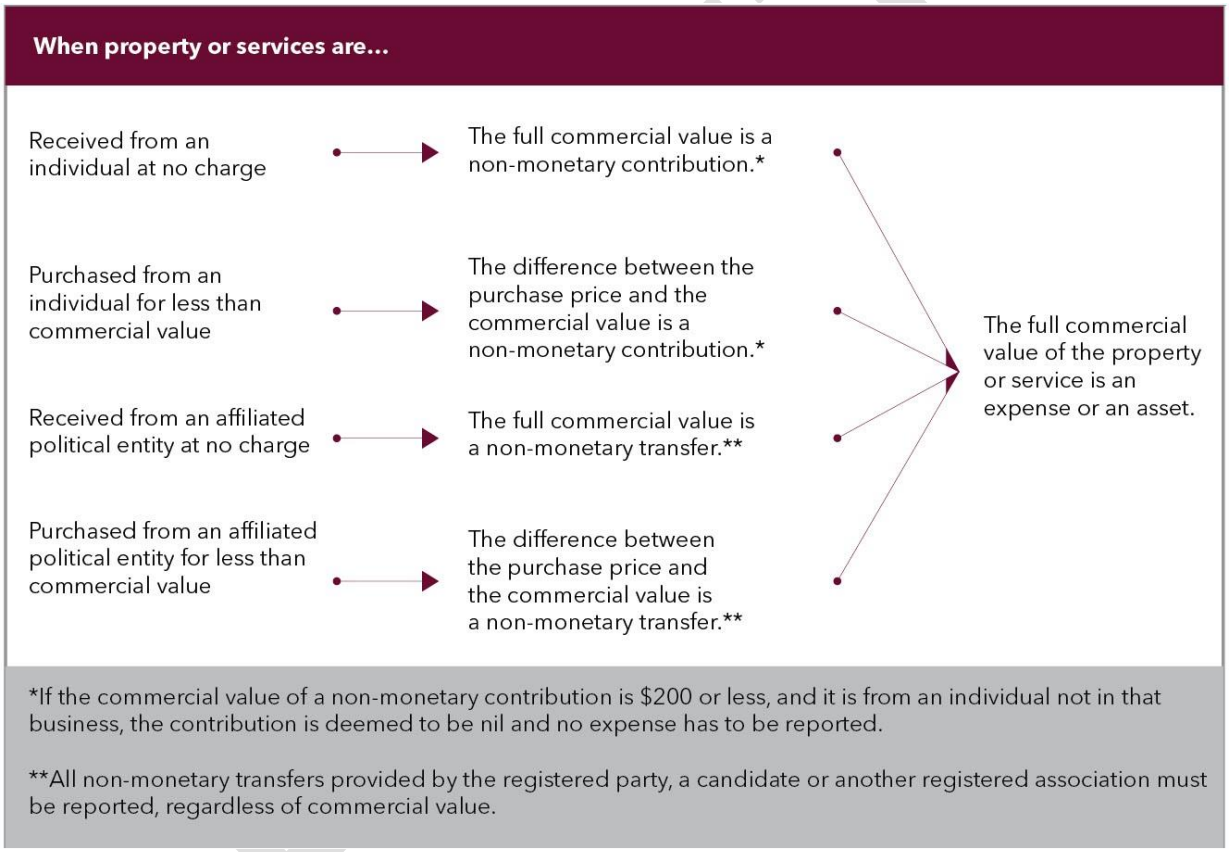
Only the financial agent and authorized electoral district agents can pay registered association expenses.

There is one exception to this rule. Expenses from the petty cash can be paid by a person authorized in writing by the financial agent. The financial agent must set the maximum amount that may be paid from the petty cash.

Non-monetary contributions and transfers are also expenses or assets

The registered association incurs an expense or acquires an asset 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.



Property or services provided to another political entity

Registered associations often work very closely with affiliated entities, especially candidates' campaigns. It is important to have a clear separation in their finances for reporting purposes.

The registered association may incur expenses for property or services that are then provided to the registered party, another registered association, a candidate, a nomination contestant or a leadership contestant. The property or services can be sent as non-monetary transfers or can be sold to the other political entity. Non-monetary transfers must be offered equally to all contestants.

If the property or service is being sold to the other political entity, a copy of the original supplier invoice as well as the invoice from the association must be sent to that other entity. The documentation should confirm the amount reported in the financial returns.

See Chapter 5, **Transfers**, for more information on rules and restrictions.

Examples

1. The registered association purchases signs from Signs Inc. for $1,500 and resells them to the candidate's campaign for $1,500. The association has to send the candidate a copy of the original invoice from Signs Inc. for $1,500 as well as an invoice from the association for $1,500.
2. The registered association creates a web page on its site for each nomination contestant. The commercial value of creating the web pages is $150 per contestant. Each nomination contestant has to report a non-monetary transfer and an expense of $150.

Staff of a parliamentarian

If employees on the staff of a parliamentarian engage in political activities to support the association during the year, the salaries of these persons are registered association expenses and, if not paid by the association, are non-monetary contributions from the parliamentarian. During an election period, some of these expenses may be election expenses of the candidate or party. See Chapter 9, **Working with Other Entities During the Election Period**.

However, if the employees work for the association 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 an expense nor a non-monetary contribution.

Invoices

If an expense of $50 or more was incurred by the registered association, either the financial agent or the authorized electoral district agent who incurred the expense 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 agent must also keep the proof of payment.

If an expense of less than $50 was incurred by the registered association, either the financial agent or the authorized electoral district agent who incurred the expense must keep a record of the nature of the expense. Once it is paid, the 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.

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Repaying and reporting unpaid claims

All invoices for claims have to be submitted to the financial agent or authorized electoral district agents. Claims have to be paid within 36 months after payment is due.

The registered association's annual financial return must include the following schedules related to unpaid claims:

- statement of unpaid claims (claims past due as of December 31 or claims with no due date)
- previously reported claims that have been paid in full since the last fiscal period
- statement of claims that remain unpaid 18 or 36 months after their due date

OGI reference
For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2018-09, *Unpaid Claims and Reporting Requirements*, on the Elections Canada website.

Auditor's fee

A registered association that needs to file an auditor's report with their annual financial return will receive a subsidy for audit fees. Elections Canada pays the subsidy directly to the auditor once it receives the return, the auditor's report and a copy of the auditor's invoice.

The auditor's subsidy for the fiscal year that ends on December 31, 2025, is a maximum of $2,646. (This is the base amount of $1,500 multiplied by the inflation adjustment factor in effect at the end of the fiscal period.) For the subsidy in a different fiscal year, check the Elections Canada website.

If the auditor's fee exceeds the maximum allowable subsidy, the registered association is responsible for the difference.

See Chapter 10, **Reporting**, for the conditions under which an audit is required.

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8. Partisan Advertising During the Pre-election Period

This chapter discusses how the Canada Elections Act *regulates partisan advertising during the pre-election period. It covers the following topics:*

- *What is partisan advertising?*
- *What qualifies as partisan advertising on the Internet?*
- *Partisan advertising expenses*
- *Partisan advertising in various situations (for a potential candidate or contestant, for a registered party inside the electoral district, for a registered party outside the electoral district)*
- *Summary of rules on partisan advertising expenses*

Note: The pre-election period starts on June 30 in the year of a fixed-date general election. It ends on the day before the general election is called.

What is partisan advertising?

Note: This section focuses on advertising that takes place off the Internet. For information about digital advertising, see the section **What qualifies as partisan advertising on the Internet?** below.

Partisan advertising is the transmission to the public during the pre-election period of an **advertising** message that **promotes or opposes**:

- a registered party or an eligible party, or
- the election of a potential candidate, nomination contestant or leader of a registered party or eligible party

Advertising in the pre-election period is not partisan advertising if it promotes or opposes a political entity only by taking a position on an issue with which the entity is associated. This is commonly called issue advertising.

However, it will be partisan advertising if the ad promotes or opposes a political entity in any other way, including by showing a logo or linking to a web page that identifies the entity (see below).

Note: A potential candidate is someone who is selected in a nomination contest, is deemed to be a candidate because they have conducted political financing transactions, is a member of Parliament or an incumbent, or has the support of a political party to be a candidate of that party.

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What qualifies as advertising

"Advertising" is a communication that makes its message known to the public by drawing attention to it and is generally unsolicited by the recipient. Factors such as form and content can help to identify something as advertising. Some communications are specifically **not** advertising under the law.

Advertising includes but is not limited to:

- lawn signs and billboards
- flyers and pamphlets
- radio and television ads
- newspaper and magazine ads
- vehicle wraps and bumper stickers
- flags designed to be flown from cars, flag poles or balconies

Advertising generally does **not** include:

- branded goods that are wearable or made for personal use (e.g. jackets, pins and mugs)
- telephone calls
- letters addressed to a named elector

What it means to promote or oppose a political entity

"Promoting or opposing" a registered party or eligible party may include but is not limited to:

- naming the party
- identifying the party, including by its logo
- providing a link to a web page that names or identifies the party

"Promoting or opposing" a potential candidate, nomination contestant or leader of a registered party or eligible party may include but is not limited to:

- naming the person
- showing a photograph, cartoon or drawing of the person
- identifying the person, including by political affiliation or by a logo
- providing a link to a web page that does any of the above

OGI reference
For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2019-11, *Application of Partisan and Election Advertising Rules to Telephone Calls*, on the Elections Canada website.

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What qualifies as partisan advertising on the Internet?

Election messages communicated over the Internet are partisan advertising only if:

- they meet the general criteria for partisan advertising (see **What is partisan advertising?** above), **and**
- they have, or would normally have, a placement cost (such as sponsored or boosted content)

For greater certainty, the following are not partisan advertising:

- messages sent or posted for free on social media platforms such as X and Facebook
- messages sent by email or through other messaging services (including texts sent through a cellular or mobile network)
- videos posted for free on social media platforms such as YouTube and Instagram
- content posted on the party's website (the ongoing expenses for creating and maintaining a website are not placement costs)

Note: If the registered association decides to sponsor or boost social media content that was originally posted for free, it will become partisan advertising and require a tagline.

Do posts by social media influencers qualify as partisan advertising?

Influencers are people with a strong online presence who are sometimes used by marketers to promote brands. They can be any person with an online reach that others are willing to pay for. Influencers regularly post unpaid and paid content to their social media accounts, which serve both personal and commercial purposes. As with any individual, if an influencer independently chooses to post their personal political views on the Internet without being paid, the communication is not partisan advertising.

If the registered association pays a social media influencer to post a message on the influencer's account in a pre-election period, it is partisan advertising. Influencer advertising does not have to be captured in an online platform registry, but it is subject to the tagline requirement.

A registered association simply asking for and receiving a free endorsement from an influencer will not trigger regulation.

Information to be held in an online registry

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 registered association 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 association 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.

OGI reference

For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2020-05, *Partisan and Election Advertising on the Internet*, on the Elections Canada website.

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Partisan advertising expenses

A partisan advertising expense is an expense incurred in relation to:

- producing a partisan advertising message
- transmitting a partisan advertising message

It includes the following:

- any non-monetary contribution received to the extent that the property or service is used in relation to producing or transmitting a partisan advertising message
- a non-monetary transfer accepted to the extent that the goods or services are used in relation to producing or transmitting a partisan advertising message

Partisan advertising in various situations

Partisan advertising expenses of registered parties are limited in the pre-election period, and rules are in place for spending by electoral district associations to protect this limit.

Associations are still allowed to incur partisan advertising expenses to benefit local campaigns. For example, they can advertise for their nominated candidate or for their party locally (in case a candidate has not been chosen yet). But there are restrictions when it comes to advertising for the party outside the association's electoral district.

The rules and restrictions for various situations are explained in the sections below.

Note: Different tagline requirements are explained in each section below. For partisan advertising on the Internet, where an authorization statement cannot be included on an advertising message because of its size, this is acceptable if the statement is made immediately apparent to the viewer by following the link in the advertising message.

Partisan advertising to promote or oppose a potential candidate or contestant

An electoral district association of a registered party, whether the association is registered or not, can incur expenses and conduct partisan advertising to promote or oppose the election of a potential candidate or a nomination contestant. This can be done inside or outside the association's electoral district.

If the association is registered, the partisan advertising has to be authorized by the financial agent or an authorized electoral district agent. The authorization has to be mentioned in or on the partisan advertising message—for example: "Authorized by the financial agent of the XYZ Riding Association." The words "paid for by" cannot be used in place of "authorized by."

Advertisements that promote a potential candidate or a nomination contestant will often include the affiliated party's name or logo. Such ads are still considered to promote the potential candidate or contestant rather than the party, unless:

- the potential candidate is the party leader, or
- the decision to advertise outside the electoral district is not reasonably related to the potential candidate's or nomination contestant's election (such as running a Facebook ad in British Columbia for an Ontario candidate)

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If pre-existing advertising is in place leading up to a pre-election period, the association must either add a tagline or remove or cover the advertising by June 30 (the start of the pre-election period).

Examples

1. During the pre-election period, the registered association places ads on city buses to promote a potential candidate (who is not the party leader) by showing the potential candidate's name and party logo. These are partisan advertising expenses of the association. The ads display an authorization message from the financial agent. The expenses remain partisan advertising expenses of the association even though the buses regularly travel into ridings other than the association's own riding.
2. During the pre-election period, the registered association runs a radio ad in an urban centre to oppose a potential candidate (who is not a party leader). It identifies the potential candidate by their name and political affiliation. This is a partisan advertising expense of the association. The ad includes an authorization message from the financial agent. The expense remains a partisan advertising expense of the association even though the ad can be heard over the airwaves in a dozen ridings outside the association's own riding.
3. During the pre-election period, the registered association places an ad in a multicultural newspaper to promote a potential candidate (who is not the party leader) by showing the potential candidate's name and party logo. The newspaper publishes only one edition for the entire country. This is a partisan advertising expense of the association. The ad displays an authorization message from the financial agent. The expense remains a partisan advertising expense of the association even though it is distributed nationally because it reasonably promotes the potential candidate's election in their own electoral district.

Note: If the potential candidate being promoted is the party leader, and the advertisement is not transmitted only or mostly within the electoral district in which the leader is running, then the ad is considered to promote the party. See **Partisan advertising on behalf of the party outside the electoral district** below.

Partisan advertising to promote or oppose a party within the electoral district

An electoral district association of a registered party, whether the association is registered or not, can incur expenses and conduct partisan advertising to promote or oppose a party. This can be done without impacting its affiliated party's limit if the advertising is conducted only or mostly in the association's electoral district.

If the association is registered, the partisan advertising has to be authorized by the financial agent or an authorized electoral district agent. The authorization has to be mentioned in or on the partisan advertising message—for example: "Authorized by the financial agent of the XYZ Riding Association." The words "paid for by" cannot be used in place of "authorized by."

If pre-existing advertising is in place leading up to a pre-election period, the association must either add a tagline or remove or cover the advertising by June 30 (the start of the pre-election period).

Example

During the pre-election period, the registered association buys balcony flags that promote the party by showing the party logo and distributes them in its riding. Because the association distributed the advertising only within its riding, the expenses are partisan advertising expenses of the association and not of the party. The flags display an authorization message from the financial agent of the association. If a small percentage of flags are inadvertently installed in adjacent ridings, this is still a partisan advertising expense of the association.

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Partisan advertising on behalf of the party outside the electoral district

An electoral district association of a registered party, whether the association is registered or not, can incur expenses and conduct partisan advertising outside the association's electoral district on behalf of the party. However, the expenses will be subject to the party's limit on partisan advertising expenses.

For that reason, before an association conducts any such advertising, it must obtain the agreement of the party beforehand. After incurring the expenses:

- if the association is registered, the property or services that the expense is incurred for must be sold or transferred to the party
- if the association is unregistered, the property or services that the expense is incurred for must be sold to the party

A copy of the original supplier invoice for the partisan advertising expense must be sent to the party. The expenses for partisan advertising conducted during the pre-election period, including the cost of production and distribution, are partisan advertising expenses of the party.

Partisan advertising done on behalf of the registered party must receive prior written authorization from a registered agent of the party. This authorization has to be mentioned in or on the message—for example: "Authorized by a registered agent of the XYZ Party of Canada." The words "paid for by" cannot be used in place of "authorized by."

If pre-existing advertising is in place leading up to a pre-election period, the association needs authorization from the registered agent to keep it in place. The association must either add the party's tagline or remove or cover the advertising by June 30 (the start of the pre-election period).

Example

Leading up to a fixed-date general election, a registered association works with the registered party to develop an advertising campaign that is centred around the party leader. The party's chief agent authorizes the association to produce flyers and distribute them across the province in July. The association adds a party tagline on the message and sends the invoice for the flyers to the party. The party reports the amount as a non-monetary transfer from the association and a partisan advertising expense.

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Summary of rules on partisan advertising expenses

The following table summarizes the partisan advertising rules for electoral district associations of registered parties.

Partisan advertising during the pre-election period			
Promoting or opposing…	**Transmitted where**	**By a registered association**	**By an unregistered association**
Election of a: • **potential candidate** • **nomination contestant**	Inside or outside the association's electoral district[1]	• Association's authorization required • Authorization on or in message • It is an expense of the registered association	• It is an expense of the association[3]
Registered party[2]	Only or mostly within the association's electoral district	• Association's authorization required • Authorization on or in message • It is an expense of the registered association	If the property or services are sold to the party: • Party's authorization required • Authorization on or in message • It is a partisan advertising expense of the party Otherwise, it is an expense of the association[3]
Registered party[2]	Outside the association's electoral district	• Party's authorization required • Authorization on or in message • Property or services must be sold or transferred to the party • It is a partisan advertising expense of the party	If the property or services are sold to the party: • Party's authorization required • Authorization on or in message • It is a partisan advertising expense of the party Otherwise, it is an expense of the association[3]

[1] If the potential candidate being promoted is the party leader, and the advertisement is not transmitted only or mostly within the electoral district in which the leader is running, then the ad is considered to promote the party.

[2] An eligible party that becomes registered during a fixed-date general election is deemed to have been registered from June 30.

[3] The association may need to register as a third party. An unregistered association may also need to register as a third party if it conducts partisan activities or election surveys in the pre-election period. Please refer to the *Political Financing Handbook for Third Parties, Financial Agents and Auditors* for registration requirements and other obligations.

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9. Working with Other Entities During the Election Period

This chapter discusses how transactions are regulated when the association engages in shared activities, shares its resources or acts on behalf of another political entity during the election period. It covers the following topics:

- *Incurring election expenses on behalf of the candidate or the party*
- *Typical election expenses incurred on behalf of the candidate or the party*

Incurring election expenses on behalf of the candidate or the party

An electoral district association of a registered party, whether the association is registered or not, cannot incur election expenses unless it is done on behalf of the candidate or the party. The association must receive prior written authorization, and the expenses are election expenses of the candidate or the party, as the case may be.

The property or services must be:

- sold to the party or a candidate endorsed by the party, or
- transferred to the party, a registered association of the party (which must then also sell or transfer the property or services), or a candidate endorsed by the party

Note: Only registered electoral district associations can send transfers.

A registered association might purchase or rent property or services before an election is called for future use by a candidate's campaign. If the candidate's official agent agrees to incur the related expenses so that the campaign can use the property or services, the association must send the campaign an invoice so that the expenses are reported in the candidate's return. The property or services can be sold or transferred to the candidate's campaign.

For example, if the registered association rents an office for the candidate in advance, the candidate's campaign must report all of the rent as its own expense either from the date agreed on for the campaign to start using the office or from the date it starts using the office (whichever is earlier)—though only the rent during the election period is an election expense.

Note: Associations and candidate's campaigns often work closely together, but they must keep their finances separate and traceable. The association must record transfers or charge for property or services that they send to the candidate or other affiliated entities.

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Typical election expenses incurred on behalf of the candidate or the party

The following are examples of typical activities where the registered association shares its resources or incurs election expenses on behalf of the candidate or the party.

Election advertising on behalf of the candidate or the party

Election advertising is the transmission to the public during the election period of an advertising message that promotes or opposes a registered party or candidate, including by taking a position on an issue with which a party or candidate is clearly associated.

Election advertising done on behalf of the candidate or the party must receive prior written authorization from the official agent of the candidate or from a registered agent of the party, as the case may be.

This authorization has to be mentioned in or on the message—for example: “Authorized by a registered agent of the XYZ Party of Canada.” The words “paid for by” cannot be used in place of “authorized by.”

The registered association must send a copy of the original supplier invoice to the candidate or party. The expenses incurred for advertising conducted during the election period, including the cost of production and distribution, are election expenses of the candidate or the party.

If pre-existing advertising is in place when an election is called, the association needs authorization from the official agent or registered agent to keep it in place. The association must either add the candidate’s or party’s tagline or remove or cover the advertising in a reasonable timeframe.

What is reasonable depends on factors such as:

- the type of election (fixed-date general election vs. elections where the start date is not known)
- how difficult it is to access the advertising
- whether the association needs a commercial provider to add the tagline
- the number of advertisements that are affected

The association should add taglines or remove or cover the advertising as quickly as possible.

Examples

1. After an election is called, the financial agent of the registered association obtains the official agent’s written authorization to purchase and distribute signs promoting the candidate. The financial agent sends a copy of the original supplier invoice to the candidate’s campaign. These expenses are election expenses of the candidate. The official agent’s authorization must be mentioned on the signs.
2. During the election period, the registered association would like to post a video promoting the candidate on YouTube. There is no placement cost to post the video, so it is not election advertising. However, because the production cost for the video would be an election expense of the candidate, the association has to obtain prior written authorization from the candidate’s official agent to post the video.

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3. The association would like to hire a media firm to place web banners promoting the candidate on social media platforms during the election period, directing users to a video on YouTube. Because the web banners have a placement cost and promote the candidate, they are election advertising. The association has to obtain prior written authorization from the candidate's official agent, and this authorization must be mentioned on the banners. The financial agent has to send a copy of the original supplier invoice to the candidate's campaign. These expenses are election expenses of the candidate.

OGI reference

For a detailed discussion of a related topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2020-05, *Partisan and Election Advertising on the Internet*, on the Elections Canada website.

Pamphlets and flyers

An electoral district association of a registered party, whether the association is registered or not, might choose to distribute pamphlets and flyers at any time during the year.

If the pamphlets and flyers are distributed during an election period, they are election expenses and can be sent only on behalf of the candidate or the party. Prior written authorization from the official agent, chief agent or a registered agent must be obtained and mentioned in or on the advertisement.

If the pamphlets and flyers are in transit on the day the election is called and the association does not have the ability to stop their delivery, they will not be considered election advertising or election expenses even though the actual delivery will take place during the election period. However, any pamphlets and flyers distributed in the 36 days preceding a fixed-date election will be considered election advertising and election expenses.

Note: Pamphlets and flyers distributed during the pre-election period in the year of a fixed-date general election are partisan advertising. See rules and restrictions in Chapter 8, **Partisan Advertising During the Pre-election Period**.

Used signs

The registered association may have in its possession signs used in a previous election. If the candidate or party reuses these signs in a subsequent election, the current commercial value of equivalent signs has to be recorded as a non-monetary transfer to the political entity receiving the signs. Transfer rules apply to these transactions.

Example

After an election is called, the financial agent of the registered association obtains the official agent's written authorization to reuse signs from the previous election, promoting the candidate. The current commercial value of the signs is the election expense of the candidate. In addition, the official agent's authorization must be mentioned on the signs.

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Billboards

The commercial value, including design, production and installation, of any pre-existing billboards promoting the candidate that remain in place during the election period are election expenses. Billboards include the sign and the supporting structure. Elections Canada will accept the commercial value of an equivalent sign (that is, the same size and design) that would be temporarily installed just for the election period.

Similarly, with respect to the supporting structure, Elections Canada will accept the commercial value of an equivalent structure that would typically be used for an election period rather than the commercial value of a structure designed to be more permanent in nature. Note that the commercial value of the structure is the lower of its purchase price or its rental cost for the length of the election period.

A tagline must be added to the billboard in a reasonable timeframe after the election is called. See the section **Election advertising on behalf of the candidate or the party** above.

Example

The registered association is renting a billboard that promotes the member of Parliament in the riding. The expenses are reported in the association's annual financial return. When a federal election is called and the member of Parliament runs for re-election, the association plans to keep the billboard up to promote the incumbent candidate. The candidate's official agent has to authorize the expenses of the billboard in writing, and the authorization must be mentioned on the billboard. The expenses are election expenses of the candidate.

Registered association's office and assets

The candidate's campaign may use the registered association's office and assets during the election period. Their use is an election expense of the candidate.

For the use of its office, the registered association must send an invoice to the candidate's campaign together with the association's original rental agreement.

If the registered association charges:

- less than its own rental cost for the period, the difference is a non-monetary transfer from the association
- more than its own rental cost for the period, the difference is a monetary transfer from the candidate

For the use of its capital assets (computers, printing equipment, etc.), the association must send an invoice equivalent to the commercial value of renting similar assets for the same period.

If the registered association does not charge for the use of its capital assets, the commercial value of renting similar assets for the same period is a non-monetary transfer from the association.

For the use of office supplies (paper, pens, printer toner, etc.), the association must send an invoice equivalent to the commercial value of the items. If the association does not charge the campaign for office supplies, the commercial value of the items is a non-monetary transfer from the association.

Example

The registered association rents office space all year. During the election period, the candidate sublets the office and uses it as a campaign office. The registered association sends the original rental agreement and an invoice to the candidate's campaign for the rent calculated for the election period. The rent paid by the candidate is an election expense of the candidate. The registered association has to report the income in its financial statement at the end of the fiscal year.

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Registered association's existing website or web content

If the registered association's website promotes the candidate and stays online during the election period, it is an election expense of the candidate. Elections Canada will accept the current commercial value of an equivalent website as the commercial value of a pre-existing website.

The official agent must approve this transfer from the association to the campaign. If the official agent does not wish to have this expense count toward the limit, the website must go offline during the election period.

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

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.

Fundraising during an election period

Registered associations can conduct fundraising activities at any time. If a registered association conducts a fundraising activity during an election period, the promotional expenses are election expenses of the candidate.

Examples include:

- producing and distributing advertising for the event
- producing and distributing invitations
- procuring and distributing promotional items, such as pens or T-shirts

Prior to incurring election expenses on behalf of the candidate, the financial agent of the registered association must receive written authorization from the candidate's official agent. In addition, for election advertising, the official agent's authorization has to be mentioned in or on the promotion—for example, "Authorized by the official agent of John Smith." The words "paid for by" cannot be used in place of "authorized by."

The registered association must send a copy of the original supplier invoice for these expenses to the candidate's campaign. The candidate's campaign must report the amounts as election expenses, whether the association invoices the campaign for the expenses or provides a non-monetary transfer.

Since the registered association conducted the activity and accepted the contributions, the remaining expenses that are not the candidate's election expenses are reported by the association.

Example

The registered association is planning to hold a fundraising event during an election period. The financial agent obtains the official agent's written authorization to incur expenses for advertising the event, and the association creates flyers and distributes them in the riding.

After the event, the financial agent sends a copy of the original supplier invoice to the candidate's campaign for the expenses incurred for designing, printing and distributing the flyers. The official agent reports the invoiced amount as an election expense. The association did not incur any other expenses for the event that would qualify as the candidate's election expenses, so the financial agent reports the remaining expenses in the association's return.

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Voter contact calling services

Voter contact calling services are services involving the making of calls during an election period (but not during a pre-election period) for any purpose related to an election, including:

- promoting or opposing a registered party, its leader, a candidate, a nomination contestant or any position on an issue with which a party or candidate 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 candidate or on any issue with which a candidate is associated
- raising funds for a registered party, a candidate or a nomination contestant

Before incurring expenses for voter contact calling services, the registered association must obtain written authorization from the chief agent, the official agent or the financial agent of the political entity the services are to be acquired for. The association cannot incur expenses for voter calls during the election period on its own behalf.

The registered association must send an invoice, including a copy of the original supplier invoice, to the registered party, the candidate or the nomination contestant. Expenses incurred for voter calls conducted during the election period, including their production and distribution, have to be reported as election expenses (or nomination campaign expenses) by the entity the services were acquired for.

Although voter calls are election expenses, they are not election advertising.

Note: If a registered association provides voter contact calling services to a nomination contestant, the service must be offered equally to all nomination contestants.

Note: A registered association 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.

OGI reference

For a detailed discussion of this topic, please refer to Elections Canada's interpretation note 2019-11, *Application of Partisan and Election Advertising Rules to Telephone Calls*, on the Elections Canada website.

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Mass text messaging

When a registered association sends mass text messages on behalf of a candidate or party to promote them during the election period, the expenses incurred for production and distribution are election expenses. Before incurring the expenses, the registered association must obtain written authorization from the party's chief agent or the candidate's official agent.

While they may result in election expenses, text messages sent by a political entity 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 candidate or party, asking for an elector's vote or asking for a contribution are not subject to CRTC rules.

Since a text message is not election advertising, 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

During an election period, a registered association can incur expenses to use voter database software for electoral purposes only on behalf of its registered party or an affiliated candidate. The association must receive prior written authorization, and the expenses are election expenses of the candidate or the party, as the case may be.

The table below shows how to determine the expense, based on the software arrangement.

Software arrangement	Party's or candidate's election expense
Association has an ongoing contract with a supplier for use of the database software	Amount charged by the supplier to the association for ongoing use, prorated for the election period
Association owns the database software outright (customized or off-the-shelf solution)	Commercial value of renting a similar asset for the election 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 100,000 electors) over the election period. A quote should be obtained from a subscription-based software supplier.	

Examples

1. An association offers a candidate access to its voter database over a 40-day election period. The association has an annual contract with a supplier for its voter database software at a cost of $7,000. It sends the candidate's official agent an invoice for $767 ($7,000 / 365 x 40) to account for the prorated access fee. This can be sent as a non-monetary transfer or as an invoice to be paid. The official agent reports $767 as an election expense for use of the database software during the election period.
2. An association has a voter database that it created using off-the-shelf software at a cost of $300. It offers a candidate access over a 40-day election period. The financial agent determines that the commercial value of renting a similar asset for 40 days is $500. Since the purchase price is less than the rental cost, the association sends the candidate's official agent an invoice for $300. This can be sent as a non-monetary transfer or as an invoice to be paid. The official agent reports $300 as an election expense for use of the database software during the election period.

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Surveys and research

A registered association can collect data outside an election period and share it with the registered party or its candidates at any time.

However, during an election period, the association can incur expenses to conduct surveys or research for electoral purposes only on behalf of its registered party or an affiliated candidate. The association must receive prior written authorization, and the expenses are election expenses of the candidate or the party, as the case may be.

Expenses to add data to a database and clean the data during the election period, and for system support during the election period, are also election expenses, if the data is used for electoral purposes.

Example

Before an election period, a registered association pays a data broker $10,000 for two sets of data. The association receives the first set immediately and the second set after the election period starts. If the affiliated candidate in the riding wishes to use these datasets during the election period, the candidate's official agent must authorize the expense for the second set of data and report $5,000 as an election expense.

Data from an external source

When a registered association 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, its candidates and its registered associations
- a person providing volunteer labour to the above-mentioned political entities (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 association 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 association, the invoiced amount must be the actual expenses incurred.

A registered association must be careful not to incur an election expense by accepting a non-monetary contribution of data during an election period that is used by a candidate's campaign, unless the candidate's official agent has authorized the expense for the campaign.

Example

Outside an election period, an advocacy group offers a registered association its members list. The list is a spreadsheet with names, addresses and phone numbers of 100 people who support an issue that the association is associated with. The advocacy group is an ineligible contributor, so the association cannot accept this list for free. However, the association 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 an 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.

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10. Reporting

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

- *Reporting obligations after registration and during the fiscal year*
- *Additional reporting if corrections or revisions are required*
- *Submitting reports to Elections Canada*
- *Requesting a filing deadline extension*

Note: Registry information and financial returns submitted to Elections Canada are published, in whole or in part, on the agency's website.

Reporting obligations after registration and during the fiscal year

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

Mandatory document	Description	Deadline	Who is responsible
Registered Association's Statement of Assets and Liabilities (EC 20031)	The statement lists the association's assets and liabilities as of the day before the effective date of registration.	6 months after becoming a registered association	Financial agent
Registered Association's Changes to Registry Information (EC 20411)	The association must report changes to its registry information, such as an address change or new appointments.	30 days after a change of registry information	Chief executive officer
Nomination Contest Report (EC 20188)	The association must file this report if the association (and not the party) held a nomination contest. It is required if the contest was open to more than one person, even if only one person entered. After receiving the report, Elections Canada starts sending notices to the nomination contestant and financial agent about reporting obligations.	30 days after a nomination contest held by the association	Association's representative

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Mandatory document	Description	Deadline	Who is responsible
Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return (EC 20081) (if applicable)[1] With supporting documents	The annual financial return includes the following: • association's information and declaration, signed by the financial agent • inflows and outflows, including for voter contact calling services • statement of revenues and expenses • statement of assets and liabilities	May 31	Financial agent
Auditor's report (if applicable)[2]	After the financial agent completes the association's annual financial return, the auditor has to examine the financial records and give an opinion in a report as to whether the association's return presents fairly the information contained in the financial records on which it is based.	May 31	Auditor and financial agent
Auditor's invoice (if applicable)[2]	The invoice must be prepared by the auditor.	May 31	Auditor and financial agent
Contributions to a Registered Party or to a Registered Association—Information Return (T2092—CRA)	The financial agent must use the Canada Revenue Agency form to report contributions received and receipted. A link to the form is posted on the Elections Canada website.	May 31, to the Canada Revenue Agency	Financial agent
Registered Association's Annual Confirmation of Registry Information (EC 20412)	Elections Canada sends the association a package with its registry information each year. The association must certify that the registry information is accurate or provide updates.	May 31	Chief executive officer

[1] The financial return is not required if, as of December 31 of the previous year, the association had been registered for less than six months. See the section **Reporting requirements soon after registration** in Chapter 2.

[2] An auditor's report is required if the association accepted contributions totalling $10,000 or more, or incurred expenses totalling $10,000 or more, in the fiscal period. Audit fees and transfers that the association sends to affiliated political entities do not count toward the $10,000 threshold.

It is very important to give the auditor enough time to properly audit the annual financial return before the deadline.

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Additional reporting if corrections or revisions are required

The *Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return* may need to be amended to correct errors or omissions.

Corrections or revisions requested by Elections Canada	Corrections or revisions requested by the registered association
On review, Elections Canada may request the financial agent to correct or revise the association's annual financial return. The financial agent must submit the corrected or revised return within the specified period.	The financial agent may become aware of a need to correct or revise a return that has been filed (for example, to add some omitted contributions). The financial agent or chief executive officer has to apply to Elections Canada for authorization to file an amended return, using the *Request for Amendment* form. An amended return must be submitted within 30 days after the correction or revision is authorized.

Reporting a nomination contest

A nomination contest is a competition to select a person who will be proposed for endorsement as a party's candidate in an electoral district. Nomination contests are not mandatory.

If a party or association holds a contest, the entity that holds it must submit a *Nomination Contest Report* to Elections Canada within 30 days after the selection date.

The party or association may be unsure of whether its selection process counts as a nomination contest. It is generally a nomination contest if the process is open to more than one person, even if only one person decides to put their name forward.

Selections that take place outside a competition are not regulated. In case of doubt, we recommend that the party or association submit the contest report to avoid potential non-compliance.

If the nomination contest is cancelled before the selection date, no reporting is required.

Note: Whoever held the contest (the party or the association) must be the one to submit the *Nomination Contest Report*. If the party submits the report, contestants do not have the option to dispose of their surplus funds to the association. The funds must go to the party or the party's candidate in the electoral district.

Example

A registered electoral district association wants to select a prospective candidate for the next election. The association informs its members that they will take nominations from the floor and vote at the next meeting. This is a nomination contest, even if only one person enters. The association submits a contest report within 30 days after the selection date.

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Submitting reports to Elections Canada

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

Elections Canada has developed free software to help with the preparation of financial returns: the Electronic Financial Return (EFR) software. It 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 *Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return* makes reporting much easier because EFR validates the entries and creates a submission file with the required fields populated.

Options for submitting financial reports to Elections Canada

Option 1—Online (Political Entities Service Centre)

Log in

- Log in to the Political Entities Service Centre at csep-pesc.elections.ca. (Use the email address that Elections Canada has on file for you in the Registry of Electoral District Associations.)
- Click on the Electronic Financial Returns tab.

Financial transactions 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.

Statement of assets and liabilities

- Upload the report (in PDF format) and any supporting documents.
- Follow the on-screen steps to apply digital consent and submit the report.

Extension and amendment requests

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

Note

- Other forms of electronic submission may not be accepted. Files cannot be left in a dropbox or cloud storage for Elections Canada to retrieve.
- If you are not using the Political Entities Service Centre to apply digital consent, handwritten signatures are required.
- The association 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.

Option 2—Mail
Any financial reports • Where signatures are required, sign the pages by hand. • Send the reports and supporting documents to Elections Canada by courier or mail. **Address** Elections Canada 30 Victoria Street Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0M6
Note • We recommend keeping a copy of all documents submitted.

Requesting a filing deadline extension

Reports eligible for an extension

If the registered association is not able to submit the *Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return* with all mandatory documents by the deadline, the association may apply to submit the report within an extended period.

Note: The *Canada Elections Act* does not allow for extensions on registry reports, including the annual confirmation of registry information or changes to registry information during the year.

The following table explains which versions of the annual financial return are eligible for an extension and from whom.

Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return—extension requests			
Document to submit	**Extension from Elections Canada**	**Additional extension from Elections Canada**	**Extension from a judge**
Original submission of the return, including the auditor's report (if required)	Yes	No	Yes
Corrected or revised return, as requested by the registered association	Yes	Yes	No
Corrected or revised return, as requested by Elections Canada	No	No	No*
*Corrections or revisions requested by Elections Canada are not eligible for extensions and must be filed within the specified period. However, the financial agent can apply to a judge to be relieved of the obligation of complying with the request.			

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Submitting an extension request to Elections Canada

To apply for an extension from Elections Canada, the financial agent or chief executive officer 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 for the original submission of the annual financial return, or if the financial agent is unable to file the return within the extended period, the financial agent may apply to a judge for an extension.

> **Note:** If documents are not filed by the statutory deadline and no extension has been authorized, a registered association may face deregistration.

Submitting an extension request to a judge

The financial agent of an association may apply to a judge for an extension to the filing deadline for the annual financial return. The request must be received by the court within two weeks after the following events, whichever applies:

- the end of the two-week period during which an extension could be requested from Elections Canada
- the rejection of an application made to Elections Canada within the allowable period
- the end of an extended period granted by Elections Canada

The application must be submitted to one of the courts listed below. Any of the courts can be applied to, no matter where the registered association has its headquarters.

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

If the financial agent or chief executive officer 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 association 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

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Province or territory	Court that can receive the application
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 registered association 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 an association submitted its mandatory documents late before requesting an extension and is now regularizing its filing.

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

Note: If the registered association 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.

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11. Financial Statements in Part 4 of the Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return

This chapter explains the information required for each field in Part 4 of the Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return*. The statements in that part must be completed based on the association's own financial statements, prepared in accordance with current accounting standards. The chapter covers the following topics:*

- *Statement of revenues and expenses*
- *Statement of assets and liabilities*

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Statement of revenues and expenses

Field	Explanation
REVENUES	
Contributions	Monetary and non-monetary contributions received or receivable
Transfers	Monetary and non-monetary transfers received or receivable
Interest income	Bank interest and investment income received or receivable
Fundraising activities	Non-contribution portion of fundraising revenue
Other	Any revenue not listed above (provide supporting schedule)
Total revenues	
EXPENSES AND CASH OUTFLOWS	
Advertising – radio	Includes airtime charged by the radio station and other expenses associated with the advertisement, such as hiring talent, designing the advertisement, etc.
Advertising – TV	Includes airtime charged by the TV station and other expenses associated with the advertisement, such as hiring talent, designing the advertisement, etc.
Advertising – other	Signs, brochures, billboards, websites, social media
Voter contact calling services	Expenses not paid for by a political entity, for which the services were acquired
Bank charges and interest	Bank fees, cheque fees, overdraft charges, etc.
Amortization	Current year's depreciation of capital assets
Transfers	Monetary and non-monetary transfers made or payable
Fundraising activities	Total expenses paid or payable for fundraising events
Office expenses	Rent and utilities
Office expenses	Insurance, supplies, subscriptions and dues, maintenance, etc.
Polling and research	Polling and research conducted
Professional services	Include legal and consulting fees, and the auditor's fee
Salaries and benefits	Salaries and benefits paid to employees (administration, bookkeeping, etc.)
Travel and hospitality	Example: expenses of electoral district association officials or volunteers travelling to the party's annual convention
Other	Examples: registration fee for conventions, writedown of obsolete assets, and any other expense not listed above (provide supporting schedule)
Total expenses	
Net income (loss)	

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Statement of assets and liabilities

Field	Explanation
CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash and equivalents	Bank account balance, short-term deposits and petty cash
Accounts receivable	Amounts owed to the registered association
Inventory	Signs and other items of significant value
Prepaid expenses	Prepaid insurance, property taxes, utilities, etc.
Other	Any asset not listed above (provide supporting schedule)
Total current assets	
LONG-TERM ASSETS	
Capital assets	Depreciated value of fixed assets, such as computers and related equipment, furniture, etc. (provide supporting schedule)
Other	Any other long-term asset, for example, a long-term investment (provide supporting schedule)
Total long-term assets	
Total assets	
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	Outstanding charges applicable to the year reported (for example, monthly telephone bill, electricity bill)
Loans	12-month payments applicable to the year reported on a multi-year loan (capital only)
Other	Any other current liabilities (provide supporting schedule)
Total current liabilities	
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES	
Loans	Loan balances owing (capital owed on Dec. 31 less 12 months' payments, which is the amount in *Other current liabilities*)
Other	Other long-term liabilities not listed above (provide supporting schedule)
Total long-term liabilities	
NET ASSETS	
Opening balance	Ending balance from the previous year's annual financial return
Add net income (subtract loss)	Current year's net income (or loss)—from the *Statement of revenues and expenses*
Ending balance = Accumulated surplus (deficit)	
Total liabilities and net assets	Must equal total assets

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12. Redistribution of Electoral Districts

This chapter explains the process of electoral redistribution and how it affects a registered party and its electoral district associations. It covers the following topics:

- *What is electoral redistribution?*
- *Existing registered associations—effect of redistribution and steps to take*
- *New electoral district associations—effect of redistribution and steps to take*
- *Role of the registered party*

What is electoral redistribution?

Electoral redistribution is a process that starts after every 10-year census. The number of electoral districts (and therefore seats in the House of Commons) given to each province is recalculated based on a legislative formula.

Independent commissions for each province redraw the electoral boundaries to account for changes in the number of electoral districts or movements in the population. The Governor in Council proclaims the final decisions in a representation order.

The process takes over a year to complete. The representation order and new electoral districts come into effect when Parliament is dissolved for a general election called at least seven months after the representation order is proclaimed.

Redistribution timeline

Commissions propose new maps, hold consultations and issue final reports (minimum 1 year)	Representation order is proclaimed by the Governor in Council (as soon as possible after all reports are final)	Registered parties and associations contact Elections Canada to transition to the new electoral districts	Representation order comes into effect (the day a general election is called, at least 7 months after proclamation)

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Existing registered associations—effect of redistribution and steps to take

No change of electoral boundaries

When there is no change to an electoral district's boundaries, there is no change to the status of a registered association in that district. It is automatically continued once the new representation order comes into effect. It does not have to file any paperwork with Elections Canada.

In this situation, if an association wants to be deregistered when the new representation order comes into effect, it will need to notify Elections Canada in writing.

Change of electoral boundaries

When an electoral district's boundaries change, even slightly, the registered associations in those electoral districts must change as well. A registered association can choose from two options.

Option 1—File a notice of continuation with Elections Canada

Filing a notice of continuation allows a registered association to continue without interruption in any new or revised electoral district once the representation order comes into effect. If this notice is filed, it is the only paperwork that an association must submit to make the transition.

Elections Canada must receive the notice **after** the representation order is proclaimed but **before** the day Parliament is dissolved, when the order comes into effect.

The form *Registered Association's Notice of Continuation* and instructions for completing it are published on the Elections Canada website.

Note: The deadline for a registered association to file a notice of continuation cannot be extended.

Option 2—Do not file a notice of continuation with Elections Canada

If boundaries have changed and a registered association in the electoral district does not file a notice of continuation, it will be automatically deregistered on the day the new representation order comes into effect.

The association can continue to send transfers of funds and property within six months after deregistration to:

- its registered party
- another registered association of the registered party

Within six months after deregistration, the association must submit the *Registered Association's Financial Transactions Return* and, if required, an auditor's report for:

- the fiscal period in which the association became deregistered, up to the date of its deregistration
- any other fiscal period for which the association has not filed a return

Note: If an association is deregistered and chooses to register again under the new representation order, the new association is considered a separate entity. The deregistered association must file the reports mentioned above within six months after deregistration, and the new association must file a *Registered Association's Statement of Assets and Liabilities* within six months after registration.

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New electoral district associations—effect of redistribution and steps to take

Party members can form a new electoral district association in anticipation of the future electoral districts. The association can apply to register in a new or revised electoral district as soon as the representation order is proclaimed, even if it is not yet in effect.

The association becomes registered once Elections Canada validates the application and enters the association in the Registry of Electoral District Associations. Elections Canada will inform the association of its registration date.

Note: Once registered, the new association immediately has all the rights and obligations of a registered association—such as submitting financial returns—even if the new representation order is not yet in effect.

Role of the registered party

Registered parties have a role to play in continuing or registering their associations in future electoral districts, so it is important for them to understand the options and deadlines outlined above.

The party leader's signed consent must accompany an association's notice of continuation or application to register in a future electoral district. The party must also plan to have no more than one registered association in an electoral district at a time.

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