



ELECTIONS BC

A non-partisan Office of the Legislature

GUIDE TO ELECTOR ORGANIZATION REGISTRATION AND DEREGISTRATION

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INTRODUCTION

Elector organizations (also known as local political parties) promote candidates in local elections. Anyone can form an elector organization, but only elector organizations registered with Elections BC can endorse candidates, receive campaign contributions and incur election expenses.

This guide provides an overview of the registration and deregistration requirements for local elector organizations under the [Local Election Campaign Financing Act](#) (LECFA). This guide should be used in conjunction with the registration forms provided by Elections BC. This guide does not take precedence over LECFA.

For more information and assistance completing an elector organization registration application, email electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca or call 1-800-661-8683.

A link to the [Local Election Campaign Financing Act](#) is available on the Elections BC website (elections.bc.ca) or a printed copy can be purchased from Crown Publications (crownpub.bc.ca).

PRIVACY

Elections BC has the authority to collect, use, disclose and dispose of personal information under the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. This information is used to administer provisions of the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

For information about Elections BC's privacy policies, please visit elections.bc.ca/privacy or contact the **Privacy Officer, Elections BC** at 1-800-661-8683 or privacy@elections.bc.ca or PO Box 9275 Stn Prov Govt Victoria, BC V8W 9J6.

WHAT IS AN ELECTOR ORGANIZATION?

Elector organization definition

The *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act (LECFA)* and the *Local Government Act* define an elector organization as an organization that intends to endorse a candidate in an election.

An elector organization must be registered in order to:

- endorse a candidate in an election and be identified on a ballot,
- accept campaign contributions,
- enter into a campaign financing arrangement, or
- incur election expenses.

Elector organizations that do any of these things prior to registration with Elections BC may be subject to significant penalties.

Although some elector organizations choose to register as societies under the *Societies Act*, this is not a requirement to register as an elector organization under LECFA.

[s. 30.06, 68.27]

A list of currently registered elector organizations is maintained and published on the Elections BC website (elections.bc.ca/local-elections/elector-organizations).

ELECTOR ORGANIZATION REGISTRATION

Obligations for registered elector organizations

All elector organizations must abide by the campaign financing and election advertising rules under LECFA. Once registered, the elector organization remains registered with Elections BC until it either requests voluntary deregistration or is deregistered for failure to comply with the Act. In order to remain registered, an elector organization must:

- ensure all registration information filed with Elections BC is kept up to date by filing notice of any changes within 60 days
- comply with the financing and reporting requirements under LECFA, including but not limited to, filing financial reports and complying with election expense limits

Failure to meet these obligations can result in suspension, deregistration, monetary penalties or prosecution.

[s. 30.11, 30.13, 57, 64]

REGISTRATION PROCESS, FORMS AND OTHER RESOURCES

How to register

The *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* (LECFA) specifies the information that must be contained in an application for registration. The application must be made on forms provided by Elections BC and be signed by the authorized principal official of the elector organization.

New registration application

Prior to submitting a registration application, an elector organization must:

- have a proposed name that is not prohibited under [section 30.08 of LECFA](#)
- appoint an authorized principal official and at least one other responsible principal official
- appoint a financial agent in accordance with [section 19 of LECFA](#)
- open a campaign account in accordance with [section 20 of LECFA](#)
- have at least 50 elector members in each jurisdiction listed in the application (see page 8)
- file a completed application for registration with Elections BC

In order to be accepted, all new elector organization registration applications submitted to Elections BC must include the following forms:

- Authorization (4504461)
- Administration (4504462)
- Account Information (4504463)
- Financial Agent Appointment (4504464)
- Statement of Assets and Liabilities (4504465)

Registration application forms are available on the [Local Forms](#) page of our website or can be requested from our office.

The following information must be included in the application:

- the usual name of the elector organization
- the legal name of the elector organization, if applicable
- any abbreviations, acronyms or other names used by the elector organization
- the name, abbreviation or acronym by which the elector organization wants to be identified on ballots
- the name of each jurisdiction where the elector organization intends to endorse a candidate in an election
- the address(es) where records of the elector organization are kept
- signed consent of the authorized principal official, including their full name, address, phone number, email address and service address
- signed consent of other responsible principal officials, including their full name, addresses and service addresses. Note that the authorized principal official cannot also be appointed as a responsible principal official.
- signed consent of the appointment of financial agent for the elector organization
- the names and addresses of all savings institutions where the elector organization has a campaign account or other account
- a statement of the elector organization's assets and liabilities, dated within 90 days before the application is submitted to Elections BC, and signed by the organization's financial agent.
- a signed declaration by the authorized principal official under [section 30.07\(4\) of LECFA](#)
- any additional information or evidence necessary to satisfy Elections BC that the elector organization meets the requirements for registration

[s. 30.07, 30.09]

Submit the completed registration application to Elections BC by:

Secure Online Filing Application (SOFA): Using the Elections BC Services Portal at (elections.bc.ca/services)

Email: electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca

Fax: 250-387-3578

Toll-free fax: 1-866-466-0665

Mail: PO Box 9275, Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC, V8W 9J6

Restrictions on elector organization names

Elector organization names (including any abbreviations or acronyms) **cannot**:

- be, in the opinion of the B.C. Chief Electoral Officer, likely to be confused with another elector organization that:
 - is currently registered in the same jurisdiction,
 - has an earlier application pending for registration in the same jurisdiction, or
 - was registered in the same jurisdiction within the previous 10 years.
- include any other information that is prohibited under [section 115\(3\) of the *Local Government Act*](#) from being included on a ballot (e.g., candidates' occupations, any titles, honours or degrees held by candidates, or any indication that candidates have held elected office)
 - If the ballot name registered with Elections BC is too long to be accommodated on the ballot, the Local Chief Electoral Officer may authorize use of a shorter ballot name after consulting with the authorized principal official of the elector organization and Elections BC.

[*Local Government Act*, s. 115]

[s. 30.08]

When registration takes effect

After receiving an application, Elections BC has 30 days to determine if the elector organization meets the requirements for registration, unless the application is submitted within 30 days of the nomination period for an election.

If an elector organization applies for registration within 30 days before the start of the nomination period for an election, Elections BC has until 30 days after the general voting day to determine if the elector organization meets the requirements for registration.

If the application for registration is approved, Elections BC will notify the elector organization of the date of registration.

If an elector organization does not meet the registration requirements, Elections BC will provide the elector organization with a written explanation of the reasons why the organization could not be registered. The elector organization has 30 days from receiving the notice to amend its application for registration. If the elector organization does not meet the requirements for registration within this 30-day period, the application ceases to be effective.

[s. 30.09]

Updating registration information

If any registration information changes, an elector organization must file a notice of the change within 60 days after the change occurs. A notice to update registration information must be made in writing and must be signed by the authorized principal official of the elector organization.

Elections BC may suspend the registration of an elector organization if the organization does not file updated registration information within 60 days of the change occurring. The suspension of the elector organization continues until all required information has been filed.

A suspended elector organization is prohibited from endorsing a candidate in an election, accepting a campaign contribution, entering into a campaign financing arrangement, or incurring an election expense.

If a registered elector organization wishes to change its name or to add other names to those specified in its registration documentation, the organization must first seek approval from Elections BC. The rules regarding name restrictions and the timelines also apply to any proposed name changes.

The same forms used for registering an elector organization are used to update registration information. If you are unsure about which forms to submit, contact Elections BC.

[s. 30.11, 30.06, 30.12]

Public access to elector organization information

Elections BC must maintain a public register of elector organizations that are registered, suspended or deregistered. This register is on the Elections BC website and available for public inspection at the Elections BC head office. The register contains the following information:

- all registered names for the elector organization, including the legal name, usual name, other names, abbreviations or acronyms, as applicable
- the name of each jurisdiction where the elector organization intends to endorse a candidate in an election
- the name of the authorized principal official and their contact information
- the name of the financial agent and their contact information

[s. 30.10]

ELECTOR ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP

An elector organization must have **at least 50 elector members in each jurisdiction** when they register with Elections BC. These members must be eligible resident or non-resident electors for the jurisdiction.

A **resident elector** must be:

- 18 years of age or older on general voting day,
- a Canadian citizen,
- a B.C. resident for at least six months immediately before registering to vote,
- a resident of the municipality or electoral area, as determined in accordance with section 67 of the *Local Government Act*; and
- not disqualified from voting in a local election under the *Local Government Act* or any other enactment, or not otherwise disqualified by law.

A **non-resident property elector** must be:

- 18 years of age or older on general voting day,
- a Canadian citizen,
- a B.C. resident for at least six months immediately before registering to vote,
- owner of real property in the electoral area for at least 30 days before registering to vote, and
- not disqualified from voting in a local election under the *Local Government Act* or any other enactment, or not otherwise disqualified by law.

Members may also be subject to other eligibility requirements of the elector organization.

Note: An elector organization may be required to provide the list of its members when registering with Elections BC. An elector organization may also be required to provide the list of its members to the Provincial Court if the elector organization's endorsement of a candidate is challenged.

How to determine membership eligibility

Many elector organizations request that prospective members complete a membership form and pay a one-time or monthly fee to the elector organization. However, this is not a requirement under the *Local Government Act*.

Elector organizations generally use the information collected from membership forms to determine whether individuals are eligible electors in the jurisdiction where the general local election is being held.

At a minimum, the information collected by elector organizations must include:

- the names and addresses of the members, and
- for members who are non-resident property electors, the addresses of the properties for which they are eligible to vote.

Membership eligibility for elector organizations is not regulated under LECFA or by Elections BC. For more information please contact the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs.

ELECTOR ORGANIZATION FINANCIAL AGENTS

Appointing a financial agent

An elector organization must have a financial agent. They may only appoint one at a time. An individual can, however, be a financial agent for more than one individual or organization. This means that the elector organization's financial agent may also be the financial agent for the elector organization's candidates.

The financial agent may also be a responsible principal official of an elector organization.

[s. 19]

The financial agent's role

The financial agent is the person responsible for ensuring compliance with the financing provisions in the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* (LECFA).

The financial agent's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- keeping complete and accurate records of all financial transactions
- opening a separate campaign account for each jurisdiction where the elector organization intends to endorse a candidate
- ensuring all transactions of money are made through a designated campaign account, including expenses for the day-to-day administration of the elector organization
- ensuring campaign contributions are only received from permissible sources and do not exceed contribution limits
- ensuring election advertising contains the required sponsorship information (also known as an authorization statement)
- filing financial reports and election disclosure statements

Financial agents are encouraged to review the [Guide to Local Elections Campaign Financing in B.C. for Elector Organizations](#) to ensure they understand the responsibilities of their role prior to their appointment.

[s. 19, 20]

The appointment process

Financial agent appointments must be made in writing and include:

- the financial agent's full name
- the effective date of appointment
- contact information
- service address
- signatures of the financial agent and authorized principal official of the elector organization

If the appointment of a financial agent ends for any reason, the elector organization **must** appoint a new financial agent and file a new appointment form with Elections BC as soon as possible.

If the financial agent resigns, they must notify Elections BC in writing. The outgoing financial agent is responsible for the reporting of the financial affairs until a new financial agent is appointed.

[s. 19]

ELECTOR ORGANIZATION DEREGISTRATION, REREGISTRATION AND SUSPENSION

Elector organization deregistration

An elector organization can be deregistered either voluntarily or involuntarily. When an elector organization is deregistered, Elections BC must give notice of the deregistration, including the effective date and reasons for deregistration, to the elector organization.

Voluntary deregistration

An elector organization may only voluntarily request to deregister if:

- the request to deregister is not made during an election in which the elector organization is endorsing candidates
- the elector organization has filed all annual financial reports, election disclosure statements and supplementary reports required under LECFA
- all candidates endorsed by the elector organization have filed all disclosure statements and supplementary reports required under LECFA
- the elector organization has paid any outstanding penalties in relation to exceeding an election expenses limit

Applications for voluntary deregistration must be made in writing and must be signed by the authorized principal official of the elector organization.

[s. 30.14]

Involuntary deregistration

Elections BC can deregister an elector organization if it:

- fails to file an annual financial report, election disclosure statement or supplementary report, unless court relief from filing obligations is granted
- endorses a candidate whose expense limit is exceeded and the elector organization exceeds their allotted expense limit under their campaign financing arrangement
- fails to pay a monetary penalty for exceeding an amount available under a campaign financing arrangement within 30 days of becoming subject to the penalty
- is convicted of an offence for providing false or misleading information or making a false or misleading statement in relation to obligations under LECFA

Elections BC will provide advance warning of any contraventions of LECFA that may result in deregistration. For example, in the case of failing to file a report or disclosure statement, Elections BC notice of non-compliance provides the elector organization with sufficient time to file the required reports or to seek court relief from the filing obligations before deregistration occurs.

[s. 30.13, 64, 65, 68.01, 68.03]

Deregistered elector organization obligations

A deregistered elector organization must file a financial report for the period from the date of the elector organization's last annual financial report up to and including the last day the elector organization was registered. The report must be received by Elections BC within six months of deregistration.

After the payment of any outstanding expenses or debts, deregistered elector organizations may disburse the funds remaining in their campaign account(s) as they choose.

The deregistered elector organization is also required to file a report for the period from the date of deregistration to the date on which any remaining funds are transferred from the campaign account(s) or on which the elector organization reports that there are no funds to be transferred.

[s. 30.16, 30.17]

How to reregister as an elector organization

An elector organization that voluntarily deregisters may apply for reregistration at any time.

In the case of involuntary deregistration, the elector organization may apply for reregistration after the next general local election.

To reregister, an elector organization must:

- submit a new elector organization application for registration,
- satisfy Elections BC that it is the same elector organization that was previously registered,
- fulfill any unfulfilled obligations (e.g., file any outstanding reports, pay outstanding penalties), and
- file a report detailing the elector organization's financial activities during the period of deregistration.

If your elector organization has been deregistered and you would like to reregister, please [contact us](#) for assistance.

[s. 30.18]

Suspension of an elector organization

The registration of an elector organization can be suspended if the elector organization:

- fails to file a registration update within 60 days of a change occurring,
- files an application for court relief from the penalties related to failure to file a required report or disclosure statement, while awaiting decision of the court, and
- files an application for court relief from the penalties related to exceeding an expense limit or an amount available under a campaign financing arrangement, while awaiting decision of the court.

During the period of suspension, an elector organization is prohibited from endorsing a candidate, accepting a campaign contribution, entering into a campaign financing arrangement and incurring an election expense.

Notice of suspension is given to the elector organization and is published in the B.C. Chief Electoral Officer's public register of elector organizations.

[s. 30.06, 30.11, 64, 68.01]

QUESTIONS?

For more information, please contact Elections BC by-email at electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca or toll-free at 1-800-661-8683.

Mailing address	PO Box 9275 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9J6
Phone	250-387-5305
Fax	250-387-3578
Toll-free fax	1-866-466-0665
Website	elections.bc.ca

