

# PONOKA COUNTY

## 2025 Municipal Election Candidate Information Guide



This guide has been developed to answer questions most frequently asked by candidates prior to Nomination Day. It also contains important information that candidates for Councillor in Ponoka County should be aware of. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the legislation and we urge you to obtain a copy of the Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA) and the Municipal Government Act (MGA) from:

Alberta King's Printer  
7th Floor, Park Plaza Building  
10611 – 98 Avenue NW Edmonton, AB T5K 2P7  
Telephone: 780.427.4952 Fax: 780.452.0668 Website: [Alberta King's Printer | Alberta.ca](http://Alberta King's Printer | Alberta.ca)

Where references are made to legislation, the specific legislation should be referred to for all purposes of interpreting and applying the law.

If you have any questions please call Peter Hall, Chief Administrative Officer at 403.783.3333.

### CANDIDATE

In the Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA), a candidate is defined as an individual nominated to run for election in a local jurisdiction as a councillor or school board trustee. **Please note – the local jurisdiction boundaries have changed since the last municipal election in 2021.** Please see the attached map or contact the County Office to get a new large map.

Candidates elected in the 2025 Municipal Election will be elected for a four-year term (2025-2029).

### Qualifications of a Candidate s. 21, 47 (1), LAEA

A person may be nominated as a candidate in Ponoka County's municipal election if on Nomination Day the person:

- is eligible to vote in that election;
- is a Canadian citizen;
- has been a resident of Ponoka County and the division in which they intend to run for the six (6) consecutive months preceding Nomination Day; and
- is not otherwise ineligible or disqualified.

### Ineligibility for Nomination as a Candidate s. 22, 23, 23.1 LAEA

A person is not eligible to be nominated as a candidate in any election under the Local Authorities Election Act if on Nomination Day:

- the person is the auditor of Ponoka County;
- the person is an employee of Ponoka County, unless the person is on a leave of absence without pay;



- the person is indebted to Ponoka County for taxes in default exceeding \$50;
- the person is indebted to Ponoka County for any debt exceeding \$500 for more than 90 days; or
- the person has, within the previous 10 years, been convicted of an offence under this Act, the *Election Act*, the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* or the *Canada Elections Act* (Canada).

Refer to Sections 22 and 23 of the Local Authorities Election Act for the inclusive instances of ineligibility. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure the candidate is not in violation of the conditions of eligibility.

### **Employees of a Municipality s. 22, LAEA**

Employees of a municipality who wish to be nominated as a candidate must notify his or her employer that he or she is taking a leave of absence without pay. This can be done as early as January 1, 2025 but must be done before the employee's last working day prior to Nomination Day. Under the LAEA, the employer must grant the leave of absence without pay.

If the employee who takes a leave of absence under this section is not elected, he or she may return to work on the fifth day after Election Day, or if the fifth day is not a working day, on the first working day after the fifth day.

If the employee, who takes a leave of absence, is declared elected, the employee is deemed to have resigned that position as an employee the day they take the official oath of office as an elected official.

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELECTED OFFICIALS**

### **General Duties of Councillors s. 153, MGA**

Councillors have the following duties:

- a) to consider the welfare and interests of the municipality as a whole and to bring to Council's attention anything that would promote the welfare or interests of the municipality;
- b) to promote an integrated and strategic approach to intermunicipal land use planning and service delivery with neighbouring municipalities;
- c) to participate generally in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality;
- d) to participate in Council meetings and Council committee meetings and meetings of other bodies to which they are appointed by the Council;
- e) to obtain information about the operation or administration of the municipality from the Chief Administrative Officer or a person designated by the Chief Administrative Officer;
- f) to keep in confidence matters discussed in private at a Council or Council committee meeting until discussed at a meeting held in public;
- g) to adhere to the code of conduct established by Council under section 146.1(1);
- h) to perform any other duty or function imposed on Councillors by the MGA or any other enactment or by the council.



## **Council's Principal Role in Municipal Organization** s. 201, MGA

- 1) A Council is responsible for:
  - a) developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality
  - b) carrying out the powers, duties and functions expressly given to it under this or any other enactment.
- 2) A Council must not exercise a power or function or perform a duty that is by this or another enactment or bylaw specifically assigned to the Chief Administrative Officer or a designated officer.

## **Elected Officials' Time Commitment**

There are a number of commitments that must be met by members of Council:

### **Council Meetings**

- Ponoka County Council established the following in-person meeting dates/times for the 2025 regular Council meetings:
  - the second and fourth Tuesday of each month
  - the summer meeting schedule is established in Junein the Council Chambers, beginning at 10:00 am, unless otherwise determined by Council, as the date, time, and place for regular Council meetings in 2025.
- On occasion, additional meetings may be called to address emergent matters.
- Be prepared to spend several hours preparing for each meeting by reviewing agenda materials and reports.

### **Budget Meetings**

- Meetings to review Ponoka County's 2026 budget are scheduled for March, 2026.
- Elected Officials **must** plan to attend these meetings.

### **Agricultural Service Board**

- All members of Council are members of the Agricultural Service Board. This Committee meets as required.

### **Council Committees**

All Councillors are appointed to serve on some standing, ad hoc and external committees. Appointments are made based on individuals' interest in committees, as well as maintaining a balance in commitment of time. Committee meetings are held throughout the day and, in some cases, in the evening.



## **Council Orientation and Training**

Council orientation is mandatory for all new members of Council. Council orientation and training commences in the week that the new Council is declared elected.

The orientation provides Elected Officials critical information about their roles and responsibilities, County functions, processes, and plans, as well as allows for an opportunity to become acquainted with fellow Elected Officials, staff, County services, operations, and facilities. Elected Officials will also gain an understanding of the budget process throughout the orientation process. It is important that all Elected Officials have this period of time available.

## **Conferences**

Ponoka County is a member of the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA). The RMA Fall Convention runs from November 17-20, 2025 in Edmonton.

This Association plays a key role in representing municipal interests to the provincial government. In an election year, the convention will be focused on educating new Councillors. For this reason, newly Elected Officials should be prepared to attend these conferences.

## **Budget Process**

One of County Council's most important responsibilities is approval of the Municipal Annual Budget.

All members of Council will be briefed on the process during the orientation in October.

## **REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS**

### **Remuneration (2024 actual)**

Reeve - \$53,460 per annum

Councillor – Between \$48,640 – 49,410 per annum (based on Division to reflect travel costs to meetings)

### **Automobile Mileage**

The mileage reimbursement for business related travel is established annually.

### **Benefit Plans**

Ponoka County Elected Officials participate in a group benefits plan at the same employer contribution rates as the County's municipal classified staff.



In an election year, Elected Officials who are:

- re-elected, will continue their benefit coverage without interruption
- retiring or not re-elected officials will have their benefit coverage discontinued when no longer in office.
- newly elected, will be eligible for benefit coverage on the first day of the month following the election with enrolment to be completed no later than 30 days after they are elected.

Elected Officials will apply for benefits through the Human Resource Coordinator. Payment for the Elected Official's portion of the premium will be made by deduction from their payroll cheques.

## **NOMINATION PROCESS**

### **Where to Get Nomination Papers**

The required forms are available at the Ponoka County Office and on the County website at [www.PonokaCounty.com](http://www.PonokaCounty.com)

### **Notice of Intent s. 147.22 LAEA**

**New** for the 2025 election, prospective candidates are required to file a Notice of Intent to run (form available on the County's website or at the Office). The notice must be filed before accepting campaign contributions or incurring campaign expenses. Once the notice is processed, the individual's name will be added to the register of candidates on Ponoka County's website.

### **Completion of Nomination Papers**

At least five eligible voters are required to sign your Nomination Paper and Candidate's Acceptance form to make it valid. An eligible voter must be:

- 18 years of age or older;
- a Canadian citizen;
- a resident in Alberta for the six consecutive months prior to Election Day; and
- a resident of Ponoka County and the specific division the candidate seeks to run in on the date the voter signed the nomination form.

The Candidate's Acceptance requires the candidate to swear or affirm that they:

- are eligible to be elected under Sections 21 and 47 of the Local Authorities Election Act;
- are not disqualified under Section 22 or 23 of the Local Authorities Election Act;
- have read and understand Sections 12, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 47, 68.1, and 151 and Part 5.1 of the Act; and
- if elected, you will accept the office for which you are a candidate.

All portions of your nomination papers must be completed and the candidate's acceptance sworn or affirmed before a Commissioner for Oaths or the Returning Officer.



It is the candidate's responsibility to be fully aware of the nomination requirements and comply with them. It is not the Returning Officer's responsibility to rule on the validity of the information contained in your nomination papers. Incomplete or ineligible nomination papers can be challenged by an elector.

#### **Filing of Nomination Papers s. 28, 29, LAEA**

Nomination papers and a deposit of \$100 by cash, certified cheque, money order, e-transfer or by debit card as well as the Candidate Financial Information must be filed to the Returning Officer between January 2, 2025 and 12 noon on September 22, 2025, at:

**Ponoka County Office**  
**4205 Hwy #2A**  
**Ponoka, Alberta**

Business hours are Monday to Friday (except STAT holidays) from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

#### **Disposition of Deposit s. 30, LAEA**

Candidate deposits shall be returned to the candidate if:

- the candidate is declared elected;
- the candidate obtains a number of votes at least equal to half of the total number of votes cast for the declared candidate; or
- the candidate withdraws in accordance with Section 32 of the Local Authorities Election Act.

#### **Withdrawal of Nomination s. 32, LAEA**

1. A candidate may withdraw their nomination as a candidate:
  - a) before 12 noon on nomination day (close of nomination period) or
  - b) Within 24 hours after the close of nomination period, if more than the required number of candidates for the office are nominated.
2. Withdrawals must be filed with the Returning Officer in writing.

Nominations cannot be withdrawn after the 24-hour deadline has passed and the candidate name will appear on the ballot if the candidate withdraws after the 24-hour period.

#### **Insufficient Nominations s. 31, LAEA**

If no nominations for a position are received on Nomination Day, the Returning Officer will continue to receive nominations the next day at the same place at the hour of 10 am and shall remain open until 12 noon until the required number of nominations have been received or a period of six days, including Nomination Day but not including Saturday or Sunday, has elapsed.

If sufficient nominations to fill all vacancies are not received, the Returning Officer will notify the Minister for further action.



## **CAMPAIGNING**

### **Campaign Period 147.1 (b)**

The campaign period for the 2025 municipal election began on October 31, 2024 and ends on December 31, 2025.

### **Offences s. 148, LAEA**

There are severe penalties under the Local Authorities Election Act for contravening this legislation.

Ponoka County logos may not be used by candidates on campaign materials, websites or for any other purposes. Photographs and visuals including website images owned by Ponoka County are also not to be used on campaign material. Candidates are encouraged to use original photographs and images to which they own the rights.

### **Signage**

A candidate must comply with federal and provincial laws.

Before placing signs on private property, candidates must ask permission of the landowner.

Advertisements, signs, posters, brochures or other campaign materials cannot be displayed or distributed anywhere on the property of a voting station when a vote is taking place.

## **CAMPAIGN PERSONNEL s. 68.1, 69, LAEA**

### **Official Agent**

Each candidate may appoint an elector as their official agent on their nomination papers. Official Agents may complete and submit a Release of Official Agent Information form to allow the Election Office to share the information with the public.

During the campaign period, if a candidate needs to appoint a new official agent, they must immediately notify the Returning Officer in writing and provide the contact information for the new official agent.

The duties of an official agent are those assigned to the official agent by the candidate. No candidate may act as an official agent for any other candidate.

A person who has been convicted of an offence under the LAEA, the Election Act, or the Canada Elections Act within the last 10 years is not eligible to be appointed as an official agent.



### Candidate's Scrutineer

If a candidate would like to appoint an Election Day scrutineer to observe the election processes at the voting stations, the following process must be followed:

- scrutineers must be given a signed Appointment of Scrutineer form from the candidate;
- upon arriving at the voting station the scrutineer will present a signed Appointment of Scrutineer form to the election official; and
- the election official will provide the scrutineer with a statement, which must be completed prior to the scrutineer commencing his/her duties.

Note that only one scrutineer, official agent, or the candidate, can be present at any time in a voting station during voting hours. The election official will designate a location in the voting station where a candidate, official agent, or scrutineer may observe the election process.

### Election finances and contributions disclosure

The Local Authorities Election Act is binding on all candidates running in this election. You must comply with the legislation, or you could face significant penalties.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that their campaign complies with all provincial legislation. This information is not intended to serve as a legal document but only provides general information about the disclosure requirements. The information is not a replacement for consulting the actual legislation or obtaining independent legal advice.

**Campaign expenses** s. 147.1, 147.22, 147.3, 147.34 LAEA s. 1 *Expense Limits Regulation A.R. 171/2024*

**New** for the 2025 general municipal election, candidates must file a “Notice of intent to run” and the notice must be filed before incurring campaign expenses.

**New** for the 2025 general municipal election is the Expense Limits Regulation. The campaign expense limits for the 2025 election are set out in the table below:

Expense limits for candidates for Councillor	
Year before a general election	\$10,000
Year of a general election	\$20,000
First two years of next campaign period (2026-2027)	\$0

Campaign expenses are defined as any expense incurred, or non-monetary contribution received, by a candidate to the extent that the property or service that the expense was incurred for, or that was received as a non-monetary contribution, is used to directly promote or oppose a candidate during a campaign period.

Campaign expenses include expenses incurred for, or non-monetary contributions in relation to:

- The production of advertising or promotional material;





- The distribution, broadcast or publication of advertising or promotional material in any media or by any other means during a campaign period, including by the use of a capital asset
- The payment of remuneration and expenses to or on behalf of a person for the person's services as a chief financial officer or in any other capacity,
- Securing a meeting place,
- The conduct of election surveys or other surveys or research during a campaign period, or
- The production of a review engagement required by the *LAEA*.

Candidates must obtain receipts for every expense and keep records of their expenses for three (3) years following the date of the election. An itemized expense report must be included with the candidate's disclosure statement.

**Campaign contributions** s 147.1, 147.13, 147.2, 147.22, 147.23, 147.24, 147.3, 147.82 *LAEA*

New for the 2025 general municipal election, candidates must file a "Notice of Intent to run" and the notice must be filed before accepting campaign contributions.

Contributions include any money, personal property, real property or service provided to or for the benefit of a candidate's election campaign without fair market value compensation from that candidate. This does not include volunteer services.

Contributors are responsible for ensuring that they are in compliance with the *LAEA* before making a contribution. Every candidate and every person acting on behalf of the candidate shall make every reasonable effort to advise prospective contributors of the provisions under the *LAEA*.

Candidate may accept contributions from:

- Individuals ordinarily residing in Alberta, to a maximum of \$5,000 in the aggregate to all candidates in Ponoka County in each calendar year during the campaign period;
- Corporations (other than a prohibited organization – prohibited organizations are defined in s. 147(1)(f) of the *LAEA*), Alberta trade unions, or Alberta employee organizations, to a maximum of \$5,000 in the aggregate to all candidates in Ponoka County during the campaign period;
- From the candidate themselves, to a maximum of \$10,000 during the campaign period, that is not reimbursed to the candidate.

Candidates may not accept contributions from:

- Individuals residing outside of Alberta;
- Prohibited organizations (prohibited organizations are defined in s. 147.1(1)(f) of the *LAEA*);
- Trade unions or employee organizations other than Alberta trade unions or employee organizations;
- Anonymous individuals; and
- Individuals, corporations, trade unions or employee organizations contributing funds that do not belong to them.



Candidates must issue a receipt for every contribution and records of contributions must be kept for a period of three (3) years following the date of the election. Contributions must be reported on the candidate's disclosure statement.

**WARNING:**

- Contributions accepted in contravention of the LAEA must be re-paid to the contributor. If the contributor cannot be located, the value of the contribution must be immediately paid to Ponoka County or to a registered charity. A letter explaining why the contribution is being sent must accompany the contribution.
- The LAEA sets out the offences relating to contributions in section 147.82. Contributors and candidates should be aware of these offences and ensure they follow the rules set out in the legislation.

**Limitations on Contributions, Acceptance of Contributions, Anonymous and Unauthorized Contributions s. 147.2, 147.22, 147.23, 147.24 LAEA**

Campaign contributions may only be accepted:

- after an individual has been nominated as a candidate;
- from individuals ordinarily residing in Alberta, to a maximum of \$5000 per contributor per candidate;
- from the candidate themselves, to a maximum of \$10 000 during the campaign period, between January 1 and December 31, 2021; and

Outside of the campaign period an individual may accept not more than:

- \$5000 in the aggregate per year outside the campaign period; and
- \$10 000 in the aggregate of the candidate's own funds per year outside of the campaign period.

Candidate's may not accept contributions from:

- individuals residing outside of Alberta;
- prohibited organizations such as corporations, trade unions, and employee organizations;
- anonymous individuals; and
- individuals contributing funds not belonging to that individual.

**WARNING:**

- Contributions accepted in contravention of the LAEA must be re-paid to the contributor. If the contributor cannot be located, the value of the contribution must be immediately paid to Ponoka County, or to a registered charity. A letter explaining why the contribution is being sent must accompany the contribution.
- The LAEA sets out the offences relating to contributions in section 147.82. Contributors and candidates should be aware of these offences and ensure they follow the rules set out in the legislation.



### **Duties of Candidates** s. 147.3, 147.32 LAEA

All candidates are responsible for opening a campaign account in the name of the candidate of the candidate's election campaign at a financial institution. This account must be opened at the time of nomination, or as soon as possible after the total amount of contributions first exceeds \$1000.

Candidates must:

- deposit all contributions in the campaign account, once opened
- use money in the campaign account only for the payment of campaign expenses;
- value contributions of real property, personal property, and services;
- issue receipts for every contribution;
- obtain receipts for every expense;
- keep records of contributions and expenses for 3 years following the date disclosure statements are required to be filed; and
- give proper direction to the candidate's official agent and any other person authorized to incur campaign expenses and solicit or accept contributions on behalf of the candidate.

### **Fundraising Functions** s.147.31, LAEA

A "fund-raising function" includes any social function held for the purpose of raising funds for the candidate's election campaign. The gross income from any fund-raising function must be recorded by the candidate. If holding a fund-raiser, candidates must review section 147.31 of the *LAEA* and ensure they follow the rules as set out.

### **Campaign Disclosure Statements** s. 147.4, LAEA

**New** for the 2025 general municipal election, candidates must file a "Campaign disclosure statement" for every year, on or before March 1, if contributions were received in the previous year. For example:

- If contributions were received in 2024, a "Campaign disclosure statement" must be filed on or before March 1, 2025, and
- If contributions are received in 2025, a "Campaign disclosure statement" form must be filed on or before March 1, 2026.

The form will be available on the Ponoka County website and must be submitted to Ponoka County. The form asks for the following information:

- the total value of all contributions from contributors giving less than \$50 in the year,
- the total amount contributed, together with the contributor's name and address, for each contributor whose contributions during the campaign period exceeded \$50 in the aggregate;
- the total amount contributed, together with the contributor's name and address, for each contributor showing contributions during the year exceeded \$50 in the aggregate,
- the total amount a candidate contributed (maximum of \$10,000) during the campaign period that is not reimbursed to the candidate from the campaign account by the end of the campaign period,
- the total amount received from fund-raising functions in the year,



- the total amount of other revenue received in the year,
- the total amount of campaign expenses incurred in the year,
- an itemized campaign expense report setting out the campaign expense incurred by the candidate in the year,
- the total amount paid by the candidate out of the candidate's own funds in the year not reimbursed from the candidate's campaign fund,
- the total amount of any campaign surplus, including any surplus from previous campaigns (where the previous year is the election year), and
- the amount of any deficit (where the previous year is the election year).

Any candidate who has incurred campaign expenses or received contributions of \$50,000 or more must file a review engagement with the disclosure statement.

#### **Campaign Surplus** s. 147.5, LAEA

If a candidate's disclosure statement shows a surplus, the candidate must, if the surplus is more than \$1,000, donate an amount to a registered charity that results in the surplus being less than \$1,000. The candidate may retain any portion of the surplus under \$1,000, or donate it to a registered charity. This must be done within 60 days of filing the disclosure statement.

After the 60-day period referred to above, the candidate has 30 days to file an amended disclosure statement showing that the surplus has been dealt with.

This applies to all candidates, elected or otherwise.

#### **Campaign Deficit** s. 147.52, LAEA

If a candidate's disclosure statement shows a deficit, the candidate must eliminate the deficit within 60 days of filing the disclosure statement. To eliminate the deficit, a candidate may:

- accept contributions, (in accordance with the LAEA), not exceeding \$5000 per contributor, and
- contribute up to \$10 000 of the candidate's own funds.

After the 60-day period referred to above, the candidate has 30 days to file an amended disclosure statement showing that the deficit has been dealt with.

#### **Late Filing** s. 147.7, LAEA

A candidate who fails to file a disclosure statement by the deadline must pay a late filing fee of \$500 to Ponoka County. If the late filing fee is not paid within 30 days after the date the fee was payable, the County shall send a notice to the candidate indicating the amount of the late filing fee that is required to be paid. If the candidate fails to pay the late filing fee the County may file a copy of the notice with the clerk of the Court of King's Bench, and, on being filed, the notice has the same force and effect that may be enforced as if it were a judgment of the Court.



## Campaign Finance Offences

The LAEA sets out offences relating to campaign finance in sections 147.82, 147.83, 187.84 and 147.85. It is important that candidates review these sections and ensure that they comply with the rules.

## VOTING

### Election by Acclamation s. 34, LAEA

At the close of Nomination Day, if the number of persons nominated for any office is the same as the number required to be elected, the Returning Officer shall declare the person nominated to be elected to the office for which they were nominated.

## RESULTS

### Unofficial Results s. 97 (1), LAEA

Unofficial results will be displayed on the Ponoka County website on election night.

### Official Results s. 97 (2), LAEA

The results of the election are official at noon on Friday, October 24, 2025.

### New Divisional boundaries

Effective January 1, 2025, new Divisional boundaries were adopted. (By-Law 26-22-DB) (blue line is the new boundary, orange was the previous boundary)

