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Introduction

This Guide gives basic information about the Nunavut Elections Act —Nunavut’s laws for territorial elections and by-elections. Please read the Act if you want to know the exact laws. This guide does not replace the Act.

Contact Elections Nunavut or go to the website for more information about voting or how to become a candidate in a general election or by-election.

Election Basics

The Nunavut Elections Act is the law we follow to elect Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). Nunavummiut have the right to vote and help decide who forms the territorial government.

The principles of the Nunavut Elections Act are to:

- Encourage people to vote.
- Make it easy for voters to vote if they choose to.
- Remove barriers for people who want to be candidates.
- Help the public be more aware about elections.
- Publish information in all Nunavut's official languages.
- Run an effective and efficient election.
- Respect the geography, languages, and other unique things about Nunavut.
- Evaluate the election process and make sure it meets the needs of Nunavummiut.

The Election Period

The election period starts 35 days before Election Day and ends on Election Day.

The post-election period is 60 days after Election Day.

In a general election, the pre-election period starts 90 days before the writ is issued and ends when the CEO issues the writ.

In a by-election, the pre-election period starts when the date of the election is announced and ends when the CEO issues the writ.

Candidates and Financial Agents must meet strict deadlines during the election and post-election period.

Election period calendar

| Important Dates | What happens on that day |
|------------------------------------|--|
| June 24 | Pre-election period starts. |
| September 22 | Chief Electoral Officer sends the writ to each returning officer (RO). Each RO posts it in their office. |
| | First day a person can file a declaration of candidacy. |
| | First day a person can apply for a special mail-in ballot. |
| September 23 | Elections Nunavut sends a Voter Information Card (VIC) to every voter on the voters list. |
| September 26 | Deadline to file a declaration of candidacy, 2 pm local time. |
| | Deadline to withdraw declaration of candidacy, 5 pm local time. |
| October 13 | First day that a voter can vote at the returning office from 12 to 7 pm local time. |
| October 20 | Mobile Poll in all communities from 9 to 11:30 am local time. |
| | Advance vote from 12 to 7 pm local time. |
| October 23 | Last day that a voter can vote at the returning office from 12 to 7 pm local time. |
| October 27 Election Day | Elections Nunavut must receive Special ballots by 5 pm local time. |

Post election period calendar

| Important Dates | What happens on that day |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 10 days after Election Day | Candidates must remove all campaign materials. |
| After Election Day | Candidates and financial agents must complete and file the campaign financial return within 60 days. |
| | Candidates must destroy all copies of the voters list that they received or return them to the Returning Office. |

Candidate

A candidate is a person whose declaration of candidacy is accepted according to the rules in the *Nunavut Elections Act*. A candidate is a person who wants to be a Member of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly, to represent the people in their constituency.

Who can be a candidate

You can be a candidate if:

- You are eligible to vote on Election Day.
- You are not disqualified.

You can only run as a candidate in one constituency. However, you may choose to be a candidate in any constituency within Nunavut.

Who cannot be a candidate

You cannot be a candidate if, on the day you file your declaration of candidacy you:

- Were a candidate or a financial agent in the last election and did not file the campaign financial return on time.
- Work for Elections Nunavut.
- Are a Government of Nunavut employee who did not take a leave of absence.
- Are a member of Municipal Council (mayor or councillor) who did not take a leave of absence.
- Are a member of the House of Commons, Senate, or legislature of another territory or province.
- Are a judge, except in a citizenship court.
- Are in jail and still in jail after Election Day.

- Did not follow a compliance agreement from the last election.
- Have been convicted of an election offence anywhere in Canada in the last 5 years.

A member of the Legislative Assembly may leave their seat because they are charged with or convicted of a crime under Nunavut or Canadian laws. The individual can be a candidate again, five years after the constituency elects someone to take their place.

How to become a candidate

A person completes and files the declaration of candidacy to the returning office to become a candidate.

Complete information: Fill out all parts of the form. The RO cannot accept incomplete forms. File ahead of the deadline in case you need to make any changes.

Oath and signatures: The candidate and financial agent are required to sign the declaration and take an oath. A voter signs as a witness. The candidate and financial agent cannot be a witness.

If you have a campaign manager, that person also signs and takes an oath.

Candidate ballot information: Print your name on the declaration of candidacy the exact way you want it on the ballot. You are strongly encouraged to provide your name in Inuktitut used in your community.

When to file: File any time between the day the CEO issues the writ—35 days before Election Day—and 2 pm local time, 31 days before Election Day.

Do not wait until the last minute.

The declaration form must be complete and properly filled out by that date and time.

Where to file: File at the returning office in your constituency.

What to include: File the completed form and pay the \$200 deposit, with a money order, certified cheque, or a draft from the Northern Store or Co-op, payable to the Government of Nunavut.

A digital photo, Elections Nunavut produces a poster of a ballot with each candidate's picture beside their name. It hangs at the polling station to help voters know who they want to vote for. If you do not give Elections Nunavut a photo, your name appears on the poster with a blank space beside it.

Campaign

The election campaign is all the campaign materials and events that people use to promote a candidate or oppose a candidate.

For example, a candidate may:

- Have buttons, brochures, signs, ads, and posters to encourage voters to vote for a candidate
- Have a website and social media platforms to give voters information.
- Give speeches and have campaign activities.
- Travel to the communities within the constituency to meet and talk to voters.

If a person, business, or group does not live or operate in Nunavut, they cannot actively campaign for any candidate. They also cannot pay for or donate any campaign activity or materials.

Who can contribute: The campaign can accept campaign contributions only from:

- Individuals that live in Nunavut.
- Companies that do business or work in Nunavut.
- Groups or associations that operate in Nunavut, must include a list of names and the amount that each person contributed.

Maximum contribution: Each person, business, or group can contribute a maximum of \$2500. They may contribute money, goods and services.

If someone contributes transportation or accommodation services, the maximum can be more than \$2500.

When/how to contribute: A person, business, or group can contribute. The campaign can accept contributions, under certain conditions:

- During the election period.
- If the candidate is an official candidate.
- If they give the contribution to the financial agent or someone the financial agent authorizes in writing.

Financial contributions: Can be 'named' or 'anonymous.' Any contribution over \$100 is required to be named. The financial agent records the name and address of the contributor.

The financial agent writes a tax receipt for the exact amount of each 'named' contribution—to the maximum of \$2500. The financial agent is the only person who can give out tax receipts.

A person, business, or group can give up to \$100 as an anonymous contribution. If the campaign receives an anonymous contribution worth more than \$100 the financial agent must give it back if they know where it came from. If they cannot return it, the financial agent must send it to the CEO.

Voter

You are eligible to vote if you are:

- A Canadian citizen.
- 18 years or older on Election Day.
- A Nunavut resident for at least one year on Election Day.
- For a by-election, you must be a resident in the constituency when the CEO issues the writ.

You are not eligible to vote if you:

- Have a court order that says you don't understand your actions.
- Broke the laws under the criminal code and you're in a place for people with mental illness.
- Broke an election law somewhere in Canada in the last five years and convicted.

Nunavut resident

Voters vote in the constituency where they live. Being a Nunavut resident means the voter lives in a place—they work and sleep there.

If a voter has two homes in different places, they choose one place for voting. A voter may have a seasonal residence, and they can choose to vote there, only if:

- They live there for more than 180 days a year, or
- They have no other home at the time of an election.

A voter is still a resident if they leave their home temporarily for work or school, in another community whether in Nunavut. Temporary means not more than 10 months, unless the voter is a full-time student.

A student may choose to vote in a temporary Nunavut residence, rather than their home residence. For example, a student's home community is Kugluktuk. They go to school full-time in Iqaluit. Iqaluit is their temporary Nunavut residence. So that student can choose to vote in Iqaluit or in Kugluktuk.

Homeless people are resident in any place that offers food or lodging, where they sleep or take a meal.

People in jail can choose to vote in the constituency:

- Where they lived before, they went to jail.
- Where their family lives.

Voter registration

Voters register with Elections Nunavut to get their name on the voters list.

Voters can register to vote online at www.elections.nu.ca.

Voters can also register at the polling station if their name isn't on the voters list.

Elections Nunavut uses two forms to register voters:

Voter registration form: Voters fill out and sign the voter registration form if their name is not on the voters list.

Change or correct form: Voters fill out and sign the change and correct form if their name is on the list and the voter information needs to be change.

Voters need to know their civic address, as well as their mailing address. You may need to provide ID if the election officer doesn't know you.

If you need to show ID you must provide one piece of ID that shows your name, current address, and signature or two pieces of ID, one that shows your name and signature and one that shows your name and address

Examples of ID with name, address and signature:

- Driver's license
- Vehicle registration
- Government of Nunavut general ID

Examples of ID with name and signature:

- Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. enrolment card
- Health insurance card
- Passport

- Citizenship card
- Old Age Security card
- Social Insurance card
- Bank or Credit card
- Library card
- Student card

Examples of ID with name and address:

- Power bill
- Land lease
- Land tax

Voter's list

Elections Nunavut prepare a list of all registered voters for each constituency. The voters list shows voter's name, mailing address, and civic.

Elections Nunavut uses the voters list to keep track of who voted during an election. They only use the voters list during elections, and they keep the information safe. No one uses the voters list for jury duty. Elections Nunavut may use the information on the voters list for a Nunavut plebiscite.

Early in the Election Period, Elections Nunavut sends a copy of the voters list to the returning officer in each constituency. Voters should check the list to see if their information on the list is correct.

Final voters list

The final voters list includes the names of any people who register when they go to vote. It also has any other changes that election officers made during voting.

Voter Information Card

Every voter on the voters list gets a Voter Information Card in the mail, this card shows:

- Voter's name and address.
- Voter's constituency.
- Where and when to vote on Election Day.
- Where and when to vote in the advance vote.
- Other ways to vote if you can't vote on Election Day.
- A toll-free phone number to call for more information.

Voters should check their Voter Information Card to see if the information is correct. Update your information online, at your returning office or with Elections Nunavut to change the information. Keep the Voter Information Card and take it with you when you go to vote.

Voting

Voters make a choice when they vote. They mark an X beside the name of the candidate they want to be the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for their constituency.

An MLA represents all the people in the constituency. Each vote is important. No one can force a person to vote. People have the right to vote, and it is their choice to vote or not and how they vote.

Some people may be at work during all the hours that the polling station is open. If needed, employers must give these voters up to two hours off work to vote. The employer chooses the time. Voters that work from 8:30 am to 5 pm don't get time off work to vote.

Each voter can vote only once in an election. Nunavummiut have many ways to vote. Every voter that wants to vote can choose the way that suits them best.

Election Day voting

For any eligible voter. Vote at the polling station in each community.

- 9 am to 7 pm local time

Voting in the Office of the Returning Officer

For any eligible voter who can get to the RO office in their constituency.

- From 12 to 7 pm local time.
- Starts 14 days before Election Day; ends four days before Election Day.

Advance vote

For any eligible voter who lives in a community without an RO office.

- From 12 to 7 pm local time.
- Seven days before Election Day.

Mobile poll

For people who physically can't get to the polling station. The poll comes to the voter's home.

- From 9 am to 7 pm local time.
- Seven days before Election Day.

Special mail-in ballot

For voters who are temporarily away from home: students, inmates, and others.

- Must apply to get a special ballot kit from Elections Nunavut before the deadline.
- Ballots must reach Elections Nunavut in Rankin Inlet by 5 pm Central time on Election Day.
- Any voter that is sent a special ballot cannot vote any other way, even if they do not mail in the ballot on time.

Vote by Emergency Method

A voter can vote by phone if they meet these conditions:

- Can not get to a polling station on Election Day
- Had to leave their constituency unexpectedly.
- Had no other way to vote before going to the remote place.

Helping another voter

The DRO can help voters if they need it. Voters can also bring a friend or relative to help. The person that helps, has to promise four things:

- Mark the ballot where the voter wants.
- Not tell the voter how to vote.
- Not help any other person to vote.

Voters who can't get inside the polling station

If a voter can't get inside the polling station, the DRO can go outside the polling station to let a person vote. The DRO shuts down the polling station for a short time. They bring the poll outside to the place where the voter can vote.

Important rules for voting

During voting, voters, candidates, and elections officers must follow the Nunavut Elections Act.

Rules everyone must follow at the polling station.

- No one except election officers can use phones, cameras, two- way radios, or other recording or communication devices at the polling station.
- Everyone must turn off their cell phone inside the polling station.
- No one can put any campaign material on the land or building at the polling station.
- No one can wear, use, or show any campaign buttons, ball caps, T-shirts, or other materials at the polling station.
- No one can just stand around within 10 metres of the polling station.
- Voters must just vote and leave. They can't stay at the polling station and watch the voting.
- Every voter can vote only once in an election.
- No one can force a voter to say who they voted for. Their vote is secret.
- Special rules for candidates and their representatives.
- The candidate or one representative for each candidate at a time, at each polling station. A representative must bring a consent form that the candidate or financial agent signed.

A candidate or their representatives may watch the voting and they:

- Must always respect and stay out of the way of voters and election officers.
- May take information from the polling record during voting and pass it on.
- MUST go outside the polling station to receive calls or to phone someone to pass on information.
- May arrive at the polling station 15 minutes before it opens—to watch the election officers count and initial the ballots, and to inspect the ballots and other official papers for the poll.
- May question a voter’s identity, even if the voter’s name is on the voters list. The voter must show their ID and take an oath or affirmation.
- May watch the Deputy Returning Officer count the ballots.
- May disagree when the Deputy Returning Officer accepts or rejects a ballot.
- Must stay to the end. Do not send or receive phone calls or text messages until after the DRO sends the results to Elections Nunavut.

Who won the election

- The candidate with the most votes wins.
- Election officers count all the ballots in each constituency—ballots from Election Day and any ballots from other ways to vote.

Counting Election Day ballots

On Election Day, each polling station counts their ballots. The deputy returning officer (DRO) handles the ballots. The poll clerk keeps count on a tally sheet. Candidates or their representatives can watch and keep count too. If they aren’t there, two voters need to watch the DRO count the ballots.

The DRO opens the ballot box and dumps the ballots on the table. They open each ballot and show it to everyone. They say how the ballot is marked. They make a separate pile of ballots for each candidate and one pile for any rejected ballots. The DRO has a sheet with examples of rejected ballots.

Rejected ballots don’t count because the voter:

- Used an unofficial ballot.
- Made no mark.
- Marked the ballot, but it's not clear who the mark is for.
- Marked the ballot for someone who isn't a candidate.
- Marked the ballot for more than one candidate.
- Marked the ballot in a way that people can tell who the voter is.

Sometimes the DRO forgets to initial a ballot or tear off the extra tab. If they are sure the ballot is official, they can do that when they count the ballots.

A candidate or their representative may want to reject a ballot the DRO counts. Or they may want to count a ballot the DRO rejects. The DRO records their objection in the polling record and decides to count or reject the ballot. Their decision is final.

Statement of the Poll

Every DRO fills out a Statement of the Poll form for their polling station. They send a copy to the RO as soon as possible and give a copy to each candidate or representative at the polling station.

The form shows:

- Number of voters at that polling station.
- Number of votes for each candidate.
- Number of rejected ballots.

The RO gets a statement for each poll in their constituency. They add up all the votes for each candidate. They fill out the Election Results form to certify the number of votes for each candidate. And they send the results to the Chief Electoral Officer.

The RO asks for a recount if the difference between the number of votes for the first and second candidates is less than 2% of the total votes. If there is no recount the Returning Officer completes the Return of the Writ and sends it to the Chief Electoral Officer.

The Chief Electoral Officer publishes the election results in the local newspaper and on their website. Returning Officers post constituency results on community bulletin boards and on local radio and TV if the community has them.

Breaking the Laws

The Nunavut Elections Act is like any other law. If people break the law they can be charged with a crime and punished.

There are many ways to break the law, such as voting when ineligible, campaigning at a polling station, misuse of campaign funds, etc.

Read the *Nunavut Elections Act* and make sure you follow the law.

Who can complain

Any person who believes a *Nunavut Elections Act* law has been broken must file a complaint in writing to the R.C.M.P. within 90 days. They do not complain to Elections Nunavut.

Glossary of Election Terms

Acclamation: A candidate wins by acclamation when they are the only candidate in their constituency. Nobody votes.

Advance vote: A way to vote before Election Day. You vote at the polling station seven days before Election Day.

Affirm: A formal, legal promise that something is true; a promise to do something; the most serious promise a person can make. If you break this promise, it is the same as breaking the law.

Assistant Returning Officer (ARO): The returning officer hires one or more AROs for their constituency. The ARO can accept declarations of candidacy and helps the RO with all other work during the election period.

Auditor: The person that the Chief Electoral Officer hires to review each candidate's financial return, to make sure it is complete and accurate.

Ballot: The official paper we use to mark our vote. It lists the candidates' names in alphabetical order.

By-election: An election in only one constituency. It happens after a general election when a seat in the Legislative Assembly becomes vacant for some reason.

Campaign: The advertising, signs, buttons, speeches, and other things a candidate uses to encourage people to vote for them.

Campaign Manager: The person who coordinates and looks after a candidate's campaign. The candidate appoints the campaign manager.

Campaign material: Any ads, signs, buttons, banners, posters, and other things in favour of one candidate, or against other candidates. Ads may be on radio, TV, Internet, and in newspapers.

Candidate: An eligible voter who wants to be a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), and who files a declaration of candidacy that Elections Nunavut accepts.

Candidate's representative: The person that a candidate appoints to go to a polling station on Election Day to watch over the voting on behalf of the candidate. Each candidate may have only one representative at a time at each polling station. The candidate's representative must bring the correct, signed form and give it to the deputy returning officer (DRO).

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO): The CEO is in charge of Elections Nunavut. The Commissioner of Nunavut appoints this person to oversee the *Nunavut Elections Act*.

Close of candidacy: The last day a person can file a declaration of candidacy. It happens at 2 pm local time, 31 days before Election Day.

Constituency: A geographic area and the people who live there. The people in each constituency elect an MLA.

Contribution: Any money, goods, and/or services a person or business donates to help elect a candidate.

Declaration: A formal or legal statement a person makes to say something is true or they intend to do something. If you break this promise, it is the same as breaking the law.

Declaration of candidacy: The form a person completes to become a candidate in an election.

Deputy Returning Officer (DRO): The election officer in charge of a polling station on Election Day. They give out the ballots and count them.

Elect: To choose a person by voting. During a territorial election, we elect our MLAs.

Election Day: The date on the writ for voting in an election. Most voters go to a polling station on Election Day to vote. Elections Nunavut also offers other ways for voters to vote before Election Day.

Election expenses: Any money paid or owed during an election period, as part of a candidate's campaign. Includes any goods and services that people contribute, and any costs of the financial agent and campaign manager.

Election officers: The people who work for Elections Nunavut and help to run a territorial election. Election officers include returning officers (RO), assistant returning officers (ARO), deputy returning officers (DRO), poll clerks (PC), and registration clerks (RC).

Election period: A 35-day period that starts with the writ and ends with Election Day.

Election report: This document details the number of votes received by each candidate. It is completed by the Returning Officer upon reviewing the Statement of the Polls.

Elections Nunavut: The office and staff of the CEO. These people organize and run territorial elections.

Electoral boundaries: The borders that define each Nunavut constituency. In 2025 there are 22 constituencies.

Electoral Boundaries Commission: A group of three people responsible for reviewing electoral boundaries, the borders that define each constituency in Nunavut. The Legislative Assembly appoints the Commission members every 10 years. In their report, the Commission may propose changes to Nunavut's electoral boundaries and constituency names.

Emergency method: A way to vote by phone or radio if you are in a remote place on Election Day. You must contact Elections Nunavut to vote this way, and you must meet strict conditions:

- You cannot get to a polling station on Election Day; and
- You cannot vote any other way; and
- You were unable to vote because of an unexpected absence.

Final voters list: This list includes all the voters that were on the list when the election started, plus those who registered during the election period.

Financial agent: The person who handles all the money for a candidate's campaign. The candidate appoints the financial agent; they both sign the declaration of candidacy. The financial agent accepts contributions and pays all the expenses. Together with the candidate, the financial agent completes the financial return after the election.

Financial return: The official report of a campaign's election contributions and expenses, as required under the *Nunavut Elections Act*. The candidate and financial agent complete the report, sign it, and make a declaration that the information is true.

General Election: An election that takes place in all the constituencies.

Integrity Commissioner: An independent officer of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly, with certain responsibilities under the *Nunavut Elections Act*.

Judicial recount: A judge of the Nunavut Court recounts all the ballots for a constituency. This happens if two candidates have the same number of votes or the same number—within 2% of each other.

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: The people we elect to form the Government of Nunavut.

Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs): The people who are elected during a territorial election; the people who work for the Government Nunavut.

Mobile poll: A way to vote if you physically cannot get out to vote. The poll comes to you.

Notice of Election: Shows the name and contact information for each candidate in a constituency. The CEO sends out the election notice 30 days before Election Day.

Nunavut Elections Act: The laws that Nunavummiut use to organize and run a territorial election.

Oath: A formal, legal promise that something is true; a promise to do something. Election officers take an oath to be impartial in their job; elected candidates take an oath as MLAs.

Poll Clerk (PC): An election officer who works at a polling station with the DRO. PCs look after the polling record.

Polling record: A list of everyone who voted at the polling station, any changes to the voters list, and notes about everything that happened during voting.

Polling place: A building that holds polling stations.

Polling station: The place where voters go to vote.

Post-election period: 60 days right after Election Day.

Pre-election expense: A campaign expense that the candidate pays for during the pre-election period.

Pre-election period: In a general election, the pre-election period starts 90 days before the writ is issued and ends when the CEO issues the writ. In a by-election, the pre-election period starts when the date of the election is announced and ends when the CEO issues the writ.

Proclamation: The official paper the Commissioner sends to the CEO to say there will be an election. The proclamation tells the CEO things such as when to issue the writ and the date of Election Day.

Public Notice of Election: Elections Nunavut posts the Notice to tell everyone about the upcoming election. It shows these four things:

- Dates for Election Day and early polls.
- Contact information for RO's.
- Deadline to file a Declaration of Candidacy.
- Deadline to object to a name on the voters list.

Registration Clerk (RC): An election officer who works under an RO to register voters, either between elections or during an election or by-election.

Rejected ballot: A marked ballot that does NOT count for any candidate. When the DRO / ARO count the ballots in the ballot box they reject a ballot for clearly defined reasons. If a person watching the ballot count disagrees with the DRO's / ARO's decision, the election officers must record the objection in the polling record.

Returning Officer (RO): The election officer in charge of a constituency.

ROs oversee everything about the election in their constituency.

Special ballot: A way to vote by mail if you are away at school, on vacation, in hospital, at a treatment centre, or in jail. Other voters can use a special ballot if they need or want to. Voters must apply to Elections Nunavut to get a special ballot. They receive a package, follow the directions, and mail the ballot back in a special envelope.

Spoiled ballot: A spoiled ballot is a ballot that a voter makes a mistake on. The DRO gives the voter a new ballot and marks the first one 'spoiled.' The spoiled ballot does not go into the ballot box.

Statement of the Poll: The official Elections Nunavut form that shows the number of votes for each candidate for that poll.

Swear: A formal, religious promise that something is true; a promise to do something; the most serious promise you can make. If you break this promise, it is like breaking the law. A person gives their word and swears on the Bible that something is true.

Vote: Voters mark a secret ballot in a territorial election. They choose the candidate in their constituency that they want to elect as their MLA.

Voter: A person eligible to vote in a territorial election:

- Canadian citizen.
- Nunavut resident for at least one year on Election Day.
- 18 years or older on Election Day.
- Not disqualified from voting.

Voters list: The list of voters that Elections Nunavut prepares for each constituency.

Voter Information Card: Each voter on the voters list receives this card in the mail about a month before Election Day. The card tells the voter where and when to vote.

Voting in the office of the returning officer (VORO): A way to vote before Election Day, starting the 14th day before election day, and ending, on the 4th day before election day.

Witness: A person who signs a document to say that another person's signature is truly their signature.

Writ: The Chief Electoral Officer shall, without delay and in accordance with the proclamation, issue a writ of election to the returning officer of each constituency where an election is to be held.