



—The TOWNSHIP of—
NORTH DUMFRIES

106 Earl Thompson Road, 3rd Floor
PO Box 1060
Ayr, ON N0B 1E0

Thank you for your interest in pursuing nomination for the 2026 Municipal Election.

This package has been prepared for individuals seeking to run for office in the Township of North Dumfries 2026 Municipal Election. The information provided is intended to support prospective candidates in understanding the legislative framework, filing requirements, and important considerations associated with running for municipal office. Additional resources and updates will be provided throughout the nomination period as they become available.

Nominations for the 2026 Municipal Election will be accepted beginning May 1, 2026 and will close at **2:00 p.m. on August 21, 2026**. Under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, a candidate's election campaign period begins on the day they file their Nomination Paper. Candidates cannot accept or make contributions, and cannot incur any expenses, until their Nomination Paper is filed. Money, goods and services given to and accepted by, or on behalf of, a candidate for their election campaign are considered contributions.

The Township of North Dumfries is open to receive nominations for the following offices:

- Mayor
- Ward 1 Councillor
- Ward 2 Councillor
- Ward 3 Councillor
- Ward 4 Councillor

Nomination for Regional Chair are to be filed at the Regional Municipality of Waterloo.

Nominations for Waterloo Region District School Board Trustee and Waterloo Catholic District School Board Trustee are to be filed at Cambridge City Hall.

Nominations for Conseil Scholaire Viamonde Trustee are to be filed with the City of London. Nominations for Conseil Scholaire Catholique Monavenir Trustee are to be filed with the City of Kitchener.

Once you are ready to file your nomination papers, please make an appointment by contacting the Clerk's Office at 519-632-8800 or via email clerk@northdumfries.ca.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Clerks Office.



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 PO Box 1060 Ayr, ON N0B 1E0

2026 Municipal Election: Important Dates

May 1, 2026 to August 21, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.	Nomination forms may be filed in person at any time when the Clerk's Office is open (Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). We kindly ask that you book an appointment prior to filing. On Nomination Day, August 21, 2026, nomination forms may be filed from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. only.
August 21, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.	Deadline to withdraw nomination.
August 24, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.	Nominations to be certified or rejected by the Clerk.
September 1, 2026 to October 26, 2026	Revision Period for the Voters' List.
October 13, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.	Online advance voting period opens.
October 21, 2026	In-person advanced voting day. Polls open 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
October 24, 2026	In-person advanced voting day. Polls open 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
October 26, 2026	Election Day. In-person polls open from 10:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Online and In-person voting closes at 8:00 p.m. Unofficial Election Results will be available as soon as possible following 8:00 p.m.
October 27, 2026	Anticipated date to declare Election Results
November 15, 2026	New Term of Council commences.
November 16, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.	Inaugural Council Meeting.
November 23, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.	Orientation & Training for New Council
November 24, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.	Orientation & Training for New Council
December 7, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.	Orientation & Training for New Council
December 31, 2026	End of campaign period.
March 30, 2027	Filing date for financial statements and auditor's reports. Must be filed in person by 2:00 p.m.

Instructions

It is the responsibility of the person being nominated to file a complete and accurate nomination paper. Please print or type information (except signatures).

Nomination paper of a person to be a candidate at an election to be held in the following municipality

Nominated for the Office of			Ward Name or Number (if any)		
Nominee's name as it is to appear on the ballot paper (subject to agreement of the municipal clerk)					
Last Name or Single Name			Given Name(s)		
Nominee's full qualifying address					
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name			
Municipality			Province		Postal Code
Mailing Address <input type="checkbox"/> Same as qualifying address					
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name			
Municipality			Province		Postal Code
Email Address			Telephone Number	Telephone Number 2	

Declaration of Qualification

I, _____, declare that I am presently legally qualified (or would be presently legally qualified if I were not a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario or the Senate or House of Commons of Canada) to be elected and to hold the office for which I am nominated.

Signature of Nominee

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Date Received (yyyy/mm/dd)	Time Received	Initial of Nominee or Agent (if filed in person)	Signature of Clerk or Designate
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Certification by Clerk or Designate

I, the undersigned clerk of this municipality, do hereby certify that I have examined the nomination paper of the aforesaid nominee filed with me and am satisfied that the nominee is qualified to be nominated and that the nomination complies with the Act.

Signature

Date Certified (yyyy/mm/dd)

Instructions

- Candidates must obtain a minimum of 25 original signatures.
- An individual providing an endorsement signature must be a Canadian citizen, aged 18 or older and have a qualifying address in the municipality. An individual may sign an endorsement for more than one person seeking nomination.
- The qualifying address provided must include the postal code.

Personal information collected on this form is obtained under the authority of sections 33 and 95 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*. Under section 88 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (and despite anything in the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*) documents and materials filed with or prepared by the clerk or any other election official under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* are public records and, until their destruction, may be inspected by any person at the clerk's office at a time when the office is open.

Name of person seeking nomination

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Endorsement signatures for the nomination of a person for an office in the municipality of _____
in the year _____

Name of person providing endorsement – 1

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified
to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 2

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified
to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 3

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 4

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 5

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 6			
Last Name or Single Name		Given Name(s)	
Qualifying Address			
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name	
Municipality		Province	Postal Code
I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.			
_____		_____	
Signature		Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	

Name of person providing endorsement – 7			
Last Name or Single Name		Given Name(s)	
Qualifying Address			
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name	
Municipality		Province	Postal Code
I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.			
_____		_____	
Signature		Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	

Name of person providing endorsement – 8			
Last Name or Single Name		Given Name(s)	
Qualifying Address			
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name	
Municipality		Province	Postal Code
I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.			
_____		_____	
Signature		Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	

Name of person providing endorsement – 9

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature_____
Date (yyyy/mm/dd)**Name of person providing endorsement – 10**

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature_____
Date (yyyy/mm/dd)**Name of person providing endorsement – 11**

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature_____
Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 12			
Last Name or Single Name		Given Name(s)	
Qualifying Address			
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name	
Municipality		Province	Postal Code
I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.			
_____		_____	
Signature		Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	

Name of person providing endorsement – 13			
Last Name or Single Name		Given Name(s)	
Qualifying Address			
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name	
Municipality		Province	Postal Code
I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.			
_____		_____	
Signature		Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	

Name of person providing endorsement – 14			
Last Name or Single Name		Given Name(s)	
Qualifying Address			
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name	
Municipality		Province	Postal Code
I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.			
_____		_____	
Signature		Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	

Name of person providing endorsement – 15

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 16

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 17

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 18			
Last Name or Single Name		Given Name(s)	
Qualifying Address			
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name	
Municipality		Province	Postal Code
I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.			
_____		_____	
Signature		Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	

Name of person providing endorsement – 19			
Last Name or Single Name		Given Name(s)	
Qualifying Address			
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name	
Municipality		Province	Postal Code
I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.			
_____		_____	
Signature		Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	

Name of person providing endorsement – 20			
Last Name or Single Name		Given Name(s)	
Qualifying Address			
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name	
Municipality		Province	Postal Code
I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.			
_____		_____	
Signature		Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	

Name of person providing endorsement – 21

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 22

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 23

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 24			
Last Name or Single Name		Given Name(s)	
Qualifying Address			
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name	
Municipality		Province	Postal Code
I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.			
_____		_____	
Signature		Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	

Name of person providing endorsement – 25			
Last Name or Single Name		Given Name(s)	
Qualifying Address			
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name	
Municipality		Province	Postal Code
I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.			
_____		_____	
Signature		Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	

Name of person providing endorsement – 26			
Last Name or Single Name		Given Name(s)	
Qualifying Address			
Suite/Unit Number	Street Number	Street Name	
Municipality		Province	Postal Code
I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.			
_____		_____	
Signature		Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	

Name of person providing endorsement – 27

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 28

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 29

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 30

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 31

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Name of person providing endorsement – 32

Last Name or Single Name

Given Name(s)

Qualifying Address

Suite/Unit Number

Street Number

Street Name

Municipality

Province

Postal Code

I endorse _____ as a candidate and declare that I am qualified to be an elector in this municipality.

Signature

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)



I, _____, a nominated candidate for the office of:

- Mayor
- Councillor

do solemnly declare that:

1. I am qualified pursuant to the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and the:
 - the *Municipal Act, 2001* (**Mayor, Councillor**), or
2. Without limiting the generality of paragraph 1, I am at least eighteen years of age, am a Canadian citizen and a resident of:
 - the Township of North Dumfries or the owner or tenant of land in the Township of North Dumfries or the spouse of such owner or tenant (**Mayor, Councillor**), or
3. I am not ineligible or disqualified under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the *Municipal Act, 2001*, the *Education Act*, the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* or any other *Act* to be elected to or hold the above-mentioned office, and:
 - I am not (**Mayor, Councillor**):
 - an employee of the Township of North Dumfries or I am an employee of the Township of North Dumfries on an unpaid leave of absence as provided for by section 30 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*,
 - a judge of any court,
 - a member of the Executive Council of Ontario or a federal Minister of the Crown.
 - a Crown employee within the meaning of the *Public Service Act*, or I am a Crown employee and have followed and will continue to follow all the relevant provisions of Part III of such Act, or

- I am not a member of the Assembly as provided in the *Legislative Assembly Act* or of the Senate or House of Commons of Canada or, if I am such a person, I will provide proof of my resignation in a form satisfactory to the Clerk of the Township of North Dumfries prior to 2:00 p.m. on nomination day, August 19, 2022. I understand that the Clerk of the Township of North Dumfries will reject my nomination for the above-mentioned office if I fail to provide proof of resignation by this deadline.
5. I am not prohibited from voting at the municipal election under subsection 17(3) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, and I am not:
 - a person who is serving a sentence of imprisonment in a penal or correctional institution.
 - a person acting as executor, trustee or any other representative capacity.
 - a person who was convicted of a corrupt practice described in subsection 90(3) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, during an election that occurred less than four years prior to Monday, October 24, 2022.
 7. I was not convicted of a corrupt practice under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* or of an offence under the *Criminal Code* (Canada), in connection with an act or omission with respect to a municipal election if the Voting Day in that election is less than six years prior to Monday, October 24, 2022.
 8. I am not disqualified from being elected to or holding office by reason of any violations of the election campaign financial requirements or for not filing the financial statement under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

AND I make this solemn Declaration conscientiously believing it to be true and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath.

Declared before me at the Township of North Dumfries

this _____ day of _____, 2026

(Signature of candidate)

(Signature of Clerk or designate)

Personal information on this form is collected under the authority of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and will be used for the nomination process in the municipal election and will be available for public inspection in the office of the Clerk until the next municipal election. Questions about this collection of personal information should be directed to the Clerk at agood@northdumfries.ca



Form W11

Release of Campaign Information

Municipal Elections Act, 1996

Name of Candidate or Third Party Advertiser: _____

Candidate for the Office of:

Mayor

Councillor

School Board Trustee

Third Party Advertiser

I hereby authorize the Clerk to include the following information respecting my candidacy for elected office or third-party advertiser status on the Township of North Dumfries website and make it available to any person:

Complete with information to be released. If no information is provided, only the name will be released online.

Town/Settlement: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Website: _____

Social Media Accounts (2 max): _____

Signature of Candidate

Date

Personal information noted on this form is collected under the authority of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and will be used to provide campaign information to electors in the municipal election. Subsection 88(5) of the Act notes that despite anything in the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, documents and materials filed with or prepared by the Clerk or any other election official under this Act are public records and, until their destruction, may be inspected by any person at the Clerk's Office at a time when the office is open and will be available for public inspection.

The consent given on this Form will allow campaign information to be provided other than by attendance in the Clerk's Office for public inspection.



**Form W14
Nomination Checklist**

Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (s.23(4); 88(10))

Name of Candidate	Office
-------------------	--------

I
,

the above-named, being nominated as a Candidate or registering as a Third Party Advertiser confirm that I have submitted or been given the items listed below, as necessary.

- "Nomination Paper" Form 1 – **Candidates Only** OR
"Notice of Registration" Form 7 – **Third Party Advertisers Only**
- "Endorsement of Nomination" Form 2 endorsed by 25 people eligible to vote for the office – **Candidates Only**
- Nomination filing fee (\$200.00 for Mayor or \$100 for other offices; paid in cash, debit, certified cheque or money order)
- Proof of identity and residence as prescribed in O. Reg. 304/13
- Proof of citizenship satisfactory to the Clerk
- "Declaration of Qualifications" Form W10
- "Release of Campaign Information" Form W11
- "Preliminary Amount of Expenses and Contributions" Form W12
- "Nomination and Registration Notices" Form W13
- "Nomination or Registration Checklist" Form W14
- "Withdrawal of Nomination" Form W16
- "Appointment of Scrutineer by Candidate" Form W17
- "Voters' List Request and Declaration" Form W42

Included for Reference or future use:

- 2026 Municipal Election Procedures
- Election Accessibility Plan – 2026 Municipal Election
- 2026 Candidates' Guide Ontario Municipal Council and School Board Elections – **Candidates**
- 2026 Third Party Advertisers' Guide – **Third Party Advertisers**
- Election Sign By-law No. 2952-18
- Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy
- Recount Policy

Candidate's /Registrant's Signature:

Date:

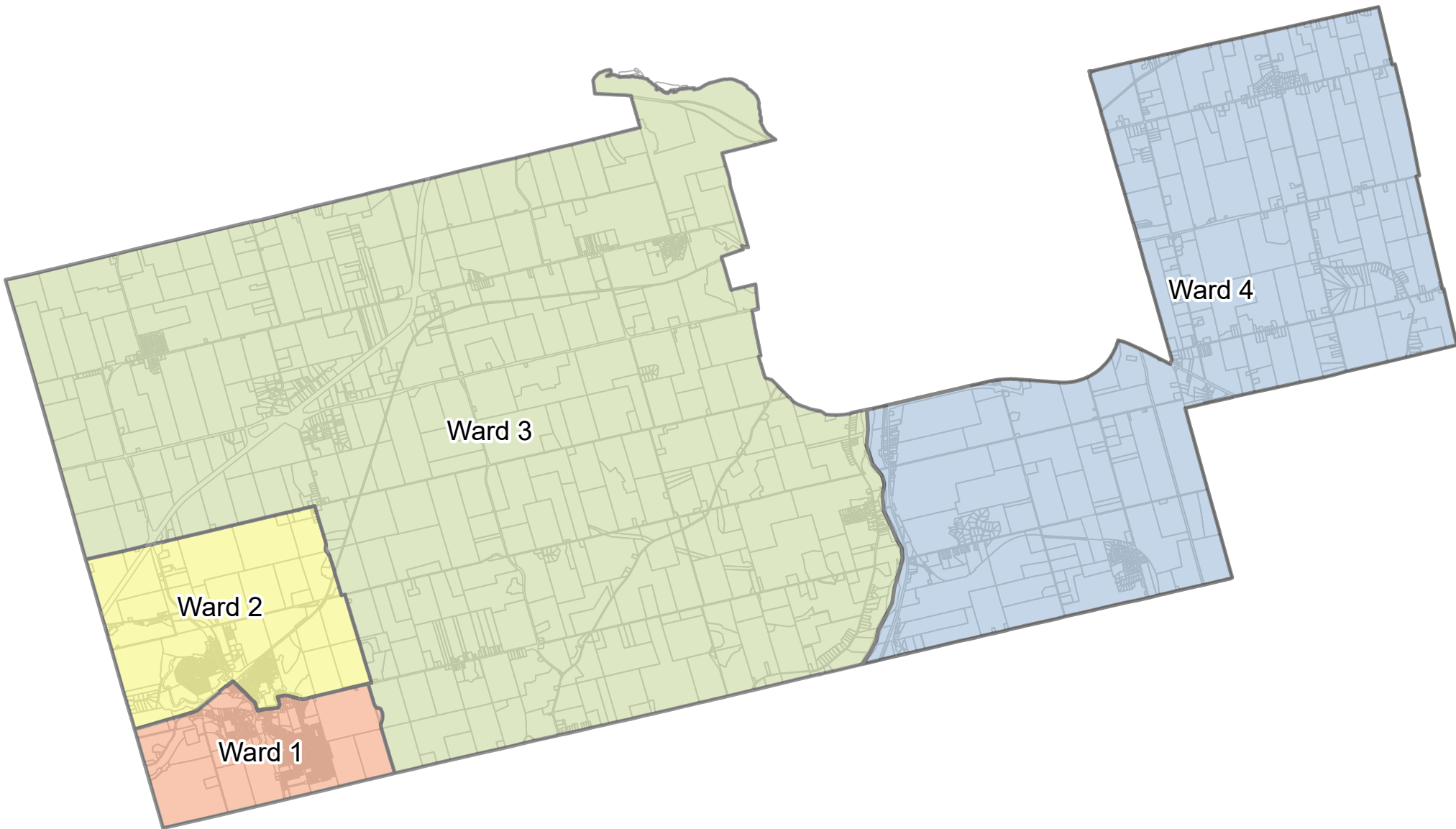
Signature of Election Official:

Date:



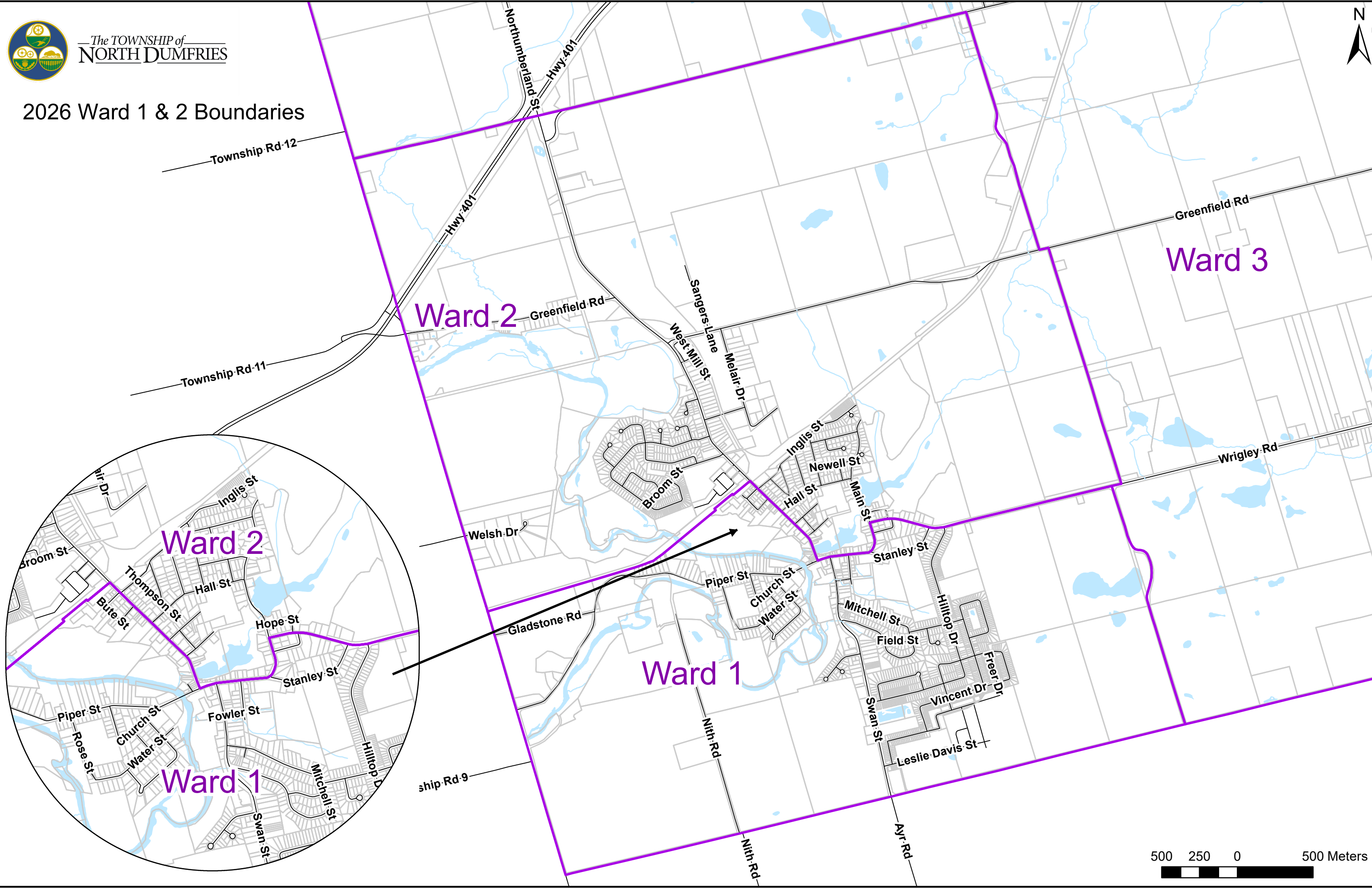
The TOWNSHIP of
NORTH DUMFRIES

2026 Ward Boundaries



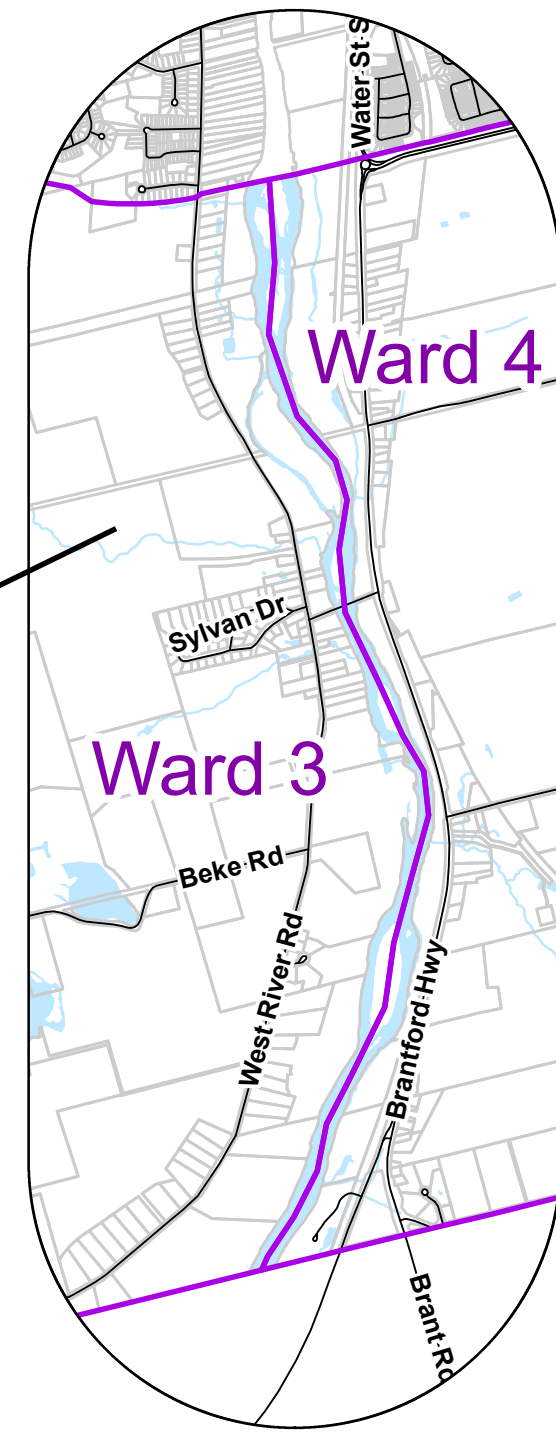
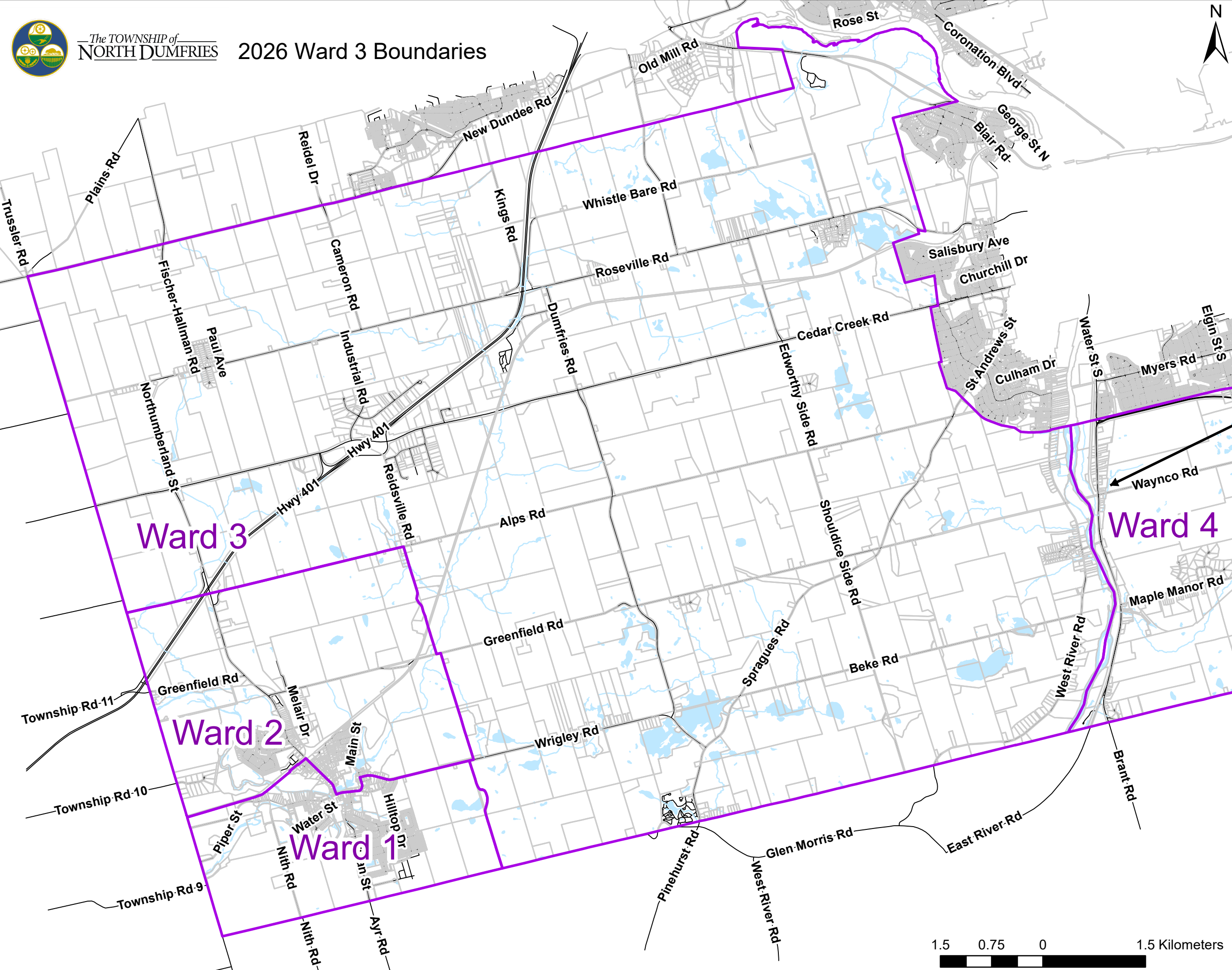


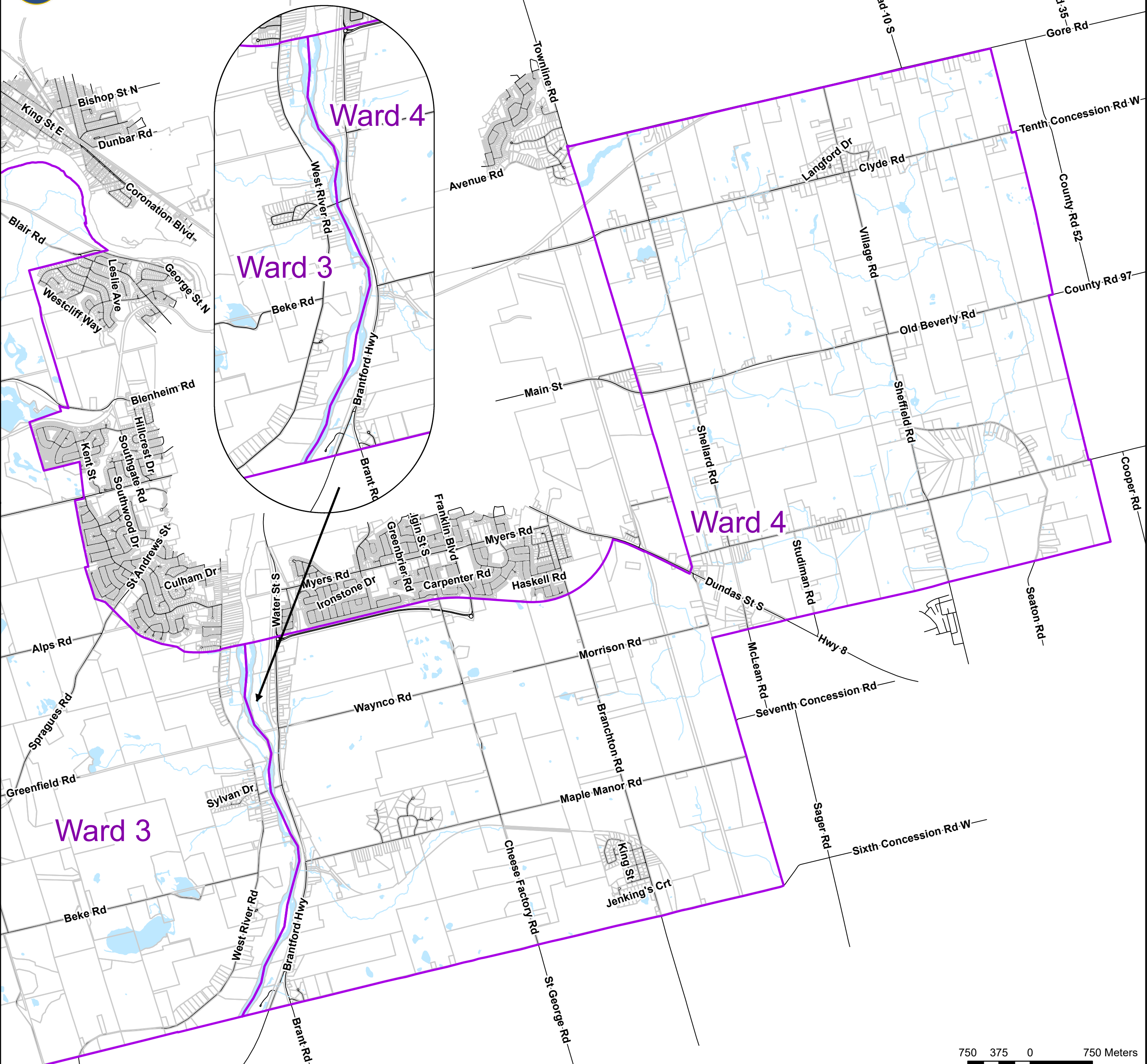
2026 Ward 1 & 2 Boundaries





The TOWNSHIP of NORTH DUMFRIES 2026 Ward 3 Boundaries





2026 candidates' guide

Ontario municipal council and
school board elections

2026 candidates' guide – Ontario municipal council and school board elections

Find out how to run as a candidate in Ontario municipal council and school board elections.

This guide provides information to candidates for the 2026 municipal and school board elections. The information also applies to any by-elections that may be held during the 2026–2030 council and school board term.

This guide is not meant to replace provincial legislation. It provides general information about the rules contained in the [Municipal Elections Act, 1996](#), and other legislation and regulations, such as:

- [Municipal Act, 2001](#)
- [City of Toronto Act, 2006](#)
- [Education Act](#)

New election rules for 2026

There are new requirements regarding how copies of the voters' list are to be handled. These include:

- written acknowledgements to receive a copy of the voters' list
- limits to sharing copies
- requirements to destroy copies after the campaign has ended

For more information regarding these requirements please see [the voters' list](#).

Contact us

If you have further questions or would like to give feedback on this guide, please contact us at mea.info@ontario.ca.

You can also contact your regional [Municipal Services Office](#) at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Table of Contents

General information	1
Eligibility to run for election.....	2
Nominations.....	4
The voters' list.....	9
Campaigning	10
Third-party advertising.....	11
On voting day	12
After voting day	14
Campaign finance	15
Compliance and enforcement	27
Completing the financial statement	29
Forms referred to in this guide.....	35

General information

Every four years, voters across Ontario elect municipal councillors and school board trustees.

The Province of Ontario sets out common rules that all candidates and voters must follow. However, municipalities are responsible for conducting elections to their council and for conducting the election of school trustees to Ontario's school boards. This guide contains information about the rules that are the same for all municipal elections, such as who is eligible to run for office, and rules about campaign spending.

Your municipality may have specific rules on issues such as:

- where and when election signs may be displayed
- whether campaign activities may occur on municipal property
- whether those who make contributions to candidates may receive a rebate

Contact your municipal clerk if you have questions about the election in your municipality.

To learn more about the duties of municipal councillors and the role of council, please see the [Ontario municipal councillor's guide](#).

The municipal clerk

Every municipality has a municipal clerk who is in charge of running the election.

Contact the municipal clerk if you are interested in becoming a candidate. You must file any election forms, such as the nomination form and campaign financial statements, with your municipal clerk. The clerk is also responsible for providing information about spending limits and filing deadlines to candidates.

If your municipality does not have a website, you could visit or contact your municipality's offices for more information.

Emergency declaration by the clerk

If the municipal clerk believes that circumstances have arisen that prevent the election from being conducted in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, they may declare an emergency. This declaration is specific to the election and separate from an emergency that may be declared by the municipality or the province.

Once the clerk has declared an emergency, they can decide what arrangements to make to allow the election to appropriately proceed. The arrangements that the clerk makes will depend on the nature of the emergency.

If your municipal clerk has declared an emergency in relation to an election or by-election in your municipality, you should contact the clerk for information about the arrangements that they have put in place and how those arrangements may affect voting and campaigning.

Eligibility to run for election

Running for municipal council

To run for a position on council, you must be eligible to vote in that municipality. On the day you file your nomination, you must be a Canadian citizen aged 18 or older, and qualify as a resident or non-resident elector. For more information about eligibility to vote, please see the [2026 voters' guide](#).

You must be eligible to hold office on the day you file your nomination. For example, a person who is 17 years old but will turn 18 before nomination day must wait until they have turned 18 to file their nomination.

If your municipality has wards, you can run in any ward — you do not have to live in a particular ward to be its councillor. However, if you run in a ward where you do not live, you will not be able to vote for yourself. Having a campaign office or a business in a ward where you would not otherwise be eligible to vote does not make you eligible to vote in that ward.

Municipal employees

You cannot work for a municipality and be on its council at the same time. If you are an employee of a municipality and you want to run for office on that municipality's council, you must take a leave of absence that begins the day you are nominated. If you are elected, you must resign from your job.

If you are an employee of a municipality and you want to run for office in a different municipality, you do not have to take a leave of absence or resign. However, you should check with your employer to see if there are any policies in place that could affect you.

If you are an employee of an upper-tier municipality, you can run for office in a lower-tier municipality without taking a leave of absence or resigning unless being elected to the lower-tier council means that you would also be a member of the upper-tier council.

Who is not eligible?

The following people are not eligible to be elected to municipal office:

- any person who is not eligible to vote in the municipality
- an employee of a municipality who has not taken an unpaid leave of absence and resigned (see above)
- a judge of any court
- an MP, an MPP or a senator
- an inmate serving a sentence in a penal or correctional institution

Running for school board trustee

To run for a trustee position on a school board, you must be a resident within the jurisdiction of the board and you must be eligible to vote in a school board election. On the day you file your nomination, you must be a Canadian citizen aged 18 or older and you must meet any other qualifications to vote for the school board (for example, being a Roman Catholic, or holding French language rights). For more information about eligibility to vote, please see the [2026 voters' guide](#).

Additional information about [French-language rights](#) is available from the Ministry of Education.

School board employees

You cannot work for a school board and be a trustee in Ontario at the same time.

If you are an employee of any Ontario school board and you want to run for a trustee position on any school board in the province, you must take an unpaid leave of absence that begins the day you are nominated. If you are elected, you must resign from your job.

Municipal officials

If you are a clerk, deputy clerk, treasurer or deputy treasurer of a municipality within the jurisdiction of a school board, you are not permitted to run for office as a trustee of that board unless you take a leave of absence. If you are elected, you must resign from your job.

Who is not eligible?

The following people are not eligible to be elected as a school trustee:

- any person who is not eligible to vote in the school board election
- an employee of a school board or a municipal official who has not taken an unpaid leave of absence and resigned (see above)

- a judge of any court
- an MP, an MPP or a senator
- an inmate serving a sentence in a penal or correctional institution

Note for MPs, MPPs and senators

If you are an MP, MPP or senator, you may file your nomination for municipal or school board office without resigning your current seat in parliament, the legislature or the senate. However, you must resign your seat by the close of nominations (2 p.m. on Friday, August 21, 2026). If you are a federal or provincial cabinet minister, you must step down from cabinet prior to filing your nomination and must resign your seat by the close of nominations.

If you have not resigned by nomination day, your nomination will be rejected and your name will not appear on the ballot.

Nominations

Filing your nomination

To file your nomination, you must give the following to your municipal clerk:

- a [nomination form \(Form 1\)](#)
- the nomination fee
- completed [endorsement of nomination forms \(Form 2\)](#)

Note: Candidates for municipal council in municipalities with fewer than 4,000 electors and candidates for school board trustee do not have to submit endorsement signatures. Your municipal clerk will be able to tell you if you need to submit endorsement signatures.

When you fill out the nomination form, write down your name as you want it to appear on the ballot. If you normally go by a different name than your legal first name, you may use that name provided that the clerk agrees.

You do not have to provide all of your names under the box entitled “Given Name(s)” on the form. Only provide the one(s) that you want to appear on the ballot. If your legal name is a single name, you do not have to provide any given names.

Clerks can decide to allow nominations to be filed electronically. If your municipality allows electronic filing, contact the clerk for more information about how to file your nomination.

If electronic filing is not allowed in your municipality, you must file the nomination form that you have signed — the form may not be a copy and may not be scanned and submitted electronically. You must file the nomination form in person or have an agent file it on your behalf.

The clerk may require you to show identification or fill in an additional form to prove that you are eligible to be nominated. If an agent is going to file the form on your behalf, you should check with the clerk to see if you are required to provide identification or additional paperwork.

Your campaign period begins when the clerk has received your nomination. If you file your nomination electronically at a time when the clerk's office is not open, you may have to wait to begin your campaign. You should contact the clerk for more information.

The nomination fee

The fee to file a nomination is \$200 to run for head of council and \$100 for all other positions. This fee must be paid to the clerk at the time you submit your nomination form.

Your nomination fee will be refunded if you file your campaign financial statement by the deadline.

Endorsement signatures

If you are running for municipal council in a municipality that has 4,000 or more electors, you must submit 25 original signatures endorsing your nomination.

You do not have to submit endorsement signatures if you are running for:

- municipal council in a municipality that has fewer than 4,000 electors
- school trustee

You must use [Form 2](#) to collect the endorsement signatures.

Anyone providing an endorsement signature must also fill in their name and address, including the postal code.

Anyone providing an endorsement signature must be eligible to vote in the municipality on the day that they signed the endorsement. In addition to their endorsement, they will also be required to sign a declaration that they are eligible to vote in the municipality.

A person who is eligible to vote in the municipality may provide endorsements to as many candidates as they would like and may endorse candidates for any office on the municipal

council. A person who is running for a ward councillor office may submit signatures from voters who do not live in that ward.

If you submit 25 original endorsement signatures and find out later that a person (or persons) was not eligible to vote on the day that they signed the endorsement, you will not lose your nomination. The person who supplied false information (by declaring that they were eligible to endorse your nomination when they were not eligible) could be subject to prosecution.

If the clerk has allowed electronic filing, you must still collect original endorsement signatures. You can submit an electronic copy of the forms when you file your nomination. You must keep the forms with the original signatures as part of your campaign records.

The [Endorsement of Nomination Form \(Form 2\)](#) is a public document. Endorsements of candidates cannot be revoked if the document has already been filed with the clerk.

Deadline to file your nomination

The nomination period begins on May 1, 2026. The last day to file a nomination is Friday, August 21, 2026, by 2 p.m.

The clerk has until 4 p.m. on Monday, August 24, 2026, to certify or reject your nomination. The clerk must be satisfied that you are eligible to run in order to certify your nomination. If your nomination is not certified, your name will not appear on the ballot.

Where to file

If you are running for council office in a single-tier or lower-tier municipality (city, town, township, village, etc.), you must file your nomination with the clerk of that municipality.

If you are running for an office in an upper-tier municipality that does not also sit on a lower-tier council, you must file your nomination with the clerk of the upper-tier municipality. For example, a person running for county councillor in Wellington County would file their nomination with the clerk of Wellington County rather than the clerk of a lower-tier municipality such as the Town of Minto.

If you are running for a school trustee position that represents more than one municipality, contact your municipal clerk for information about where to file your nomination.

Changing your mind – withdrawal

If you decide to withdraw your nomination, you must notify the clerk in writing by the close of nominations (2 p.m. August 21, 2026).

If you withdraw your nomination, you are still required to file a campaign financial statement covering all the financial transactions you made in your campaign.

If your campaign did not have any financial transactions, you must file a financial statement reporting this. Your nomination fee will be refunded by the clerk if you file your financial statement by the deadline.

Changing your mind – running for a different office

You can only run for one office at a time. If you decide to run for a different office, your first nomination is deemed to be withdrawn when you file your second nomination.

If you decide to run for a different office on the same council or school board, and both offices are elected at large (for example, an office such as the mayor, which everyone in the municipality may vote for), everything (contributions, expenses, etc.) from your first campaign is simply transferred to your second campaign.

Example:

You file your nomination to run for deputy mayor on May 12, 2026. During the summer you decide to run for mayor instead, and file your second nomination form on June 29, 2026.

- Your first nomination for deputy mayor is deemed to be withdrawn.
- The nomination fee you paid on May 12 is transferred to your second nomination (in this case, you would have to pay an additional \$100 to make up the \$200 fee to run for head of council).
- You do not have to submit new endorsement signatures. Your initial 25 original endorsement signatures still qualify since you withdrew and filed a nomination for a different office on the same municipal council.
- Your campaign for mayor is deemed to have started on May 12.
- Any campaign contributions or expenses that occurred prior to June 29 are transferred to your mayoral campaign.
- You must file one campaign financial statement covering your campaign finances from May 12 until December 31, 2026.
- Your nomination fee will be refunded if you file your campaign financial statement by the filing deadline.

If you decide to run for a different office on the same council or school board, and one or both of the offices is elected by ward, then you must keep the two campaigns separate.

Example:

You file your nomination to run for mayor on May 12, 2026. During the summer you decide to run for councillor in ward 1 instead and file your second nomination form on June 29, 2026.

Your first nomination for mayor is deemed to be withdrawn, and your campaign for mayor ends. You may not transfer any contributions or expenses from your mayoral campaign to your ward councillor campaign.

- You must pay a separate nomination fee when you file your nomination for ward councillor.
- You do not have to submit new endorsement signatures. Your initial 25 original endorsement signatures still qualify since you withdrew and filed a nomination for a different office on the same municipal council.
- You must file a campaign financial statement covering your campaign for mayor (May 12 to June 29) – your first nomination fee will be refunded if you file this financial statement by the filing deadline.
- You must file a separate campaign financial statement covering your campaign forward councillor (June 29 to December 31) — your second nomination fee will be refunded if you file this financial statement by the filing deadline.

If you decide to run for office on a different council or school board, then you must keep the two campaigns separate. If you decide to run for council in a municipality that has more than 4,000 electors, you will need to submit original endorsement signatures from electors eligible to vote in that municipality. If you are unsure if the municipality has more than 4,000 electors, you should contact the municipal clerk.

Example:

You file your nomination to run for school board trustee on May 12. During the summer you decide to run for councillor instead, and file your second nomination form on June 29, 2026.

- Your first nomination for school board trustee is deemed to be withdrawn.
- You are required to pay a nomination fee when you file your nomination for ward councillor.
- If the municipality where you are running for ward councillor has 4,000 or more electors, you must submit 25 endorsement signatures.
- Your campaign for school board trustee ends. You may not transfer any contributions or expenses from your trustee campaign to your ward councillor campaign.

- You must file a campaign financial statement covering your campaign for schoolboard trustee (May 12 to June 29) — your first nomination fee will be refunded if you file this financial statement by the filing deadline.
- You must file a separate campaign financial statement covering your campaign forward councillor (June 29 to December 31) — your second nomination fee will be refunded if you file this financial statement by the filing deadline.

Acclamations

If there is only one certified candidate running for an office at 4 p.m. on Monday, August 24, that candidate will be declared elected by acclamation. Similarly, in a municipality where multiple candidates are elected at large, if the number of certified candidates is the same as or less than the number of offices, those candidates will be declared elected by acclamation.

If you are elected by acclamation, you must still file a campaign financial statement.

Additional nominations

If there are positions with no candidates or positions that are still vacant after the candidates who did run have been acclaimed, the clerk will call for additional nominations.

Additional nominations for the remaining vacant seats must be filed between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Wednesday, August 26, 2026. The clerk must either certify or reject each nomination by 4 p.m. on Thursday, August 27, 2026.

The voters' list

The voters' list becomes a public document on September 1, 2026. As a candidate, you can request that the municipal clerk give you the part of the voters' list that relates to the office that you are running for. This request must be in writing.

To receive the voters' list from the municipal clerk, you must give the clerk a written acknowledgement confirming that you will:

- only use the list for electoral purposes, not for commercial purposes
- follow the restrictions set out in the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, for handling the voters' list
- only share the list with others (such as campaign workers) after obtaining a similar written acknowledgement from them

Restrictions on handling the voters' list

You are the only person who may share the voters' list. If you have given someone a copy, they are not allowed to share it further.

You must keep track of who you have shared the voters' list with. If you give someone a physical copy of the list, they must return that copy to you. If you share an electronic copy, they must destroy the copy and provide you with a written acknowledgement that the copy has been destroyed.

You cannot keep copies of the voters' list after your campaign had ended. On or before the day your campaign ends, you must:

- destroy the copy of the voters' list that you received from the clerk
- have any print copies that you shared with others returned to you and destroy them
- ensure you have received written acknowledgements from anyone who received an electronic copy confirming that the electronic copy has been destroyed

Written acknowledgements

Before you share the voters' list with someone, you must obtain a written acknowledgement from that person. That written acknowledgement must confirm that:

- they will only use the list for electoral purposes, not for commercial purposes
- they will not share or give copies to anyone else
- if they receive a physical copy, they will return it to you
- if they receive an electronic copy, they will destroy the copy and give you written confirmation that the electronic copy has been destroyed

The written acknowledgement should include the dates by which physical copies must be returned and written confirmations of destroyed electronic copies must be provided.

You must keep all written acknowledgements you have received until November 15, 2030, when the next council or school board takes office. You must also keep any written confirmations that electronic copies of the list have been destroyed.

Campaigning

Signs

Your municipality may have rules about when you can put up campaign signs and how signs may be displayed on both private and public property.

All of your campaign signs and other advertising must identify that you are responsible for the sign. This is so that people seeing the sign or advertisement can tell that it is from your campaign, rather than from a third-party advertiser.

Please see [leftover campaign inventory](#) if you plan to reuse signs from the last election.

You are responsible for ensuring that your campaign signs are removed after voting day in accordance with municipal by-laws. Your municipality may require a sign deposit or have penalties for failing to remove your signs. Contact your local clerk for more information.

You are entitled to have your nomination fee refunded if you file your campaign financial statement by the filing deadline. The clerk cannot make removing your signs a condition for receiving your refund.

Getting information out

It is up to you to provide voters with information about you as a candidate and about your campaign. The municipal clerk is not responsible for providing your contact information to voters.

All candidates' debates

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, does not require candidate debates to be held, and the municipal clerk is not responsible for organizing meetings or debates. Debates can be organized by community groups, media outlets, candidates or any other interested persons.

Joint campaigns / running on a slate

There is nothing in the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, that would prevent like-minded candidates from campaigning on the same platform or identifying themselves as a group or slate. However, each candidate must keep their campaign finances separate and any joint expenses (for example, signs with two candidates' names on them) must be divided between the campaigns.

For information on campaign finance rules please see [campaign finance](#).

Third-party advertising

General information

There are rules for third-party advertising in Ontario's municipal council and school board elections.

A third-party advertisement is an ad that supports, promotes or opposes a candidate or a “yes” or “no” answer to a question on the ballot.

The meaning of “third-party” in this context means a person or entity who is not a candidate. Eligible individuals, corporations and trade unions can register to be third-party advertisers. Third-party advertising is separate from any candidate’s campaign and must be done independently from a candidate.

Third-party advertisers who want to spend money on advertisements during the election must register with the municipal clerk and must file a financial statement.

For more information about third-party advertising rules, including eligibility, spending limits and enforcement, see the [2026 third-party advertisers’ guide](#).

On voting day

Campaigning on voting day

The [Municipal Elections Act, 1996](#), does not prohibit campaigning on voting day. While there are restrictions on advertising for federal and provincial elections on voting day, these “blackouts” do not exist for municipal council and school board elections.

The Act prohibits the display of campaign material inside a voting place. The “voting place” could include the entire property of a building that has a voting place inside it, including the parking lot. You are not allowed to have campaign brochures, campaign buttons, signs or any other material inside the voting place.

Remaining in a voting place

As a candidate, you are allowed to stay in a voting place to observe, but you are not allowed to interfere with voters, attempt to influence how they vote, or ask a voter how they voted. Scrutineers may also stay in the voting place.

You and your scrutineers are entitled to be in the voting place 15 minutes before it opens and to inspect the ballot boxes, the ballots and any other papers or forms relating to the vote. However, you may not delay the opening of the voting place.

You and your scrutineers are entitled to place a seal on the ballot box so that ballots put in the box cannot be removed without breaking your seal.

Note: If you have been acclaimed, you are not allowed to be in the voting place or to appoint scrutineers.

Scrutineers

You may appoint a scrutineer for each ballot box in a voting place. You do not have to appoint that many scrutineers, or any scrutineers at all. If you have appointed one scrutineer for each ballot box, a scrutineer must leave while you are in the voting place.

Scrutineers may observe but they are not allowed to interfere with voters, attempt to influence how they vote, or ask a voter how they voted.

You must provide each of your scrutineers with an appointment in writing. Scrutineers may be required to show their appointment document to election officials at the voting place.

Scrutineers may be required to take an oath of secrecy.

There are no general restrictions on who you can appoint as a scrutineer (for example, a scrutineer can be any age and does not have to be a citizen). However, an acclaimed candidate cannot be appointed as a scrutineer for another candidate.

Counting votes

If your municipality is using voting machines or vote counting equipment, the clerk must have the processes and procedures for use of this equipment in place by June 1, 2026. If vote counting equipment is used, the clerk will be able to provide you with information on how the votes will be counted and how many scrutineers may be present.

The vote count begins immediately after the close of voting at 8 p.m. on October 26, 2026.

If the votes are counted manually, you and your scrutineers are entitled to view the ballots as they are counted, but you cannot touch the ballots. You and your scrutineers may object to a ballot or how it is counted (for example, if it is unclear who the vote is for or if the ballot has extra markings on it). The deputy returning officer is responsible for deciding whether to accept the objection and must keep a list of all the objections raised.

Results

After the votes have been counted, the deputy returning officer will prepare a statement showing the results and seal all the other election documents, including the ballots, inside the ballot box. You and your scrutineers are entitled to put your or their own seal on the ballot box at this time and are entitled to sign the statement showing the results.

The sealed ballot box and the statement of the results will then be delivered to the municipal clerk, who will compile the results and declare who has been elected.

Note: results announced on voting night are unofficial. It may take the clerk a few days or more to make the official declaration.

After voting day

Recounts

The [*Municipal Elections Act, 1996*](#), requires an automatic recount only if the votes are tied.

Your municipal council or school board may have a policy in place that sets out other specific circumstances under which the clerk must conduct an automatic recount. For example, a council may decide that if two candidates are within 10 votes of each other, an automatic recount will be held. The policy must be adopted on or before May 1, 2026.

A municipal council or school board may also order a recount within 30 days after the clerk has officially declared the results of the election. If you feel there should be a recount, you must either persuade council (or the school board) to order one or you may apply to the Superior Court of Justice to request that a judge order a recount. This application may be made by any eligible elector, and must be made within 30 days of the clerk declaring the results of the election.

Recounts must be conducted in the same way that the votes were originally counted, unless the recount is ordered by the court. For example, if the votes were counted by a vote tabulator, they may not be counted by hand during the recount.

If the recount is ordered by the court, the judge may order that the votes be counted in a different manner if the judge believes that the way the votes were counted the first time was an issue.

Tied votes

If two or more candidates get the same number of votes and they cannot all be elected, there is an automatic recount. The recount must be held within 15 days of the clerk declaring the results of the election. If you are one of the candidates in the tie, you are entitled to be present at the recount.

If the recount shows that there is still a tie, then the legislation states that the clerk will choose the winner by lot. This means putting the names of the tied candidates into a hat (or other suitable container) and drawing the name of the winner.

Wrapping up your campaign

After voting day, remove any election signs that have been put up and take down your campaign website, if you have one. If you would like to keep using your website, remove any references to the campaign. Websites that say “Vote for me” which are left up for years after the election can make it look like you are attempting to campaign for the next election early.

Your campaign must end on December 31, 2026, unless you have a deficit and inform the clerk in writing that you are going to extend your campaign. Once your campaign has ended, you should close your campaign bank account and prepare your campaign financial statement.

The deadline to file financial statements is the last Friday in March. Since March 26, 2027, falls on Good Friday, and March 29 is Easter Monday, financial statements **may be filed with the clerk until 2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30, 2027.**

Term of office

The council and school board term of office will run from November 15, 2026, to November 14, 2030.

Campaign finance

General information

Record keeping

You are responsible for keeping records of the financial activities related to your campaign. The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, does not require you to use any specific accounting system. You may want to consult with an auditor or an accountant early in your campaign to make sure that you are using a bookkeeping and accounting system that will suit your needs.

You should also look through the [campaign financial statement \(Form 4\)](#) that you will be required to file to make sure that you are keeping records of all the information that must be included on the statement.

You are required to keep all of your campaign financial records until November 15, 2030, when the next council or school board takes office.

You must keep the following campaign records:

- receipts issued for every contribution including when you accepted the contribution and the date you issued the receipt (remember to issue receipts to yourself for any contributions you make)
- the value of every contribution, whether it is in the form of money or goods or services, and the contributor's name and address
- all expenses, including the receipts obtained for each expense
- any claim for payment of an expense that the campaign disputes or refuses to pay
- the funds raised and expenses incurred from each separate fundraising event or activity
- the terms of any loan received from a bank or other recognized lending institution

Campaign period

You may accept contributions or incur campaign expenses during your campaign period only.

Your campaign period begins on the day the clerk receives your nomination.

In most cases, your campaign will end on December 31, 2026. Exceptions are if you:

- withdrew your nomination, your campaign ends on the date you informed the clerk in writing that you wanted to withdraw
- were not certified as a candidate and your name did not appear on the ballot, your campaign ends on nomination day (August 21, 2026)
- know you will not have any more financial activity, you can end your campaign at anytime after voting day and before December 31, 2026

If you have extended your campaign to pay down a deficit, the end date for the extended campaign period will be the earliest of:

- the day you notify the clerk in writing that you will be ending your campaign and not accepting any more contributions
- June 30, 2027

Bank account

You must open a bank account exclusively for your campaign if you accept any contributions of money (including contributions from yourself or your spouse) or incur any expenses. You do not have to open a campaign bank account if you do not spend any money and do not receive any contributions of money. If you receive contributions of goods or services, but no contributions of money, you do not have to open a campaign bank account.

You cannot use your personal bank account for campaign finances, even if you are planning a very small campaign.

All contributions — including contributions you make to yourself — must be deposited into the campaign bank account. All expenses must be paid from the campaign account.

The nomination fee is considered to be a personal expense, not a campaign expense. You do not need to have a campaign bank account in order to pay the nomination fee.

Contributions and campaign income

Contributions

Campaign contributions are any money, goods or services that are given to you for use in your campaign, including money and goods that you contribute to yourself.

If you are given a special discount on a good or service that you are purchasing for your campaign, the difference between what you were charged and what the market value would be is considered to be a contribution.

Corporations and other businesses are not permitted to make contributions to candidates. If you are being offered a discount, you should make sure that whoever is offering the discount is entitled to make a personal contribution to your campaign.

If a professional who would normally charge for a service gives you that service for free, the market value of the service is considered to be a contribution.

If you sell tickets to a fundraising event, the cost of the ticket is considered to be a contribution. If you sell goods at a fundraising event for more than their market value, the difference between what the person attending the fundraising event paid you and what they would have normally paid for the item is considered to be a contribution.

If you have inventory such as signs left over from a previous campaign and you use them again, the current market value of the signs (what it would cost you to buy those signs today) is considered to be a contribution that you make to your campaign.

If you or your spouse guarantees your campaign loan and the campaign is unable to repay the full amount, any unpaid balance is considered to be a contribution by the guarantor.

Things that are not contributions

If you have volunteers working for your campaign, the value of their volunteer labour is not considered to be a contribution.

A cash donation of \$25 or less received at a fundraising event is not considered to be a contribution, and you may accept such donations without keeping track of who gave them to you. You will have to report the total amount of money that you received from these donations on your financial statement.

The value of free political advertising, provided that such advertising is made available to all candidates and is in accordance with the *Broadcasting Act (Canada)* is not considered to be a contribution.

If you obtain a campaign loan from a bank or a recognized lending institution, the amount of the loan is not considered to be a contribution.

Who can make a contribution

You can accept contributions only from individuals who are residents of Ontario. Corporations and trade unions are not permitted to make contributions to candidates.

If your spouse is not a resident of Ontario, they can still make contributions to your campaign. They may not make contributions to any other candidate.

Groups such as clubs, associations or ratepayer's groups are not eligible to make contributions. The members of these groups may make individual contributions from their personal funds (as long as they are residents of Ontario).

Who cannot make a contribution

The following individuals and organizations are not permitted to make contributions to municipal council and school board campaigns:

- a corporation
- a trade union
- an individual who is not normally a resident in Ontario
- a federal political party, constituency association, or a registered candidate in a federal election
- a provincial political party, constituency association, or a registered candidate or leadership contestant
- a federal or provincial government, a municipality or a school board

When you can receive contributions

You can only accept contributions after the clerk has received your nomination, and you cannot accept contributions after your campaign period has finished. Any contributions received outside the campaign period must be returned to the contributor. If you cannot return the contribution to the contributor, you must turn it over to the clerk.

Contribution limits – contributions from yourself and your spouse

If you are running for municipal council, there is a limit on the total amount that you and your spouse may collectively contribute to your own campaign. The contribution limit is calculated based on the number of electors who are eligible to vote for the office that you are running for. The formula to calculate the limit is:

- for head of council: \$7,500 plus \$0.20 per eligible elector
- for council member: \$5,000 plus \$0.20 per eligible elector

There is a cap of \$25,000. If the formula results in a number greater than \$25,000, the limit will still be \$25,000.

The clerk will tell you what your self-funding limit is.

All of the contributions that you and your spouse make to your own campaign count towards this limit, including:

- contributions of money
- the value of goods or services that you or your spouse donate to the campaign
- the value of any inventory from the previous election that you use again in this campaign

This limit does not apply to school board trustee candidates.

Contribution limits – contributions from other people

There is a \$1,200 limit that applies to contributions from other individuals. If a person makes more than one contribution (for example, contributes money, contributes goods, and purchases a ticket to a fundraising event), the total value of all the contributions cannot exceed \$1,200.

If you are running for mayor in the City of Toronto, the limit is \$2,500.

The maximum total amount that a contributor can give to candidates in the same jurisdiction (for example, running for the same council or for the same school board) is \$5,000.

You are required to inform every contributor of the contribution limits. An easy way to ensure compliance is to include the contribution limits on the receipt that you provide for each contribution.

Only a contribution that is \$25 or less can be made in cash. All contributions above \$25 must be made by cheque, money order, or by a method that clearly shows where the funds came from (such as certain debit, credit or electronic transfer transactions).

Contribution receipts

You must issue a receipt for every contribution you receive. The receipt should show who made the contribution, the date, and the value. If the contribution was in goods or services, you must determine the value of the goods or services and issue a receipt for the full value.

If you receive a contribution from a joint account, the contribution can only come from one person. You must determine who is making the contribution and issue the receipt to that person.

You are required to list the names and addresses of every contributor who gives more than \$100 total to your campaign in your financial statement. You should keep a record of the names and addresses of every contributor, regardless of the value of their contribution, because the same contributor may make multiple contributions that end up totalling more than \$100.

Note: Contribution receipts are not tax receipts. Contributions to municipal council and school board campaigns cannot be credited against provincial or federal income taxes.

Returning ineligible contributions

You are required to return any contribution that was made or accepted in contravention of the [Municipal Elections Act, 1996](#), as soon as you learn that it was an ineligible contribution. If you cannot return the contribution, you must turn it over to the clerk.

Contributions should be returned or paid to the clerk if the contribution is:

- made outside your campaign period
- from an anonymous source (except for donations of \$25 or less at a fundraising event)
- from an ineligible source (someone who doesn't live in Ontario, a corporation, etc.)
- greater than the individual \$1,200 limit or the \$5,000 total limit per jurisdiction
- a cash contribution greater than \$25
- from funds that do not belong to the contributor who gave them to you

Unused contributions

If your campaign ends with a surplus, you can withdraw the value of contributions that you and your spouse made from the surplus. If you still have a surplus once you have withdrawn your contributions, the remaining surplus must be turned over to the clerk.

You are not permitted to refund eligible contributions made by anyone other than yourself or your spouse.

Contribution rebates

Your municipality may have a contribution rebate program. Contact your clerk for more information.

Contributions to municipal council and school board campaigns are not tax deductible.

Fundraising

Fundraising functions are events or activities held by you, or on your behalf, for the primary purpose of raising money for your campaign. If you hold an event to promote your campaign and you happen to receive some contributions or ask people to consider contributing to your campaign, this would not qualify as a fundraising event.

Similarly, if you have a sentence in your campaign brochure asking people to make a contribution or giving them information about how to contribute, this would not make the production of the brochure a fundraising expense since its primary purpose is to promote your campaign, not to raise money. Fundraisers can only be held during your campaign period. You must record the gross income (including ticket revenue and other revenue) and the expenses related to each event and activity on your campaign financial statement.

If you sell tickets to an event, the ticket price is considered to be a contribution to your campaign and you must issue a receipt to each person who purchases tickets. If the ticket price is higher than \$25, tickets cannot be paid for in cash.

Campaign income

If you raise funds by selling goods or services for more than fair market value, the difference between the fair market value and the amount paid is considered to be a contribution. If the good or service is sold for \$25 or less, the amount paid is considered to be campaign income that is not a contribution.

Campaign expenses

Expenses

Campaign expenses are the costs that you incur (or that a person such as your campaign manager incurs under your direction) during your campaign.

Reminder: the nomination fee is a personal expense rather than a campaign expense. It should not be reported on your campaign financial statement.

Expenses must be paid from your campaign bank account. If you use a credit card to pay for purchases, you should make sure that you keep clear records showing that the expense on the credit card was reimbursed from the campaign account.

Any taxes such as HST paid on purchases should be included in the amount of the expense.

You can incur expenses only during your campaign period, except for expenses related to the preparation of an auditor's report. If you are required to include an auditor's report with your financial statement, you may incur these expenses after the campaign period has ended. These expenses must also be reported on your financial statement.

Goods and services

Goods or services that are contributed to your campaign are also expenses. They should be treated as if the contributor gave you money and you went out and purchased the goods and services. You must record both the contribution and the expense.

Spending limits

Candidates are subject to two spending limits — a general limit, and a separate limit for expenses relating to parties and expressions of appreciation after voting day.

General spending limit

The general spending limit for your campaign is calculated based on the number of electors who are eligible to vote for the office that you are running for. The formula to calculate the limit is:

- for head of council: \$7,500 plus \$0.85 per eligible elector
- for council member or trustee: \$5,000 plus \$0.85 per eligible elector

When you file your nomination, the clerk will give you an estimate of your general spending limit. This estimate will be based on the number of electors in the previous election.

On or before September 30, 2026, the clerk must give you a final general spending limit which is based on the number of electors on the voters' list for the current election.

If the spending limit estimate that you received when you filed your nomination is higher than the final spending limit you receive in September, the estimate becomes your official spending limit.

While most of your expenses will be subject to the general spending limit, the following expenses are not:

- expenses related to holding a fundraising event or activity

- expenses relating to a recount
- expenses relating to a court action for a controverted election
- expenses relating to a compliance audit
- expenses incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the candidate's disability and would not have been incurred if not for the election
- audit and accounting fees

Note: Any materials, events or activities must have fundraising as the primary purpose in order to be exempt from the spending limit. An incidental mention of contributions is not enough to qualify as fundraising.

When the general spending limit applies

Your spending limit covers expenses that you incur between the beginning of your campaign and voting day. Expenses that you incur between the day after voting day and the end of your campaign are not subject to the spending limit.

Note: If you incur an expense before voting day, but don't get around to paying for it until after voting day, it would still be subject to the spending limit.

Spending limit for parties and expressions of appreciation

The spending limit for expenses related to holding parties and other expressions of appreciation after the close of voting is calculated as 10% of the amount of your general spending limit.

Expenses related to parties and expressions of appreciation are subject to the specific spending limit regardless of whether they are incurred before or after voting day.

Leftover campaign inventory

If you ran in the last municipal council or school board election and you want to reuse leftover goods such as signs or office supplies, you must establish the current market value of the goods – what it would cost you to purchase them today. You must record the current market value as an expense.

If you have inventory left at the end of your campaign it becomes your personal property. If you want to store materials such as signs for use in another election, any costs related to storage are personal costs, not campaign expenses.

Note to accountants: The value of all goods must be recorded as an expense regardless of whether the campaign ends with used or unused goods in inventory. Do not deduct the

value of unused goods from the campaign expenses, as this will result in the campaign having a surplus on paper that the candidate does not actually have.

Surplus and deficit

If your campaign has a surplus after you have refunded contributions made by yourself or your spouse, you must pay the surplus over to the clerk when you file your financial statement. The surplus will be held in trust, and you can use it if you incur expenses related to a compliance audit. If the surplus is not needed for these expenses, it becomes the property of the municipality or the school board.

If your campaign expenses are greater than your campaign income, your campaign will be in deficit.

Note: Ending your campaign with a deficit may result in questions being raised about how expenses were paid for, and whether you contributed more than your self-funding limit by paying outstanding expenses with personal funds.

Campaign advertisements

When campaign advertising appears in broadcast, print, electronic or other media, the broadcaster or publisher of the advertising must keep certain records:

- a written copy of the candidate's name, as well as the name, business address and telephone number of the individual who deals with the broadcaster or publisher under the direction of the candidate (this could be the candidate themselves)
- a copy of the advertisement (or the means of reproducing the advertisement for inspection)
- a statement of the charge made for its appearance

These records will be kept for four years after the date the advertisement appears.

Broadcasters and publishers must allow the public to inspect the records during this time.

If your campaign includes advertising that is broadcast or published, you must record the name of the broadcaster or publisher as well as their contact information in Schedule 3 of the campaign financial statement (Form 4).

Campaign financial statement

It is your responsibility as a candidate to file a **complete and accurate financial statement on time**.

The filing deadline is 2 p.m. on the last Friday in March following the election. Since March 26, 2027, falls on Good Friday and March 29, 2027, is Easter Monday, financial statements may be filed with the clerk until **2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30, 2027**.

If you have a bookkeeper or accountant complete the financial statement for you, you are still responsible for ensuring that it is complete and accurate and filed on time.

Financial statements are not required to have original signatures. You should contact your clerk for information about whether you can file your financial statement electronically if you are not able to file your statement in person.

If you filed a nomination form, you must file a financial statement. This includes candidates who withdrew their nomination, candidates who were not certified and did not appear on the ballot, and candidates who were acclaimed.

If you did not receive any contributions (including contributions from yourself) or incur any expenses, you are only required to fill out the first page of the financial statement and sign it.

If you received contributions or incurred any expenses you must complete the relevant parts of the financial statement.

If your campaign contributions (including contributions from yourself) or campaign expenses are greater than \$10,000, you must have your financial statement audited and include the auditor's report when you submit your financial statement to the clerk.

Filing early

You can file your campaign financial statement after you have ended your campaign. If you file your statement early and then discover an error, you can submit a corrected statement at any time before the filing deadline on March 30, 2027. Your original statement is deemed to be withdrawn when you file the corrected statement. You cannot withdraw a financial statement without submitting a corrected one.

Applying for an extension

If you think that you will be unable to file your financial statement by the deadline, you may apply **before March 30, 2027**, to the Superior Court of Justice for an extension. If the court grants the extension, you will receive the refund of your nomination fee if you file by the deadline given to you by the court.

Grace period for filing

If you have not filed your financial statement by the deadline, you may file your financial statement within 30 days after the deadline if you pay the municipality a \$500 late filing fee. This grace period ends at 2 p.m. on Thursday, April 29, 2027. You will not receive a refund of your nomination fee if you file during the 30-day grace period.

If you have not filed your financial statement by the end of the 30-day grace period and you did not apply to the court for an extension prior to the deadline, automatic penalties apply:

- you will forfeit your elected office (if you won the election)
- you will be ineligible to run for office or be appointed to fill a vacancy until after the 2030 election

If you did not file your financial statement by the end of the grace period, you may still file it for the purposes of having your finances on the record. The clerk will accept the financial statement and make it available to the public. The penalties will still apply.

Separate statement for each office

If you filed a nomination and then changed your mind and filed a nomination for a different office, you may be required to file a separate financial statement for each campaign.

Extended campaigns

Your campaign period ends on December 31, 2026. However, if your campaign has a deficit, you can extend your campaign in order to do some additional fundraising. If you want to extend your campaign, you must notify the clerk on or before December 31, 2026, using the [Notice of Extension of Campaign Period form \(Form 6\)](#).

Your campaign may be extended until June 30, 2027.

If you extend your campaign, you must file two financial statements:

- a financial statement reflecting your campaign until December 31, 2026, (due March 30, 2027)
- a supplementary financial statement that includes the information from your initial statement and adds financial information from your extended campaign

The supplementary financial statement must be filed with the clerk by 2 p.m. on Friday, September 24, 2027.

Auditor's report

You must have an auditor review your financial statement and provide a report if any of the following are true:

- your campaign expenses exceed \$10,000
- the contributions you received (including contributions from yourself) exceed a total of \$10,000
- both your expenses and your contributions exceed \$10,000 each

The auditor's report must be prepared by an auditor licensed under the [Public Accounting Act, 2004](#). Before you hire someone to prepare the report, ensure that they are properly qualified.

You can incur expenses relating to the auditor's report after December 31, 2026. These expenses do not count toward your spending limit. Include these expenses on the financial statement that you are filing.

Compliance and enforcement

Enforcement of the [Municipal Elections Act, 1996](#), is done through the courts. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing does not have a role in investigating elections or in determining penalties.

Automatic penalties

There are three contraventions of the [Municipal Elections Act, 1996](#), where penalties apply automatically:

1. if you fail to file a financial statement by the end of the 30-day grace period or fail to apply to the court before March 30, 2027, for an extension by the filing deadline
2. if your financial statement shows that you exceeded your spending limit
3. if you fail to turn over your surplus to the clerk when you file your financial statement

The penalty is that you forfeit your office (if you won the election) and you become ineligible to run or be appointed to fill a vacancy until after the 2030 election.

Compliance audits

Each municipality and school board must establish a compliance audit committee.

If an eligible elector believes that you have contravened the election finance rules, they may apply for a compliance audit of your campaign finances. The application must be in writing and must set out the reasons why they believe you contravened the rules.

An application for a compliance audit must be submitted to the municipal clerk who conducted the election within 90 days of the deadline to file the campaign financial statement.

The compliance audit committee will consider the application and decide whether to grant or reject the application. You may appeal the committee's decision to the Superior Court of Justice within 15 days after the decision is made.

If the committee grants the application, it will appoint an auditor to conduct a compliance audit of your campaign finances. The auditor is entitled to have access to all of the financial records related to your campaign. The auditor will produce a report, which you are entitled to receive.

The compliance audit committee will meet to consider the auditor's report. If the report concludes that there is an apparent contravention of the [Municipal Elections Act, 1996](#), the committee will decide whether to commence legal action.

The compliance audit committee does not have any authority to set penalties. Only the court can decide if you contravened the Act and, if so, which penalties should apply.

A person who does not want or who is not able to apply for a compliance audit may decide to commence legal action on their own. A prosecution related to the 2026 election must be commenced by November 15, 2030.

Penalties

If you are convicted of an offence, you may be subject to the following penalties:

- a fine of up to \$25,000
- ineligibility to vote or run in the next general election
- up to six months in prison
- forfeiture of your elected office, if the judge finds that you committed the offence knowingly

If you are convicted of exceeding the spending limit, you may also be fined the amount by which you exceeded the limit.

Completing the financial statement

General information

All candidates must file a financial statement. This includes candidates who withdrew their nomination, candidates who were not certified and did not appear on the ballot, and candidates who were acclaimed.

Candidates must use [Form 4](#).

All candidates must complete Box A: Name of Candidate and Office and Box B: Declaration.

- **If you did not receive any contributions** (including contributions from yourself) or incur any expenses, check the box indicating this, and complete the Declaration in Box B. No further information is required.
- **If you did receive contributions** (including contributions from yourself) or incur expenses, you must fill in the information in Box C, Box D, Schedule 1 and Schedule 2, as appropriate. You may find it easier to fill out the form if you start with the more detailed sections such as the tables in Schedule 1 before filling in Box C (Statement of Campaign Income and Expenses).

If you received contributions or incurred expenses in excess of \$10,000, you must include an auditor's report with your financial statement.

Your completed financial statement must be submitted to the clerk by **2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30, 2027**.

Supplementary financial statements must be submitted to the clerk by **2 p.m. on September 24, 2027**.

Tips for completing Form 4

Learn more about how to correctly fill out the campaign financial statement.

Box A: Name of candidate and office

Record your general spending limit and your spending limit for parties and other expressions of appreciation.

Note: automatic penalties will apply if the form reports that either of the spending limits have been exceeded.

If you are running for a council position, record your self-funding limit.

Box B: Declaration

By signing the form, you are declaring that the information recorded in the financial statement is true and accurate. If your financial statement was prepared by someone else, you as the candidate are still responsible for its accuracy.

Box C: Statement of campaign income and expenses

Loan

If you obtained a loan for your campaign, you must record the name of the bank or recognized lending institution and the amount borrowed.

You are permitted to get a loan only from a bank or other recognized lending institution in Ontario, and it must be paid directly into your campaign bank account. You may not receive a loan from family members or from any corporate accounts that you may have access to.

The loan is not considered to be campaign income, and paying it back is not a campaign expense. However, if you or your spouse guarantee the loan and the campaign does not repay all of it, the remaining balance is considered to be a contribution (since the guarantor is basically providing the campaign the means to repay the loan). This amount counts towards your self-funding limit.

Any interest that the campaign pays on the loan is a campaign expense.

Income

Your campaign income includes all contributions received from yourself, your spouse and other eligible contributors. This includes the value of contributions of goods and services. Income also includes any refunds of deposits, interest earned by your campaign bank account, and revenue from fundraising events or activities that is not deemed a contribution (for example, if you sold refreshments at market value).

Example

You have 100 t-shirts printed to sell at a fundraiser. The cost to the campaign is \$10 per shirt, and you sell them for \$25 each.

The \$25 is not a contribution. You do not have to collect names and contact information, or issue a contribution receipt to anyone who buys a shirt.

The \$1,000 that you spent on the shirts must be recorded as a campaign expense.

The \$2,500 that you raised by selling the shirts must be recorded as revenue from fundraising events not deemed a contribution.

If you sell goods (such as food and drink) at market value, the revenue is not considered to be a contribution and must be recorded as revenue from fundraising events not deemed a contribution.

Sign deposit

If your municipality requires a deposit for election signs, this should be recorded as a campaign expense and paid for using campaign funds. If your deposit is refunded, record the amount under Income.

Expenses

Your campaign expenses include the value of any goods or services that have been contributed to your campaign (it is as if the contributor gave money to the campaign, which the campaign then spent on acquiring the goods or services).

The general spending limit applies only to expenses incurred until the end of voting day. Expenses incurred after voting day are not subject to the spending limit.

Note: An expense subject to the general spending limit that was incurred prior to voting day but not paid for until after voting day is still subject to the limit.

Some types of expenses are not subject to the general spending limit even if they are incurred prior to voting day.

Expenses related to parties and expressions of appreciation after voting day are subject to that spending limit regardless of when they are incurred.

Box D: Calculation of surplus or deficit

Campaign deficit

At the top of Box D, you must subtract the total amount of your campaign expenses from the total amount of your campaign income. If your expenses are greater than your income, your campaign is in deficit.

If you have extended your campaign in order to fundraise, you must still file a financial statement reflecting your campaign finances to December 31, 2026.

Campaign surplus

At the top of Box D, you must subtract the total amount of your campaign expenses from the total amount of your campaign income. If your income is greater than your expenses, your campaign has a surplus.

You are entitled to reimburse contributions made by yourself or your spouse out of the surplus. For example, if the surplus was \$500 and you contributed \$400 to your campaign, you may deduct that \$400, leaving your campaign with a surplus of \$100. If the surplus was \$500 and you contributed \$600, you may deduct \$500 of your contribution, leaving your campaign with \$0. You may not deduct more than the value of the surplus.

If, after deducting contributions made by yourself or your spouse, the campaign still has a surplus, these funds must be turned over to the clerk.

Schedule 1: Contributions

Schedule 1 includes a summary of contributions from your campaign.

The following tables are included in Schedule 1 and need to be filled in, if applicable:

- Table 1: Contributions in goods or services from candidate or spouse
- Table 2: Inventory of campaign goods and materials from previous municipal campaign used in this campaign
- Table 3: Monetary contributions from individuals other than candidate or spouse where contributions exceed \$100 per contributor
- Table 4: Contributions in goods or services from individuals other than candidate or spouse where contributions exceed \$100 per contributor

Contributions from yourself and/or your spouse

If you are running for municipal council, you and your spouse are subject to limits on how much you can contribute to your campaign. This limit applies to contributions of money, goods and services, as well as the value of any inventory from a previous campaign that you have used in your current campaign.

Record these amounts on the lines provided in Schedule 1. Do not include them in the tables of contributions (Table 1 or Table 2). The other reason to identify the contributions from you and your spouse is because those contributions can be reimbursed by you and your spouse if the campaign ends with a surplus.

Note: you must report the full amount of the contributions made by you and your spouse, including any amounts that have been reimbursed from a surplus.

Contributions totalling \$100 or less

If the total amount contributed (including the value of goods and services) from a single contributor is \$100 or less, you do not need to provide details on the form. Simply indicate the total value of all such contributions on the line provided at the top of Schedule 1.

If an anonymous contribution is \$100 or less, include it in the total value of contributions not exceeding \$100 per contributor. Any anonymous contribution that is greater than \$25 must be turned over to the clerk.

Goods and services from candidate or spouse

If you or your spouse contribute goods and services to your campaign, this must be recorded as a contribution. Record any contributions in Table 1 of Schedule 1.

Inventory from previous campaign

Any inventory from a previous campaign that you are using again is a contribution in goods that you make to your campaign and counts towards your self-funding limit. You must calculate the current market value (for example, if you have 100 signs left over from 2022 and use them again, you must calculate how much it would cost to purchase those same signs in 2026) and record it in Table 2. This inventory must also be recorded as a campaign expense.

Contributions totalling more than \$100

If a contributor makes 1 or more contributions totalling more than \$100 (including the value of goods and services and the cost of tickets to fundraising events), you must record all of these contributions in the tables provided in Schedule 1 (Tables 3 and 4).

If an anonymous contribution is more than \$100, include it in the total value of contributions exceeding \$100 per contributor, and include it in Table 3 (listing “anonymous” as the name of the contributor). Any anonymous contribution that is greater than \$25 must be turned over to the clerk.

Note: it is the total amount contributed that matters — if an individual buys a ticket to a fundraising event for \$50, and then later in the campaign contributes \$75, each of these contributions must be recorded in Table 3 because the total exceeds \$100.

Goods and services from individuals other than candidate or spouse

Eligible contributors may donate goods and services to the campaign. These must be recorded as a contribution and as an expense (as if the contributor donated money, which the campaign then spent on the goods and services).

Corporations and trade unions are not permitted to make contributions to candidates. This includes contributions of goods and services.

Example:

Your friend spends \$150 on coffee and baked goods which they donate for a campaign event. You should record a contribution of \$150 in goods or services from your friend and record an expense of \$150.

If you are given a special discount on a good or service that you are purchasing for your campaign, you should record the expense as if you were not given the discount (since the value of the discount is considered to be a contribution of the good or service to your campaign).

Example:

Your order for campaign signs would normally cost \$500, but the vendor lets you have them for \$300 because he wants to help your campaign. You should record an expense of \$500 for the signs and record a contribution of \$200 in goods or services from the vendor.

Note: As businesses are not permitted to make contributions, the contribution would have to be a personal contribution from the vendor.

Contributions in goods or services from individuals other than the candidate or spouse must be recorded in Table 4 of Schedule 1.

Schedule 2: Fundraising events and activities

The cost of holding fundraising events or activities is not subject to the spending limit. However, in order to be considered a fundraising cost, the primary purpose for the expense must be related to fundraising rather than promoting the candidate. Incidental fundraising that happens to occur during a promotional event is not sufficient to make it a fundraising event. Similarly, a line at the bottom of a campaign brochure asking people to donate does not make the production of the brochure a fundraising expense.

If you have included costs of fundraising events/activities as an expense in Box C, you must provide details of these events and activities in Schedule 2.

Contributions received at a fundraising event may include:

- the price of the ticket
- if goods or services are offered for sale, any amount of money paid that exceeds their market value (for example, if a \$100 item is sold for \$175, the purchaser has made a \$75 contribution to the campaign)
- personal cheques collected from contributors at the event

If contributors have donated goods or services for the fundraising event, these must be recorded as contributions and as expenses.

These contributions must be recorded in Schedule 1, and where the total from a contributor exceeds \$100, be detailed in the appropriate tables. Refer to the section above [Schedule 1: Contributions](#) for more information.

The fundraising event may also generate revenue that is not considered to be a contribution:

- donations of \$25 or less
- if goods or services are offered for sale, the market value of those goods and services sold (for example, if a \$100 item is sold for \$175, \$100 is revenue)
- the amount paid for goods or services offered for sale for \$25 or less

Anonymous contributions

You may keep anonymous contributions that do not exceed \$25 each that are received at a fundraiser (such as those collected by passing the hat or having a tip jar). Report the total amount of money received from these donations in Schedule 2 for that fundraiser.

All other anonymous contributions must be turned over to the clerk.

You will then subtract the contribution as paid or payable to the clerk to arrive at the Total for Part II Contributions in Schedule 2.

Schedule 3: Broadcasters and publishers

If your campaign had any advertising that was broadcast or published, you must record the name of each broadcaster and publisher, along with their contact information.

Auditor's report

If your campaign expenses or the contributions you received total more than \$10,000, you must have an auditor review your financial statement and provide a report.

The auditor's report must be prepared by an auditor licensed under the [Public Accounting Act, 2004](#). Before you hire someone to prepare the report, you should ensure that they are properly qualified.

Forms referred to in this guide

You can get copies of forms from your municipal clerk, or you can download them from the [Government of Ontario's Central Form Repository](#).

[Nomination Paper \(Form 1\)](#)

[Endorsement of Nomination \(Form 2\)](#)

[Financial Statement – Auditor’s Report – Candidate \(Form 4\)](#)

[Financial Statement – Subsequent Expenses \(Form 5\)](#)

[Notice of Extension of Campaign Period \(Form 6\)](#)



Lead Where You Live

A guide to running for
municipal council

Contents

3	Introduction
3	Municipal Councils
4	Service on Council
5	The Structure of Municipal Government
5	Managing Your Campaign
	2026 Municipal Election: Key Dates
	Welcome to the Spotlight
	Campaign Finance
	Campaign Rules
	Election Day and Alternative Voting
11	After the Election
	Resources
	Candidate support organizations



The Association of Municipalities of Ontario aims to make municipal governments stronger and more effective through advocacy, training and events, and business services. Through AMO, Ontario's 444 municipalities work together to achieve shared goals and meet common challenges

Introduction



From clean drinking water, affordable housing and childcare, to good roads and safe streets, Ontario's 444 municipal governments provide the services that people rely on most, every day. Collectively, they own more infrastructure than the provincial and federal governments combined, and each year they manage budgets totalling more than \$65 billion.

Municipal government is important. Well-run governments are led by strong councils, and municipal councils are more effective when good, qualified candidates step forward to serve on them.

Elected municipal leaders play a vital role in making sure that communities are healthy and successful, socially and economically. Councils shape priorities, ensure accountability to the public, and represent the people who elect them. They provide a democratic forum for diverse perspectives and experiences to be heard, so that better decisions are made and good governance is maintained. Having people with a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences on council helps the municipality better meet the needs of all residents and businesses.

If you are thinking of running for election in 2026, this guide will introduce you to some of the key steps in that process. It will also give you a sense of what life is like as an elected member of a municipal council.

Municipal Councils



Councils represent the best interests of the public and the municipal government. They develop policies and programs. They determine what services are provided. And they ensure that the municipality is well run by qualified municipal staff.

That last point is key. Elected officials provide strategic direction and oversight. The day-to-day work of municipal governments is provided by municipal employees. That means you do not have to be a municipal expert before you run for office. Councils are supported by a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or City Manager, clerk, and other senior municipal staff who work with elected representatives to ensure that responsibilities are met.

Diversity is important to municipal government. Councils benefit when people with different life experiences and skills come together to make a positive impact on their community. AMO created the *We All Win* campaign in 2021 to encourage more candidates from diverse communities to participate in Ontario municipal elections. Since then, AMO has expanded its work through the Healthy Democracy Project to support democracy on a number of fronts. The project [homepage](#) provides more information, links to helpful organizations and resources.

Once elected, councillors are expected to learn and adhere to municipal policies and procedures, as well as provincial legislations such as the *Municipal Act*. Municipal staff often assist with that education, and organizations like the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) offer training programs for elected representatives.

Service on Council

You will be expected to dedicate four years to the position, with the understanding that it involves more than attending meetings and reviewing agenda packages.

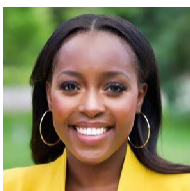
The role of an elected municipal official includes:

- Being a community ambassador, advocating for the needs of your community and your municipal government.
- Developing a working relationship with your fellow councillors and municipal staff that's built on mutual trust and respect.
- Serving on committees related to areas such as planning, policing, or economic development.
- Helping to set the municipal budget, priorities and policies.
- Listening and learning from your residents, so you may best represent their interests.
- Attending conferences, educational sessions and community events.
- Reviewing documents and participating in meaningful discussions.

Service on council can change other aspects of your life, positively and negatively. Most councillors look back on it as an honour and a rewarding experience. However, it can present challenges.

- It may change your relationships with your friends, family and colleagues. You or your council make may decisions they do not like.
- You will attend several meetings a month and be expected to review a lot of information.
- People will want to engage with you in person, on the phone, by text and email, and through a wide range of social media platforms. It can feel overwhelming.
- The public can have high expectations and you may be asked to address matters that are well beyond your authority, influence or control.
- You may face harsh criticism or behaviour from people at meetings, in public, or on social media.
- There are significant legal liabilities. Failing to perform your duties can have consequences.
- You will be involved in matters that require you to keep certain kinds of information private and confidential.

You may want to find out how much councillors and mayors earn in your municipality as part of your decision-making process. But, also consider there are perks of the job that money can't buy, like opportunities for learning, skill-building, networking, and having the opportunity to participate in municipal decision-making on behalf of your community.



“You have to work with your council colleagues and not everything will go your way, or things you worked for may get overturned. It can be hard, but it is all part of the democratic process. The important thing is that it's an open and respectful debate.”

– MP Arielle Kayabaga, London West, Former City of London Councillor

Responsibility by Level of Government

It is important to know which level of government is responsible for which areas of service. Candidates and elected officials get a lot of questions and requests about topic areas that are not under municipal jurisdiction. It is helpful to share with residents who is responsible for what.

Who Does What?

RESPONSIBILITY BY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT

Federal

Services affecting the **whole country**:

- Citizenship
- Immigration
- International Relations
- Currency & Banking
- Income Tax & Sales Tax
- Census
- Defense
- International Trade
- Postal Service
- Transportation

Provincial

Services affecting the **province of Ontario**:

- Agriculture
- Employment
- Education
- Health Care
- Highways
- Planning & Development Framework
- Social Services
- Sales Tax
- Mental Health
- Income Tax

Municipal

Services affecting a local **municipality, region, or county**:

- Housing Support & Homelessness
- Emergency Services
- Libraries
- Parks, Trails & Playgrounds
- Planning & Development Decisions
- Roads, Bridges, Sidewalks
- Waste Management
- Drinking Water
- Sewers & Wastewater
- Snow Clearing
- Animal Services



The Structure of Municipal Government

The head of a local or municipal council is normally called a mayor or the reeve, and the members of council are normally called councillors or aldermen. The head of council serves as the voice of their council, reflecting consensus.

Council sets the strategic direction for the corporation. Municipal staff carry out those decisions and provide services to taxpayers. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or City Manager is the most senior staff member.

It's also a common misconception that a single councillor can bring change forth for taxpayers. It's council as a body that makes decisions and sets policy, not individual councillors.



Managing Your Campaign

Once you have made the decision to run for an elected position, there's work to be done. **May 1, 2026**, is the first day to file nomination papers.

Everyone running for council must meet the same criteria:

- A resident, a non-resident owner, or tenant of land in the municipality, or the spouse of a non-resident owner or tenant
- A Canadian citizen
- At least 18 years old
- Legally eligible to vote
- Not disqualified by any legislation from holding municipal office

Candidates must **not** be:

- An inmate of a penal or correctional institution under sentence of imprisonment
- Any person not eligible to vote in the municipality
- A staff member of the municipality, **UNLESS** he or she takes an unpaid leave of absence during the campaign period and resigns once elected to office
- A judge of any court
- A member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, a Senator, or a member of the House of Commons

If your municipality has more than 4,000 electors, your nomination must be endorsed by 25 eligible electors (voters) in the municipality, and you must pay a nomination fee of \$100 for councillors and \$200 for heads of council (mayor or reeve). You cannot begin campaigning until the municipal clerk accepts your paperwork as complete.



“The highlight of working in municipal government is the public interaction and meeting so many people throughout the city. I continue to learn and grow because of it.”

– Kristin Murray, City of Timmins Councillor

2026 Municipal Election: Key Dates

MAY 1, 2026

FIRST DAY TO FILE A NOMINATION

You will require:

- A signed nomination paper delivered to the clerk
- ID proving that you meet local eligibility criteria
- A form showing that 25 voters endorse your candidacy if your municipality has more than 4,000 electors
- The nomination filing fee of either \$100 or \$200



AUGUST 21, 2026

FINAL NOMINATION DAY

- All candidates must file paperwork by 2 p.m.
- This is the last day for candidates to withdraw their nomination by providing written correspondence to the clerk by no later than 2 p.m.



SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

VOTERS' LIST IS FINALIZED

- Candidates now have access to the [Voters' List](#). Members of the public can access the list, but only to confirm they are on it, and that their information is correct
- From now until election day, requests can be made to the clerk to amend the list to add or remove voters or amend voter information



AUGUST 2026

ELECTIONS ONTARIO TO DELIVER THE VOTERS' LIST

- [Elections Ontario](#) provides the municipality with the Voters' List
- The clerk reviews this list to add and remove names and/or adjust voter information

AUGUST 24, 2026

CANDIDATES ARE CERTIFIED

- All candidates will be certified by the clerk by 4 p.m.
- Acclamations are announced

OCTOBER 26, 2026

VOTING DAY

- While some municipalities may have already held advance polls since September 26, 2026, this is the official election day
- Voting places are open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. unless otherwise established by the clerk



“The most important thing for candidates is to understand the job. Many people get drawn into local politics over a single issue. The role is bigger than that. It is really about what you want growth to look like and thinking strategically about the future, not about micromanaging services.”

– Former AMO President,
Mayor Lynn Dollin, Town of Innisfil

Welcome to the Spotlight

Municipal candidates attract attention. In fact, it is hard to get elected without it. You may have to give speeches, participate in debates, or give media interviews.

Increasingly, there is pressure to engage with audiences using social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook or Instagram. Campaign styles vary, but here are some approaches that many seasoned election winners follow.

Social media:

- Simple ideas and information tend to build confidence and trust more than complicated ideas. Find ways to explain complicated things simply, fairly and accurately in your posts.
- Memorable messages are often simple, colourful and credible. To gain traction on social media, you will want to use compelling photos or videos to tell your story.
- You do not need to create a lot of social media content or be an expert on every topic. Often, the most practical approach is to lead people to useful, credible information that others have created.
- Focus on being helpful. Remember that the person you are at odds with today could be someone you work with tomorrow. This is important when tackling challenges or looking for the right words on social media. How do you want to be remembered?
- Create a social media plan for yourself. Why are you on it? What platforms will you use? What issues will you focus on? How much of your personal life will you share? Who will manage the account?
- Always think about your online audience before you choose your words. Think about how you can connect with your audience quickly, give them something useful, and make what you're explaining interesting.
- Remember it's rare to win a debate on social media and keep in mind your audience is potential voters. Rather than responding emotionally, listen to what the person is saying, focus on valid concerns, and respond in a way that inspires confidence and trust in the larger audience that is watching.

Media relations:

- No matter how urgent the request is, carve out some time to gather your thoughts, plan your response and focus your message.
- If you expect media at an event, try to think ahead of time about what message you most want to get across.
- You will not have the answers to every question. No one does and you should be comfortable with that. Focus on what you do know, and the story that you want to tell.
- If you have a lot to explain, or the topic is complicated, make sure you can start with a simple sentence or two that captures what is happening, or what you want, and *why*.
- End the interview with a strong summary of your message. This will help shape the final story.

Campaign Finance

Campaign finance rules ensure a fair election for everyone. Under the Municipal Elections Act, a candidate should open a bank account for the campaign if they accept any contributions of money or incur any expenses.

The candidate and/or the person managing their campaign is responsible for keeping financial records, and there are rules to follow during an election campaign, as well as when the campaign is over. Candidates can't use a personal bank account to operate their campaign, even if they have very few expenses. It's important to keep good records.

These expectations are simple, and important. If you are subject to an Election Compliance Audit, failure to meet spending limits and campaign rules can cost you your seat on council.

Receipts and dates issued for campaign contributions, as well as the contributor's name and address. Any one candidate can receive a maximum campaign contribution up to \$1,200. If an individual is supporting more than one candidate, their contribution total can't be more than \$5,000. It's important you keep records for any contributions you receive – even cash contributions under \$100.

The terms and conditions of loans received at a bank or lending institution (the loan itself is not considered a campaign contribution).

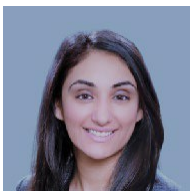
Receipts for your own campaign contributions / expenses.

The funds raised and expenses incurred at fundraising events.

The value of contributions, if you receive support in the form of goods instead of money, along with the contributor's name and address.

Also keep in mind:

- Businesses cannot contribute to a campaign. However, business owners can donate as individuals.
- There are limits on campaign expenses. The Clerk's Office can provide this information to candidates.
- Candidates must provide their campaign financial statements to the municipal clerk by the last Friday in March of year following the election (for October 2026, this would be March 2027). Failure to do so could result in penalties, or an inability to run in subsequent elections.

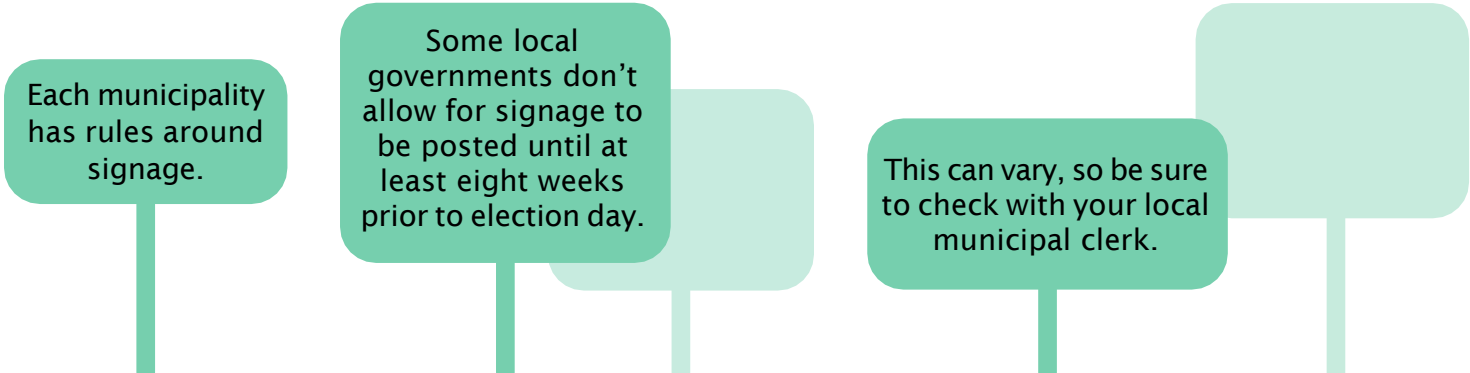


“Campaigning successfully is hard work. You have to put yourself out there and just outwork everyone else. You have to start early and just keep knocking on doors, so people get to know you.”

– Jasvinder Sandhu, Healthy Democracy Project Chair,
Former Town of Oakville Councillor

Campaign Rules

The campaign period begins as soon as nomination forms have been filed by the municipal clerk.



Each municipality has rules around signage.

Some local governments don't allow for signage to be posted until at least eight weeks prior to election day.

This can vary, so be sure to check with your local municipal clerk.

There are some campaign rules that all candidates must follow:

- Candidates cannot use a municipal property to support events, activities or meetings related to their campaign. This includes municipally owned phones, computers, supplies or staff time.
- Municipal staff should not participate in partisan political activities for candidates while on municipal time or while being paid for by the municipality.
- In most municipalities, campaign signs are required to be on private property and usually are not allowed on municipal or provincial property, including provincial highways. Municipal staff have the right to remove signs that break this rule. It's best to check with your respective municipality to confirm where signs can go.
- Candidates have the right to access apartment buildings, condominiums, non-profit housing units and gated communities, between the hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and tenants are allowed to place campaign signs in windows.
- Candidates and advertisers must identify themselves on all signs.

Sometimes campaign expenses exceed contributions and candidates are left with a deficit. It is possible to extend a campaign past election day to try and raise money to offset expenses by submitting appropriate paperwork to the municipal clerk.

Election Day and Alternative Voting

Election day is **October 26, 2026**. Voting will be available on this day. Locations and times vary between municipalities.

Your municipality may use traditional paper ballots, vote by phone, internet, mail, or a combination of voting methods. Check with your municipality.

Election staff are sworn to confidentiality and professionalism and are not allowed to tamper with anyone's vote, as outlined in the [Municipal Elections Act](#). The Act says The election should be accessible to voters, and that secrecy and confidentiality of the individual is paramount.

Candidates have a right to be at the voting station on election day, provided they are not campaigning in any way. They are not allowed to pressure, influence or intimidate voters or staff working at the election poll. They can only observe. Alternatively, candidates may have what is called a "scrutineer" present on election day. This person must come to the polls with written authority, signed by the candidate, to observe the polls in place of a candidate.

On election day, the candidate or the scrutineer can:

- View the Voters' List to see who has voted, as long as this doesn't interfere with the act of voting.
- Ask for clarification on why a voter is getting assistance.
- Examine ballots when they are being counted and object to any that are marked incorrectly or unclear.

Vote counts begin immediately after the polls close. This may be done manually, if the municipality is using paper ballots, or electronically. The clerk will have already established the count method at least 60 days prior to election or advance voting day.

During this time, candidates and appointed scrutineers may be present and can watch the ballot count. If a candidate or scrutineer objects to a ballot, the deputy returning officer will note the objection and make the final decision about counting the ballot.

Once a ballot box has been counted, it will be sealed by the deputy returning officer and delivered, along with the statement of results, to the clerk.

Alternative Voting – Why?

- Allows eligible electors to vote from anywhere around the world
- Allows for advance voting ahead of election day
- Can be more cost effective for municipalities
- Allows staff to take equipment to places like long-term care homes
- Is more accessible for everyone with options other than paper and pencil

After the Election



Win or lose, candidates have some responsibilities to perform after the election.

Financial statements have to be filed with the clerk. If needed, you can ask for a campaign extension to address the financial deficit.

Candidates must remove all campaign signs, or the municipality may remove them and bill you for the expense.

Resources

Although this document doesn't get into the ins and outs of council and council meetings, there are a few things you may want to get familiar with during your campaign, so you are prepared should you be elected. After the election, AMO will be providing a range of training and resources to help incoming councillors navigate the ins and outs of council meetings, legislation, staff-council relationships, conflict of interest and so much more.

AMO's New Councillor Education

In partnership with the Institute on Governance (IOG), AMO is developing its new, bold and forward-focused education series for new councillors. Available following this year's municipal elections, our workshops will address the municipal leadership demands of today. Recognizing the breadth of knowledge required for decision making and planning, the AMO/IOG new council education will challenge our members to think strategically, communicate powerfully and act with knowledge, insight and understanding. Participants will leave our workshops with sharper insight, stronger influence and practical strategies that can be applied to their leadership and to serve their organizations and communities. From legislation to leadership skills in municipal government-these workshops will cover it all.

The *Municipal Act*

All municipalities follow the [*Municipal Act*](#), which identifies the powers and jurisdiction of municipal governments. It defines how municipal governments function in terms of open and closed meetings, procedure, policy, accountability and transparency. It helps municipalities establish a Code of Conduct for elected officials, and very clearly identifies what authority municipalities have.

The *Municipal Act* is a long document. Councillors are not expected to memorize or understand every section. Knowing the *Municipal Act* well is mainly the role of the clerk, CAO or city manager.

You may want to take note of Section 239(2), which relates to closed meetings. Municipalities are the most open and the transparent order of government. Information can only be kept private under limited and specific circumstances. Just as there are rules to demand that government is open and transparent, there are legal responsibilities to keep some kinds of information private and confidential. It is important that everyone understands these rules.

Here are some links:

- [Conflict of Interest Act](#)
- [Council Transparency and the Role of the Integrity Commissioner](#)
- [Municipal Elections Act](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act](#)
- [Planning Act](#)
- [AMO's Municipal 101 resource](#)

Candidate support organizations

There are local and national candidate support organizations that can help candidates navigate the election process and experience. These organizations support candidates in different ways based on geographies and demographics. Candidates don't have to run without support.

If you would like to see the various types of resources provided by these groups, please take a look at the candidate supports catalogue in AMO's [Local Democracy Solutions Bank](#).

Organization	Link
electHER NOW	electhernow.ca
Equal Voice	equalvoice.ca
Guelph Campaign School	municipalcampaignschool.ca/Guelph
Leadership féminin Prescott-Russell	leadershipfemininpr.ca
Nominee	gonominee.com
Operation Black Vote Canada	obvc.ca
Oxford Campaign School	municipalcampaignschool.ca/oxford
PoliticsNOW	polinow.org
ProudPolitics	proudpolitics.org
The Canadian-Muslim Vote	canadianmuslimvote.ca
The Jean Collective	thejeancollective.ca
Waterloo Region Women's Campaign School	wrwomenrun.wordpress.com
Wellington Campaign School	municipalcampaignschool.ca/wellington



“Municipal elections are about the future of our communities, the places that we call home. Win or lose, every candidate makes a difference by respectfully debating priorities. We congratulate all who choose to run for demonstrating their commitment to their municipality.”

– Former AMO President,
Mayor Jamie McGarvey, Town of Parry Sound



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