



# Lethbridge County Policy Handbook

**EFFECTIVE:** September 7, 2017      **SECTION:** 100 NO. 166 Page 1 of 6  
**APPROVED BY:** County Council      **SUBJECT:** Use of Municipal  
Resources for Election Campaigns  
**REVISED DATE:**

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## POLICY STATEMENT

County administration is responsible to ensure the democratic process is transparent, fair, and accessible in Lethbridge County. It is the responsibility of elected officials to uphold the integrity and ethical accountability which are the foundation of public confidence in government and the political process.

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This protocol establishes guidelines on the appropriate use of resources during an election period in order to ensure:
  - a. all candidates are provided with the same accessibility to the democratic process;
  - b. County employees remain neutral and without perception of bias during the hours the employee is being compensated by the County;
  - c. and Lethbridge County as an organization conducts an election without influence.

### **2. DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 "Campaign contribution" means any money, personal property, real property, or service that is provided to or for the benefit of a candidate or the candidate's election campaign without fair market value compensation from that candidate but does not include services provided by a volunteer who voluntarily performs the services and receives no compensation, directly or indirectly, in relation to the services or time spent providing the services.
- 2.2 "Campaign period" means:
  - a. for a municipal election, the period of time from January 1<sup>st</sup> immediately following a general election to December 31<sup>st</sup> immediately following the next general election;
  - b. for a municipal by-election, the period of time from January 1<sup>st</sup> immediately following a general election to 60 days immediately following the by-election;



## Lethbridge County Policy Handbook

**EFFECTIVE:** September 7, 2017      **SECTION:** 100 NO. 166 Page 2 of 6  
**APPROVED BY:** County Council      **SUBJECT:** Use of Municipal  
Resources for Election Campaigns  
**REVISED DATE:**

---

- c. for a vote on a question or bylaw, the period of time between the resolution of council fixing the date for the vote on the question or bylaw to the day in which the vote result is declared;
- d. for a provincial election, the definition provided for under the Elections Act; and
- e. for a federal election, the definition provided for under the Canada Elections Act.

2.3 "Campaigning" means any activity by or on behalf of a candidate, political party or question on a ballot meant to elicit support during the election period. Campaigning does not include the appearance of elected officials, other candidates or their supporters, or registrants at an event in their personal capacity without the display of any signage or graphics which identifies the individual as a candidate or registrant without the solicitation of votes.

2.4 "Candidate" means an individual nominated as a candidate for election under the Local Authorities Election Act, the Elections Act, or the Canada Elections Act, or an individual who intends to be nominated as a candidate for such an election. A candidate can be a current elected member of council.

2.5 "County" means the Municipality of Lethbridge County.

2.6 "County employee" means an individual, other than a councillor, who is compensated for services performed and whose duties are under the control of Lethbridge County.

2.7 "Election" means a general election, by-election and a vote on a bylaw or question.

### 3. GENERAL

3.1 The use of municipal resources by a candidate, both County employee time and actual municipal property, for election-related activity is strictly prohibited. This prohibition applies to both the promotion and opposition to the candidacy or a person for elected office.

3.2 All candidates will receive equal treatment from County administration regardless of whether the candidate is an incumbent.



## Lethbridge County Policy Handbook

**EFFECTIVE:** September 7, 2017      **SECTION:** 100 NO. 166 Page 3 of 6  
**APPROVED BY:** County Council      **SUBJECT:** Use of Municipal  
Resources for Election Campaigns  
**REVISED DATE:**

---

3.3 This protocol shall not preclude a member of Council who is also a candidate from performing his or her duties as Reeve, Deputy Reeve or Councillor as prescribed by the Municipal Government Act, nor impede him or her from representing the interests of their constituents.

#### **4. CONDUCT OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL AND CANDIDATES**

- 4.1 Candidates and sitting members of council are not permitted to:
- a. Use equipment, supplies, services, County employees or other resources of the municipality for the purpose of campaigning or solicitation of campaign advice.
  - b. Use County funds to acquire resources for any campaign or campaign related activities.
  - c. Use County facilities or property for campaign events, unless the facility or property is rented in accordance with municipal agreements and the appropriate rates are paid from the candidate's campaign account.
  - d. Use County funds or resources to print or distribute any material that makes reference to, identifies, or contains the name or photographs of a candidate. Minutes of council and committee meetings are exempt from this provision.
  - e. Use the County brand, logo, crest, coat of arms, slogan, or corporate program identifiers on any election campaign related material, either printed or on a campaign website or social media account.
  - f. Use County information technology assets, infrastructure, or data to communicate election related messages. This includes County email accounts, computers, wireless devices, portals, webpages, or telephones.
  - g. Where provided for under Policy 158 – Technology for County Councillors – a member of council may use County-issued devices for personal use, but is prohibited from using County email for the purpose of campaigning.



## Lethbridge County Policy Handbook

**EFFECTIVE:** September 7, 2017      **SECTION:** 100 NO. 166 Page 4 of 6  
**APPROVED BY:** County Council      **SUBJECT:** Use of Municipal  
Resources for Election Campaigns  
**REVISED DATE:**

---

- 4.2 Candidates who attend County organized events are permitted to campaign, however, senior management or the designated County employee responsible for organizing the event may request that a candidate desist if such campaigning is disruptive to the event.
- 4.3 Members of Council are not permitted to campaign at County organized events while attending an event or conducting business as a representative of County Council.
- 4.4 Candidates are not permitted to engage in campaign activities directed at County employees while those employees are at their workplace or engaged in work for the County.

### 5. COUNTY EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

- 5.1 Specific employees will, by virtue of their position or responsibilities, have direct input into the conduct of municipal elections or have a direct and impartial relationship with the elected Council. For these reasons the following County employees may not participate in the election campaign of any candidate for municipal office:

- a. Senior Management, Supervisors and Employees of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Office

Senior Management, Supervisors and employees of the CAO's Office have a regular interface with elected officials and must maintain an independent and impartial relationship with the Council. Additionally Senior Management and Supervisors are in a position of trust and could be in a position to influence other County employees or be perceived by members of the public as representing County administration.



## Lethbridge County Policy Handbook

**EFFECTIVE:** September 7, 2017      **SECTION:** 100 NO. 166 Page 5 of 6  
**APPROVED BY:** County Council      **SUBJECT:** Use of Municipal  
Resources for Election Campaigns  
**REVISED DATE:**

---

b. Employees of the CAO's Office

The CAO's Office is charged with the administrative conduct of any municipal election, by-election or vote on a question and therefore all members of the section will be responsible for ensuring the election is conducted in a free, fair, transparent and accountable manner. Members of the CAO's Office will fill the positions of returning officer, presiding deputy returning officers, and deputy returning officers during an election, and therefore will be required to take an oath as prescribed under the Local Authorities Election Act prohibiting participation in the election campaign of any candidate for municipal office.

c. County Employees Acting in Election Worker Roles

County employees who are appointed or employed as a constable or election worker will be required to make a statement as prescribed by the Local Authorities Election Act and therefore may not participate in the election campaign of any candidate for municipal office.

5.2 County employees shall not perform any work in support of a candidate during hours in which the employee is receiving any compensation from the County.

5.3 County employees shall not:

- a. post or distribute campaign material on behalf of a candidate at County facilities or on County property; or
- b. display campaign advertising or distribute campaign literature, or otherwise publicly endorse any candidate for municipal office while performing their duties for the County.

5.4 If campaigning outside of their employment hours or duties, a County employee may not:

- a. identify themselves as an employee of the County;
- b. wear or carry County-issued identification; or
- c. wear County branded items that identify the person as an employee of the County.



## Lethbridge County Policy Handbook

**EFFECTIVE:** September 7, 2017      **SECTION:** 100 NO. 166 Page 6 of 6

**APPROVED BY:** County Council      **SUBJECT:** Use of Municipal  
Resources for Election Campaigns

**REVISED DATE:**

---

### **6. CANDIDATE REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION**

- 6.1 Information that is readily available to the public can be requested from the appropriate member of administration directly.
- 6.2 Other information requests made by a candidate where the information is not readily available to the public will be directed to the CAO, and:
  - a. the CAO will coordinate and direct the employees of the County regarding the response; and
  - b. the response will be provided to all candidates who have supplied Lethbridge County with an email address for the purpose of receiving municipal election related correspondence.

### **7. APPLICATION**

- 7.1 For the purposes of this policy, residents hired to act as election workers shall be considered to be temporary County employees.
- 7.2 Campaign-related activity applies not only to a campaign for municipal office, but also other campaigns for provincial, and federal office.
- 7.3 This policy will apply to campaign activities related to a vote on a bylaw or question that is conducted in accordance with the Local Authorities Election Act.
- 7.4 Section 6, Candidate Requests for Information only applies to candidates for municipal office.