
Chief Electoral Officer

Position Profile



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ALBERTA**

June 2024

Chief Electoral Officer

Created in 1977, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer was founded as an independent body responsible for overseeing the *Elections Finances and Contribution Disclosure Act* and the *Election Act*.

The Chief Electoral Officer oversees what is now referred to as Elections Alberta which is a nonpartisan, independent office of the Legislature responsible for the fair, impartial and efficient administration of electoral events (provincial elections, by-elections and referenda) in Alberta.

The Chief Electoral Officer provides leadership and direction to Elections Alberta and oversees electoral events to ensure they are conducted fairly and that political party and stakeholder activities abide by the rules set out in legislation. The Chief Electoral Officer is located with Elections Alberta in Edmonton.

A. POSITION SUMMARY

Under the leadership of the Chief Electoral Officer, Elections Alberta

- Regulates Alberta's electoral legislation to safeguard confidence in the election process
- Educates voters, future voters and political participants to enable their lawful and peaceful participation in the election process
- Discloses election results and political participants' financial activities to ensure transparency, fairness and to guard against undue influence
- Sanctions those who do not comply, or those who interfere, with election laws

There are five core delivery areas in Elections Alberta including Corporate Services, Finance, Compliance and Enforcement, IT and Geomatics and Electoral Operations.

Drawing on executive level leadership and management experience the Chief Electoral Officer provides strategic direction and support to the team of professionals in Elections Alberta.

B. RELATIONSHIP TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Chief Electoral Officer is a nonpartisan, independent officer of the Legislature appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly.

The Chief Electoral Officer reports to the Legislative Assembly through the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices with respect to annual reports of the office, proposed budgets and matters relating to the jurisdiction or authority of the Chief Electoral Officer.

The Standing Committee on Legislative Offices is responsible for reviewing the budget and operations of the Offices of the Ethics Commissioner, Information and Privacy Commissioner, Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner, Auditor General, Child and Youth Advocate and Chief Electoral Officer. The Chief Electoral Officer meets with the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices during the year as necessary.

C. AUTHORITIES

The Chief Electoral Officer is involved with the administration of legislation related to the business of Elections Alberta and other related legislation and designated authorities:

- *Alberta Senate Elections Act (ASEA)*
- *Citizen Initiative Act*
- *Election Act*
- *Elections Finances and Contribution Disclosure Act (EFCDA)*
- *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*
- *Financial Administration Act*
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)*
- *Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA)*
- *Public Inquiries Act*
- *Public Service Act*
- *Recall Act*
- *Referendum Act*
- Other applicable legislation

D. MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Electoral Officer has a leadership role in overseeing the effective and efficient performance of Elections Alberta in executing its mandate:

- Developing a strong team of professionals to foster a positive and respectful working environment
- Leading, coaching and mentoring a senior management team to achieve business plan goals
- Preserving the objectivity and impartiality of Elections Alberta and maintaining public trust
- Setting the strategic direction for structure, systems, policies and processes that enable Elections Alberta to administer provincial elections, by-elections and referenda
- Guiding policy and procedure development for prudent operation of Elections Alberta, including governance, risk management, programs and services
- Implementing public education programs to increase awareness of the electoral process
- Liaising with representatives of political parties concerning the election process or activities
- Overseeing fiscal and human resources to ensure effective management of resources in meeting business plan objectives for Elections Alberta
- Preparing a budget for Elections Alberta for each upcoming fiscal year for presentation to the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices
- Acting as the primary spokesperson for Elections Alberta

The Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for two groups of employees, each with a different reporting relationship:

- Employees or direct staff within the Elections Alberta organizational chart that are

appointed pursuant to the *Public Service Act*

- Returning officers and other elections officers that are temporary in nature and are appointed pursuant to the *Election Act*

Under the *Alberta Senate Elections Act (ASEA)*, the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for:

- Managing the election of individuals for possible appointment to the Senate of Canada for the purposes of filling vacancies related to Alberta
- Reviewing the registration of candidates and nomination papers in a Senate election and once accepted, adding to the Senate election ballot
- Conducting the vote for a Senate election held with a provincial general election or as a stand-alone election and once tabulated, declaring official results from the Senate election
- Managing appeals and recounts following the Senate election
- Arranging for publication of required data and reports

Under the *Citizen Initiative Act*, the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for:

- Managing the application, canvassing and verification process for initiative petitions for legislative or policy proposals or referendum proposals
- Referring successful petitions to the Legislative Assembly, or conducting initiative or referendum votes where a proposal is referred to Elections Alberta by the Legislative Assembly
- Enforcing election finance rules through collection, review and disclosure of political participant financial reports
- Ensuring filing, examination and public disclosure of financial documents submitted by the proponent and third-party advertisers

Under the *Election Act*, the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for:

- Conducting provincial elections, enumerations, by-elections and plebiscites by:
 - o maintaining and updating election procedures and information requirements
 - o ensuring that returning officers and other election officers adhere to the requirements and schedules of the *Election Act* and act against non-performance of duties or violation of requirement of the Act
 - o enforcing fairness and impartiality on the part of all election officers in the conduct of their duties and compliance with the *Election Act*
 - o providing training, guidance and issuing information to returning officers and providing them with resources to train election officials
 - o providing direction to returning officers and ensuring they are up-to-date in their understanding of the legislation and of election and enumeration practices and procedures
 - o maintaining an up-to-date permanent Register of Electors
 - o investigating complaints of possible breaches of the Act and consenting to

prosecution, if warranted

- Preparing reports for each general election, by-election, enumeration, referendum and plebiscite
- Administering election practices that increase the economy, efficiency and service to electors, party officials and candidates
- Drafting amendments to the *Election Act*

Under the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act (EFCDA)*, the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring filing, examination and public disclosure of financial documents submitted by political parties, constituency associations, candidates, leadership contestants and third-party advertisers
- Enforcing election finance rules through collection, review and disclosure of political participant financial reports
- Maintaining a register of political participants including political parties, constituency associations, candidates, leadership contestants and third-party advertisers
- Assisting individuals and groups forming new political entities
- Investigating complaints of possible violations and consenting to prosecution if warranted, exercising the powers of a Commissioner under the *Public Inquiries Act*
- Drafting amendments to the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act (EFCDA)*

Under the *Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA)*, the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for:

- Investigating complaints of possible violations related to candidate campaign finances
- Investigating complaints of possible violations related to third-party advertisers

Under the *Recall Act*, Elections Alberta is responsible for:

- Administering the process for recall petitions for Members of the Legislative Assembly
- Managing the application, canvassing and verification process for recall petitions for Members of the Legislative Assembly
- Conducting recall votes, where recall petitions are successful
- Enforcing election finance rules through collection, review and disclosure of political participant financial reports

Under the *Referendum Act*, the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for:

- Conducting the vote for constitutional or non-constitutional referendums held with a general election or a stand-alone event
- Overseeing the vote for a referendum held with a local authority election

Under the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*, the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for:

- Providing advice, information and assistance when an Electoral Boundaries Commission is appointed

E. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Chief Electoral Officer provides leadership and guidance to 43 full-time staff working out of the Elections Alberta office in Edmonton with eight (8) contracted investigators in Edmonton and Calgary and an operating budget of \$11,000,000 to \$45,000,000 depending on the election cycle.

During election events, staff numbers increase substantially to include temporary staff involved with delivering election events, including returning officers and election officers.

F. CONTACTS/PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The Chief Electoral Officer maintains an ongoing liaison with electoral officials and related department representatives in provincial and federal jurisdictions which includes the observation of enumeration and electoral processes. Additionally, the Chief Electoral Officer maintains ongoing contact with registered political parties through the official(s) designated by each party leader.

The Chief Electoral Officer meets with leaders of government, leaders of professional authorities, community leaders, members of the public as well as the media.

Contact is also maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer with the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices and other legislative offices.

The Chief Electoral Officer networks with electoral officers across Canada as well as international counterparts. Participation in organized meetings such as the Conference of Canadian Election Officials and Election Finance Officers and with the Council on Governmental Ethics are very beneficial to further the work of the Chief Electoral Officer.

G. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Lieutenant Governor in Council appoints the Chief Electoral Officer on the recommendation of the Assembly. The appointment of the Chief Electoral Officer expires 12 months after election day for the second general election held after the Chief Electoral Officer was appointed unless the Chief Electoral Officer is reappointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council prior to that date on the recommendation of the Standing Committee.

The position of Chief Electoral Officer is classified within salary range A of the Senior Officials Salary Schedule for the public service of Alberta. This appointment offers a salary range of \$219,386 - \$294,923 per annum, dependent on qualifications, as well as a comprehensive benefits package.

THE PERSON

The demands of this position require attributes that go beyond a specific discipline or academic achievement. In addition to the knowledge, experience and skill requirements of the role, applicants will have the proven ability to apply a balanced, common-sense approach while using sound judgment and demonstrating fairness, patience, and integrity. Credibility in a related career, respect within the community, public service orientation and an understanding of the political context of this role are key. As this position is an independent officer of the Legislature, the individual must be nonpartisan and able to work independently.

A. Knowledge/Experience Requirements

- A strong record of achievement at the executive level in public- or private-sector administration, overseeing significant fiscal and human resource operations
- Experience in decision making at a senior level related to sensitive and complex issues
- Visionary leadership coupled with a strategic orientation to position the Chief Electoral Officer and Elections Alberta to deal with emerging and long-term trends, issues and opportunities
- Demonstrated success in guiding, managing and developing a professional workforce
- Understanding of financial management practices and procedures to include financial statements, budgets and audit techniques
- Working knowledge of complex information management and technology processes
- Proven expertise in the interpretation and application of legislation, regulations and policies
- Demonstrated general knowledge of Alberta's geography and population distribution patterns
- Working knowledge of the parliamentary system, government functions and processes and the public sector
- Related senior level experience administering election processes would be an asset

B. Skills and Abilities

- Proven ability as a leader who models values to support a positive and inclusive work environment that enables employees to achieve results and to develop and build organizational capacity for the future
- Exceptional verbal, listening, written and interpersonal skills with a proven ability to effectively communicate with clients, stakeholders in the community and other jurisdictions
- Proven record of executive management skills in a complex environment
- Ability to lead, influence and negotiate innovative solutions to complex and diverse issues with a wide variety of stakeholders and balance the needs and interests of these diverse groups
- Demonstrated decision-making abilities in a high consequence environment

- Strong ability to interpret, apply and understand electoral law, processes and administration
- Demonstrated ability to act with impartiality and perform duties in the absence of political bias

C. Education

- A degree in a related discipline (finance, accounting, law, et cetera.)