



March 9, 2023

Your League and Navigating Federal, Provincial and Municipal Elections

Community Leagues are non partisan. This means they must refrain from promoting a candidate or party running for office during an election.

Crossing this line is against our [Code of Ethics](#). It can also create reputational harm to Community Leagues across the city and alienate your League from your own community.

Here is a guide to help you understand how not to cross the line.

What does 'partisan' mean?

Aside from municipal elections, most political races in Alberta are contested by candidates who are members of political parties. *To be partisan is to publicly and actively endorse a candidate and their party.*

The nuances of endorsement

Endorsement has an element of perception that must be taken into account. For example, if your League rents its hall to only one candidate from one party for a campaign event, others may see this as your League *endorsing* that candidate or party. There are other nuances to consider as well. Later in this document we will examine political third party advertisers, commonly known as PACs, and their relationship to partisanship.

The pressure of elections

Rules and perceptions change once an election is called. While it's perfectly appropriate to invite your city councillor, school board trustee or MLA to your events outside of elections, you should reconsider this practice once an election is called.

How to stay inside the lines

- If a candidate asks to attend a League monthly meeting or AGM, the EFCL recommends the League board decide as a group whether or not to approve the request. The EFCL

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recommends an all or nothing approach: Either **all** candidates are invited or **none** should be invited.

- If the League decides to allow an individual candidate to attend, the League should *publicly* invite *all* other candidates running in their electoral district as well.

Can League board members and EFCL board members be involved in elections?

All staff and board members of the EFCL and Community Leagues have the right to take part in election-related activities *on their own time and in their own individual, non-League capacity*.

What are election-related activities?

Election-related activities are those that advance an individual's or group's interests, including:

- canvassing
- campaigning
- fundraising

How to stay inside the lines

- *EFCL board member*

If an EFCL board member chooses to run for public office, the best practice is that they step away by taking a leave of absence from the board. This will take place when the person registers their intention to run as a candidate or when they begin actively campaigning, whichever comes first.

- *Community League board member*

As a best practice, the EFCL recommends a Community League board member to relinquish or take a leave from their position on the board when they register their intention to run as a candidate, or when they begin actively campaigning, whichever comes first. The League should announce this change of status to the community so that members know that the board member has stepped away from the board in order to campaign.

As a League board member, you represent the League in the eyes of your community. This applies particularly to the League president, who is the official spokesperson for the League. Remember: If you are out door knocking for a candidate, people will recognize you and associate you with the League.



What rules apply for social media?

EFCL or Community League accounts on social media must not share or redistribute posts from people or parties running in an election. EFCL's recommendation? *When in doubt, leave it out.*

The personal social media accounts of EFCL and League staff and/or board members are up to the individual's discretion.

Candidates and parties are asked to not tag the EFCL or Community Leagues in partisan content.

How to stay inside the lines

- Issues are fair game. They're political but not partisan. If your League or you as someone connected to a League want change on an issue, discussing the issue rather than the candidates or parties is absolutely fine, and even encouraged.

Materials and facilities

Neither the EFCL's nor any Community League's resources should be used to support any political campaign in any way.

How to stay inside the lines

- Do not rent out the hall for use by one candidate such as a campaign headquarters or for a campaign launch party. Be highly wary of the community discord that could result from renting to groups that may be PACs. Do your research on rentals. If in doubt, ask the EFCL for help.
- League halls can be used for candidate forums or debates. The best practice is to invite all the candidates to participate.

Special consideration: PACs

Political Action Committees present confusing nuances to partisanship. While some registered PACs work outside partisan politics, others are aggressively partisan. Renting to these groups could open your League to public scrutiny during an election campaign. If you wish to avoid this, the EFCL recommends you *scrutinize all rental requests* by examining the [registered list of PACs](#). The EFCL advises that you make informed decisions and contact us with questions.

Have questions? Please contact info@efcl.org