



A Guide to Navigating Municipal, Provincial and Federal 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 the Community League [Code of Ethics](#). It can also create reputational harm to Community Leagues across the city and alienate your League from your own community. Supporting a candidate or party can also actually reduce the League's effectiveness in advocating to government.

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

What does 'partisan' mean?

All political races in Alberta are contested by candidates who may be members of political parties. *To be partisan is to publicly and actively endorse a candidate or their party.*

Endorsement and Hall Rentals

Endorsement has an element of perception that must be taken into account. For example, if your League rents its hall to one candidate from one party for a campaign event, others may see this as your League *endorsing* that candidate or party. This includes events outside the election period such as party nominations event. Leagues should consider a "no elections events" policy for hall rentals.

Special consideration: PACs

Political Action Committees (PACs) 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.



During 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 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

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. This also applies to board members who are taking a leadership role in the campaign of someone else, such as being a communications director or campaign manager for a candidate.



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?

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.*

How to stay inside the lines

The personal social media accounts of EFCL and League staff and/or board members are up to the individual's discretion. This becomes a problem if the main communications from a League is a board member's personal account. It becomes difficult to tell when the League Communications Director, for example, is posting for the League or themselves. Leagues should create official League social media accounts to avoid using personal accounts for League communications.

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

Leagues can be Political without being Partisan

After proper consultation with their community, a League may want to take a position on an issue, and that is fine. Leagues may also act as a resource for community members during an election, hosting election forums with all candidates invited or putting questions of importance to the community to all candidates and sharing the answers received.

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

EFCL and/or League resources should not be used to support any political campaign.

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.

Additional questions?

Please contact leaguesupport@efcl.org