



Electoral Area Director Candidate Guidebook

2026

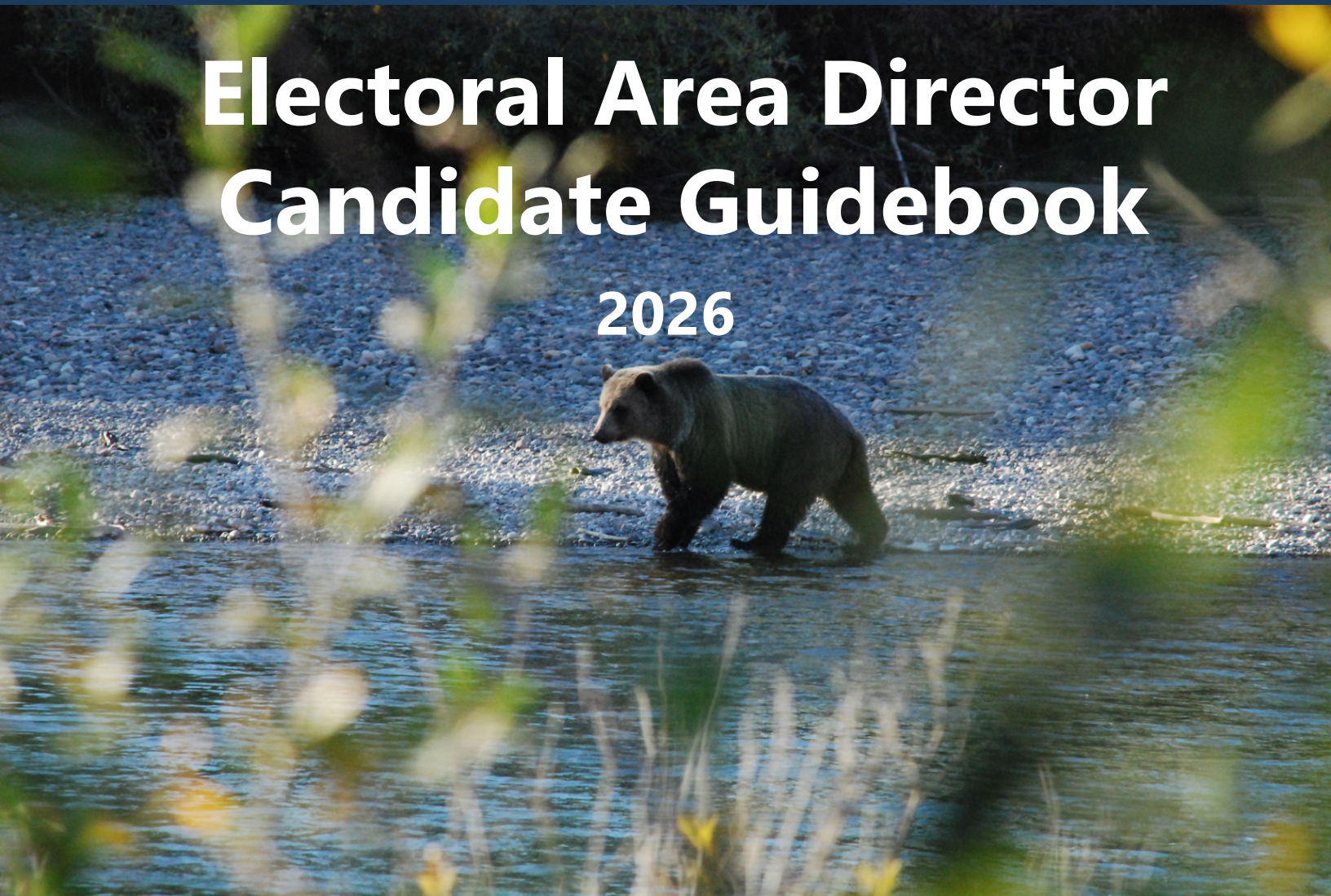


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Introduction & Purpose

This guidebook is designed to provide prospective candidates with the information they need to understand the role of an Electoral Area Director within the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN). Whether you are considering running for the first time or seeking re-election, this guide will help you understand:

- The governance structure of the RDBN
- The responsibilities and expectations of an Electoral Area Director
- The time commitment and meeting schedules involved
- The election process and candidate requirements
- The services delivered by the Regional District

Serving as an Electoral Area Director is a meaningful way to contribute to your community and help shape the future of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako.

Who should use this guide?

Anyone considering running as a candidate for Electoral Area Director in the RDBN, including community members, volunteers, and current local leaders.

Thinking of Running for Electoral Area Director?

Electoral Area Director's primary responsibility is to represent the views of their constituency and make decisions that affect sub-regional, region-wide and interjurisdictional services of the Regional District. Directors serve as a key link between residents and the regional district by engaging with the community, attending meetings, and advocating on local issues within a broader regional and provincial framework. Before you decide to run, consider the following:

Expectations of Elected Officials

- Understand the difference between governance and administration. Be prepared to work as part of a board and contribute to effective decision-making.
- Understand local government elected officials are required to comply with the Local Government Act, Community Charter and other provincial legislation, including conduct rules, privacy and employment laws and policies, as well as the regional district's procedures, policies and code of conduct.

Skills & Competencies for the Role of an Elected Official

- Honest and act with integrity
- Accept responsibility for their actions
- Respect others (even when not in agreement) and the institution of local government
- Have an ability to be curious, listen, lead, and positively influence others while working collaboratively
- Ability to make informed, objective decisions
- Strong communication skills (verbal and written)
- Problem-solving and conflict resolution abilities
- Ability to analyze information, set priorities, and manage competing demands
- Capacity to work cooperatively with colleagues and staff
- Ability to accept majority decisions and maintain public trust
- Basic understanding of parliamentary procedures
- Competence using computers and the internet

Understand the Role

- Represent residents and act in the best interests of the entire region
- Participate in decision-making using established policies and procedures
- Work with the Board, staff, and the public respectfully and professionally
- Understand local government powers, limitations, and statutory responsibilities

Time Commitment

Holding office requires a significant time investment: meetings, preparation, public engagement, and community events. Expect 20-40 hours per month depending on committee assignments and seasonal workload

Before You Decide to Run

- Assess your readiness, including available time, comfort with public engagement, and ability to handle public scrutiny
- Learn how local governments make decisions and the kinds of issues the Regional District typically addresses
- Review rules, obligations, and financial reporting requirements for candidates

About the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

About the RDBN

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako is one of 27 regional districts in British Columbia. It encompasses a vast area of central BC, stretching from west of Smithers to east of Cluculz Lake. Regional Districts are unique to BC and arose out of a need for greater regional cooperation and equitable cost-sharing between municipal areas and rural areas.

Quick Facts

- Population: approximately 38,000
- Area: approximately 73,000 square kilometres
- 7 Electoral Areas: Electoral Areas A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural), B (Burns Lake Rural), C (Fort St. James Rural), D (Fraser Lake Rural), E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural), F (Vanderhoof Rural) and G (Houston/Granisle Rural)
- 8 Municipalities: Smithers, Telkwa, Houston, Burns Lake, Fraser Lake, Vanderhoof, Fort St. James, Granisle
- First Nations: 14 within the regional boundary

The Board typically meets twice a month on Thursdays with tentative meeting start times being 10:00 a.m. Meetings are held in the RDBN Boardroom at 37-3rd Avenue, Burns Lake. The first meeting of the month is often a Committee meeting day. The Committees make recommendations to the Board for consideration.

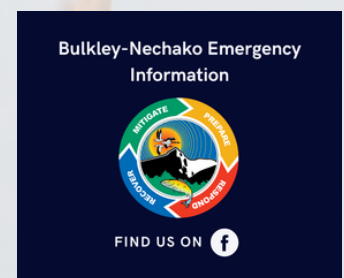
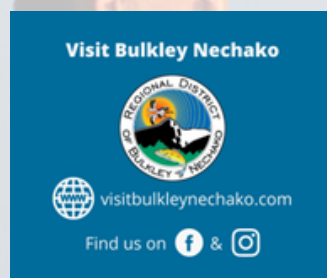
Board Composition

The RDBN Board of Directors consists of:

- 7 Electoral Area Directors (one per Electoral Area A-G)
- 8 Municipal Directors (mayors or councillors who are appointed from each municipality)

The Board Chair and Vice-Chair are elected annually from among the Directors. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) implements Board policy and oversees day-to-day operations.

Other Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Sites and Social Media



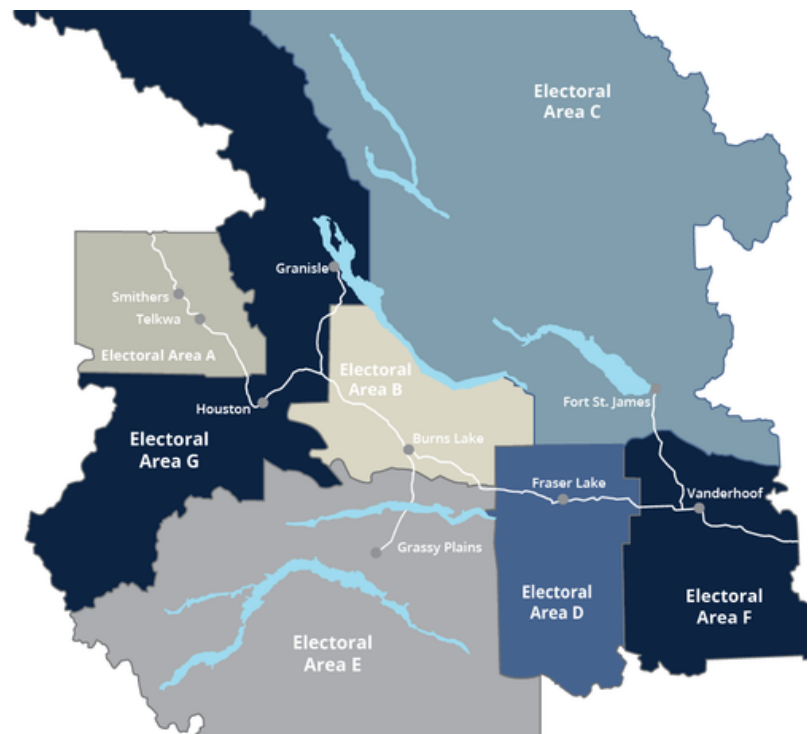
Populations & RDBN Map

Electoral Area Populations (2021 Census)

Area A Smithers/Telkwa Rural	5,587	Area B Burns Lake Rural	1,706
Area C Fort St. James Rural	1,266	Area D Fraser Lake Rural	1,607
Area E Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural	1,512	Area F Vanderhoof Rural	3,517
Area G Houston/Granisle Rural	836		

Population by Community (2021 Census)

Vanderhoof	4,346
Smithers	5,378
Houston	3,052
Burns Lake	1,659
Fort St. James	1,386
Fraser Lake	965
Telkwa	1,474
Granisle	337



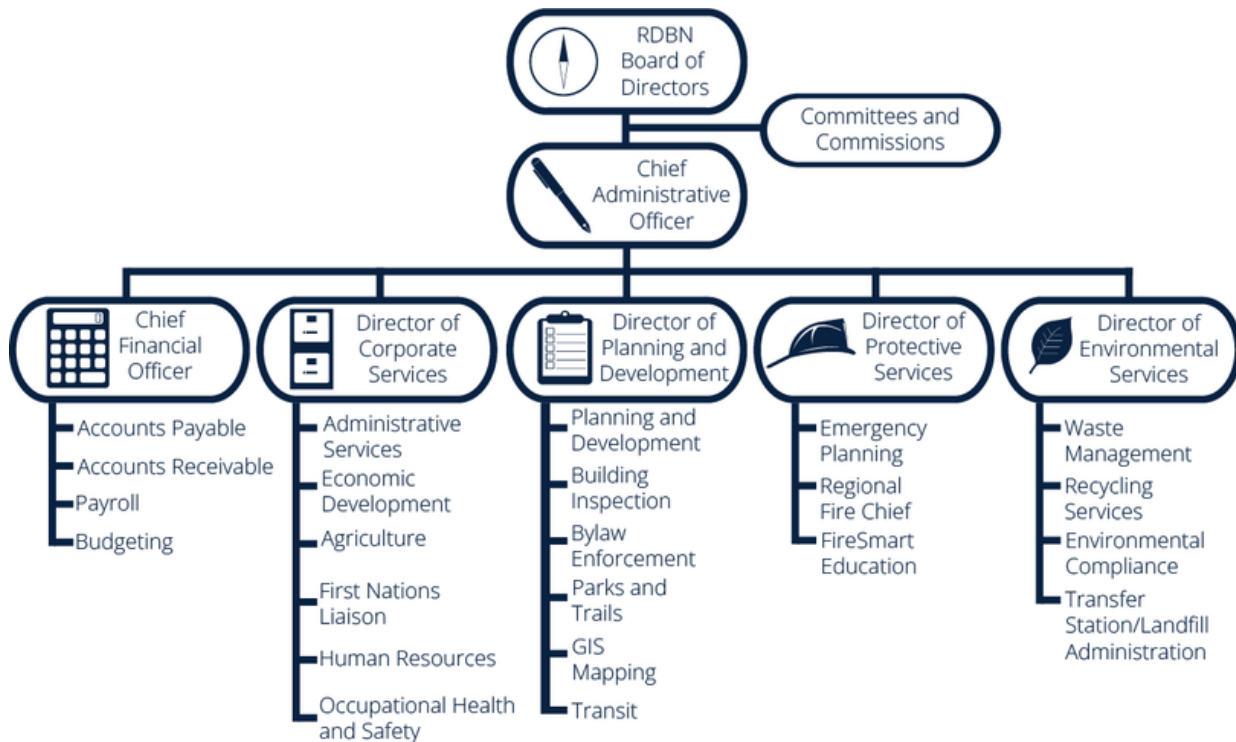
14 First Nations Within the RDBN

- Binche Whut'en – 120
- Cheslatta Carrier Nation – 50
- Lake Babine Nation – 705
- Nadleh Whut'en – 240
- Nak'azdli Whut'en – 555
- Nee Tahi Buhn – unavailable
- Saik'uz First Nation – 335
- Skin Tye Nation – unavailable
- Stelat'en First Nation – 190
- Takla Nation – 255
- Tl'azt'en Nation – 415
- Ts'il Kaz Koh – 40
- Wet'suwet'en First Nation – 95
- Yekooche First Nation – 90

Total Regional Population: ~37,718

RDBN Organizational Structure

The organizational chart below shows the RDBN administrative structure from the Board of Directors through to department heads, as presented in the 2025 Annual Report.



Governance Framework

How the Board Works

The RDBN Board of Directors is the governing body responsible for setting the vision, strategic direction, and policies for the Regional District. Directors make decisions on behalf of their communities and the region as a whole.

Voting Structure

Voting at the Board table depends on the matter being considered:

- Regional matters: All Directors vote
- Service-specific matters: Only Directors whose areas participate in that service vote
- Weighted voting may apply based on population for certain financial decisions

Role of the Board Chair

- Elected annually by the Board
- Presides over Board meetings
- Acts as the official spokesperson for the Regional District
- Provides leadership and direction to the Board

Role of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

- Implements Board policies and decisions
- Oversees all Regional District operations and staff
- Provides advice and recommendations to the Board
- Manages day-to-day administration

Local Government Bylaws

The Regional District Board may only make decisions by bylaw or resolution. Bylaws are laws that formalize rules made by a council or board. The Board provides direction to staff to bring bylaws forward for consideration.

Bylaws are one of the main tools used to provide services, guide development and regulate activities.

Common types of regional district bylaws:

- Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaws
- Service Establishing Bylaws
- Regulatory Bylaws
- Financial and Administrative Bylaws

Some bylaws are mandatory as they are required by legislation and others are discretionary and reflect the Board's decision to regulate or address a specific issue in the community.

Local Government Policy

Board policies or guidelines adopted by the regional district board helps guide decisions, actions and priorities.

The CAO establishes operational policies to govern the day-to-day activities within the organization.

Stuart-Nechako Regional Hospital District (SNRHD)

Directors of the Regional District are automatically on the Board of Regional Hospital Districts. Depending on location, RDBN Board members sit on one of two Regional Hospital Districts. The Stuart-Nechako Regional Hospital District (SNRHD), which is managed by the RDBN or the North West Regional Hospital District (NWRHD), which is managed by the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine.

The Stuart-Nechako Regional Hospital District (SNRHD) includes the following municipalities and electoral areas: Village of Granisle, Village of Burns Lake, Village of Fraser Lake, District of Vanderhoof and District of Fort St. James and Electoral Areas B (Burns Lake Rural), C (Fort St. James Rural), D (Fraser Lake Rural), E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural), and F (Vanderhoof).

The NWRHD includes the following RDBN municipalities and electoral areas: District of Houston, Village of Telkwa, Town of Smithers, Electoral Areas A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) and G (Houston/Granisle Rural).

Regional Hospital Districts are governed by the Hospital District Act. Regional Hospital Districts provide a portion (up to 40% of capital expenditures) of the funds required by hospitals within their boundaries for equipment, renovations and new construction. The funding is raised through property taxes. The SNRHD and NWRHD provide funding to the facilities operated by the Northern Health Authority.



Fort Fraser Local Community Commission

The Fort Fraser Local Community Commission is an elected body that represents the unincorporated community of Fort Fraser within the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. It consists of four locally elected Commissioners and the Electoral Area D Director. Commissioners are elected every four years in conjunction with local government elections.

As both an advisory and administrative body, the Commission plays a role in the operation and administration of services delivered within Fort Fraser. These include water, sewer, and street lighting. The Commission serves as a channel between the community and the Regional District Board, ensuring that local concerns and priorities are represented.



Which Government Provides What Service?



Regional District

Solid waste management • Residential service (outside municipal boundaries) • Regional parks and recreation • Rural area planning and development • Emergency services • 911 operation • Grant services • Economic development • Regional environmental services • Building Inspection



Provincial Government

Schools • Provincial parks • Rural Road Maintenance • Crown land • Health care • WorkSafe • ICBC/Driver Licensing • Provincial courts • Highway maintenance • Provincial income/property/sales tax • Water Licensing



Municipal Government

Municipal road maintenance • Snow removal • Water supply • Waste water management • Municipal parks • Municipal cemetery • Recreation facilities • Fire rescue • Business licenses



Federal Government

Income tax • Employment insurance • Child benefit tax • Military • National parks • Immigration • Criminal law • Foreign relations • Fisheries and oceans

Roles & Responsibilities of an Electoral Area Director



Community Representation

Electoral Area Directors are the elected voice of rural residents. You bring local priorities to the regional table and ensure rural perspectives shape regional decisions.

Key Responsibilities

- Attend Board & Committee meetings
- Review and approve regional budgets
- Participate in land use planning
- Represent your area on regional services
- Engage with residents on local issues
- Liaise with First Nations communities, municipal directors, provincial agencies and community organizations
- Support emergency preparedness
- Balance electoral matters with regional district-wide interests

Directors

- Vote at the Board table
- Access to all Board information
- Participate in all general matters
- Eligible to serve as Chair
- Appoint alternates for absentees
- Receive remuneration & expenses
- Oversight - Monitor regional services, review financial reports, and ensure accountability in operations

Board Composition

- 7 Electoral Area Directors
- 8 Municipal Directors
- Chair elected annually by the Board
- Vice-Chair elected annually by the Board
- Committee Chairs appointed
- CAO supports all Directors
- Serve on Standing committees and select committees that guide specific regional initiatives.

Regional vs. Local Decisions

Directors vote on all regional matters but only participate in service-specific votes where their area is a participant. Weighted voting based on population may apply for certain financial decisions.

Term of Office

Directors serve a four year term if elected and are sworn in the first meeting of the Board on November 12, 2026. Directors will serve in office until October 2030.

Board Commitment



Board Meetings

- Regular Board meetings may be held twice a month but are typically held the 2nd meeting of the month on a Thursday
- Tentative start time is 10:00 am
- Held at the RDBN Office in Burns Lake



Committee Meetings

Standing committees meetings are typically held the first meeting of the month on a Thursday



Special Meetings

- Can be considered for Strategic Planning and Budget meetings
- Can be called as needed for urgent or time-sensitive matters



Public Hearings

Required for some land use decisions

2026 RDBN Board of Directors Meeting Calendar

- January 15 and 29
- February 12 and 26
- March 12 and 26
- April 16 and 30
- May 14 and 28
- June 11 and 25
- July 9
- August 6 and 20
- September 10
- October 1 and 15
- November 12 and 26
- December 10

2026 SNRHD Board Meetings

- January 29
- February 26
- March 12 and 26
- May 28
- July 9
- Same day as RDBN meetings as required

2026 NWRHD Board Meetings

- January 17
- March 21
- May 16
- August 22
- November 21

Meetings, Conference & Travel

An Electoral Area Director should anticipate regular travel within the electoral area, routine attendance at Board and Committee meetings in Burns Lake, and occasional travel throughout the region and province. The role may require driving outside regular business hours using a personal vehicle, with mileage and travel expenses reimbursed in accordance with the Regional District Remuneration Bylaw and Policies.

Estimated time commitment: 20-40 hours per month including preparation, meetings, community engagement, and travel.

Board Orientation (Mandatory)

- 2026 Board Orientation Training - Smithers - October 27-28, 2026
- RDBN Board Orientation - Burns Lake - November 25, 2026
- LGLA Newly Elected Officials Training (also for returning Electoral Area Directors) - Prince George - January 27-29, 2027

Annual Conference & Travel Requirements

- BC Natural Resources Forum - January - Prince George (2 days)
- Electoral Area Director's Forum - February or March - Richmond (2 days)
- Minerals North - May - Hosted throughout northern BC (3 days)
- North Central Local Government Association (NCLGA) Conference - May - Hosted throughout northern BC (3 days)
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities Conference (FCM) - May/June - Hosted throughout Canada (4 days)
- Union of BC Municipalities Convention (UBCM) - September - Vancouver, Victoria or Whistler (5-6 days)

Travel Expectations

- Some committee work may require travel to Vancouver/Victoria or other regions
- Remote/hybrid participation available for some meetings

Professional Development

Directors are encouraged to attend conferences, training sessions, and workshops to build governance skills. The RDBN supports ongoing learning through UBCM, NCLGA, and other professional development opportunities.

2026 Election Calendar

Date	Event	Legislation Reference
January 1	Election Period Begins	LECFA s. 10(1)
March 13	Last day to meet 6-month BC residency requirement for candidates seeking nomination	LGA s. 81(1)(c)
April 16	Last day to meet 6-month BC residency requirement for voters registering on general voting day	LGA s. 65(2)
September 1	Nomination period begins at 9:00 AM Start of challenge period	LGA s. 84(1)
September 11	Nomination period closes at 4:00 PM All candidates who have been nominated are officially declared as candidates	LGA s. 84(1) LGA s. 97(1)
September 15	Period to challenge candidate nomination and elector endorsements ends at 4:00 PM	LGA s. 91(2) & 96(2)
September 18	Deadline of 4:00 PM for the following: - Withdrawal of candidate - Withdrawal of candidate endorsement by elector organization	LGA s. 95 LGA s. 101 (1)
September 19	Campaign period begins	LECFA s. 10(2)
September 21	Chief Election Officer declares election or declaration of candidates elected by acclamation	LGA s. 98
October 7 & October 14	Advance Voting period – 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM 2 nd Advance Voting opportunity (Smithers only – if required)	LGA s. 107(1)
October 17	GENERAL VOTING DAY (Saturday 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM)	LGA s. 52
October 21	Last day to declare official election results by 4:00 PM	LGA s. 146(1)
October 21 – October 26	Time period for application for judicial recount	LGA s. 148(3)
November 12	Inaugural Board Meeting	LGA s. 52(2)
January 15, 2027	Deadline to file campaign financing disclosures with Elections BC	LECFA s. 47(1)
February 16, 2027	Disclosure statements late filing deadline (\$500 late penalty due to Elections BC)	LECFA s. 47(2)



Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility Requirement

To be eligible to run for office in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, you must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 18 years of age on General Voting Day
- Be a Canadian citizen
- Have been a resident of British Columbia for at least 6 months immediately prior to nomination
- Not be disqualified under the Local Government Act or any other legislation from voting or holding office

These requirements ensure that candidates are qualified to participate in local governance and represent their communities.

Disqualified Candidates

A person is disqualified from being nominated, elected, or holding office if they:

- Are a judge
- Are an RDBN Employee and do not meet leave requirements. A leave of absence is required before becoming a candidate and an agreement to resign if elected.
- Are serving a sentence for an indictable offence while in custody
- Are disqualified from candidacy under any law or enactment - examples include: failure to file required campaign financing disclosure statements, failure to take the oath of office when required, etc.

Contacts

Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services and Chief Election Officer
Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Election Officer

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250-692-3195 or 1-800-320-3339