

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN
2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

FOUNDATIONS FOR MODERNIZATION





SUSTAINING. LEADING. MODERNIZING.

ADVANCING ELECTORAL
EXCELLENCE IN SASKATCHEWAN



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July 28, 2022

The Honourable Randy Weekes
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Room 129, Legislative Building
2405 Legislative Drive
Regina, SK S4S 0B3

Pursuant to Section 286.1 of *The Election Act, 1996*, I have the distinct privilege of presenting the Annual Report for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (Elections Saskatchewan) to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

This Annual Report highlights Office activities for the fiscal year period of April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Michael D. Boda'.

Michael Boda, D.Phil., Ph.D.
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Province of Saskatchewan

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“In August, I reissued my CEO Discussion Paper looking at the continued overlap of provincial and municipal election dates. My proposed solution would see municipal elections moved to the spring beginning in May 2024 while provincial general elections remain in October. Given that a legislative solution has not been introduced yet, I am reiterating my recommendation in this report. Provincial and municipal elections should not be held weeks apart again.”

- Dr. Michael Boda, Chief Electoral Officer





A Message from the Chief Electoral Officer

For those working in an election management body, the year following a general election always has a dual focus. A portion of your attention remains with the administrative close out of the previous event – reporting, political finance activities, logistical clean up, and so on. At the same time, however, your mind must already be on the coming four years, on beginning to prepare for the administration of the next event.

Fiscal year 2021-2022 was this kind of year for our team at Elections Saskatchewan. On one hand, we were looking back on the October 2020 general election and completing the clean up from that event. And on the other, we were looking forward to October 2024, and the pending administration of the 30th General Election in the history of this province – an event that I anticipate will look far different from the previous one.

Modernization has been at the forefront of our plans at Elections Saskatchewan for some time. Our 2018-2019 Annual Report was even titled “Preparing to Modernize.” Those plans, which had been in development since shortly after the 2016 general election were severely impacted by two separate events early in the 2020 calendar year. The first was the very public possibility of an early election call that spring and the second was the COVID-19 pandemic. The end result was that I made the difficult decision to suspend our modernization plans for the 2020 election but to do so in a way that meant we would be able to pick up where we left off following that event and resume planning for a modernized process.

And that is where we found ourselves this past year. Picking up our original plans for modernization and amending them for a new event in 2024. This past August, I released a discussion paper highlighting a number of options and ideas that could form the basis of a modernized system. Many of the lessons learned in 2020, including a greatly changed Vote by Mail process, will serve as guideposts as we plan for this stage of modernization. The goal is to offer



Dr. Michael Boda has been Chief Electoral Officer since June 1, 2012.

voters, as well as political stakeholders, a system that meets their needs and expectations for how an election should be conducted in the Twenty-First Century.

A second key priority from the past year that firmly looks toward the future is our continued work on a new Election Management System (EMS). An EMS is a software tool that serves as the “backbone” of a modern election management body – allowing for efficient and secure reporting of results, worker assignment, and countless more activities critical to administrative success. Elections Saskatchewan has been working on developing a new EMS for several years and important progress was made in 2021-2022. This work will continue into the coming fiscal year.

The pending modernization of our system of elections was, of course, not our sole focus in 2021-2022. I mentioned the dual focus of an election management body in the year after a general election and we spent considerable resources over the past twelve months completing the administrative close out of the last election. That included the publication of



"Fiscal year 2021-22 also marked the final year covered in our existing strategic plan "Sustaining. Leading. Modernizing. Advancing Electoral Excellence in Saskatchewan," which covered the years 2017 – 2022."

Volume I, Statement of Votes, and Volume II, Administrative Review, in A Report on the Twenty-Ninth General Election. Volume III, Statement of Expenditures, and Volume IV, Chief Electoral Officers Recommendations for Legislative Reform, will be published early in 2022-23.

Fiscal year 2021-22 also marked the final year covered in our existing strategic plan "Sustaining. Leading. Modernizing. Advancing Electoral Excellence in Saskatchewan," which covered the years 2017 – 2022. This report includes a final report card on how Elections Saskatchewan did in meeting targets set through that plan. Next year's annual report will include information on a new strategic plan that will guide us through our coming modernization plans and the administration of the province's next election in 2024. I look forward to providing more information in next year's CEO Message.

In August, I reissued my CEO Discussion Paper looking at the continued overlap of provincial and municipal election dates. My proposed solution would see municipal elections moved to the spring beginning in May 2024 while provincial general elections remain in October. Given that a legislative solution has not been introduced yet, I am reiterating my recommendation in this report. Provincial and municipal elections should not be held weeks apart again.

The past year also saw the publication of *Modernizing Saskatchewan's Constituency Boundary Legislation & Processes*, a CEO Assessment Series document that offered ten recommendations to greatly improve the province's constituency boundary setting process. The coming year, 2022-23, will see the formation of a Constituency Boundary Commission, a process which only happens every ten years. As 2021-22 ended, we were hard at work preparing to

offer whatever technical and administrative supports the Commission required.

Many other important activities took place in the past year. A by-election was administered in Athabasca in February, a constituency which introduces many logistical challenges not present in the southern portion of the province. During that event, we piloted "Assisted Telephone Voting," an option that has been used in other jurisdictions to increase access to the ballot for individuals with disabilities. In Athabasca, we targeted this option to voters forced to quarantine due to COVID-19. In future elections, it might also allow us to serve voters, who for one reason or another, find themselves unable to vote in person but who still wish to cast a ballot.

I would be remiss if I did not mention one other event that took place during the last fiscal year. On November 4, I was reappointed to a second term as Chief Electoral Officer for the Province of Saskatchewan. I am proud of what we have accomplished, as an organization, in my decade in this office (June 1, 2022, will mark ten years since my initial appointment) and I am also proud of the work that is still to come. I want to thank the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan for their continued confidence in my ability to serve the people of this province.

Thank you for taking the time to read the story of Elections Saskatchewan's 2021-2022 fiscal year. As always, if you have questions or comments, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Michael D. Boda, D. Phil., Ph.D.
Chief Electoral Officer
Province of Saskatchewan

Regina, Saskatchewan
April 1, 2022

ABOUT ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN





The many component parts involved in planning, organizing and implementing elections in Saskatchewan are overseen by what is described as an election management body (EMB).

Internationally, an EMB is defined as an independent, non-partisan institution that is responsible for impartial election administration within a jurisdiction governed as a democracy. In Canada, each province, territory, and the national jurisdiction has an EMB that impartially administers elections, upholds the democratic electoral rights guaranteed within the Canadian constitution, and conducts electoral events in accordance with applicable electoral legislation.

Elections Saskatchewan fulfills this mandate for the province, serving as the secretariat to the statutory Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Elections Saskatchewan has a leadership team based in Regina and dispersed across the province's 61 constituencies that each elect a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

In the months leading to a general election, Saskatchewan's electoral service grows steadily and during the election period includes approximately 12,000 temporary workers from all walks of life, each serving provincial voters in administering an event that is fundamental to sustaining Saskatchewan's democratic traditions.

VALUES

When creating the institution's strategic plan, Elections Saskatchewan's head office and field leadership team reflected on the values that are espoused by practitioners of election administration across Canada and around the world. In doing so, five core values were identified:

- Professionalism
- Impartiality
- Innovation
- Service
- Accountability

These values remain at the foundation of every activity conducted by the institution, guiding the actions and decisions of all staff members. They are values widely shared by election administrators and are defining elements of a modern election management body.

STAKEHOLDERS

Elections Saskatchewan has a tremendously broad and diverse base of stakeholders who it affects and by whom it is affected. These include:

- Voters and prospective voters;
- Registered political parties (including chief official agents, political party staff and volunteers);
- Candidates for election (including their business managers);
- Elected Members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan;
- Members of the Legislature's Board of Internal Economy;
- Constituency associations of registered political parties;
- Unregistered political parties, external organizations and advocacy groups;
- Media representatives, reporters, columnists, bloggers and contributors;
- Other Canadian Chief Electoral Officers and their institutions;
- Urban and rural municipality election officials;
- External data providers;
- Service organizations, vendors and contractors;
- Academic researchers and political analysts;
- Other independent officers of the Legislative Assembly; and
- Electoral boundary commissions.



Addressing the needs and concerns of these stakeholders is critical to the success of Saskatchewan's election management body and central to the institution's focus on service. Elections Saskatchewan's intent is to continually consult with its stakeholders to assess how well the institution is meeting their needs. Elections Saskatchewan will continue consulting with its stakeholders to assess how well it is meeting their needs. It aims to identify clear opportunities for improvement and modernization of services.

Finding fiscally responsible, effective, and transparent methods for obtaining meaningful stakeholder input is necessary to define current and emerging needs that Elections Saskatchewan is expected to meet.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head Office Leadership Team

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) is an independent officer of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. As head of Elections Saskatchewan, the CEO ensures the fair and equitable conduct of operational, administrative, and financial practices related to the electoral process. The CEO is assisted in these legislated responsibilities by a head office leadership team.

Elections Saskatchewan's primary responsibility is to maintain an appropriate state of provincial election readiness. To that end, Elections Saskatchewan must appoint and train requisite numbers of constituency returning officers and election officers to ensure electoral preparedness throughout each government's mandate, and to be fully ready for by-elections and scheduled general elections.

The Election Act, 1996 (the Election Act) also places a duty on the CEO to assist registered political parties, candidates, chief official agents, and business managers to ensure the Election Act's financial transparency and disclosure goals are met. Elections Saskatchewan publishes guides for party chief official agents and candidate business managers to help them fulfill their administrative and financial reporting responsibilities, compile the necessary support documentation, and ensure their annual financial disclosures are filed in accordance with the Election Act and *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001* (Saskatchewan).



Elections Saskatchewan's Executive Team includes Jeff Kress (Deputy CEO, Electoral Operations), Dr. Michael Boda (Chief Electoral Officer), and Jennifer Colin (Deputy CEO, Corporate Services & Electoral Finance).

Where applicable, Elections Saskatchewan is responsible for assessing and reimbursing election expenses which are paid from the province's General Revenue Fund. Elections Saskatchewan has established a financial review system to certify public reimbursement of election expenses through the examination and audit of registered political parties' and candidates' expense returns and required disclosure documentation. To promote transparency, expense return details are tabled in the Legislative Assembly and posted on Elections Saskatchewan's website.

Elections Saskatchewan is also responsible for investigating offences under the Election Act. While the Act is regulatory rather than criminal, the role of Elections Saskatchewan is to inspect, investigate, and inquire about instances where contravention of the Election Act is suspected or alleged, as deemed necessary by the CEO. Since this responsibility is a matter of considerable discretion and is often initiated by complaints filed by interested parties, it is incumbent upon Elections Saskatchewan to consider whether any specific situation has contravened the overall purpose, policy rationale, and/or legislative intent of the province's electoral legislation.



To ensure political stakeholders and the public are aware of important aspects of its role and mandate, Elections Saskatchewan maintains an outreach program that responds to public enquiries and liaises with registered political parties, candidates, and their chief official agents and business managers.

The CEO reports annually to the Legislative Assembly, via submission of a written report that is tabled by the Speaker, on matters related to administering the Election Act. In addition to such annual reporting, the CEO also prepares reports to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly on all elections administered by his office. The Chief Electoral Officer's Report on a Provincial General Election is published in four separate volumes: 1) Statement of Votes, 2) Administrative Review, 3) Statement of Expenditures, and 4) Legislative Change Recommendations. Administrative and financial reporting for constituency by-elections are encapsulated in individual by-election reports.

The environment within which Elections Saskatchewan is accountable is unique and complex due to the potential timing uncertainty of the provincial electoral cycle, the decentralized nature of election administration, its requirement for an extremely large temporary workforce, and the interaction among registered political parties, candidates, media and the electorate. The integrated management of this highly decentralized process rests with Elections Saskatchewan and depends heavily on its impartial and effective administration of the process integrity controls contained in the Election Act.

The Field Leadership Team

While central electoral administration is the responsibility of Elections Saskatchewan's head office leadership team, the regional and constituency-level conduct of electoral events is the responsibility of the field leadership team.

Supervisory returning officers (SROs), each representing a different geographic zone of the province that comprises five to seven constituencies, are responsible for supporting returning officers within those constituencies in performing their duties. SROs act as a liaison between the head office and the constituency returning officers and provide oversight to ensure electoral events are administered and conducted at a consistently high standard across the province in accordance with direction from Elections Saskatchewan's executive leadership.

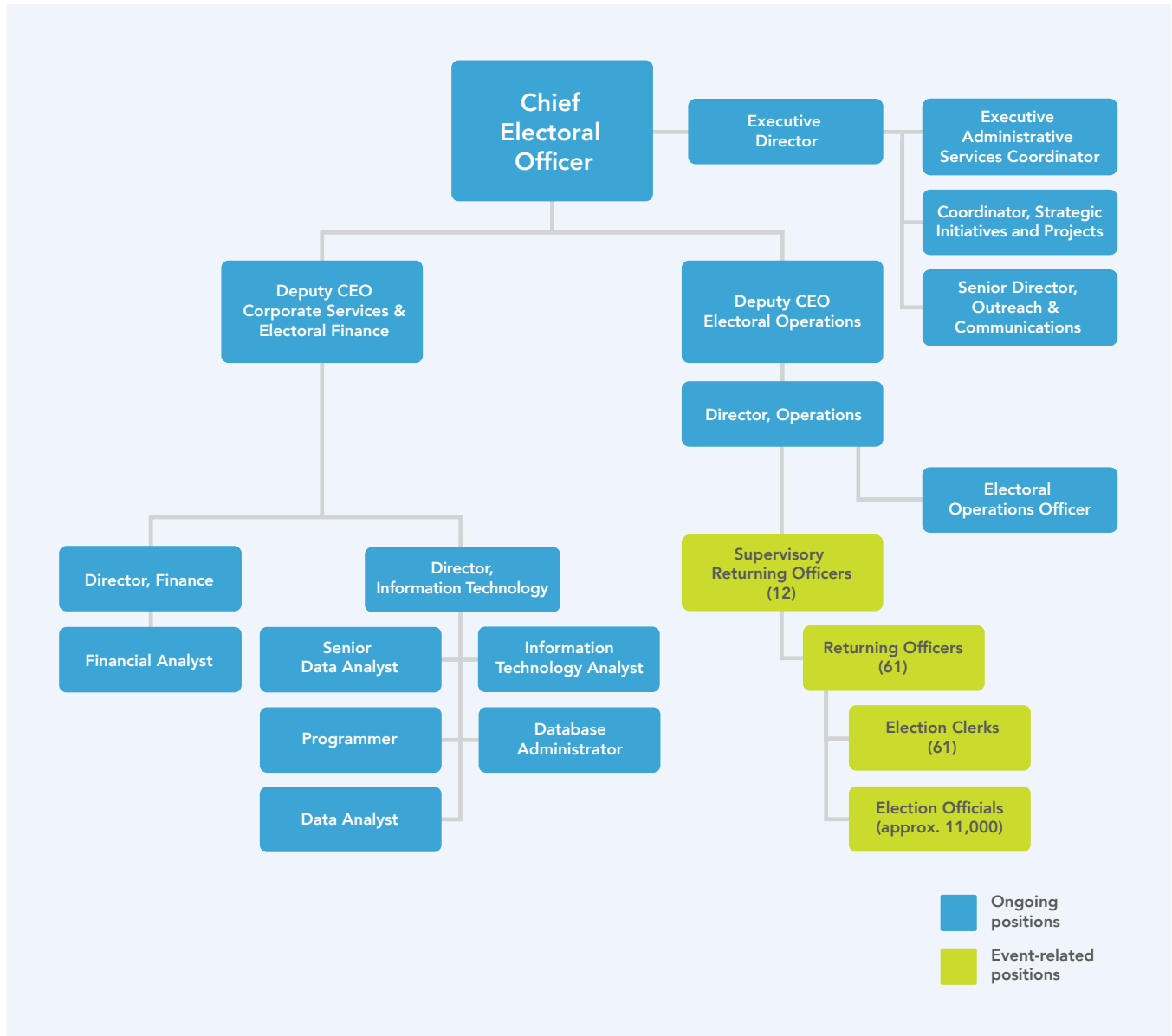
Representing Elections Saskatchewan at the local level, each constituency has a returning officer who is assisted by an election clerk. These two individuals are entrusted with upholding the neutrality of the province's decentralized electoral process within their constituency, and are responsible for the administration, conduct, and reporting of electoral proceedings for general elections, by-elections, referendums, and plebiscites.

An important part of achieving and maintaining election readiness is having constituency returning officers and election clerks appointed and in position within each of the province's 61 constituencies. The CEO appoints all provincial returning officers and election clerks. Notices of all returning officer appointments (or cancellations) are published in The Saskatchewan Gazette. Returning officer and election clerk vacancies are filled through independent merit-based competitions.



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Elections Saskatchewan (2021-22)



FOUNDATIONS FOR MODERNIZATION





During the 2017-18 fiscal year, Elections Saskatchewan prepared and published a strategic plan in preparation for the 29th Provincial Election.¹ Covering the years 2017 to 2022, the plan facilitated a significant institutional shift—altering its focus from organizational renewal to acting intentionally to sustain democratic traditions, lead in establishing best practices in election management, and modernize an election system that has been in place since the province's founding in 1905.

The 2017-2022 Strategic Plan was organized around a strategic imperative with two pillars—one aimed at sustaining improvements made during the previous electoral cycle and another on modernizing the conduct of our electoral events. This strategic imperative was established as a frame for the five years

of activity at Elections Saskatchewan on which the strategic plan focuses.

This year's annual report continues to link Elections Saskatchewan's key activities during the fiscal year to the objectives and strategic goals established within its strategic plan (see the map for our current strategic plan below). This is achieved by pointing to several objectives and measures against which the institution can assess its level of success over the life of the strategic plan. As this is the final year of the organization's current strategic plan, a full assessment

and a final report card has been included in the section entitled Measuring Strategic Plan Performance. Over the course of the coming year, a new strategic plan for the organization will be developed with details included in next year's annual report.


Elections Saskatchewan's Strategic Imperative (2017-2022)

Sustain

Refine and improve our organization for the efficient and effective delivery of electoral events.

Modernize

Innovate toward best practice in election management.



Vision				
<p>Our hope for Saskatchewan: The people of Saskatchewan trust, value and participate in the democratic process</p> <p>Our vision for Elections Saskatchewan We are a leader in establishing best practices in election management</p>				
Mission				
Elections Saskatchewan is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly, created to plan, organize, deliver and regulate provincial electoral events for the people of Saskatchewan.				
Values				
<p>Professionalism We demand the highest standards in our performance.</p>	<p>Impartiality We are objective, fair and non-partisan.</p>	<p>Innovation We seek solutions to propel us toward election modernization.</p>	<p>Service We go above and beyond to meet the needs of our stakeholders and the legislated requirements of election management.</p>	<p>Accountability We earn the trust of the people of Saskatchewan and our stakeholders through commitment to legislation, best practices and standards in election management.</p>
Sustain		Modernize		
Refine and improve our organization for the efficient and effective delivery of election events		Innovate toward best practices in election management		
Stakeholder	1.0 We succeed by ensuring we meet the expectations of our stakeholders:			
	<p>1.1 Voters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the electoral process and have every opportunity to participate 	<p>1.2 Political Parties and Candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the electoral process and are supported equitably 	<p>1.3 Other key actors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and trust electoral processes Enhance the effectiveness of elections management 	
Finance	2.0 We ensure accountability and sustainability by:			
	<p>2.1 Financial Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial accountability is achieved through sound budgeting and reporting 	<p>2.2 Adaptability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elections Saskatchewan is responsive to the financial pressures of the elections management environment 		
Processes/ Operations	3.0 We strive for operational excellence with specific emphasis in:			
	<p>3.1 Organizational Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core systems and processes allow for ongoing effective operations Electoral systems and processes ensure ongoing readiness for election event management 	<p>3.2 Regulatory Modernization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislation is modernized to reflect best possible practices and ensure compliance 	<p>3.3 Information Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems and technology support modernization of election management processes 	<p>3.4 Continuous Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes are monitored and improved through the application of standards and best practices
Organization Learning	4.0 We strive for organizational excellence with specific emphasis in:			
	<p>4.1 Project Management and Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority initiatives are executed through effective project management and planning processes 	<p>4.2 Capacity Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance capacity of head office and field staff Important relationships are built and sustained to enhance the electoral management process 	<p>4.3 Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A culture of excellence aligned with institution's values 	

¹ Elections Saskatchewan, Sustaining. Leading. Modernizing.: Advancing Electoral Excellence in Saskatchewan – 2017-2022 (Regina, Elections Saskatchewan, December 2017). The strategic plan can be found online at <https://elections.sk.ca/ESKStrategicPlan2017-22>.

CONTINUING CLOSE OUT OF SASKATCHEWAN'S 29TH GENERAL ELECTION

Saskatchewan's 29th General Election was held on October 26, 2020, about halfway through the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Similar, however, to the fact that planning for a general election takes multiple years, closing out a general election can push into the following fiscal years.

Post-election reporting is a significant activity for any election management body.

This type of reporting typically includes the public release of poll-by-poll results from the election, detailed financial data, and is an important step in ensuring the integrity and transparency of the event. Elections Saskatchewan published two of its planned four volumes in *A Report on the Twenty-Ninth General Election* during FY2021-22. Volume I, Statement of Votes, which includes poll by poll results as well as analysis and data on voter turnout, was published in mid-June. Volume II, Administrative Review, was published in late-September and offered the results of field level analysis of Elections Saskatchewan's delivery of the general election. Volume II also included a number of administrative commitments that the Chief Electoral Officer made with an eye toward improving the election process for the next election.

Strategic Goal 1.3

We succeed by ensuring we meet the expectations of our stakeholders and that key actors understand and trust electoral processes.



Volume I, Statement of Votes, was released in July 2021.

Reporting typically includes the public release of poll-by-poll results from the election, detailed financial data, and is an important step in ensuring the integrity and transparency of the event.



Volume III, Statement of Expenditures, will be published in the first half of FY2022-23. Volume III will provide information on the financial costs of the province's 29th General Election and will also include the results of the first ever administrative review of the province's political finance processes. This will include a series of administrative commitments related to improving the processes and procedures followed by Elections Saskatchewan as it administers this portion of its mandate.

Volume IV, Chief Electoral Officer's Recommendations for Legislative Reform, will also be published in the first half of FY2022-23. This report will help to set the stage for the continued modernization of Saskatchewan's system of delivering elections. The Chief Electoral Officer will offer a number of recommendations that will allow modernization to continue in a manner that is consistent with the vision first outlined in the Volume IV report published shortly after Saskatchewan's 28th General Election, held in April 2016.

Post-event reporting is one task that must take place after a general election, but it is far from the only one. Much of the province's political finance processes occur well after the end of the writ period. The deadline for candidates to file their audited election expense return for the last election was January 26, 2021. The deadline for registered political parties to file their audited election return was April 26, 2021. While the candidate deadline was in FY2020-21, portions of the work reviewing these returns took place in the fiscal year covered by this annual report.

Every election expense return received by Elections Saskatchewan follows a similar process. A preliminary review is conducted when the return is first received to ensure that it contains the appropriate auditor's report and all back-up documentation required. At this point, if the return was received prior to the deadline, the candidate's nomination deposit is returned and, if applicable, an interim election expense reimbursement is processed.

Following that, a detailed review is conducted to ensure the return has been completed in compliance with *The Election Act, 1996* and other direction provided by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer in the form of Interpretation Bulletins and CEO Directives. A team reviews campaign account bank statements and reconciles all deposits to contributions reported on the return to ensure all amounts have been disclosed appropriately. All expenses reported are reviewed to ensure that they meet the definition of an "Election Expense" and back-up documentation is reviewed to ensure no expenses have been excluded from the return that should be reported. All advertisements are reviewed to ensure that they contain the appropriate authorization by the business manager.

This process requires a good deal of communication and cooperation with the business manager, or Chief Official Agent, to address questions and provide any additional documentation required. Once the detailed review is complete, the team makes the adjustments required to the return and a calculation of eligible election expenses is completed to determine the final reimbursement for election expenses to the candidate where applicable.

Much of the province's political finance processes occur well after the end of the writ period.

During the past year, Elections Saskatchewan launched a new Contribution Search Tool on its website. This searchable database made the information contained in candidate and registered political party financial returns far easier to search and contained data from 2016 onwards. This tool can be found in the Political Finance section of the Elections Saskatchewan website.

Alongside reporting and political finance activities, many other important activities take place in the months and years following a general election. By legislation, many election materials are required to be destroyed one year after election day. This activity was delayed somewhat by the ongoing presence of COVID-19 which made it difficult to have a team of people working closely together in the Elections Saskatchewan warehouse for the necessary amount of time. Only by clearing out materials from one election can Elections Saskatchewan begin preparing at its warehouse for the next.

Finally, FY 2021-22 involved an important transition as the period marked the last year covered by Elections Saskatchewan's existing five-year strategic plan, published in 2017, which guided the institution through the last election. A new plan, tailored to ensuring the successful administration of the next general election, will be established in consultation with Elections Saskatchewan team members and published in the coming year.



During the past year, Elections Saskatchewan launched a new Contribution Search Tool on its website.



RECOMMENDING IMPROVEMENTS

The time between general elections is also the period when the Chief Electoral Officer is able to offer widespread and systemic recommendations to improve the province's election system.

In 2021-22, the Chief Electoral Officer released:

- Resolving the Municipal/Provincial Election Timing Problem in Saskatchewan, Version 2.0
- Modernizing Saskatchewan's Constituency Boundaries Legislation & Process

As mentioned earlier, the key set of recommendations that the Chief Electoral Officer will deliver in advance of the next election will be contained in Volume IV, *Chief Electoral Officer's Recommendations for Legislative Reform*. That document will help to set the stage for continued modernization and will have an impact on nearly every aspect of what the next election will look like. And while that report will not be published until next fiscal year, the Chief Electoral Officer delivered a preview in late-summer 2021 with the distribution of *Modernizing Saskatchewan's Provincial Voting Experience – Voting Services Modernization for Saskatchewan's 30th General Election*.² This report offered a preview of what could be expected in Volume IV, with three core components:

- Moving from an "election day" to an "election period"
- Modernizing election processes and administration, and
- Broadening access to voting.

And while the recommendations previewed in the modernization paper may ultimately be the most important, they were not the only ones delivered by the Chief Electoral Officer over the past year. Throughout his term, the Chief Electoral Officer has actively offered legislators with formal recommendations on a variety of legislative and policy issues outside of *The Election Act, 1996*. In FY2021-22, the Chief Electoral Officer brought forward two documents offering guidance to legislators in areas critical to the broader success of the province's democratic system of governance.

The first document the Chief Electoral Officer offered to government was to increase the amount of time between scheduled municipal and provincial election dates by moving municipal elections to May beginning in 2024.³ In 2020, the 29th General Election was held on October 26, 2020, with municipal elections following across the province two weeks later on November 9. This caused confusion for voters, with some wanting to apply to vote by mail municipally but contacting Elections Saskatchewan by mistake and vice versa.

It was also not ideal for municipal candidates who had less time to debate and discuss issues of local concern with attention the provincial event for much of the municipal election period. Further complicating matters was a severe winter storm that hit many municipalities in the province on November 9, forcing voting to be suspended in some communities and rescheduled to a later time. Having municipal elections in the middle

Strategic Goal 3.2

We strive for operational excellence with specific emphasis on ensuring legislation is modernized to reflect best possible practice and to ensure compliance.

While the recommendations previewed in the modernization paper may ultimately be the most important, they were not the only ones delivered by the Chief Electoral Officer over the past year.

² This paper can be found on the Elections Saskatchewan website at <https://www.elections.sk.ca/reports-data/reports-publications/>

³ A copy of the CEO's discussion paper, entitled *Resolving the Municipal/Provincial Election Timing Problem in Saskatchewan, Version 2.0*, can be found at www.elections.sk.ca/MunicipalProvincialElectionTiming.



of November will mean a continued risk of inclement weather having a significant impact on how voting occurs.

Post-election survey work conducted by Elections Saskatchewan found that 55 percent of respondents thought there should be more time between provincial and municipal elections. And 21 percent of voters reported that they were confused by the arrangement of election dates. In the time since the publication of the Chief Electoral Officer's discussion paper in August 2021, no legislative solution has been introduced that would resolve this issue. For this reason, the Chief Electoral Officer is reissuing his recommendation and asking legislators to consider solving this ongoing problem with a permanent solution.

"I am recommending that municipal election day be moved to May beginning in 2024 and every four years thereafter."

The Chief Electoral Officer also issued a document containing series of recommendations in FY2021-22 to enhance the province's constituency boundary delimitation process. Modernizing Saskatchewan's Constituency Boundaries Legislation & Process, a CEO Assessment Series report, was published in November 2021.⁴ This report offered ten recommendations that would improve the independence, impartiality, and efficiency of the boundary review process.

The Chair of the previous Constituency Boundaries Commission had encouraged the Chief Electoral Officer to draft this report as that Commission completed its work in 2012. The province's boundary setting process had not been comprehensively reviewed since the province's first boundary commission was established in 1972.

The ten recommendations were:

1. Integrate the schedule for electoral boundary commissions with the schedule for general elections	2. Appoint independent, impartial commissions
3. Provide an appropriate completion timeline for each constituency boundary commission	4. Designate Elections Saskatchewan as the boundaries commission secretariat
5. Enable commissions to set their own rules and procedures	6. Confirm the entire population of provincial citizens is to be considered
7. Set reasonable population variances for southern constituencies	8. Correct population imbalances between the northern constituencies
9. Adjust rules for establishing constituency boundaries	10. Enable commissions to use modern boundary descriptions

Strategic Goal 3.2

We strive for operational excellence with specific emphasis on ensuring legislation is modernized to reflect best possible practice and to ensure compliance.

While these recommendations were not passed into law before the appointment of a Constituency Boundary Commission in spring 2022, they will remain as possible improvements in advance of the next commission, set for 2032.



PREPARING FOR 2024

Even while Elections Saskatchewan was finalizing the close out of the province's 29th General Election, it was preparing to ensure the successful delivery of the 30th General Election. As soon as the Return to the Writ took place in November 2020, work began on preparing for October 2024. The Chief Electoral Officer engaged with stakeholders and returned to the long-term, multi-year vision that was established after the province's 28th General Election in 2016. While this is an annual report for Elections Saskatchewan covering the 2021-2022 fiscal year, it is also a report documenting a portion of a much larger project that will ultimately culminate in the fall of 2024 with the province's next general election.

Current plans will see an election in 2024 that will look very different than the one delivered in 2020. As described under the section focused on Recommending Improvements, the Chief Electoral Officer is proposing extensive legislative amendments in his Volume IV Report.

With the publication of the Chief Electoral Officer's Volume IV report pending, and the final set of changes ultimately agreed to and brought forward by legislators still to be seen, the exact form of the next provincial general election is not yet known. Despite this, Elections Saskatchewan is hard at work preparing to serve voters in a way that is different than previous events.

Perhaps the biggest change would be the presence of laptop computers allowing election workers to strike voters off an electronic voting record and ballot tabulators to count votes more quickly and accurately. These plans will be similar to those described in past Elections Saskatchewan annual reports under the project referred to as "Advance Voting Services Modernization."⁵ In 2024, however, technology will be implemented at far more voting locations than was planned for in 2020, where the scope was limited to advance polls in mostly urban constituencies.

There are several key benefits to introducing this type of technology to the voting process. Voters will be served faster as it will be easier to scan a Voter Information Card and have the computer bring up the correct voter as opposed to finding one name on a paper voters list. Results will be produced faster, and election workers will not need to hand count ballots after a long day of serving voters. Finally, registered political parties and candidates will be able to receive real time data on who has voted and when, data which is currently only available by manually collecting "bingo sheets" from every voting location in the province.

The introduction of technology to the administration of voting changes many aspects of Elections Saskatchewan preparations. Training documents must be recast and rewritten, while forms, guides and manuals must all be recreated. Even the type of Returning Officer that Elections Saskatchewan looks for must be reconsidered, as Field Leadership Team members will now be responsible for a significant technology roll out as well as their traditional responsibilities. Voting locations will need to be reviewed to ensure sufficient Internet and electrical coverage as well as standard accessibility checks.

Current plans will see an election in 2024 that will look very different than the one delivered in 2020.

Strategic Goal 1.3

We succeed by ensuring that we meet the expectations of our stakeholders and that key actors understand and trust electoral processes.

⁵ A detailed description of plans for AVSM can be found in Elections Saskatchewan's 2019-2020 annual report. AVSM implementation was suspended in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the possibility of an early election call.

Other planned changes for 2024 include an emphasis on “voting week” as opposed to separate advance voting and election day voting opportunities. While the legislated provisions for each may stay the same, Elections Saskatchewan will no longer differentiate between the two voting options but rather focus on the many places and times that are available for voters to cast their ballots.

One more key innovation that is expected to be in place for 2024 is “Vote Anywhere” locations. In these locations, any voter, from any constituency will be able to cast their ballot and have it recorded and counted for their home constituency. This will offer much greater convenience for voters who live in one community but work in another or who find themselves away from their home for long periods of the election campaign.

Another project which is underway and scheduled for completion in advance of the next general election is the completion of a new Election Management System (EMS). An EMS is a software tool that serves as the backbone of a modern election management body. It can manage election results, collate information on voting locations, record election worker information, etc. Elections Saskatchewan has been developing a new EMS for several years and current plans will see most development work completed in FY2022-23. After that, testing and training will take place with a goal of having the new system in place for the 2024 election.

Elections Saskatchewan did administer one by-election during the past fiscal year, in the northern constituency of Athabasca on February 15, 2022. For an election management body, by-elections are a very good opportunity to test processes and procedures that are not yet in use or still under development.

Strategic Goal 3.3

We strive for operational excellence with specific emphasis in ensuring that systems and technology support modernization of election management processes.



A provincial by-election was held in the constituency of Athabasca in February 2022.



Election workers accepting a voter's ballot over the phone during the February 2022 constituency of Athabasca by-election.

In Athabasca, the Chief Electoral Officer authorized the use of "Assisted Telephone Voting," (ATV) a form of voting whereby a voter calls in and is assisted by multiple teams of election workers in casting their ballot over the phone. By using multiple teams of workers, the election management body can ensure that no one knows both the voter's identity and the candidate that they wished to vote for. This preserves the secrecy of the ballot. Moving forward, ATV could serve as a valuable accessibility tool for voters who are unable to attend a physical voting location. The Chief Electoral Officer is considering including provisions that would allow for ATV as part of his Volume IV recommendations.

Despite the ongoing presence of COVID-19 and the possibly of inclement wintry weather in the northern constituency, the Athabasca by-election was administered smoothly and without incident. This was due in no small part to the dedicated Field Leadership Team members and the returning office team who worked hard to deliver the by-election to residents of the constituency.

As of the publication of this annual report in summer 2022, the next provincial general election was still more than two years away. The exact details of how that event will be administered must still be decided upon by legislators through the passing of amended legislation. That information, and more, will be captured in Elections Saskatchewan's 2022-23 annual report.

Strategic Goal 1.1
Voters understand the electoral process and have every opportunity to participate.



EVALUATING PROGRESS OF ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN'S 2017-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2017, Elections Saskatchewan published its Strategic Plan, “Sustaining. Leading. Modernizing. Advancing Electoral Excellence in Saskatchewan.” This plan introduced the strategic imperative that would guide the organization through to 2022 as well as targeted goals that would shape its activities. It has served as an overarching presence for the organization over the past five years, reflected in annual reports, public comments made by the Chief Electoral Officer, in the detailed planning and preparation that makes an election possible, and finally in the service and commitment shown by thousands of election workers serving hundreds of thousands of voters.

The life of this strategic plan has seen several events that required Elections Saskatchewan to suspend certain initiatives that were planned for the 29th General Election and this is reflected in the scorecard below. Overwhelmingly, however, Elections Saskatchewan was able to meet its goals, a result that can be traced back to a strong plan grounded by meaningful values that guided the organization through a time of significant uncertainty. A good strategic plan allows for flexibility in implementation while still holding an organization accountable to achieving its core goals.

The first event affecting Elections Saskatchewan's stated plans came when public statements were made that raised the very real possibility of an early election in spring 2020. This forced a drastic reassessment of the organization's planning position. For example, under Goal 3.1 below, one objective was that Elections Saskatchewan would initiate Phase One of modernization with technology to be deployed in 40% of polls. However, uncertainty about the election date meant that modernization had to be delayed until the 2024 election, hence the reported percentage of 0% of polls modernized.

The second event requiring the institution to refocus and regroup was the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, the plan still provided guidance in helping Elections Saskatchewan face these unprecedented circumstances in a way consistent with the values and strategic imperative of the organization. While it may not appear in the following tables, Elections Saskatchewan used the opportunity afforded by the pandemic to modernize its vote by mail system. This innovation allowed a process that was originally capable of handling 4,000 to 5,000 ballots to become one that accommodated just under 60,000 ballots. This is one example of how the strategic plan guided the organization to success, even under drastically changed circumstances.

Elections Saskatchewan has been intentional in tracking and documenting its progress toward these goals over the past five years. Data has been gathered through stakeholder surveys, administrative documentation, financial information, and other sources. The following details Elections Saskatchewan's accomplishments with respect to its strategic goals. It indicates a great many successes but also highlights areas to be objects of focus for the next strategic plan. More information on Elections Saskatchewan's strategic planning process, including results from past plans and year by year progress, can be found at www.elections.sk.ca/strategicplan.

Overwhelmingly...
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1.0 Stakeholders

1.1 Voters: understand the electoral process and have every opportunity to participate					
OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE	2022 RESULT	TARGET
Support voters through education and outreach	Voter Satisfaction with Elections Saskatchewan Information Sources	Maintain or Improve	80.9%	94.9%	✓
Remove barriers to participation as election workers	Field Leadership Team Assessment of Ease of Recruitment	Increase by 5%	32.1%	38.3%	✓
Remove barriers to participation as voters	Voter Assessment of Ease of Voting	Maintain or Improve	96.6%	97.4%	✓

1.2 Political Parties and Candidates: understand the electoral process and are supported equitably					
OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE	2022 RESULT	TARGET
Support Registered Political Parties and candidates through education and training	Candidates, Business Managers and Chief Official Agents Satisfaction with Elections Saskatchewan Support	Establish Baseline	NCB ¹	Partially Satisfied	✓
Provide equitable and impartial treatment	Candidates, Business Managers and Chief Official Agents Assessment of Treatment	Establish Baseline	NCB	Satisfied	✓
Maintain a consultative approach	Chief Official Agents Assessment of consultative approach	Establish Baseline	NCB	Satisfied	✓

1.3 Other key actors: understand and trust electoral processes and enhance the effectiveness of election management					
OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE	2022 RESULT	TARGET
Engage a broad range of community stakeholders in the planning, administering and reviewing the 29th General Election	Percentage of Stakeholder Groups Consulted	75.0%	NCB	86.7%	✓
Engage other Electoral Management Bodies in the preparation and review of the 29th General Election	Percentage of Canadian Electoral Management Bodies consulted	75.0%	NCB	100%	✓

¹ No current baseline available.



2.0 Finance

2.1 Financial Management: financial accountability is achieved through sound budgeting and reporting

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE	2022 RESULT	TARGET
Maintain sound budgeting	Administrative Budget Variance	Maintain or Improve	Under 10%	-0.73%	✓
Ensure transparency through public release of financial disclosure reports	Complete/Not Completed	Completed	NA	Completed	✓

2.2 Adaptability: Elections Saskatchewan is responsive to the financial pressures of the election management environment

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE	2022 RESULT	TARGET
Implement Returning Office expense control framework	Complete/Not Completed	Completed	NA	Completed	✓
Leverage technology to provide innovative and cost-effective ways to distribute voter information cards	Complete/Not Completed	Completed	NA	Completed	✓

3.0 Processes/Operations

3.1 Organizational Readiness: Core systems and processes allow for ongoing effective operations. Electoral systems and processes ensure ongoing readiness for election event management

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE	2022 RESULT	TARGET
Foster a spirit of innovation in core processes	Candidates, Business Managers and Chief Official Agent's Assessment of Innovation	Establish Baseline	NCB	58.4%	✓
Refine Risk Management Framework for use on all institutional projects	Complete/Not Completed	Completed	NA	Completed	✓
Strengthen a state of readiness for electoral events	FLT Satisfaction with Overall Election Planning	Establish Baseline	NCB	83.9%	✓



3.2 Information Management: Systems and technology support modernization of election management processes

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE	2022 RESULT	TARGET
Enhancement of cyber security for the 29th General Election is conducted	Complete/Not Completed	Completed	NA	Completed	✓
Initiate Phase One of modernization of Saskatchewan elections	Percentage of constituencies with modernized advance polls	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	✗
Design and implement online party and candidate financial reporting	Done/Not Done	Completed	NA	Completed	✓

3.3 Regulatory Modernization: Legislation is modernized to reflect best possible practices and ensure compliance

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE	2022 RESULT	TARGET
Provide recommendations for the drafting of legislation to modernize Saskatchewan's election system in line with best practices	Completed/Not Completed	Completed	NA	Completed	✓
Contribute to future legislative reform in line with best practices through CEO Assessments	Completed/Not Completed	Completed	NA	Completed	✓

3.4 Continuous Improvement: Processes are monitored and improved through the application of standards and best practices

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE	2022 RESULT	TARGET
Ensure data and feedback from past electoral events are used to refine and improve upon future performance	Field Leadership Team and Election Workers' perception that the election was run better than the previous one	Maintain or Improve	23.3%	25.4%	✓
Employ parallel processes during electoral events to systematically test process improvements	Percentage of By-Elections conducting tests of innovations	75.0%	NA	85.7%	✓
Improve the overall management of the election	Voter Satisfaction with the management of the election	Maintain or Improve	83.8%	92.4%	✓



4.0 Organizational Learning

4.1 Project Management and Planning: Priority initiatives are executed through effective project management and planning processes

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE	2022 RESULT	TARGET
Bolster the level of project management maturity of Elections Saskatchewan	Percentage of major projects managed through Project Briefs/ Charters and Benefits Realized reporting	Establish Baseline	NCB	100.0%	✓

4.2 Capacity Building: Enhance capacity of head office and field staff; important relationships are built and sustained to enhance processes of election management

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE	2022 RESULT	TARGET
Further build head office staff capacity through professional development	Percentage of Head Office Staff engaged in professional development courses each year	Establish Baseline	NCB	100.0%	✓
Redesign training to reflect modern adult-based learning principles	Election Workers' perception of preparedness after training	Maintain or Improve	85.1%	86.0%	✓
Enhance the use of technology in training to facilitate learning	Field Leadership Team perception of the effectiveness of technology in training	Establish Baseline	NCB	81.9%	✓
Support the building of capacity amongst the registered political parties	Chief Official Agent's Perception of Capacity Building Activities	Establish Baseline	NCB	Satisfied	✓

4.3 Culture: A culture of excellence aligned with institution's values

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE	2022 RESULT	TARGET
Mission, Values and Goals are clearly understood and embodied throughout the institution	Field Leadership Team and Election Workers' perception that ESK ran the election fairly	Maintain or Improve	92.9%	98.3%	✓
Core values integrated into institutional operations	Field Leadership Team Assessment of ESK operating according to its values	Establish Baseline	NCB	84.0%	✓



Elections Saskatchewan is proud of the accomplishments it has made over the life of its previous strategic plan. The strategic imperative, values, and goals within allowed it to be ready to administer an election months earlier than called for in legislation if required to and then allowed the organization to pivot and administer a safe voting experience during a worldwide pandemic. Neither of these actions would have been possible without the guidance provided by the plan.

Moving forward, Elections Saskatchewan will be developing a new strategic plan in FY2022-23. This plan will build on lessons learned during the past planning cycle and will allow the organization to continue to fulfil its mandate and to implement the type of modernization envisioned by the Chief Electoral Officer. Once again, it will include input from all levels of Elections Saskatchewan and will serve to guide the province's election management body through the administration of the next general election. Full details will be published in Elections Saskatchewan's 2022-23 annual report along with a preliminary plan for reporting on the success of the organization in meeting its goals.



Financial Summary

The work of an election management body differs fundamentally from that of most other public service organizations in that it operates on an electoral cycle, rather than an annual cycle. As such, it incurs costs associated with the ongoing operations of the institution as well as costs associated with the delivery of electoral events that happen either on a schedule set out in statute (i.e., general elections and boundary redistributions) or on-demand (i.e., by-elections and referenda).

Elections Saskatchewan's FY2021-22 budget estimates distinguish between these on-going administration costs and event-related costs. In most instances, the former expenditures will remain relatively constant over time while the latter costs will fluctuate and peak in the 12-month period that immediately follows a general election call.

Regardless, Elections Saskatchewan must be accountable for both types of costs.

Details on the total four-year cost of the most recent election can be found in Volume III of the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the 29th General Election, Statement of Expenditures.

A summarized view of Elections Saskatchewan's fiscal activity during FY2021-22 is set out in the table below:

Elections Saskatchewan Total Expenditures vs. Budget, Fiscal Year 2021-2022		
	Budget	Actual
Ongoing Administration Costs	\$ 3,968,647	\$ 3,783,393
Event-Related Costs	\$ 1,138,353	\$ 1,419,813
Total	\$ 5,107,000	\$ 5,203,206

Strategic Goal 2.1 & 2.2

We ensure accountability and sustainability through financial management and adaptability.

APPENDICES

- A. Elections Saskatchewan Financial Statements 2021-22
- B. Registered Political Parties
- C. Annual Financial Reporting by Political Parties
- D. Saskatchewan's Political Contributions Tax Credit System
- E. Annual Tax Credit Reporting





Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The accompanying financial statements are the responsibility of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (the Office). They have been prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

The Office maintains appropriate systems of internal control, including policies and procedures, which provide reasonable assurance that the Office's assets are safeguarded and that financial records are relevant and reliable.

The Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan conducts an independent audit of the financial statements. That examination is conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards and includes tests and other procedures that allow the Provincial Auditor to report on the fairness of the financial statements.



Michael Boda, D.Phil., Ph.D.
Chief Electoral Officer
Province of Saskatchewan



Jennifer Colin, CMA, CIA
Deputy Chief Electoral Officer
Corporate Services & Electoral Finance

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To: The Members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2022, and the statements of operations and accumulated surplus, change in net debt, and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer as at March 31, 2022, and the results of its operations, changes in its net debt, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Information

Management is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in 2021-22 annual report, but does not include the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or any knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed on this other information, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact in this auditor's report. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

**PROVINCIAL AUDITOR**
of Saskatchewan

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control identified during the audit.

Regina, Saskatchewan
July 18, 2022



Tara Clemett, CPA, CA, CISA
Provincial Auditor
Office of the Provincial Auditor



APPENDIX A:
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT MARCH 31

STATEMENT 1

	2022	2021
Financial Assets		
Due from the General Revenue Fund	\$ 705,790	\$ 2,334,134
	<u>705,790</u>	<u>2,334,134</u>
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	530,707	2,064,327
Accrued Employee Costs	175,083	269,807
	<u>705,790</u>	<u>2,334,134</u>
Net Debt (Statement 3)	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Non-financial Assets		
Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	917,485	1,167,954
Prepaid Expenses	-	16,536
	<u>917,485</u>	<u>1,184,490</u>
Accumulated Surplus (Statement 2)	<u>\$ 917,485</u>	<u>\$ 1,184,490</u>

(See accompanying notes to the financial statements)



STATEMENT 2

APPENDIX A:
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND ACCUMULATED SURPLUS
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31

	2022		2021
	Budget	Actual	Actual
	(Note 6)		
Revenue			
General Revenue Fund	\$ 5,107,000	\$ 5,200,130	\$ 27,568,871
Miscellaneous Income	-	3,076	9,147
Total Revenue	5,107,000	5,203,206	27,578,018
Expenses			
Operating:			
Salaries and Benefits	1,929,467	2,040,803	2,052,535
Contractual Services	1,245,360	992,737	221,429
Communications and Advertising	17,000	17,976	9,393
Employee Travel	34,110	4,549	419
Supplies and Services	180,422	171,566	194,115
Office Rent, Insurance and Utilities	408,888	379,621	411,671
Equipment	153,400	176,141	188,912
Amortization (Note 4)	232,511	250,469	256,596
Total Operating Expense	4,201,158	4,033,862	3,335,070
Events:			
2022 Athabasca By-Election Costs (Note 10) (Schedule 1)	452,000	541,495	-
2024 General Election Costs (Note 11) (Schedule 2)	532,820	500,063	-
2020 General Election Costs (Note 12) (Schedule 3)	153,534	386,678	24,411,699
2022 Saskatchewan Boundaries Commission Costs (Note 13) (Schedule 4)	-	8,113	-
Total Events Expense	1,138,353	1,436,349	24,411,699
Total Expenses	5,339,511	5,470,211	27,746,769
Operating (Deficit)	\$ (232,511)	\$ (267,005)	\$ (168,751)
Accumulated Surplus, beginning of year		1,184,490	1,353,241
Accumulated Surplus, end of year (Statement 1)		\$ 917,485	\$ 1,184,490

(See accompanying notes to the financial statements)



STATEMENT 3

APPENDIX A:
STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN NET DEBT
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31

	2022	2021
Operating (Deficit)	\$ (267,005)	\$ (168,751)
Acquisition of Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	-	(116,173)
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	250,469	256,596
Change in Prepaid Expenses	16,536	28,328
Increase (Decrease) in Net Debt	-	-
Net Debt, beginning of year	-	-
Net Debt, end of year (Statement 1)	\$ -	\$ -

STATEMENT 4

APPENDIX A:
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31

	2022	2021
Cash from (used for) operating activities:		
General Revenue Fund appropriation received	\$ 6,831,550	\$ 27,691,366
Salaries and benefits paid	(2,552,591)	(10,091,636)
Supplies and other expenses paid	(4,295,495)	(17,511,885)
Cash from (used for) operating activities	(16,536)	87,845
Cash from (used for) capital activities:		
Purchase of Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	-	(116,173)
Change in Prepaid Expenses	16,536	28,328
Cash from (used for) capital activities	16,536	(87,845)
Increase (Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the year	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents, end of the year	\$ -	\$ -

(See accompanying notes to the financial statements)



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

MARCH 31, 2022

1. Authority and Purpose

The Chief Electoral Officer is an officer of the Legislative Assembly and is appointed by resolution of the Assembly. The mandate of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (Office) is to administer provincial elections, enumerations and provincial election finances under *The Election Act, 1996*. The Office maintains the province's political contributions tax credit disclosure regime under *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*, and administers referenda, plebiscites and time votes according to *The Referendum and Plebiscite Act* and *The Time Act*. The net cost of the operations of the Office is borne by the General Revenue Fund of the Province of Saskatchewan.

2. Summary of Accounting Policies

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. These statements do not include a Statement of Remeasurement Gains and Losses as the Office has no activities that give rise to remeasurement gains or losses. As a result, its accumulated surplus is the same as its accumulated operating surplus.

The following policies are considered significant:

(a) Reporting Entity – The reporting entity is the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, for which the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible.

(b) Revenue – The Office receives statutory appropriations from the General Revenue Fund to carry out its work. General Revenue Fund appropriations are included in revenue when amounts are spent or committed.

(c) Tangible Capital Assets – Tangible capital assets are reported at cost less accumulated amortization. All capital assets are amortized on a straight-line basis over a life of two to ten years. Work in progress (WIP) is not amortized until completed and placed in service for use.

(d) Accrued Employee Costs – Accrued employee costs include the salary, vacation, and severance owed to staff of the Office at year end.

(e) Use of Estimates – These statements are prepared in conformity with Canadian public sector accounting standards. These principles require management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the period. Actual results could differ from those estimates. Differences are reflected in current year operations when identified.

3. New Standards and Amendments to Standards

A number of new standards and amendments to standards which may impact the Office are not yet effective for the year ended March 31, 2022, and have not been applied in preparing these financial statements. The following new standards and amendments to standards are effective for financial statements on or after the dates noted below:

PSG-8, Purchased Intangibles (April 1, 2023)
PS3160, Public Private Partnerships (April 1, 2023)
PS3280, Asset Retirement Obligations (April 1, 2022)
PS3400, Revenue (April 1, 2023)

The extent of the impact on adoption of these standards is not known at this time.



4. Tangible Capital Assets

The recognition and measurement of tangible capital assets is based on their service potential. These assets will not provide resources to discharge liabilities of the Office.

Table 1 – Tangible Capital Assets

	2022						2021
	Hardware & Software	Machinery & Equipment	Office Equipment	Furniture & Building Improvements	System Development	Total	Total
Cost:							
Beginning of year	\$ 149,406	\$ 28,270	\$ 4,615	\$ 816,688	\$ 2,331,736	\$ 3,330,715	\$ 3,508,189
Additions	-	-	-	-	-	-	116,173
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	(293,647)
End of year	149,406	28,270	4,615	816,688	2,331,736	3,330,715	3,330,715
Accumulated amortization:							
Beginning of year	71,957	19,789	4,615	807,259	1,259,141	2,162,761	2,199,812
Annual amortization	38,724	2,827	-	4,691	204,227	250,469	256,596
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	(293,647)
End of year	110,681	22,616	4,615	811,950	1,463,368	2,413,230	2,162,761
Net Book Value, end of year	\$ 38,725	\$ 5,654	\$ -	\$ 4,738	\$ 868,368	\$ 917,485	\$ 1,167,954



5. Contractual Obligations

Operating Leases

Minimum annual payments under operating leases on property over the next three years are as follows:

2022/23	108,750
2023/24	108,750
2024/25	112,500

6. Budget and Lapsing of Appropriation

Budget amounts reflected on an expense basis represent funds appropriated by the Legislative Assembly to enable the Chief Electoral Officer to carry out the Office's duties under *The Election Act, 1996*. The amount appropriated for the year was \$5,107,000.

An amount of \$4,655,000 was appropriated at the beginning of the fiscal year. A by-election occurred in the Athabasca constituency on February 15, 2022. Supplemental funding of \$452,000 was requested to cover the costs associated with this by-election.

The Office follows *The Financial Administration Act, 1993* with regards to its spending. If the Office spends less than its appropriation by March 31 the difference is not available to acquire goods and services in the next fiscal year.

7. Pension Plan

The Office participates in a defined contribution pension plan for the benefit of its employees. The Office's financial obligation of the plan is limited to making payments of 8.6% of employees' salaries for current service. Pension costs are not included in these statements as the costs are borne by other agencies (Note 8).

8. Costs Borne by Third Party Agencies

The Office has not been charged with certain administrative costs and employee benefit costs. These costs are borne by the Legislative Assembly Service and the Ministry of Finance. No provision for these costs has been made in these statements.

9. Financial Instruments

The Office's financial instruments include Due from the General Revenue Fund, Accounts Payable, and Accrued Employee Costs. The carrying amount of these instruments approximates fair value due to their immediate or short-term maturity. These instruments have no significant interest rate or credit risk.

10. 2022 Athabasca By-Election Costs

The Athabasca By-Election took place on February 15, 2022. Due to the timing of the event some expenses for 2021-22 were estimated. Any difference between estimated and actual expenses will be reflected in 2022-23.

11. 2024 General Election Costs

The 2024 General Election Costs are being incurred over four fiscal years. The costs for 2021-22 have been reflected in these financial statements.

12. 2020 General Election Costs

The 2020 General Election Costs were incurred over four fiscal years. The costs for 2021-22 have been reflected in these financial statements.

13. 2022 Saskatchewan Boundaries Commission

The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993 requires that a Provincial Constituency Boundaries Commission be established every 10 years to review and recommend changes to constituency boundaries in the province. The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer has been appointed as the Secretariat for the Commission and will incur costs on behalf of the Commission over fiscal years 2021-22 and 2022-23. The costs for 2021-22 have been reflected in these financial statements.



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

SCHEDULE 1

2022 ATHABASCA BY-ELECTION COSTS

	2022		2021
	Budget	Actual	Actual
<u>2022 Athabasca By-Election</u>			
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 166,337	\$ 152,926	\$ -
Contractual Services	59,275	78,802	-
Communications and Advertising	30,000	72,847	-
Employee Travel	30,000	25,193	-
Supplies and Services	68,278	82,879	-
Office Rent and Utilities	8,000	8,319	-
Equipment	-	1,006	-
Reimbursement of Election Expenses	90,110	119,523	-
Total Event Expenses (Statement 2)	\$ 452,000	\$ 541,495	\$ -

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

SCHEDULE 2

2024 GENERAL ELECTION COSTS

	2022		2021
	Budget	Actual	Actual
<u>2024 General Election</u>			
Salaries and Benefits	\$ -	\$ 78,279	\$ -
Contractual Services	532,820	373,767	-
Communications and Advertising	-	15,271	-
Employee Travel	-	1,314	-
Supplies and Services	-	15,729	-
Office Rent and Utilities	-	8,983	-
Equipment	-	6,720	-
Total Event Expenses (Statement 2)	\$ 532,820	\$ 500,063	\$ -

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
2020 GENERAL ELECTION COSTS**

SCHEDULE 3

<u>2020 General Election</u>	2022		2021
	Budget	Actual	Actual
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 77,274	\$ 183,249	\$ 8,195,254
Contractual Services	8,500	43,838	2,473,617
Communications and Advertising	55,000	59,237	1,072,963
Employee Travel	-	(590)	554,556
Supplies and Services	-	7,862	7,045,087
Office Rent and Utilities	-	73,198	1,309,111
Equipment	12,760	47,036	136,225
Reimbursement of Election Expenses	-	(27,152)	3,624,886
Total Event Expenses (Statement 2)	\$ 153,534	\$ 386,678	\$ 24,411,699

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
2022 SASKATCHEWAN BOUNDARIES COMMISSION COSTS**

SCHEDULE 4

<u>2022 Saskatchewan Boundaries Commission</u>	2022		2021
	Budget	Actual	Actual
Salaries and Benefits	\$ -	\$ 2,610	\$ -
Equipment	-	5,503	-
Total Event Expenses (Statement 2)	\$ -	\$ 8,113	\$ -



APPENDIX B: REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES

As of March 31, 2022, six political parties are registered in Saskatchewan. Their names, abbreviations, leaders, and chief official agents are recorded in the Register of Political Parties as follows:

REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES

Party Name	Party Abbreviation	Party Leader	Chief Official Agent	Website
Buffalo Party of Saskatchewan	BPSK	Philip Zajac	Barry Knight	www.buffalopartybpsk.ca
New Democratic Party, Saskatchewan Section	New Democratic Party (N.D.P.)	Ryan Meili	Tim Williams	www.saskndp.ca
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	PC Party of Saskatchewan	Vacant	Wayne Mastrachuk	www.pcsask.ca
Saskatchewan Green Party	Saskatchewan Green Party	Naomi Hunter	Nancy Carswell	www.saskgreen.ca
Saskatchewan Liberal Party	Saskatchewan Liberal Party	Jeffrey Walters	Reid Hill	www.saskliberals.ca
Saskatchewan Party	Saskatchewan Party	Scott Moe	The Saskatchewan Party Fund Inc. (Patrick Bundrock)	www.saskparty.com

The Political Party Registration Process

Under Section 224 of *The Election Act, 1996*, a political party may apply to be registered at any time between the day fixed for the return to a writ for a general election and ending on the day that is seven months before the polling day for the next general election.

A registration application must be in the prescribed form, accompanied by a complete and accurate petition for registration. Each petition must be signed by at least 2,500 eligible provincial voters. At least 1,000 of these voters must live in at least ten different provincial constituencies, with a minimum of 100 voters in each of those constituencies.

Along with its application and petition, a political party must file:

- A written statement declaring that its primary purpose is to field candidates for election as Members of the Legislative Assembly;
- An audited financial statement; and
- Prescribed information regarding the party's leader, senior officers, chief official agent, and auditor.

Once Elections Saskatchewan has reviewed the political party's registration documentation and vetted its application, the Chief Electoral Officer will register the political party and, in accordance with Section 233 of the Act, publish its name in *The Saskatchewan Gazette*.

APPENDIX C: ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORTING BY POLITICAL PARTIES

Under Section 250 of *The Election Act, 1996*, before May 1 each year, the chief official agent of a registered political party must file an audited Fiscal Period Return (Form E-521) detailing the party's financial activities for the preceding calendar year.

All donations of money and commercial value exceeding \$250 made during the year by individuals, corporations, trade unions, unincorporated organizations and associations, and any other person or group of persons must be reported on

Form E-521. Expenses incurred during an election campaign period are not reported on Form E-521. Under Section 251 of the Act, election expenses are reported on an audited Registered Political Party's Return of Election Expenses (Form E-524).

The following table summarizes the contributions received and expenses incurred by each registered political party for the calendar year 2021.

Calendar Year 2021

Contributions			Expenses			
Registered Political Party	Total Contributions	Cash on Hand	Operating Expenses	Advertising	Other	Total
Buffalo Party of Saskatchewan	31,627.00	-	31,779.81	-	8,272.05	40,051.86
New Democratic Party, Saskatchewan Section	1,182,224.47	1,552,412.71	981,054.52	46,612.53	156,958.65	1,184,625.70
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	12,799.98	53,582.84	149,358.70	10,524.15	-	159,882.85
Saskatchewan Green Party	7,289.00	15,212.37	11,803.79	-	-	11,803.79
Saskatchewan Liberal Party	20,988.29	36,088.63	10,525.64	6,843.64	750.00	18,119.28
Saskatchewan Party	2,122,178.50	1,457,632.00	1,627,051.25	-	551,877.00	2,178,928.25

Note: The information reported in this table is from fiscal returns as filed by the registered political party. Fiscal returns are reviewed by Elections Saskatchewan and are subject to change. Once reviewed, fiscal returns are posted on the Elections Saskatchewan website and are marked as "FINAL."



APPENDIX D: SASKATCHEWAN'S POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TAX CREDIT SYSTEM

The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001

(Saskatchewan) (the Tax Credit Act) governs the province's political contributions tax credit system and forms the basis for calculating political contribution tax credits for provincial resident taxpayers under *The Income Tax Act, 2000* (Saskatchewan).

Saskatchewan's political contributions tax credit system offers provincial resident taxpayers, including individuals and corporations, the opportunity to claim tax credits based on the eligible contributions they made to a registered political party or independent candidate.

Tax receipts issued by registered political parties or independent candidates must comply with the Tax Credit Act to qualify under the provincial tax act. Specifically, registered political parties and independent candidates may receipt contributions from provincial resident taxpayers when those contributions are used to advance the democratic process in Saskatchewan.

Tax Receipts

Under Section 8 of the Tax Credit Act, official income tax receipts are issued by the chief official agent of a registered political party or by the business manager in the case of an independent candidate.

- The chief official agent's name must be recorded in the Register of Political Parties maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer.
- The business manager is eligible to issue tax receipts only if the returning officer has certified the candidate's nomination under Subsection 48(2) of *The Election Act, 1996*.

Tax receipts may be issued for eligible contributions of \$25 or more to a registered political party or independent candidate.

The tax credit available to provincial resident taxpayers is calculated according to the following criteria:

- Where the total eligible contribution is \$400 or less, the taxpayer is entitled to claim 75 percent of the total contribution;
- Where the total eligible contribution is more than \$400 but not more than \$750, the taxpayer is entitled to claim \$300 plus 50 percent of the amount by which the total contribution exceeds \$400; and
- Where the total eligible contribution is more than \$750, the taxpayer is entitled to claim the lesser of \$650 or \$475 plus 33 percent of the amount by which the total contribution exceeds \$750.

APPENDIX E: ANNUAL TAX CREDIT REPORTING

Under Section 13 of *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001 (Saskatchewan)* (the Tax Credit Act), on or by the last day of April each year, the chief official agent of a registered political party must file a reconciliation of tax receipts used the preceding calendar year on an Annual Report of Contributions (Registered Political Party) (Form P-602). The reconciliation details the aggregate amount of contributions receipted; the number of tax receipts issued, spoiled or duplicated; and the number of tax receipts retained (unused).

Under Section 12 of the Tax Credit Act, when an independent candidate participates in the province's political contributions tax credit system, the candidate's business manager must file a reconciliation of tax receipts used during the campaign period and the aggregate amount of contributions receipted—on a Campaign Period Report of Contributions (Independent Candidate) (Form P-606).

The following table summarizes the value of the tax receipts issued by each registered political party for the years 2014 through 2021.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIPTED (CALENDAR YEAR 2014–2021)

Registered Political Party	Aggregate Receipted Contributions							
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Buffalo Party of Saskatchewan **	-	-	-	-	-	-	87,700.00	32,497.50
New Democratic Party, Saskatchewan Section	816,696.50	931,242.08	1,103,296.88	973,400.65	990,736.48	1,064,106.26	1,601,397.43	854,585.97
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	8,010.00	10,070.00	22,964.00	10,594.00	5,880.00	2,476.68	12,045.84	12,539.00
Saskatchewan Green Party	4,503.09	6,379.95	9,857.35	9,003.80	11,528.45	11,220.90	17,025.00	7,289.00
Saskatchewan Liberal Party	28,609.96	38,069.96	75,847.01	34,440.03	17,195.90	13,444.35	13,584.04	19,951.29
Saskatchewan Party	2,413,357.99	3,182,436.61	5,056,304.87	1,797,426.24	1,931,559.47	2,354,289.04	4,649,051.83	1,645,891.68
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (WIP)*	135.00	160.00	4,597.00	6,200.00	800.00	-	-	-
Independent	-	-	-	-	-	-	14,910.00	-
Total	\$3,271,312.54	\$4,168,358.60	\$6,272,867.11	\$2,831,064.72	\$2,957,700.30	\$3,445,537.23	\$6,395,714.14	\$2,572,754.44

* The Western Independence Party was deregistered effective May 9, 2019

** The Buffalo Party of Saskatchewan was registered effective March 10, 2020

Note: The political contributions reported as receipted for 2021 in the above table are from fiscal returns as filed by the registered political party. Fiscal returns are reviewed by Elections Saskatchewan and any revisions to the final figures will be reported in subsequent annual reports.



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