Elections Saskatchewan

A Guide for the

Chief Official Agent

Using Electoral Management System (ELMS) to Complete the Fiscal Period Return

December, 2021

Elections SK

Table of Contents

1.   Introduction

Elections Saskatchewan (referred to in legislation as The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer) is the province's independent, impartial, election management body. Under a legal mandate established by the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Elections Saskatchewan plans, organizes, conducts, and reports on provincial electoral events.

Under *The Election Act, 1996* (the Election Act), Elections Saskatchewan administers provincial electoral events and oversees the administration of electoral finance.

This guide describes how the business manager of a candidate is to account for electoral income and expenses. It also explains how to prepare the candidate's audited election expenses return that must be submitted to Elections Saskatchewan after an electoral event. It has been prepared to help the business managers of candidates fulfill their financial administration and reporting responsibilities under the Election Act.

This guide describes how the chief official agent of a registered political party is use the Electoral Management System (ELMS) to complete and print the annual fiscal period return and has been prepared to help parties and chief official agents fulfill their financial administration and reporting responsibilities under the Election Act.

This guide has no legislative authority. For specific statutory responsibilities, please refer to the Election Act. In case of a discrepancy between the Election Act and this guide, the Election Act will apply.

Copies of the Election Act and this guide are available on Elections Saskatchewan's website at www.elections.sk.ca/candidates-political-parties/forms-and-guides/.

2. Background

Section 224 of *The Election Act, 1996* (the Election Act) establishes the registration requirements for political parties in Saskatchewan. Once registered, a political party may solicit and receive contributions, incur expenses, and field candidates for election to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

Under the Election Act, a registered political party's expenditures are either fiscal period (annual) expenses or election expenses.

Annual fiscal period expenses include:
- operating expenses;
- advertising expenses; and
- other expenses.

Operating Expenses

Operating expenses are all reasonable expenses incurred in the day-to-day operations of the party's **permanent office**. These expenses are not election expenses, and they may not be included in the election expenses for any election that takes place during the fiscal period.

Advertising Expenses

Advertising expenses are the expenses incurred for advertising the party during the fiscal period. Parties are limited to an amount they may spend on advertising and publicity **for the party** during the calendar year. This limit includes the amount that constituency associations, members of the Legislative Assembly, and candidates spend on advertising. The limit is the base amount established in the Election Act, adjusted annually for inflation according to the Consumer Price Index. Every year the limit is communicated to parties, published in *The Saskatchewan Gazette*, and posted on Elections Saskatchewan's website at www.elections.sk.ca/candidates-political-parties/electoral-finance/expenditures-and-election-expense-limits/.

Other Expenses

Expenses that cannot be categorized as operating or advertising expenses (or election expenses) are other expenses. These expenses include, but are not limited to:
- transfers to provincial constituencies and candidates;
- transfers to federal electoral districts; and
- transfers to federal political parties.

3. Preparing the Fiscal Period Return in ELMS

Under the Election Act, a registered political party must complete and submit an audited Fiscal Period Return at the end of April in the year following that to which the return relates.

Chief official agents must complete the Fiscal Period Return using the Electoral Management System (ELMS) developed by Elections Saskatchewan. A user account will automatically be set up for each chief official agent. Parties may also designate an administrative user who can perform all the same functions as the chief official agent in ELMS with the exception of locking the return.

The return must be audited by the party's auditor. The auditor's report and all supporting documentation must be submitted with the return. This supporting documentation includes:
- Detailed contribution listing in electronic format;
- Annual Report of Contributions (Form P-602);
- Elections Saskatchewan's copy of political tax contribution receipts issued in the reporting period; and
- Detailed listing of political tax contribution receipts issued in electronic format.

Once all information is entered into ELMS, the chief official agent will:
- lock the return in ELMS;
- print and sign a paper copy of the return for submission;
- attach supporting documentation;
- attach a copy of the auditor's report; and
- deliver to Elections Saskatchewan along with CEO copies of all issued contribution receipts for the period.

4.   About ELMS

4.1   What is ELMS?

ELMS is Elections Saskatchewan's web-based **El**ectoral **M**anagement **S**ystem. It has been developed to allow business managers and chief official agents to complete their respective election expense and fiscal period returns electronically. ELMS also allows auditors to review election expense returns within the application.

4.2   Features and Functions

ELMS features and functions include:
- ELMS is a secure, web-based application that you can access any time of day from any computer using a web browser.
- ELMS allows you to record contributions and expenses online with automated calculations and totalling.
- ELMS provides the flexibility to capture information in the system when it is convenient for you, save it and return to work on it at a later time.
- ELMS provides you with the ability to complete and print off the Registered Political Party Fiscal Period Return and supporting forms.
- ELMS contains built-in tips and reminders to assist you while you are completing the return online.

4.3 Computer Requirements

To access ELMS, you will require:
- A web browser[1] and internet access;
- Adobe Reader (version 6.0 and higher); and
- An email account.

---

[1] Recommended browsers are: Chrome, Safari and Firefox.

4.4 Logging in to ELMS

ELMS is a web-based application you can access from any computer with Internet access, using your email address. To log in to the ELMS application, open your internet browser and type the following URL in the address bar: **https://elms-annual.elections.sk.ca**

4.5 ELMS Password Policy

You will need to establish a password for your user account in ELMS. For security reasons, passwords must conform to the following requirements:

> ***Password Policy***
>
> 1) *Passwords must be at least 8 characters long*
> 2) *Passwords must contain all four of the following elements:*
>   a. *At least one uppercase letter;*
>   b. *At least one lowercase letter;*
>   c. *At least one number; and*
>   d. *At least one special character (e.g., !, #, *)*
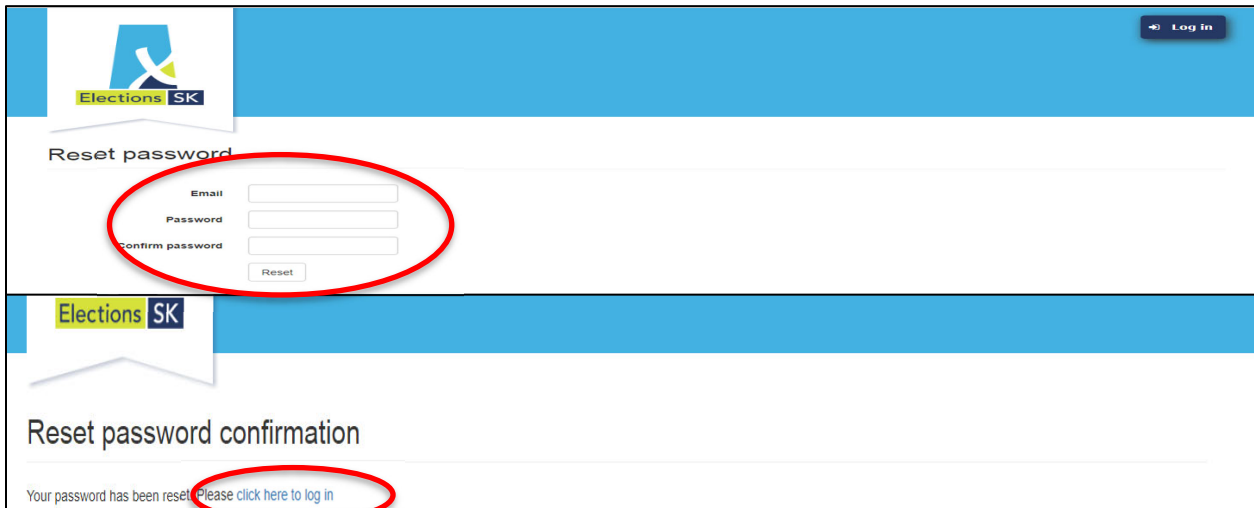
4.6 First Time Access

Once your user account has been set up by Elections Saskatchewan, you will receive an email message that an account has been set up for you. It includes a link to the application login page.

1. Open the email and click the **Set your Password Here** link appearing in the message.

> Elections Saskatchewan has created an account for you to access our Election Saskatchewan Management System (ELMS).
>
> Your user name i[   ] Please set your new Password Here.
>
> If you did not request an account, please ignore this email or contact ELMS support at 1 866 351 0448
>
> Thank you,
> Elections Saskatchewan
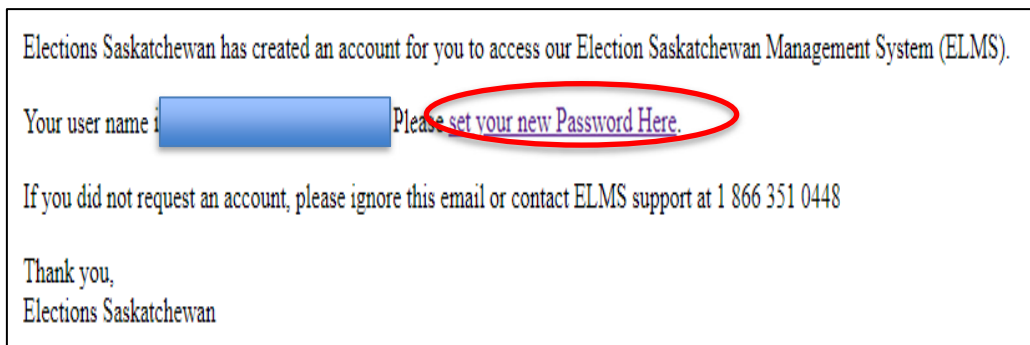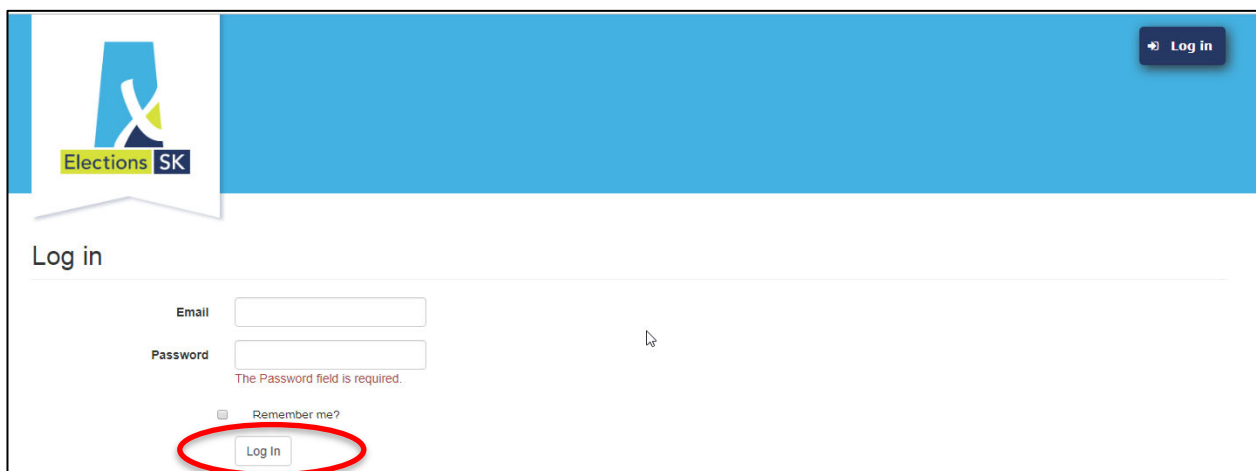
2. After clicking on the link, the **Reset password** screen will appear. Type in your email address in the **Email** field, enter your password in the **Password** field and then re-enter that same password in the **Confirm password** field and click **Reset**.


3. A screen will appear to confirm your password has been reset. When this screen appears, click on the **click here to log in** link provided in the email message. This link will take you to the ELMS Log in screen.

4. On the ELMS Log in screen, type in your email and password in the fields provided and click the **Log In** button.

4.7 Forgot Password

- If you forget your password once you have established your account, you can request a password reset through the application by following the steps outlined below.
-

  1. To reset your password, click on the **Forgot your password?** link.

  2. Next, type in your email address in the **Email** field and click the **Email Link** button.

3. You will see the following confirmation screen.
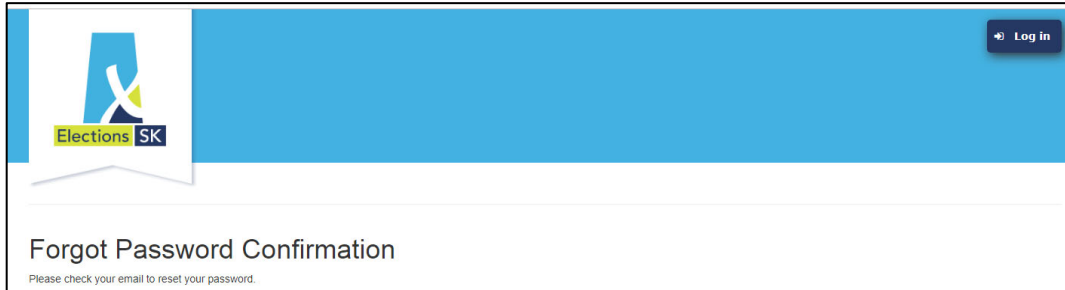
4. You will receive an email message providing a link to reset your password. Open the email and click the **Reset your Password Here** link appearing in the message.
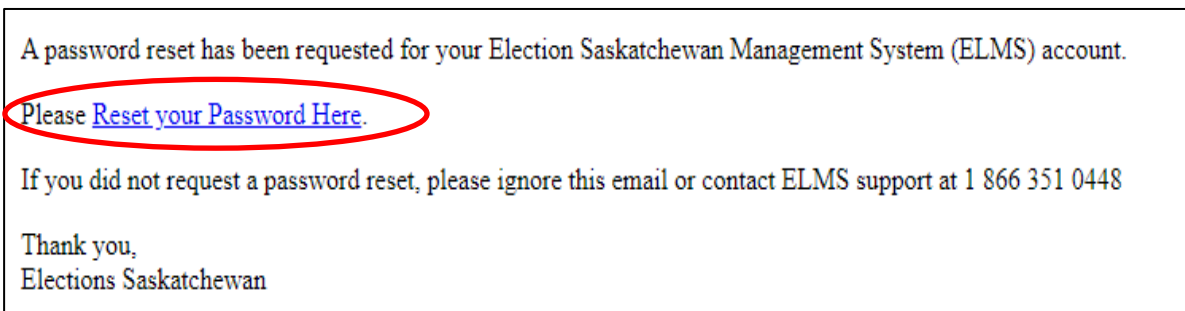
5. The **Reset password** screen appears. This is the same screen that you see when you log in to ELMS for the first time. Type in your email address in the Email field, enter your password in the **Password** field and then re-enter that same new password in the **Confirm password** field and click Reset.
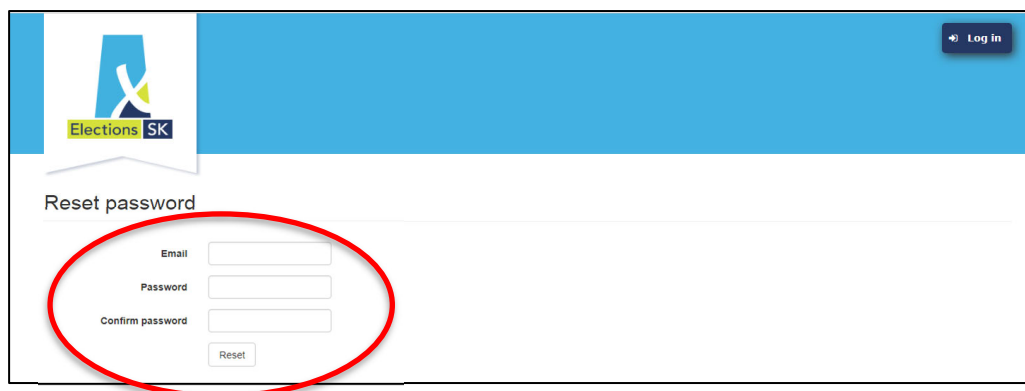
6. A screen will appear to confirm your password has been reset. Click on **click here to log in** which will take you to the ELMS Login screen.
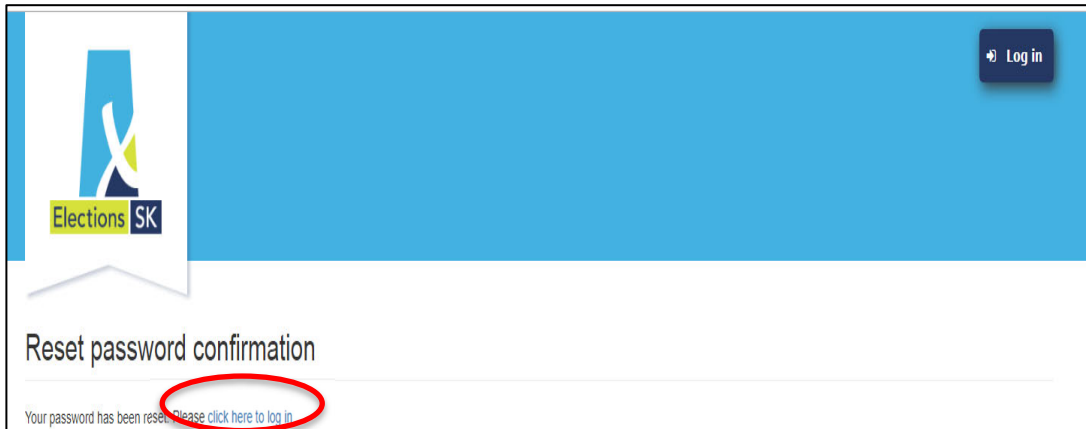
7. On the ELMS Log in screen, type in your email and password in the fields provided and click the **Log In** button.
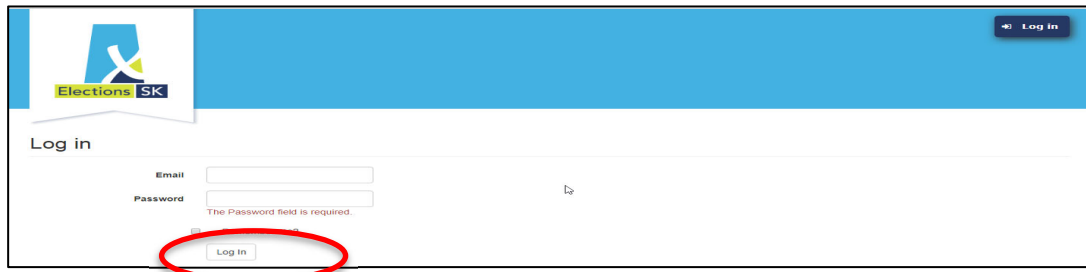
4.8 Navigating in the System

The screens in ELMS consist of tabs that allow you to easily move from one screen to another, as well as between data entry fields. You can navigate within ELMS using your computer's mouse and keyboard.

- Using your mouse to navigate:
  o Move your mouse to a location on screen, or to a field and click your mouse.
  o For a data entry field (i.e., fields requiring information to be typed into them), move your mouse to the field and click the mouse. You can then begin typing in the field.

- Using your keyboard to navigate:
  o Click the **Tab** key on your keyboard to move between data entry fields (i.e., fields requiring information to be typed into them).
  o Once your cursor is in the field, you can begin typing in the field.

o Tabbing does not navigate between screens or allow you to select tabs located on screens.

4.9 Logging Off

- You can log off of the ELMS application by clicking the **Log off** button on the top right hand corner of the screen.
- After a period of inactivity of half an hour the application will automatically log you out. You will have to log back in to resume entering information on your return. Your data will be saved from the last point of entry.
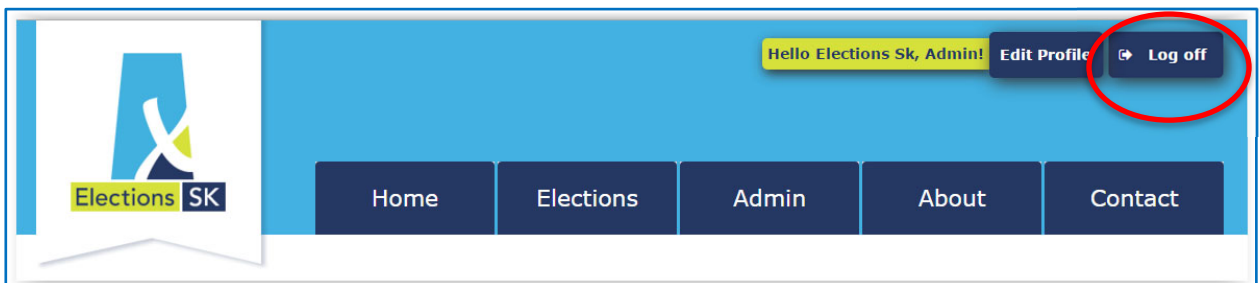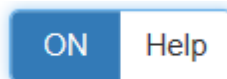

4.10 Online Help

The system has online help available to assist you while you are using ELMS to track contributions, expenses and generate the Candidate Election Return.

1. **Turning Online Help On/Off**

- The online Help button is located in the top right corner of your screen.

- By default, the ELMS Help function is "**ON**", enabling you to access the Online Help features built into the system. We recommend you leave this on.
- To turn online help off, click on the word **Help** on the button.
- *Warning*: You will not see any additional help information if help is turned off.

- To turn online help back on, click on the **Help** button.
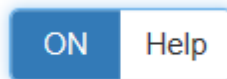
2. How to Access Online Help

- When you see the question mark ❓ icon, online help is available for additional information.

- To access the online help, hover directly over the ❓ icon and a pop-up screen will appear with additional information. For example, if you move your mouse to the ❓ beside Individuals, the following online help will appear:
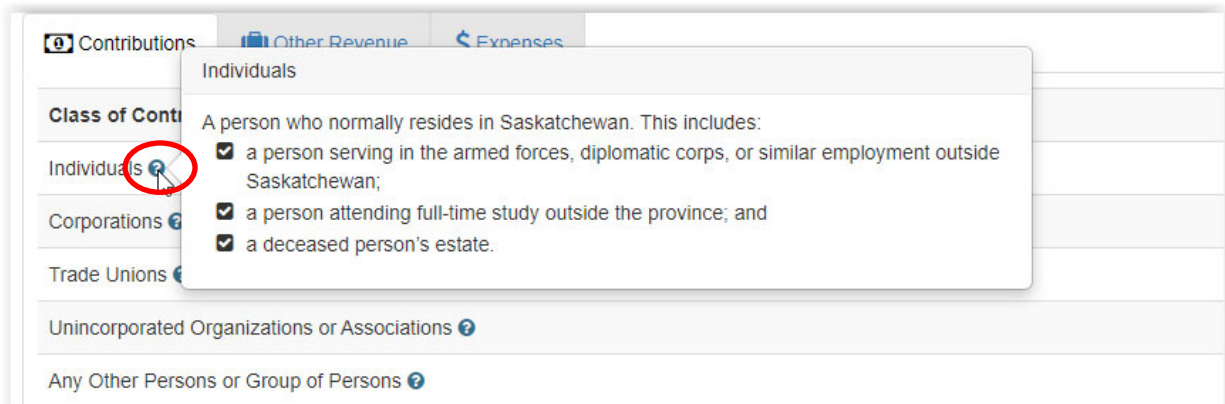
4.11 Home Page

Chief Official Agent View: When you log in, your will have access to two types of returns: Party Election Return and Party Fiscal Return.

From the **Home** screen, you can also navigate to three other menu options:

- Directives;
- Contact; and
- Forms & Guides.
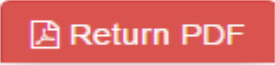
To start working on your fiscal period return, click the tab labelled Party Fiscal Return.

4.12 Actions

You will see three buttons located under the Actions heading:

Q Fiscal Return

Provides access to the Fiscal Period Return information and data entry tabs. This is the primary screen used to access all of the Fiscal Period Return details, including contributions, expenses, and supporting forms.

Support Forms

Provides links to the supporting forms required to complete and submit with your Fiscal Period Return.

Return PDF

Opens the Fiscal Period Return in PDF format. Parties can see and print a copy of the return at any time. A draft watermark will appear on the printed copy until the return has been "Locked".

4.13 Updating Contact Details

Elections Saskatchewan will set up all registered political parties and chief official agents in ELMS based on the information contained in the party register. Users can update their contact information, including address information, phone numbers and email addresses, in ELMS at any time.
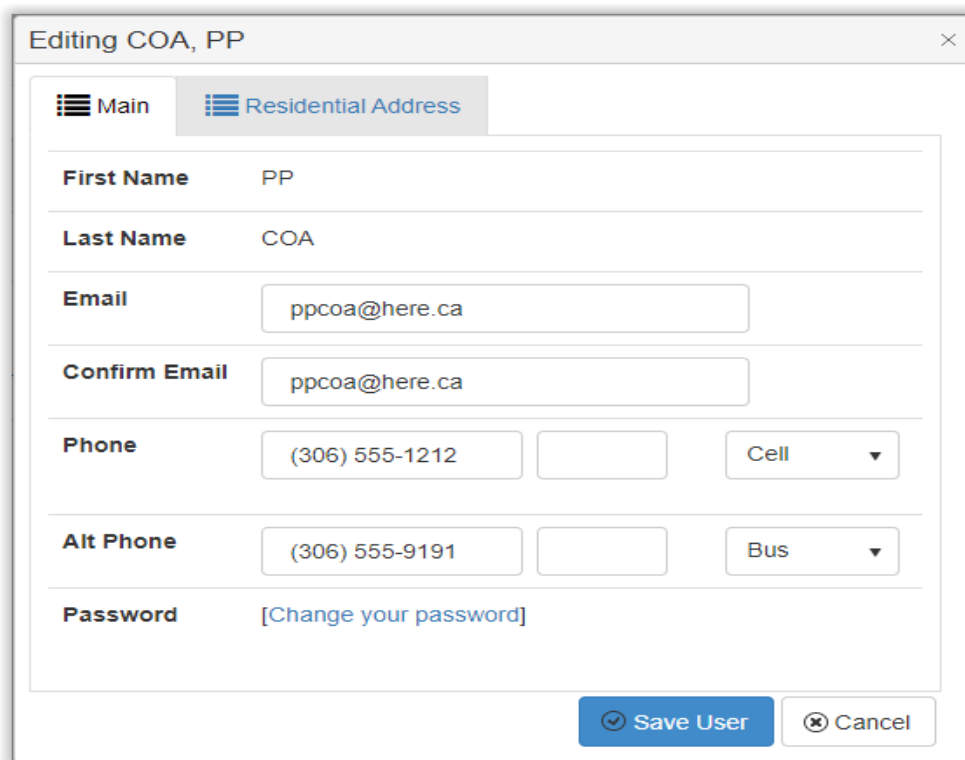
Please note that registered political parties are still required to notify Elections Saskatchewan of any changes to information contained in the register, including the name and address of the registered political party or the name of the chief official agent using the appropriate forms posted on Elections Saskatchewan's website. Updating your contact information in ELMS **does not** replace the requirement to notify Elections Saskatchewan pursuant to section 226 of the Election Act or any other provision with the legislation that requires such notification.

If you need to update your information, follow the below directions.

- From the ELMS Home Page, click on the **Edit Profile** button (see below) to access your contact information.

Hello COA, PP!   Chief Official A...   **Edit Profile**   ➡ **Log off**
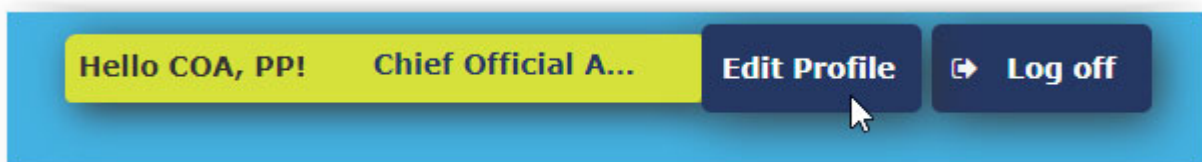
- From the Edit Profile screen you can change your email, phone number, mailing address and password.

- After making any necessary changes, click Save User to update your information.

## 4.14 Accessing the Fiscal Period Return

When you first log-in you will be taken to the **Home** tab. You will see two tabs available to you: Party Election Return and Party Fiscal Return.

To start or continue working on the fiscal period return, click on the Party Fiscal Return and click the **Fiscal Return** button. This will take you to the Fiscal Return Summary page.
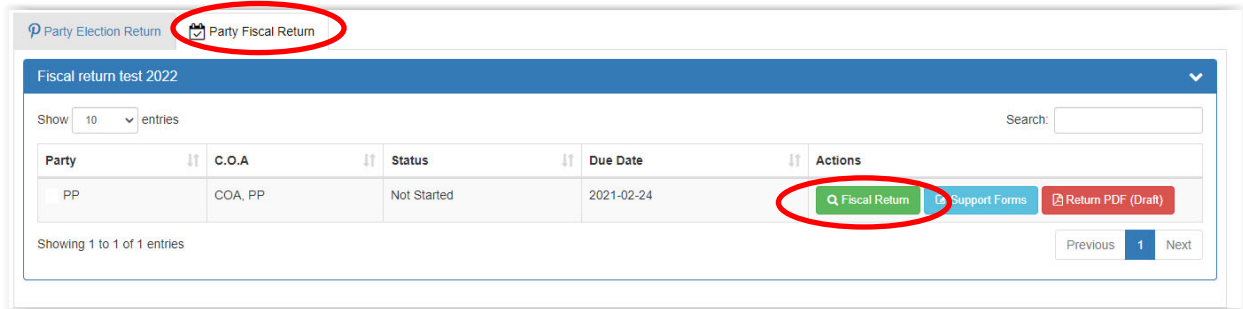
The first time you open your Party Fiscal Return, all the fields will contain $0.00. As you enter contributions and expenses, the running totals update to reflect the information you have entered to date.

You can add and modify any of the data up until the time you lock the return. When you select **Lock Return**, the data within the return will be locked down and you will be unable to add or modify any of the data.

Elections SK
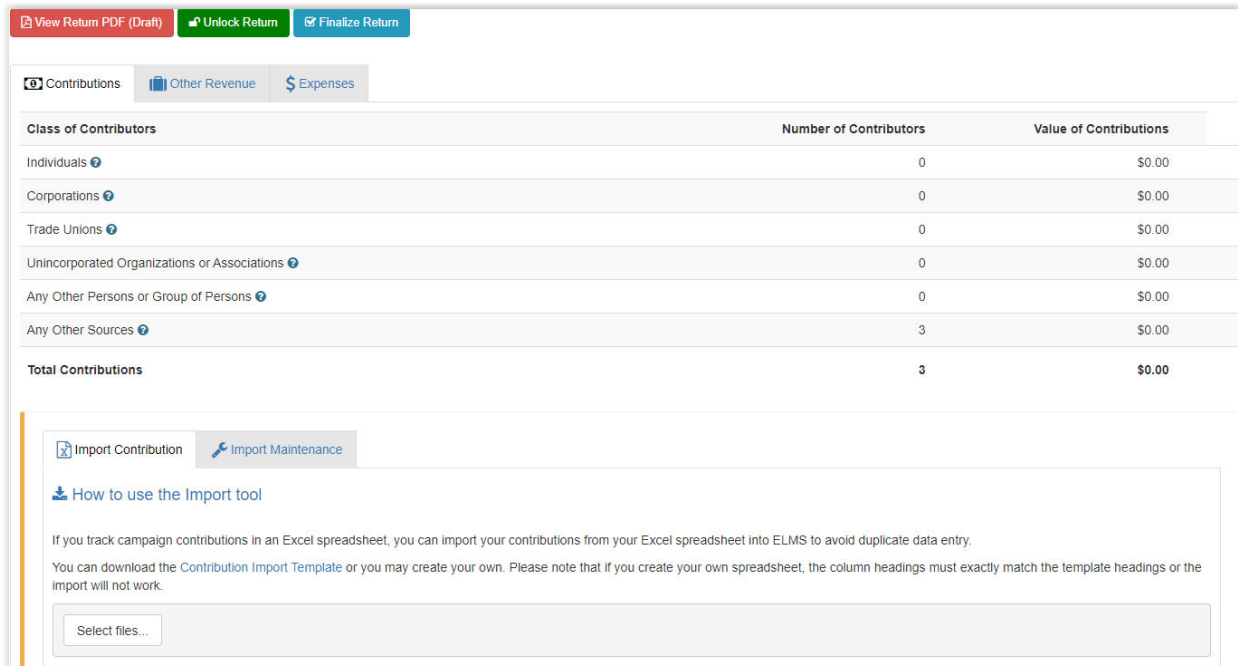
After clicking on the **Fiscal Return** button, a summary view of all data entered to date will become available in addition to four new tabs. This section displays a summary view of all the contributions and expenses currently entered in this return. It also provides easy access to the detailed information comprising the summary data. When you first start in ELMS, these will be $0.

Data will be entered in one of the following tabs: Contributions, Other Revenue and Expenses.

Contributions | Other Revenue | $ Expenses
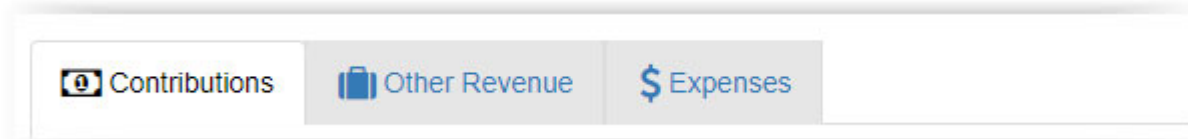
Contributions – Click the **Contributions** tab to view, revise or add contributions. The tab will display the current running total for contributions.

Other Revenue – Click the **Other Revenue** tab to enter income from sources other than contributions as well as to enter the Cash on Hand.

Expenses – Click the **Expenses** tab to view, revise or add expenses. The tab also displays the current running total for expenses.

The **Fiscal Return Summary** page also provides two additional buttons:

View Return PDF (Draft) – this button provides a current pdf view of the Party Fiscal Period Return which can be generated at any time during the process. You can view a copy of the return as often as you like. A draft watermark will appear until the return has been locked.

Lock Return – this button locks the return and prevents any edits to the date. Click this button when you are ready to finalize and submit the return. ELMS will set the return's status to **Locked**, remove the Draft watermark and allow you print the return. Locking the return will lock the return preventing any further changes.

5. Entering Contributions

There are two ways to enter contributions in ELMS: direct data entry into the application or by using an import function.

5.1 Direct Data Entry

Parties can add new contributions, revise existing contributions and delete contributions entered in error from the **Fiscal Return Summary** screen in ELMS.

- First, click on the **Contributions** tab. Notice the contribution types appear as tabs at the bottom of the screen.

Next, based on the contribution you want to record in ELMS, select the tab corresponding to the contributor type. For example:

- Click the **Individual** tab if the contribution was received from an individual.
- Click the **Corporate** tab if the contribution was received from a corporation, or an individual submitting a contribution on behalf of a corporation.
- Click the **Trade Union** tab if the contribution was received from a union.
- Click the **Unincorporated Organizations or Association** tab if the contribution was received from a party association, or any unincorporated organization or association.
- Click the **Any Other Persons or Groups of Persons** tab to capture contributions from any contributor who does not fit into the other four categories.
- Click the **Any Other Sources** tab to enter contributions obtained from fundraising events or meetings or from the sale of promotional material.
-

👤 Individual ❔	🗏 Corporate ❔	🏛 Trade Union ❔	👥 Unincorporated Organizations/Associations ❔	💼 Any Other Persons or Groups of Persons ❔	💼 Other Sources ❔

⊕ New Individual Contribution	🗐 Export Excel

Batch Id	Amount	Type	Contributor's Name	Address	

| ⏮ ◀ 1 ▶ ⏭ | | | | | No items to disp |

The process for adding contributions is the same for individuals, corporations, trade unions and unincorporated organizations or associations and any other person or group of persons.

- Click on one of these contribution tabs, and a **New Contribution** button appears.
- Click on the **New Contribution** button and a pop-up window appears where you can type in the contribution details.
- The pop-up window will contain different fields based on the type of contribution selected. For example, the pop-up window will require a First and Last Name for an individual contribution but will require an Organization for a Corporate contributor.
- When the fields are complete, click **Save** to save the contribution. Your contribution should now appear in the list of contributions by type.

> NOTE: Avoid creating duplicate entries for a single contributor by confirming if the contributor already exists in the system before creating a new contributor. ELMS cannot aggregate multiple contributions from a contributor if duplicate contributors are created for the single contributor.

You will note that the Category will default to the contributor type you selected in Step 2. You can change the change contributor type on this screen by clicking on the drop-down menu in the Category field.

You may edit (revise) a contribution, or delete a contribution recorded in error, up until the time the election return is sent to the auditor for review.

To edit an existing contribution, locate the contribution in the appropriate listing (individual, corporate, trade union, etc.) and select the **Edit** button.

5.2   Contribution Import

An import tool is available for parties who track contributions in an application or Excel spreadsheet. This tool will allow you to import your existing contributions into ELMS to avoid duplicate data entry.

> To use the Import tool:
> - From the **Contributions** tab, download the ELMS template designed for the Import function by clicking on the **Contribution Import Template.** You may click on **How to use the Import tool** link for instructions.
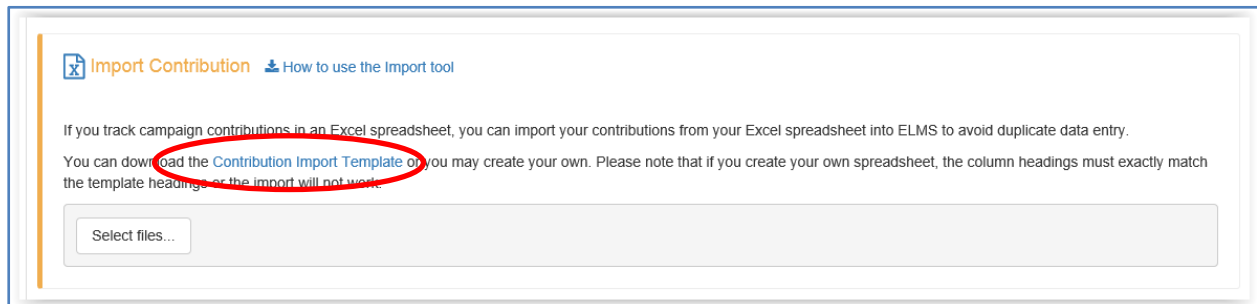
> Save this Excel file to your computer.
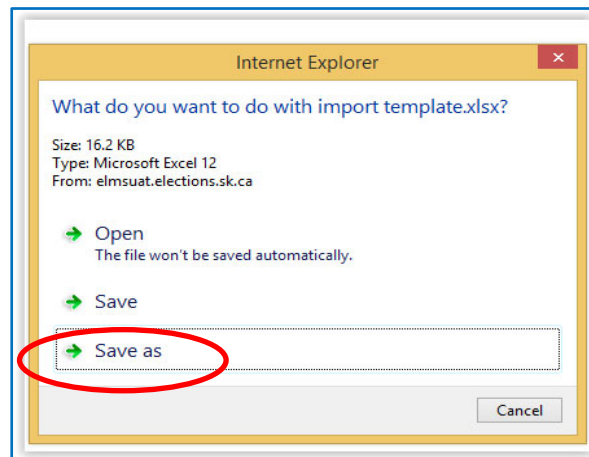
> In the header row of the spreadsheet there are comments, which you can see by hovering over the red triangle. These comments outline the required format for the data to be entered, e.g. Category → IN. If you do not follow the required format, the file will not import successfully.

You can copy and paste data from an existing spreadsheet into the new template or type information directly into this spreadsheet, however it must follow the prescribed standard found in the comment box.

Note that the rows 2 and 3 of the template contain sample entries. These must be removed prior to uploading, otherwise they will be included as contributions on your return.

You can import up to 2500 contributions in one spreadsheet. If you try to import more than 2500 contributions in one spreadsheet, the import will fail.

After you have finished populating your spreadsheet, you must **save your file as a .csv** otherwise the import will fail.
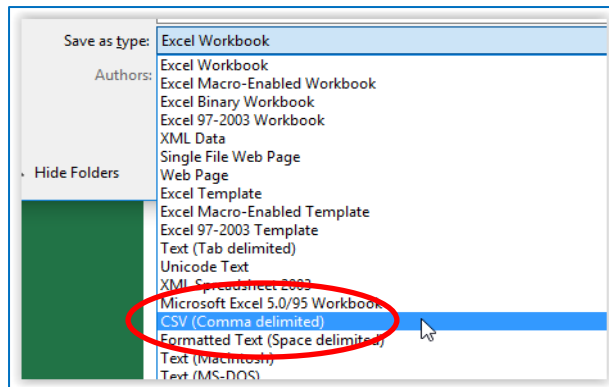
NOTE: DO NOT change any of the template's defined headings or columns. Changing defined headings or columns may cause the import to fail.

To begin the Import, click on the **Select Files…** button. Next, locate your completed .csv file (from Step 2) on your computer and select it to start the import process.
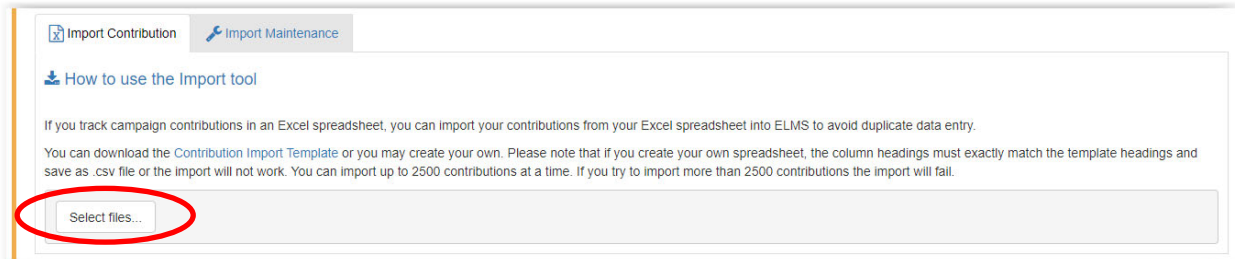
If the import is successful, a dialogue window will show the contributors and contributions that are about to be imported.

    a.   Review these records.

    b.   Click **Import Contributions** to import the records into ELMS or **Cancel** if your data requires updates.
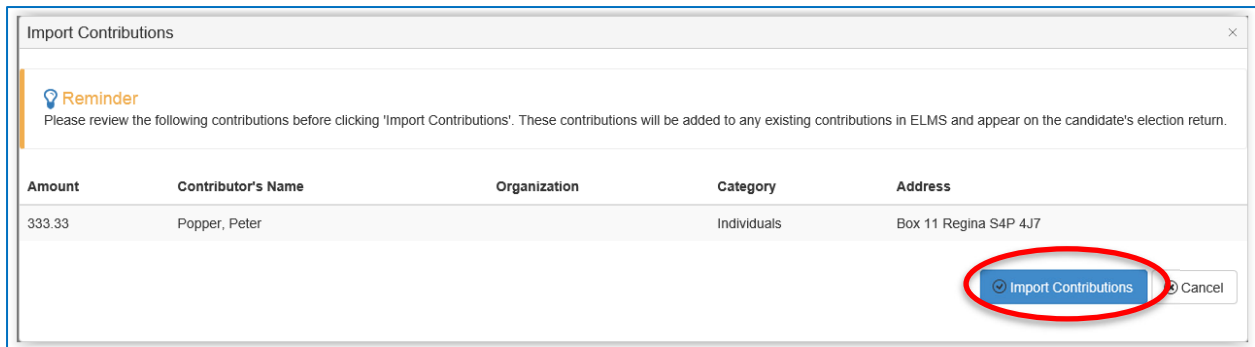
You will receive a message, on the bottom corner of your screen, when your import is complete which indicates the number of records imported.
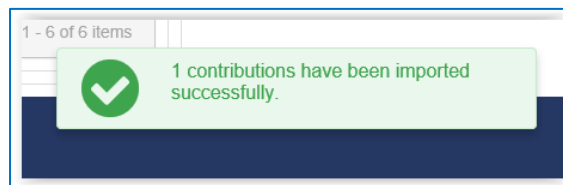
You will also see a message with your file name and percentage complete in the Import Contribution section.

Your contributions should now be in ELMS, under the correct contribution type (e.g., individual, corporation, etc.). Your imported contributions will look like other contributions that have been manually entered.

If any errors are encountered during the import, you will receive an error Message. If this occurs, review the error message, correct your data and re-import the spreadsheet.

You may import contributions as often as you like but *do not import the same data again* or duplicate contributions will appear in ELMS.

Each time you import contributions you should start with a blank spreadsheet.

5.3   Contributions from Other Sources

To capture contributions obtained from other sources, such as fund-raising events, click on the **Any Other Sources** tab. The net proceeds from fundraising events or the sale of promotional goods should be entered on this screen.

The amounts entered on this screen will automatically populate the amount reported on the return under the **Proceeds from Other Sources** category.

6.　Other Revenue & Cash on Hand

To record all other revenue and the balance of cash on hand at the end of the fiscal period, navigate to the **Other Revenue** tab and enter the values in the corresponding line. The following revenue sources should be entered on this screen:

- Reimbursements for election expenses and audit expenses related to an electoral event;
- Excess campaign contributions transferred from candidates' accounts;
- Any interest or investment income; and
- Revenue from any other source.

If recording revenue from any other source, type a brief description in the text box, enter the amount of the revenue and click the ⊕ button. Repeat as many times as required.
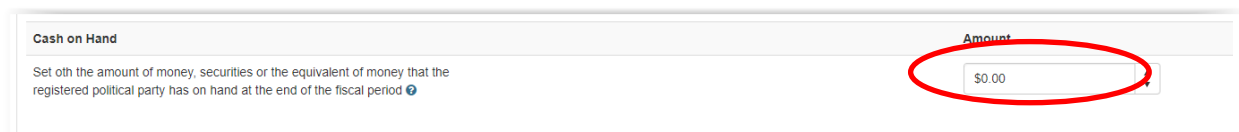
The **Cash on Hand** value should be entered in the text box located at the bottom of the **Other Revenue** tab.

The Cash on Hand value will default to $0.00. If your cash on hand balance is $0.00, you do not have to enter anything in this field. If you leave the cash on hand balance as $0.00 or forget to enter your cash on hand balance, you will receive a warning message when you attempt to lock the return. If you need to edit the cash on hand balance, simply click No and navigate back to this screen to enter the correct cash on hand balance.
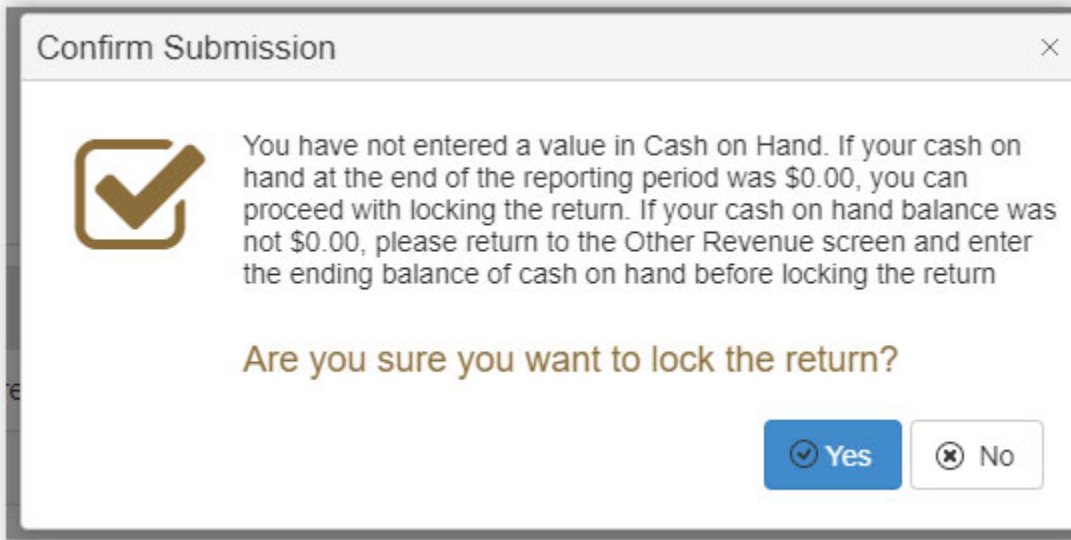
8.   Expenses

Registered political parties are required to report all operating expenses incurred during the fiscal year. When you click on the **Expenses** tab, three additional tabs will become visible.
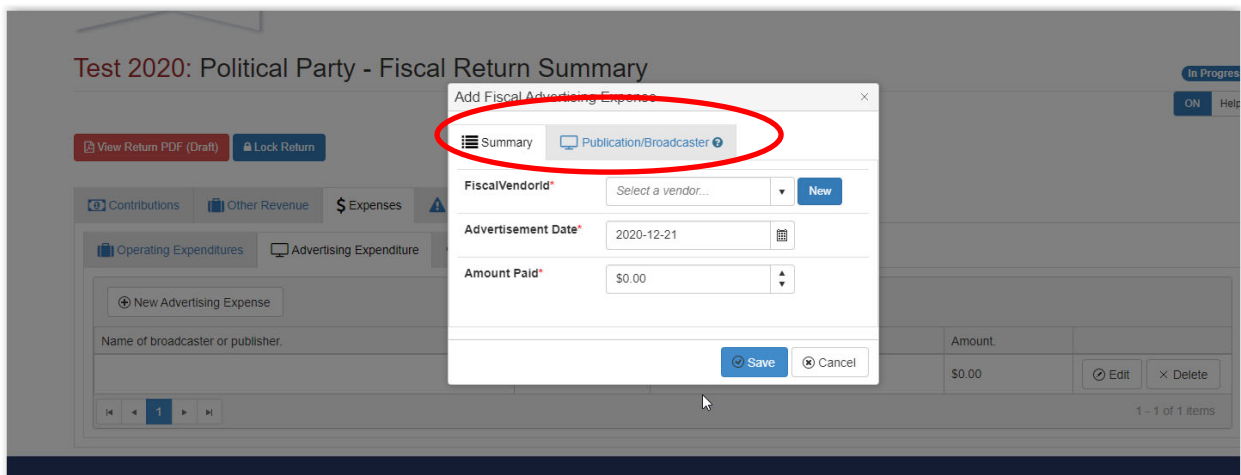
- **Operating Expenditures** – Used to record all operating expenses incurred by the party during the fiscal year on this screen.

- **Advertising Expenditures** – Used to record the advertising expenses the party incurred during the fiscal year.

- **Other Expenditures** - Used to record all other expenses, including transfer to constituency associates of federally registered political parties.

When entering operating or other expenditures, simply enter the amount on the corresponding line. When entering adverting expenses, you must enter the name of the vendor and the particulars of the expense.

9.   Finalizing and Printing the Return

Once you have completed all the data entry, you can print a draft version of the return to review prior to locking the return. Once you are satisfied with the return, lock the return to prevent any additional changes.

After you click the lock button, you will be prompted to confirm that you want to lock the return.

If you want to proceed, click Proceed with Locking Return. If you don't want to proceed, click Cancel.

Once you have locked the return, you cannot make any additional changes. If you need to edit or amend the return after it has been locked, please contact Elections Saskatchewan.

After locking and printing a final version of the return, sign page 2, complete the Declaration of a Chief Official Agent of a Registered Political Party (page 14), attach the audit report and any other supporting documentation required and submit along with the CEO copies of issued receipts to Elections Saskatchewan no later than April 30th.