

So You Want to be a Candidate



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Introduction

This booklet is intended as a guide to persons interested in being candidates for the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia in the next election. The purpose is to make you aware of what is involved in winning a nomination to become a candidate, and to provide some practical advice on how to go about that task.

Additional information is also available about the rules governing the process, the requirements and time commitment that a candidate must give, and the demands and benefits of being elected a member of Legislature.

The most important thing to understand is that the Progressive Conservative Party operates as a democracy. That is, nobody will appoint you to be a candidate—you may have to win the nomination in a democratic vote of the members of the local Progressive Conservative constituency association. This will take work on your part. Being the best candidate is not good enough—you also have to be the candidate who works the hardest.

Winning a Nomination

If more than one person in a constituency has approved nomination papers, the PC Electoral District Association (EDA) selects its candidate for the election at a process held especially for that purpose called a nomination process. The rules and procedures for nomination process are detailed in the Party's governing documents and rules. During that process, members of the EDA who are eligible to vote will select the candidate. The person who wins the support of a clear majority of the votes cast (50% +1) is selected as the candidate.

When Does the Nomination Process Open?

The simple answer is any time between now and the next election. The local association is aware of the process involved in requesting the nomination process be opened. An association must first demonstrate that they are ready for an election. They should meet certain minimum guidelines which include items such as:

- Have completed a full candidate search
- Have the financial means to run a successful campaign
- Have worked to maintain the membership in their EDA

The executive or candidate search committee of the EDA will make a request the provincial campaign committee for a nomination process to be opened. It will be required to show that the guidelines have been met. The Provincial Campaign Committee will work with the local EDA to open the process, and if required, and determine the best date to hold its nomination process.

When Should I Start Campaigning for a Nomination?

The work involved in becoming the candidate depends on whether or not you will be taking part in a contested nomination. However, you should always begin by believing you will be taking part in a contested nomination, not an acclamation.

You should start campaigning now — or as soon as possible. The more time you spend and the harder you work, the better you will do.

What Steps Should I Take to Begin?

You should become active in your constituency's association. You'll get to know the key players and volunteers in your EDA and learn from them the local issues and what it takes to win.

You should also probably start by talking to your friends and your family about what they think of your becoming a candidate. It is essential that your family support you fully, understanding the time commitment involved. Notwithstanding the public's view of politicians, they are in fact tremendously hard-working and dedicated. Legislative commitments, party events and constituency activities will often consume some of your evenings and weekends that you may have previously shared with your family. The commitment is a major one.

You may also wish to canvass the idea with your employer, depending on your circumstances.

If you think you are serious, you should then contact the Provincial Campaign's Director of Field Operations and Candidate Support (DOSC). You can request a process to discuss what's involved and whether or not you're well suited for the constituency. Especially in more urban areas you may decide that where you live may not be the best area for you to run. You may decide to run where you grew up and your family still lives, or where you work or own a business or where you spend most of your time volunteering.

You can request the Candidate Disclosure & Agreement Package from the Director of Field Operations and Candidate Support and it must all be returned to the DOSC. Part I outlines the candidate's personal profile, including information about yourself, educational and employment information and community profile. Part II is the candidate's agreement. Part III is the disclosure of information such as law suits or disciplinary matters, past political affiliations and social media. A criminal record check, a consent to release credit report information, a private disclosure letter to the Leader of the Party and a \$100 processing fee are also part of the nomination package that must be submitted. Parts I and II only should also be given to the Chair of the local Candidate Search Committee.

Once you decide where you'd like to run the Director of Field Operations and Candidate Support will put you in touch with the local EDA to discuss this and get a sense of the constituency. Depending on when you decide to seek the nomination you may be put in touch with the President, the District Vice President (DVP) or the Candidate Search Committee (CSC). Do not be discouraged if the immediate

response of the constituency association is not enthusiastic. While the CSC must be neutral, other members of the EDA may not be. In fact, the constituency president may be interested in the nomination, or members of the executive may already be supporting another contender. While this may initially be disheartening, it is still readily possible to run and win the nomination—as many have—through the democratic process.

Once the CSC is formed, you should take the time to meet with them to demonstrate why you would be a strong candidate. Be prepared for a knowledgeable and interesting discussion about politics and why you are interested in becoming a candidate. You may also wish to meet with members of the EDA so they can get to know you.

Be ready to give good answers to questions like:

- Why do you want to run?
- What qualities do you have that make you a good candidate?
- What experience do you have?
- What are your main policy concerns?
- What are your main concerns for your constituency?
- What kind of time commitment can you make?
- Will you be able to raise some money for a campaign?
- Do you have a group of people who will be willing to volunteer in the campaign?

With a good performance, you can win the support of some members of the executive who can be very helpful to you in your efforts. Regardless of the response of the executive to you, you should continue to maintain a positive relationship with them. The executive will usually rally behind the winner of the nomination, provided that winner has demonstrated a sincere and open desire to work with and welcome everyone.

There are many past examples of someone seeking the nomination and having to run against the president or other key member of the EDA. This may seem like a daunting task, but the key to winning the nomination is selling the most memberships and getting more supporters to the nomination process than the other contestants. This takes work.

Signing Up Members

The biggest part of the job will be to sign up as many members as possible so that they can vote for you at the nomination process. There are several places to look to find members:

- Put together a membership sales team. Approach people who are traditional community leaders or connectors in your community to join your team.
- Ask your friends and neighbours to purchase a membership to support you.
- Get your sales team to ask their friends and neighbours to join.
- And of course, contact people you know who are traditionally conservative supporters who might be willing to purchase a membership to support your nomination.

Involvement in your local community is a strong asset to you as a candidate. It is also an asset when you are seeking a nomination. Your community contacts can be a strong source of supporters. You should make efforts to have a strong role in the community.

Get Your Volunteer Team Going

As with any organization, the hardest part is to get it going. That is why you should start now. Call together your core campaign team and ask them to suggest names of others who might be willing to help. Ask them to bring their own personal phone books. These will be reviewed at your process as a source of other potential volunteers for the organization. The volunteers should be from different areas in your constituency and be involved with different organizations so they have a larger reach to sell memberships for you.

How to Recruit

Many politicians say the hardest part of running in an election is asking people to vote for them. In running for a nomination, you are asking even more—you are asking people to join a Party and commit to support you. However, most people feel good about participating in their community. The hardest part for a candidate is not doing the asking, but getting over the aversion to doing the asking.

Researching Issues and Your Constituency

You will be a more impressive candidate and find more success in recruiting members if you demonstrate an understanding of public affairs and local issues. You could discuss these matters with local politicians (especially municipal politicians) and various community leaders from local organizations. Understanding the demographic background of your constituency can also help you understand the community in which you are working.

Some potential new members will want to hear some policy but will really be looking for character. It is important for you to stress that you have a good reason for running. The message should be simple, but consistent. As a candidate you may get bored of saying the same thing, but the ability to do so is key to being a good candidate. While you may have heard yourself make the same sales pitch many times, the person to whom you are making it is usually hearing it for the first time so you must be sincere and committed every time you make it.

The Nomination Process

Everything you are doing in the time leading up to the nomination process is geared towards this day.

The members you have signed up as prospective supporters should be carefully tracked and recorded on lists that you keep. These lists should be divided into sections and each of your volunteers should be responsible for a section to remind or encouraging supporters to vote.

In the event that your nomination is contested by three or more candidates, there is the potential for the process to go to multiple ballots, or a preferred ballot. That is, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes will be dropped from each successive ballot until finally, a candidate obtains the votes of 50% plus 1 of the members voting. If a member is not supporting you encourage them to mark you as their second choice on the preferential ballot or vote for you on subsequent ballots.

The Presentation

You have up to twenty minutes to present yourself to the voting members. You can spend the time doing what you think will help you win. The standard procedure is that you are nominated and seconded by two prominent area residents who are respected in the community. Their speeches should be brief but unrestrained in their enthusiasm. However, you can do the presentation on your own or have as many people on your behalf as you would like.

Your speech should be short and focused. Concentrate on your core message without getting into a lot of boring details. Some humour can be good, but demonstrate that you are a serious and credible candidate. Don't read your speech from prepared text, but don't try to memorize it either. Generally, following brief notes is the best way to appear sincere while staying on track.

Scrutineering the Vote

Ensure that your campaign has assigned scrutineer(s) to monitor the count of the ballots. It is important to ensure that the count is carried on in a fair fashion and that every ballot for your candidacy is properly recorded.

You have a right to scrutineer(s) in the count and should insist on it.

After the Nomination Process

After the winner is chosen, it is critical that the organizations of the various contenders for the nomination are merged into one organization for our Party. If you are the winner, you must extend an open hand to your competition and invite all members of that team to join together with yours and ask them to play a role in the election campaign. If you don't do this you are risking alienating good volunteers and potential voters.

In the event that you lose the nomination you may feel hurt and angry. While it may be difficult to do, you should also bury the hatchet and offer your support to the successful candidate. It is in all our interests that the PC Party win the majority of seats, including yours. It will take a unified team to help make that happen. While you may have lost this nomination you may, within a matter of years, have another opportunity to run again, maybe federally or provincially. People have long memories and being a team player now will win you many admirers that may help you in the future.

Registering with Elections Nova Scotia

All candidates must be registered with Elections Nova Scotia after winning their nomination. Candidates must fill out Form 1-1 https://electionsnovascotia.ca/sites/default/files/Form%201-1%20Application%20for%20Candidate%20Registration_PDF%20FILLABLE_0.pdf and return it to PC Party Headquarters where the Letter from the Leader will be attached and it will be sent to Elections Nova Scotia on your behalf.

Additional Resources that you may request:

- Candidate Nomination Rules and Procedures
- EDA Bylaws
- Provincial Party Constitution
- Elections Nova Scotia Guide for Prospective Candidates - www.electionsnovascotia.ca

Questions and Answers about Signing up Members:

Q. *Do members have to live in the constituency?*

To vote in a nomination process, members must reside in the constituency. The Party will outline the membership requirements that apply in your constituency.

Q. *Do I need membership cards to sell memberships?*

Most constituencies provide membership application forms which each prospective member can fill out and accompany with the appropriate cheque, cash or credit card number. In the event that your constituency has no such form or you are having trouble getting a supply, you should call Provincial Headquarters. You can also print membership forms directly from the PC Party website at http://pcparty.ns.ca/membership_form . Supporters can also purchase a membership online at <https://4pc.pcparty.ns.ca/page/pcpartyjoin.aspx> . Be sure to keep photocopies of all completed applications for your records to ensure the membership lists is accurate.

Q. *What is the membership fee?*

The membership fee is \$10.00. It can be paid by cheque, cash or credit card.

Q. *When should I start signing up new members?*

You should sign up and submit memberships on an ongoing basis starting as soon as you decide you are interested in seeking the nomination. Some candidates try to hold back memberships until just before the cut off to disguise their strength. However, during a contested nomination updated lists are not sent to potential candidates until after the close of membership sales so the other candidates cannot see how many members there are. It can be a mistake to submit memberships right before the cut off as it will take longer to receive the final list if several hundred memberships are submitted at the last minute. Along with the membership forms, candidates for nomination should also submit a list of memberships they have sold to ensure it matches what's entered into the database.

Questions and Answers about Mechanics

Q. *Do I need a campaign headquarters?*

NO. it is unwise to rent a campaign headquarters for a nomination effort. Unless you are engaged in a large battle in which thousands of members are being recruited, you probably do not need to do so and you can adequately run a campaign out of your own home. Let your volunteers know they are always welcome to come to your house to pick up membership forms and drop off completed memberships.

Q. *Should I have a pamphlet when I am running for the nomination?*

A pamphlet when you are seeking a nomination is not required, however it can be used as a recruiting tool. It shows people you are serious about being the candidate and gives you a chance to put some information about yourself in writing. It also gives an opportunity to leave something with people if they want to think about whether or not to join to support you. However, your time is better spent selling memberships rather than creating pamphlets. Remember, you cannot use any PC Party logo in written material until you become the candidate.

Q. *How much money do I need to raise?*

This depends entirely on the nomination battle you are in. You may want pamphlets or buttons to hand out in the period before the nomination process. It would also be wise to have a letterhead or notepaper prepared to use.

On nomination day itself, if there is an in-person nomination meeting, you will probably want posters and buttons or stickers or even bottles of water or snacks to put on your candidate table.

Q. *Do I have to worry about the election finances laws, recording contributors and providing tax receipts when I seek the nomination?*

The expenses you incur in pursuing the nomination are not regulated or affected by the election expenses legislation. If you receive a donation, no tax credits are provided. However, you must maintain records of all contributions made to your campaign for nomination in the event the names of the donors need to be disclosed. (See the Elections Nova Scotia "Guide for Prospective Candidates")

You must appoint an Official Agent who will record the name and address of each contributor. In the event your contributions exceed \$1000 and you transfer the excess funds to your constituency or election account, any contribution in excess of \$200 from an individual donor must be disclosed.