

Resilient and Ready

2025 Calgary Catholic School District By-election and
2025 General Election Summary Report



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Contents

Land acknowledgement	1	Administering the 2025 General Election	13
Introduction	2	Offices to be elected	14
Message from Kate Martin, Returning Officer, Elections Calgary	2	Program planning for the 2025 General Election	17
Roles	3	Integrity and security	17
Role of Council and school boards	3	Election readiness audit	17
Role of the Returning Officer	3	Emergency Operations Centre for Election Day	17
Role of the Assistant Director and Substitute Returning Officer	3	Election carts	18
Organizational structure	4	Cybersecurity	19
Legislative framework	5	Enhanced support centres	19
Ministerial orders	7	Ballot distribution model	19
Four-year program planning cycle	7	Supply kits for each position in the voting station	19
Administering the 2025 CCSD By-Election	9	Accessibility	20
Program planning for the 2025 CCSD By-election	10	Physical barriers	20
Election carts	10	Communication barriers	21
Strengthening training and ballot counting processes	10	Accessible voting opportunities	21
Visitor program	10	Communications and engagement	21
Communications and engagement	11	Objectives	21
Communications	11	Voting Equity Research Project	22
Partnerships	12	Election communication strategies	22
CCSD By-election costs	12	Election call centre	26
		Community partnerships	27
		Responding to legislative change	28
		Use of a Permanent Electors Register	28
		Transition to a manual ballot counting process	28
		Staffing model enhancements	29
		Expanded <i>Work the Vote!</i> program	29
		Increased voting opportunities	29
		Special (mail-in) ballots	31
		Large central counting centre	31
		Conducting two recounts	32
		Political participants	33
		2025 General Election costs	33
		Conclusion	34
		What we heard	34
		Program improvements, legislative advocacy and next steps	35
		Next steps	36

Land acknowledgement

The Returning Officer respectfully acknowledges that the 2025 Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD) By-election and 2025 General Election took place on the ancestral and traditional territory of the Blackfoot Nations of the Siksika, Piikani and Kainai First Nations; the Îethka Nakoda Wîcastabi First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki, Bears paw, and Goodstoney First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. The City of Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis and to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, Métis Nation Battle River Territory (Nose Hill Métis District 5 and Elbow Métis District 6).

We acknowledge and give gratitude to the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit who have lived here and cared for these lands for generations and call Calgary home.



Introduction

Message from **Kate Martin**, Returning Officer, Elections Calgary

I am pleased to present the Summary Report on the January 31, 2025 Calgary Catholic School District By-election and the October 20, 2025 General Election. The report highlights the extensive work required to plan and deliver both elections, the innovations introduced, and the improvements made to enhance the voting experience for Calgarians. It also outlines how Elections Calgary adapted its operations to meet significant legislative changes and how we will continue strengthening our readiness.

Over 10 months, Elections Calgary delivered two elections while navigating:

- legislative changes;
- new and complex operational requirements;
- implementation of a Permanent Electors Register;
- a transition from vote tabulators to hand-counted ballots; and
- external challenges such as mail delivery disruptions.

Despite these pressures, several service improvements were introduced. For the 2025 General Election, voters had more voting opportunities than ever before, including additional voting stations and a vote bus that visited 11 locations across the city.

Voter outreach was expanded through a staged, multi-channel communications plan using print, digital and social media. Election carts were introduced to enhance security and streamline delivery of election materials. A new secure digital election management system, including a real-time digital Permanent Electors Register, strengthened election integrity. Cybersecurity best practices, including penetration testing, guided the implementation of the election systems. Election worker training was also enhanced with more hands-on learning to better prepare election workers to welcome voters.

The successful delivery of both elections was made possible through strong collaboration with partners, including the Calgary Board of Education, the Calgary Catholic School District, community organizations and colleagues across The City of Calgary (The City). The 2025 General Election relied on the dedication of more than 3,800 election workers and 276 employees through the *Work the Vote!* program who supported 349,815 voters over seven days at 380 voting opportunities. Their professionalism ensured a voting experience that was accessible, efficient, and trustworthy. I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to the success of the 2025 elections.

Elections Calgary remains committed to data-informed planning and continuous improvement. After each election, we evaluate outcomes from the perspectives of voters, election workers, and community partners. Following the 2025 General Election, a representative telephone survey of 500 Calgarians and an exit survey completed by 8,434 voters provided valuable insights into the voting experience.

Both surveys showed consistently positive results. According to the telephone survey, approximately 97 per cent of voters found voting stations convenient to access. Ninety-four per cent reported that voting hours were convenient, 93 per cent found their station accessible and 96 per cent described election workers as helpful.

The survey also found that 75 per cent of voters considered the time required to register and receive a ballot to be reasonable, while 74 per cent felt the wait time to vote was reasonable, down 17 percentage points from the 2021 General Election. I thank each Calgarian that waited in line to cast their ballots. It is important for Elections Calgary to draw lessons from this feedback and these experiences as we begin preparing for the next election.

In addition to these surveys, Elections Calgary has completed a comprehensive, data-driven review of election services and operations to guide future improvements and strengthen readiness for potential by-elections and the 2029 General Election.

I am proud of how Elections Calgary responded to a period of significant legislative change while continuing to deliver accessible, secure and efficient elections for our city. I look forward to building on the lessons of 2025 as we enhance our operations, adapt to evolving legislative requirements and uphold the integrity of local election process so every eligible voter can participate with confidence.



Kate Martin
Returning Officer
The City of Calgary
Calgary Board of Education
Calgary Catholic School District



Roles

Roles of Council and school boards

The role of Council in a general election is set out in the [Local Authorities Election Act](#) (the Act). Council is responsible for passing bylaws and resolutions, including the Election Bylaw ([Bylaw 50M2024](#)). Council approves budget allocation for the election, the Ward Boundary Review and Determination Policy ([Policy CP2019-04](#)), the Electoral Ward Boundaries Bylaw ([Bylaw 29M2024](#)), Temporary Signs on Highways Bylaw ([Bylaw 29M97](#)) and Use of Parks and Pathways Bylaw ([Bylaw 11M2019](#)). Council would also direct a vote of the electors on a question or bylaw, if applicable.

Through an agreement authorized under section 3(1) of the Act between The City of Calgary, [Calgary Board of Education](#) (CBE) and [Calgary Catholic School District](#) (CCSD), Elections Calgary administers trustee elections. School board jurisdictions are determined by the Minister of Education while school boards determine their respective ward boundaries. Where directed by a school board, a [by-election is administered by Elections Calgary](#).

Role of the Returning Officer

[Kate Martin](#), Returning Officer, appointed by Council in the [City Clerk Bylaw 73M94](#), is accountable for independently and impartially administering their statutory duties related to:

- General elections and by-elections for The City of Calgary offices of mayor and councillors and the trustees of the CBE and CCSD administered under the Act and [Education Act](#);
- Vote of the electors on questions or bylaws directed by Council; and,
- Senate elections administered under the [Alberta Senate Election Act](#) and provincial referendum questions administered under the [Referendum Act](#) when directed to occur with a General Election.

The Returning Officer also undertakes delegated duties of the Secretary in the Act. The Returning Officer provides executive leadership to the Elections Calgary team.

Role of the Assistant Director and Substitute Returning Officer

As set out in the Elections Bylaw ([Bylaw 50M2024](#)), [Andrew Brouwer](#), Assistant Director, City Clerk's Office, is appointed by Council as the Substitute Returning Officer.

The Assistant Director and Substitute Returning Officer is accountable for leading the day-to-day operations of the Elections Calgary team, undertaking a wide range of responsibilities including:

- Liaison to the Returning Officer, City Auditor and other internal partners who support election services;
- Ensuring legislative compliance and exercising the statutory duties of the Returning Officer, where required or delegated;
- Division leadership, recruiting, onboarding and support to the Elections Calgary team;
- Delivering accessible voting opportunities and processes;
- Media relations and issues management;
- Candidate, local political party and third party advertiser relations;
- Risk mitigation and issues escalations;
- Leading ward boundary reviews and drafting bylaws, policies and procedures;
- Liaison to government and regulatory partners including CBE, CCSD, area municipalities, Elections Alberta, Election Commissioner and Ministries of Education and Municipal Affairs; and,
- Liaison to external partners including community partners and organizations, Alberta Municipalities and Alberta Municipal Clerks Association.



Andrew Brouwer,
Assistant Director and
Substitute Returning Officer



Andrew Brouwer,
Assistant Director and
Substitute
Returning Officer
(left) and Kate
Martin, Returning
Officer (right).

Organizational structure



Leadership team



(From left to right): Andrew Brouwer, Jeannine Dryden, Robin Bly, Kate Martin, Austin Still, Mary Kirk

Legislative framework

The January 31, 2025 CCSD By-election and October 20, 2025 General Election were administered in accordance with provincial legislation, including the *Act* and the *Education Act* as well as the Elections Bylaw (Bylaw 50M2024).

Between 2021 and 2025, the Government of Alberta amended the Act and its regulations and enacted new regulations impacting the 2025 General Election, in four key areas:

- voter registration processes;
- ballot counting procedures;
- rules governing political participants; and
- recounts.

To mitigate operational challenges associated with implementing Bill 20 amendments to the Act in time for the January 31, 2025 CCSD By-election, [Ministerial Order #028/2024](#) was made to direct that the CCSD By-election be held under the provisions of the Act and associated regulations in effect prior to October 31, 2024.

Bill 21, *Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2022*

The first set of amendments came into force on May 31, 2022, through [Bill 21](#). These changes required municipalities and school boards to redact personal information, such as addresses and contact details from candidates' disclosure statements before making them publicly available.

Bill 20, *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024*

The majority of subsequent changes were introduced through a series of three bills brought forward in the 12 months leading up to the October 20, 2025 General Election. The first of these was [Bill 20](#), which came into force on October 31, 2024.

Bill 20 introduced significant changes, including the requirement to use a Permanent Electors Register to verify the eligibility of voters, together with acceptable identification. The Permanent Electors Register was compiled and revised primarily using information received from the Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta (Elections Alberta) under an agreement with The City.

Since the 2021 General Election, new legislation was introduced, including:

- [Bill 21, Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2022](#) (May 31, 2022)
- [Bill 20, Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024](#) (October 31, 2024)
- [Local Political Parties and Slates Regulation](#) (October 31, 2024)
- [Expense Limits Regulation](#) (October 31, 2024)
- [Local Authorities Election Forms Regulation](#) (updated January 31, 2025)
- [Bill 50, Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025](#) (May 15, 2025)
- [Bill 54, Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2025](#) (July 4, 2025)

Voter identification and vouching

Bill 20 introduced new voter identification requirements. Voters were required to present the following to confirm both identity and address:

- government-issued photo identification, or
- another acceptable form of identification.

Changes were also made to the vouching rules. Vouchers were limited to confirming a voter's address only, and voters being vouched for were required to present acceptable identification to verify their identity.

Special (mail-in) ballots

Eligibility for special ballots was expanded. Any voter unable to attend a voting station in person on Election Day was permitted to vote by mail.

Vote counting and recounts

Bill 20 prohibited the use of vote tabulators. As a result, Elections Calgary implemented new procedures and training to support a fully manual hand count of 29 different ballot types including mayor, councillor, public and separate school board trustee ballots.

Two new recount types were also introduced:

- a preliminary recount, and
- a recount on request

Each recount type had distinct application deadlines and completion timelines.

Introduction of new political participants

Bill 20 introduced changes affecting political participants, including the implementation of a pilot to introduce local political parties and slates into municipal elections in Calgary and Edmonton. The [Local Political Parties and Slates Regulation](#) which came into force on October 31, 2024, established the rules for registering, operating and financing local political parties and slates.

Candidate nominations and contributors

Further amendments introduced through Bill 20 reshaped candidate nomination requirements and their campaign finance framework. These changes altered both how candidates entered the election and who was permitted to financially support them.

Candidates were required to submit a notice of intent to be nominated as the first formal step in their nomination process. In addition, elected authorities were granted discretion to require criminal record checks as part of a candidate's nomination package.

Changes were also made to contributor eligibility. Candidates were permitted to accept donations from an expanded group of contributors including corporations, trade unions and employee organizations based in Alberta.

Third party advertiser contribution limits

Contribution limits for third party advertisers were also amended. The maximum contribution a permitted donor could provide to a third party advertiser during the election advertising period was reduced from \$30,000 to \$5,000.

Extension of the campaign period

The campaign period was extended by Bill 20 from the year of an election to include the four years leading up to and including an election year. This was a significant change to the campaign finance framework for candidates, local political parties, slates and third party advertisers.

Under this extended campaign period, candidates and local political parties are permitted to collect contributions and incur expenses outside of an election year. Registered candidates and local political parties who engage in financial activity between election years are required to submit campaign disclosure statements on an annual basis. The [Expense Limits Regulation](#), which came into force October 31, 2024, introduced mandatory spending caps for candidates, local political parties, slates and third party advertisers, calculated using population-based formulas.

Local Authorities Election Forms Regulation

The [Local Authorities Election Forms Regulation](#) prescribes the official forms that municipalities and school boards must use when administering elections under the Act. Effective January 31, 2025, the regulation was updated to reflect new statutory requirements for the 2025 General Election. Key changes included revised forms to support the implementation of the Permanent Electors Register, updated campaign finance disclosure timelines and new provisions to align with the introduction of local political parties and slates.

Bill 50, Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025

[Bill 50](#) was the second piece of legislation that introduced amendments to the Act in advance of the 2025 General Election and came into force on May 15, 2025.

The legislation introduced several key changes. Accessibility provisions were enhanced by enabling elected authorities discretion to use accessible ballot-marking devices to support voters who face barriers to voting.

Bill 50 refined recount processes introduced under Bill 20 by distinguishing between recounts initiated by the returning officer and those requested by runner-up candidates. Where the vote margin between the leading candidate and the runner-up is within 0.5 per cent of the total valid ballots cast, the runner-up may request a recount.

In addition, Bill 50 clarified campaign finance rules by confirming that candidates and local political parties were permitted to transfer funds between one another. The legislation also clarified rules related to candidate nomination withdrawals by specifying that a candidate can withdraw for any reason within 24 hours after the close of nominations.

Bill 54, Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2025

[Bill 54](#) introduced an additional change to political participant campaign finance requirements and came into force on July 4, 2025. In addition to the annual campaign finance disclosure requirement, this legislation established a new disclosure obligation for registered candidates, local political parties, slates and third party advertisers during an election year.

Under Bill 54, a disclosure statement was required to be filed by September 30 of an election year. For registered candidates, local political parties and slates, the disclosure was required to capture campaign finance activity occurring between January 1 and July 31 of the election year. For third party advertisers, the disclosure requirement applied to campaign finance activity occurring during the election advertising period from May 1 to July 31 of the election year.

City of Calgary's Elections Bylaw 50M2024

A report outlining the changes to The City of Calgary's [Elections Bylaw](#) was delivered to Council on December 17, 2024. The Returning Officer recommended that the previous Elections Bylaw 35M2018 be repealed entirely and replaced with the new Elections Bylaw 50M2024. Key changes introduced in the updated Elections Bylaw 50M2024 to align election processes with the Act included:

- **Alternative voting equipment:** Removal of references to alternative voting equipment (e.g., vote tabulators).
- **Ballots:** The removal of alternative voting equipment required a change to the use of ballot types. The use of the composite ballot was removed.
- **Permanent Electors Register:** Amendments to the Act required the use of a Permanent Electors Register for municipal council elections. Bylaw 50M2024 was updated to remove past references to the Permanent Electors Register.
- **Elector assistance:** To support electors with limited mobility, reduced vision or blindness to mark their ballots independently, the Bylaw 50M2024 provides authority to use a blind elector template in keeping with Section 78 of the Act.
- **Voting station hours on Election Day:** The requirement to hand count ballots resulted in election officials working additional hours following the close of voting stations on Election Day. To mitigate election worker fatigue and support vote counting accuracy, Election Day early voting hours were not requested for this election, defaulting to Election Day voting hours of 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., as set out in the Act.
- **Criminal record checks:** Addition of a criminal record check with specific criteria to be a requirement of Council candidates running for mayor or councillor.
- **January 2025 separate school board By-election:** A By-election for the CCSD which was held at the end of January 2025, and the Elections Bylaw also included provisions determined in consultation with the CCSD to administer their By-election.

School board election bylaws

The City of Calgary administers school board elections on behalf of both the CBE and the CCSD, with each board setting its own bylaws to govern trustee elections.

CBE Bylaw 1 of 2007 outlines the number of signatures required for candidates seeking election as public school trustees, while [CBE Bylaw 1 of 2024 \(Police Information Check Bylaw\)](#) establishes how trustees are elected by ward and requires public school trustee candidates to submit a criminal record check with their nomination papers. In addition, [CBE Bylaw 2 of 2024 \(Ward System Bylaw\)](#) establishes how trustees are elected by ward and identifies which City of Calgary wards are paired.

For the CCSD, [Bylaw 188-2024 \(Ward System Bylaw\)](#) sets the minimum number of signatures required for nomination papers, and [Bylaw 190-2024 \(Criminal Record Check Bylaw\)](#) mandates that trustee candidates submit a criminal record check with their nomination papers. Lastly, CCSD [Bylaw 191-2025 \(Early Opening of Voting Station Bylaw\)](#) provides for the early opening of a CCSD election voting station on Election Day to align with early voting hours established by area municipalities.

Electoral Ward Boundaries Bylaw 29M2024

The [Electoral Ward Boundaries Bylaw 29M2024](#) repealed and replaced Bylaw 19M91 which updated Calgary's electoral ward boundaries. The realignment made in Bylaw 29M2024 was a technical adjustment to ensure Calgary's ward boundaries correctly matched the updated city limits following recent annexations. Minor adjustments were made to Wards 6, 11 and 13, but ultimately, no residents, communities or businesses were impacted by these boundary adjustments. Bylaw 29M2024 came into force on Election Day, October 20, 2025.

Ministerial orders

2025 CCSD By-election

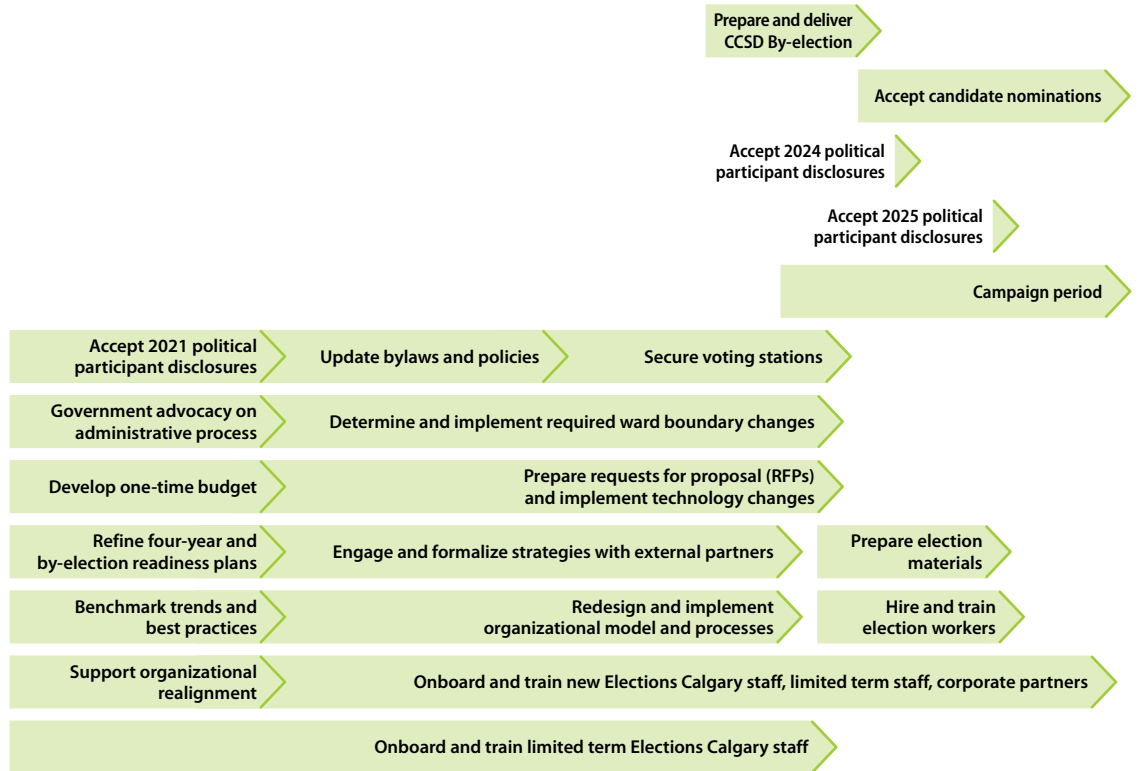
The Government of Alberta Department of Education issued [Ministerial Order \(#028/2024\)](#) directing that the January 2025 CCSD By-election be administered under the provisions of the Act as it stood prior to the amendments introduced through Bill 20. As a result, election planning required the development of distinct materials, forms, training and procedures that differed from those prepared for the 2025 General Election. On January 31, 2025, the CCSD By-election was carried out in accordance with Ministerial Order #028/2024.

Four-year program planning cycle

Delivering elections for a city as large and complex as Calgary requires careful coordination, forward-thinking, planning and ongoing training over a four-year cycle.



2025 General Election planning and operations



Legislative changes



Council engagement

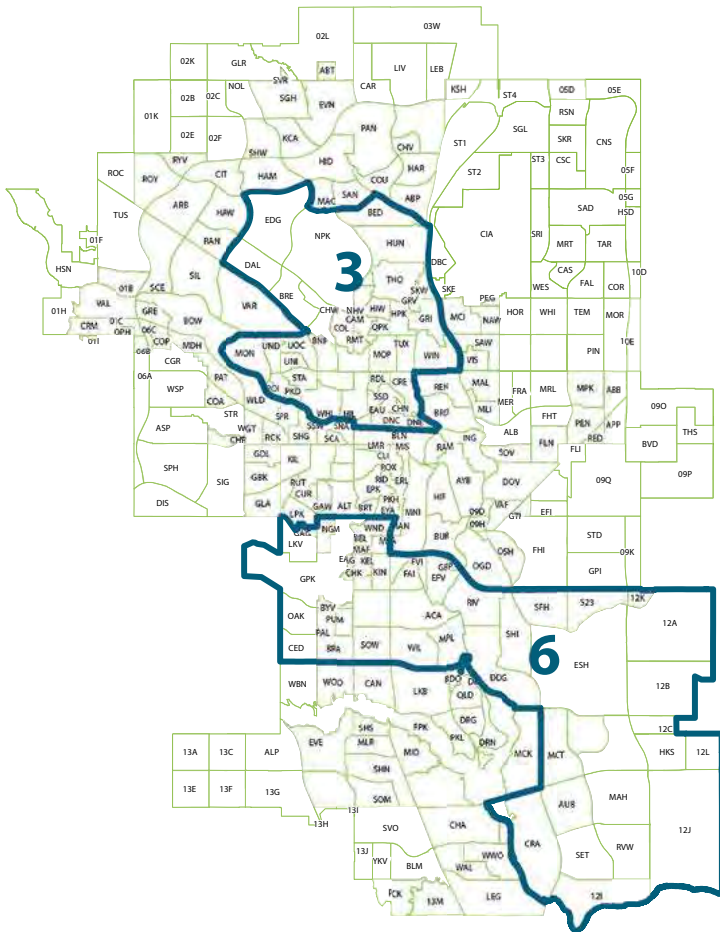


Administering the 2025 CCSD By-Election

The CCSD By-election was delivered on January 31, 2025, with the Advance Vote on January 24 and 25. The CCSD By-election was required under Section 81 of the *Education Act* to fill two vacancies on the CCSD Board of Trustees for the remainder of the 2021–2025 term.

These vacancies occurred in:

- **School Board Ward 3**
(City of Calgary Wards 4 and 7) and
- **School Board Ward 6**
(City of Calgary Wards 11 and 12).



The CCSD By-election took place to fill two school board trustee vacancies.

At a glance

For the CCSD By-election, voters were able to cast their ballots at one of three Advance Vote stations over two days. The Advance Vote took place January 24 and 25, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. each day. A total of six care facilities and two shelters were also serviced during the Advance Vote days. On Election Day, voters in both Wards 4 and 7 and Wards 11 and 12 could cast their ballot at one of six voting stations in their respective wards from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. In total, 382 voters in Wards 4 and 7 cast a ballot while 1,099 voters cast their ballot in Wards 11 and 12.






There was no established list of eligible separate school electors for the CCSD By-election. As a result, there was insufficient data to calculate voter turnout as a percentage. To support election delivery, approximately 90,000 ballots were printed and distributed to voting stations across the city.




**Advance
Vote**
January 24–25




**3
voting stations**
Vote anywhere

 <p>21 training sessions</p>	 <p>~200 election workers</p>	 <p>3 nominated trustee candidates in City of Calgary Wards 4 & 7</p>
 <p>2 ballot types</p>	 <p>1,481 ballots cast</p>	<p>4 nominated trustee candidates in City of Calgary Wards 11 & 12</p>



Election Day
January 31



**6
voting stations**

Program planning for the 2025 CCSD By-election

Election carts

To ensure the integrity of the election process, Elections Calgary developed processes to ensure the safety and security of materials, facilities and personnel.

The CCSD By-election provided Elections Calgary with the first opportunity to pilot the new election cart delivery model. These carts were introduced to strengthen the security and organization of voting materials by consolidating them into a single, lockable unit that could be securely stored within each voting station.

As a pilot project, the CCSD By-election allowed Elections Calgary to test the full workflow associated with cart preparation, storage, transportation, delivery and end-of-night return. This early deployment was valuable in identifying operational risks, logistical bottlenecks, and opportunities to refine processes ahead of the larger and more complex 2025 General Election. Lessons learned from the By-election informed updates to cart loading procedures, delivery timelines and chain-of-custody documentation, resulting in a more robust and efficient model for the 2025 General Election.

Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking allowed Elections Calgary to see where the election carts are always located. The By-election also marked the first implementation of GPS-enabled asset trackers on election carts. These trackers were used to monitor cart movement throughout the delivery and retrieval process, providing real-time visibility into cart locations and supporting enhanced chain-of-custody assurance.



Election carts are packed with the necessary supplies to operate a voting station.

Strengthening training and ballot counting processes

Elections Calgary used the CCSD By-election as an opportunity to refine both election worker training and newly developed procedures to hand count ballots. More than 200 election workers participated in 21 training sessions, which were designed to build confidence through clear materials, visual aids, structured exercises and standardized delivery. Feedback from participants highlighted the value of consistency across the training program, while also emphasizing the need for more hands-on practice, particularly for the new hand count processes.

As the CCSD By-election was the first real-world application of procedures developed following the prohibition of vote tabulators, it provided an environment to observe how election workers applied their training and used their manuals. Insights and data collected during this CCSD By-election directly informed improvements for the 2025 General Election, where training placed greater emphasis on practical exercises, flexibility and enhanced visual supports to strengthen overall election worker readiness.

Visitor program

During the CCSD By-election, Elections Calgary delivered a visitor learning program that provided municipal election administrators from across Alberta the opportunity to learn about Calgary's election operations, planning and processes. Participants observed key election activities, toured voting stations and Elections Calgary facilities and engaged with peers from other municipalities. In total, 20 participants representing 11 Alberta municipalities took part in the program.



Visitors from Alberta municipalities participated in a visitor program during the CCSD By-election.

Communications and engagement

Communications

A comprehensive communications plan was developed to effectively reach the targeted audiences for the CCSD By-election, using a combination of digital and print-based strategies. The plan focused on the following objectives:

- Inform and educate political participants about the requirements for taking part in the By-election.
- Inform, educate and motivate eligible voters of all backgrounds and abilities to participate in the voting process.
- Recruit Calgarians to serve as By-election workers.
- Provide timely and accurate information to media and election partners to support consistent and accurate reporting and promotion of the By-election.

Overview

The primary source of information for the CCSD By-election was electionscalgary.ca/byelection. Most communication tactics directed audiences to this website.

A geo-targeted marketing campaign to promote voting opportunities ran from January 17 – 31, 2025. The following tactics were used:

- **Bold signs**
- **Digital web banner ads** (translated into French, Spanish, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese)
- **Spotify ads**
- **YouTube ads**
- **Shine FM/AM 700 radio ads**
- **Paid social media ads**



Voter Guide

As a result of the Canada Post service disruptions, a community-based Voter Guide distribution plan was implemented. Distribution was targeted to homes, schools, and other locations in Wards 4, 7, 11, 12.

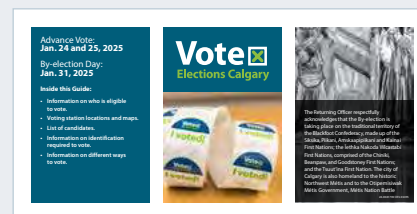
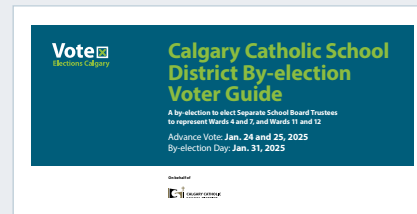
114,400
delivered January 16 to homes.

350
copies at public library branches (7) the week of January 13.

17,000
sent home with CCSD students the week of January 13.

1,600
delivered to local Catholic churches (15) the week of January 13.

The Voter Guide was translated and posted online. Cultural organizations were contacted to let them know about the translated versions.



CCSD communications support

In addition to sharing provided materials, the CCSD supported the By-election communications through:

- **Web:** A feature article was published in the spotlight section of the CCSD website for the duration of the election period. The article was also published on all 118 school websites.
- **Social media:** By-election information was shared on the CCSD's X (Twitter), Facebook and Instagram accounts leading up to Election Day on January 31, 2025.
- **Parent letter:** Every weekly parent letter leading up to the By-election included messaging and information.
- **Candidate videos:** Produced and promoted short videos featuring all seven candidates, which were posted and amplified on YouTube.

Partnerships

The following partners were provided with graphics and key messages to share through their e-newsletters, websites, social media channels and other communication platforms:

- **Calgary Catholic School District** (CCSD)
- **Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary**
- **Community Associations** (via City Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators)

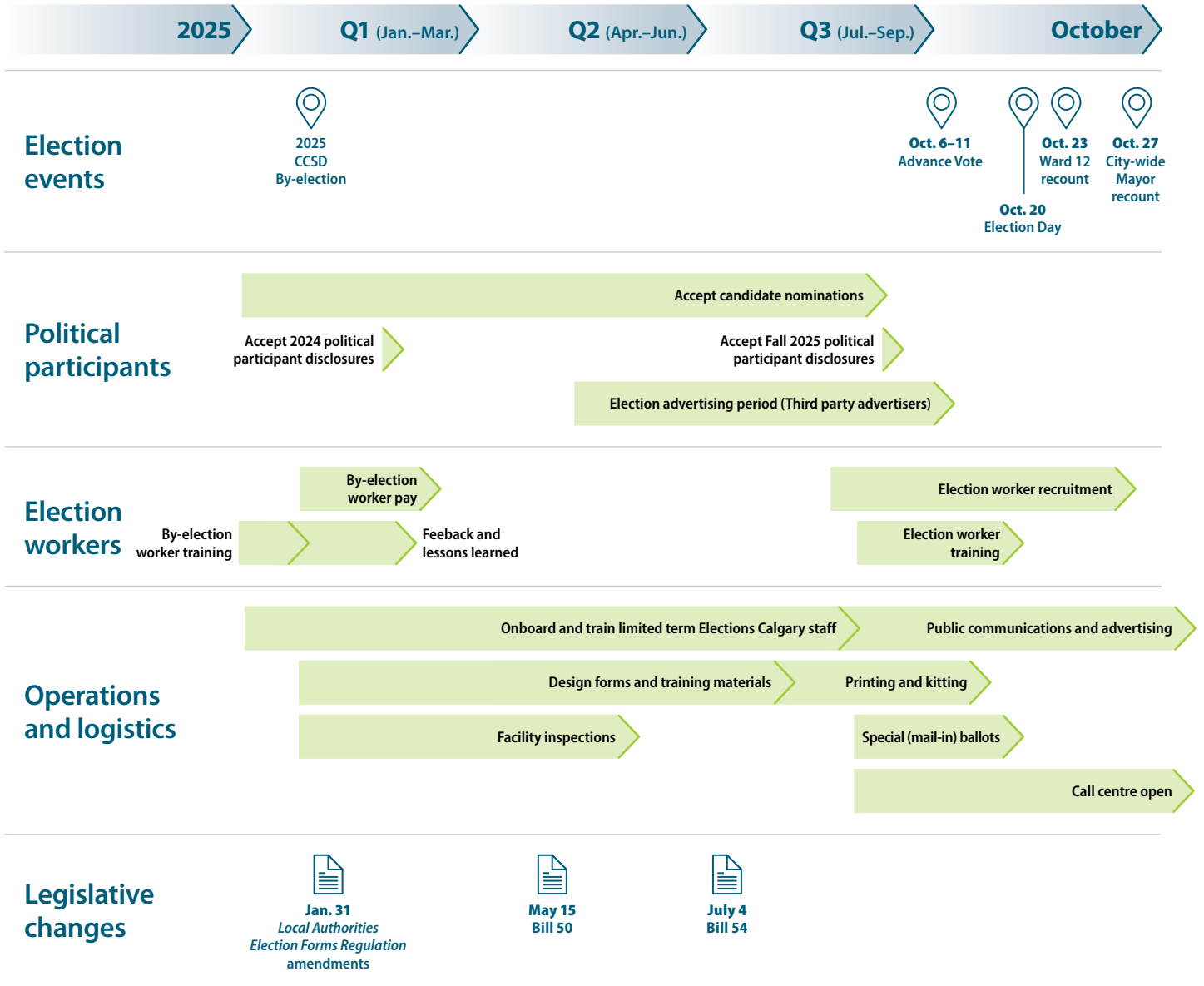
2025 CCSD By-election costs

Category	Expenditure	Description
Election operations	\$205,722	Election supplies, rentals, salaries, technology, administration
Voter engagement and communications	\$130,592	Advertising, voter communication, design services
Voting station workers	\$73,646	Recruitment, training, pay
TOTAL	\$409,960	



Administering the 2025 General Election

Timeline for the 2025 General Election

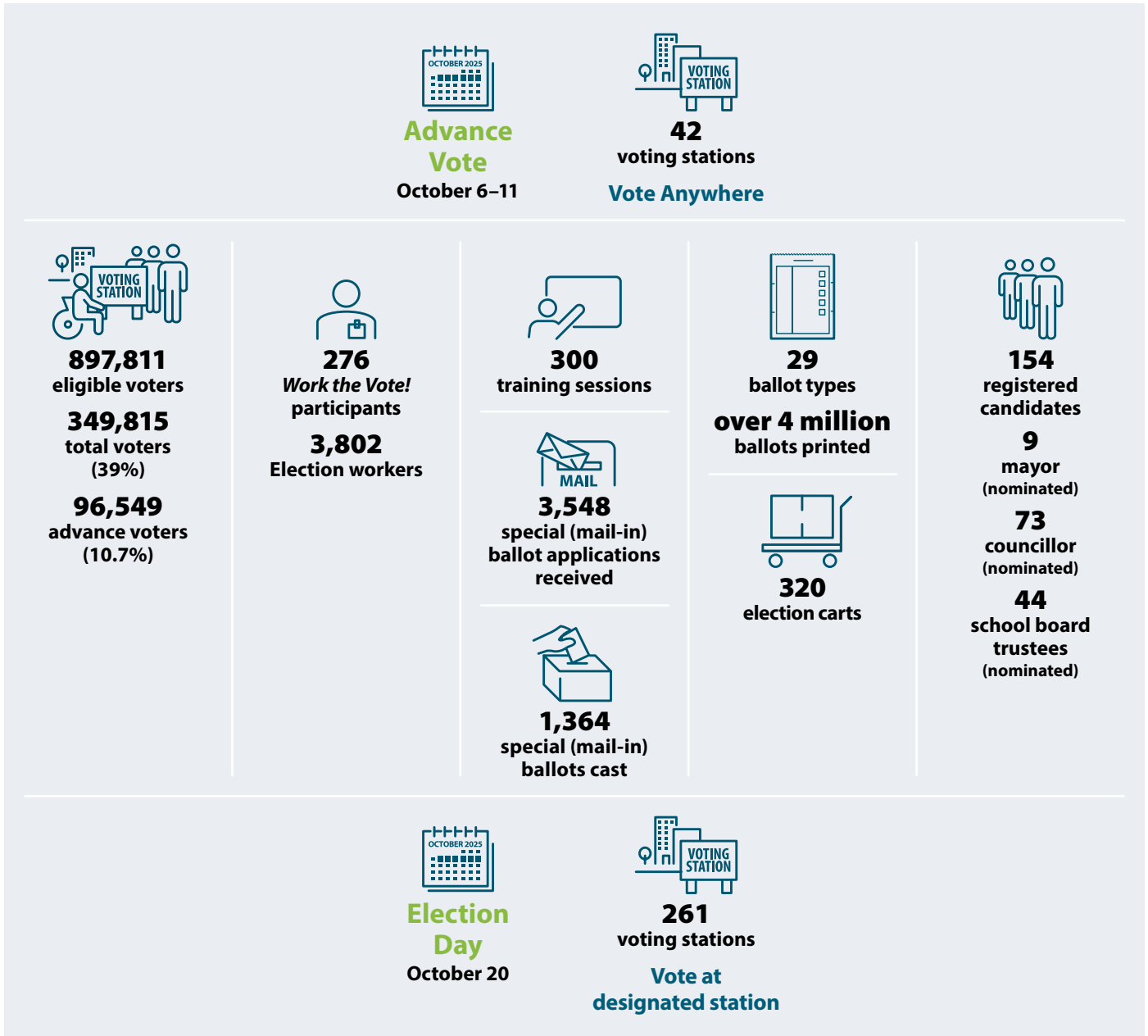


The 2025 General Election took place on October 20, 2025, with the Advance Vote from October 6 to 11, 2025. Planning and delivery of the election built on legislative change and lessons learned from the CCSD By-election delivered nine months earlier.

There were 896,042 eligible electors for the 2025 General Election. In total, 349,815 voters cast a ballot through available voting opportunities. Across the various Advance Vote

opportunities, 96,549 voters representing 10.7 per cent of voters turned out to cast their ballots. On Election Day, the majority of voters, 253,266 people, cast their ballots at one of 261 voting stations. Overall, voter turnout was 39.04 per cent. This represents a decrease of 15.8 per cent compared to the 2021 General Election, which saw a voter turnout of 46.38 per cent. To support election delivery, over 4 million ballots were printed and distributed to voting stations across the city.

Numbers at a glance: 2025 General Election



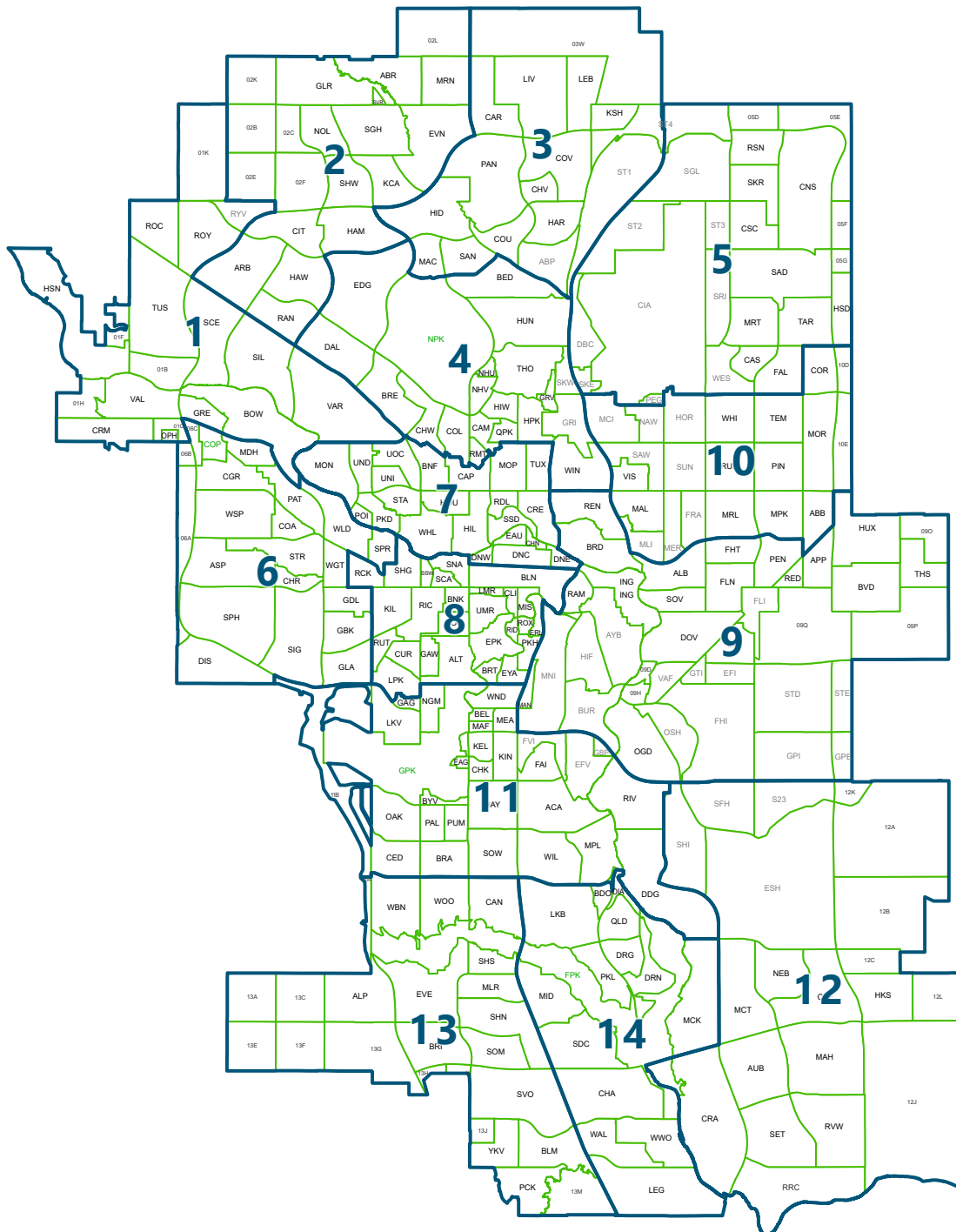
Offices to be elected

A total of 29 contests were included in the 2025 General Election, encompassing positions for The City of Calgary, the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School District.

City of Calgary Council

- Mayor (1)
- Councillors (14): One councillor for each City of Calgary ward

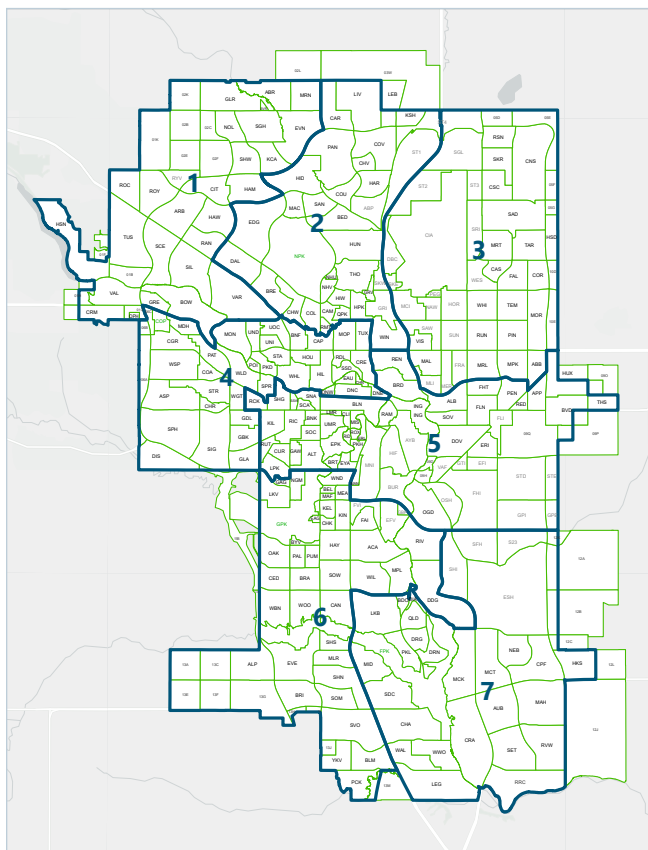
City of Calgary wards



Calgary Board of Education

One public school board trustee is elected for each of the following wards:

- City of Calgary Wards 1 and 2
- City of Calgary Wards 3 and 4
- City of Calgary Wards 5 and 10
- City of Calgary Wards 6 and 7
- City of Calgary Wards 8 and 9
- City of Calgary Wards 11 and 13
- City of Calgary Wards 12 and 14

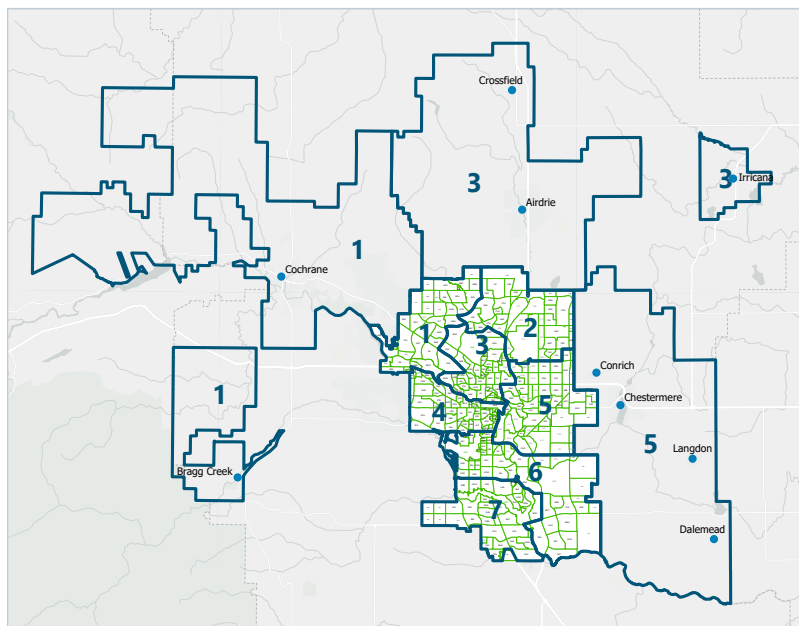


Calgary Board of Education wards.

Calgary Catholic School District

One separate school board trustee is elected for each of the following wards:

- School Board Ward 1 (City of Calgary Wards 1 and 2 and the Town of Cochrane)
- School Board Ward 2 (City of Calgary Wards 3 and 5)
- School Board Ward 3 (City of Calgary Wards 4 and 7 and the City of Airdrie)
- School Board Ward 4 (City of Calgary Wards 6 and 8)
- School Board Ward 5 (City of Calgary Wards 9 and 10 and the City of Chestermere)
- School Board Ward 6 (City of Calgary Wards 11 and 12)
- School Board Ward 7 (City of Calgary Wards 13 and 14)

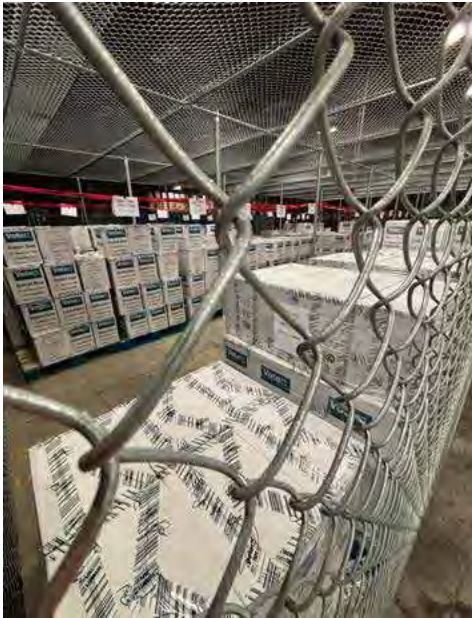


Calgary Catholic School District wards.

Program planning for the 2025 General Election

Integrity and security

To ensure the integrity of the election process, Elections Calgary developed processes to ensure the safety and security of materials, facilities and personnel.



Ballot boxes were securely locked and monitored.

“Elections Calgary have designed plans and processes that support readiness to deliver the 2025 Municipal Election effectively.”⁽¹⁾

Election readiness audit

During the first few months of 2025, Elections Calgary collaborated with the City Auditor’s Office to conduct the [2025 Municipal Election Readiness Audit](#). The purpose of the audit was to assess Elections Calgary’s preparedness to successfully deliver the 2025 General Election, with particular attention to new legislative requirements and the city’s growing population.

Overall, the audit found that Elections Calgary had developed robust plans and processes to support the delivery of a safe, efficient and legislatively compliant election. It also emphasized that effective implementation of these plans would be critical to mitigating risks associated with the election.

Emergency Operations Centre for Election Day

For the 2025 General Election, the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was activated on Election Day to serve as the central hub for coordinating emergency response activities and monitoring the overall General Election. The EOC was hosted by the Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA). Key internal and external partners were present and ready to mobilize quickly in the event major issues arose.



City of Calgary’s Emergency Operations Centre

“Appropriate plans and processes have been designed to mitigate the key risks arising from these changes that could impact the voting experience and ensure timely and accurate results.”⁽²⁾

¹ City of Calgary, *2025 Municipal Election Readiness Audit* (PDF), accessed February 16, 2026, <https://pub-calgary.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=333779>, p. 2.

² City of Calgary, *2025 Municipal Election Readiness Audit* (PDF), accessed February 16, 2026, <https://pub-calgary.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=333779>, p. 2.

Agencies represented at the EOC:

- City Clerk's Office
- City of Calgary 311
- Calgary 911
- Calgary Board of Education
- Calgary Catholic School District
- Calgary Parking Authority
- Calgary Police Service
- Calgary Stampede
- Community Safety Peace Officers
- Corporate Security
- Customer Service and Communications
- Facilities
- Geospatial Business Solutions
- Human Resources
- Law
- Information Technology (Deskside Support)
- Mobility
- Calgary Transit
- Safety
- Fleet and Inventory

The operational period for the EOC was from 7 a.m. October 20 to 1 a.m. October 21, 2025. Throughout the course of Election Day, the EOC was in constant communication with Election Central, the Elections Calgary office location where election delivery and live operations were managed. Updates between the EOC and Election Central were provided through a series of situation reports and briefings throughout Election Day. Escalation protocols to the EOC were established for multiple scenarios in the event a situation escalated beyond the capacity of Election Central or had the potential to damage or significantly impact life safety or critical infrastructure.

Election carts

For the 2025 General Election, Elections Calgary introduced a redesigned logistics model centered on the deployment of 320 election carts to securely transport all voting station materials. Purpose-built carts replaced the need for election workers to physically pick up supplies before Advance Vote or Election Day. Each cart was equipped with a combination lock and a GPS-enabled asset tracker, significantly strengthening chain-of-custody controls.

To further enhance delivery integrity, Elections Calgary partnered with a third party logistics vendor to complete all cart deliveries. Upon arrival at each voting station, drivers captured a geotagged proof-of-delivery photograph, allowing real-time verification of correct delivery.

Elections Calgary partnered with The City's Fleet & Inventory business unit to equip all 320 election carts with GPS-enabled asset trackers. GPS data was used throughout the delivery cycle to:

- Monitor real-time cart location
- Confirm deliveries against assigned routes
- Maintain a full digital record of chain-of-custody

This marked the first general election where Elections Calgary had full end-to-end cart-level tracking, significantly elevating the security and transparency of logistics operations.



Election carts wrapped and ready for delivery to voting stations.

Cybersecurity

Elections Calgary demonstrated a commitment to the protection of election information and data for the 2025 General Election by working closely with internal and external partners and implementing robust cybersecurity best practices.

Elections Calgary engaged with The City's cybersecurity experts to ensure alignment with municipal standards and conducted multiple rounds of penetration testing on the election management system used to administer the Permanent Electors Register using a specialized, unbiased third party vendor. A Privacy Impact Assessment was completed with support from The City's privacy experts, focusing on the use, movement and secure storage of personal information contained in the Permanent Electors Register.

In Advance Vote stations, all election workers using laptops for real-time voter strike-off were required to log in using two-factor authentication, and each Advance Vote station operated on a private and secure network. All laptops deployed for the Advance Vote were equipped with software that enabled remote-wipe capability, real-time threat monitoring, GPS tracking and controls that ensure laptops could access only pre-approved websites.

For the 2025 General Election, Elections Calgary collaborated with The City's Information Technology business unit to develop an in-house results application to support the intake and validation of election results. The application was built over a compressed four-month development period to support the operational realities of a hand count election.

The results app enabled:

- Entry and secure transmission of results for all contests
- Secondary verification checks
- Recording of rejected and objected-to ballots
- Automated flags when recount criteria were met

The application significantly improved Elections Calgary's ability to manage and validate results in a transparent and secure manner.

Enhanced support centres

Support centres continued to play an essential role in the 2025 General Election, serving as decentralized operational hubs for Election Day. Elections Calgary operated seven support centres, with each centre supporting the needs of two City wards.

Support centres received and stored materials returned from voting stations at the end of the night and acted as decentralized supply depots during voting hours. When stations required replenishment, including ballots, forms, or accessibility supplies, support centre staff were able to fulfil requests quickly due to their proximity to voting locations. Standby courier drivers were positioned at each support centre to provide rapid deployment of high-priority

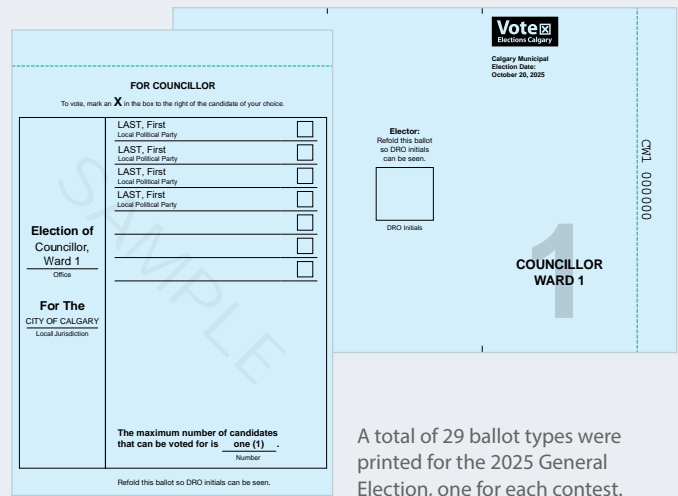
materials, ensuring timely response to all operational needs and reducing reliance on long-distance transportation from Elections Calgary's central warehouse.

Ballot distribution model

The ballot distribution model for the 2025 General Election was designed to accommodate legislative requirements, projected turnout and Calgary's population growth. Allocation of ballots were calculated using:

- Estimated voter turnout within each Voting Subdivision
- Ward-level growth projections
- The number of enumerated electors from the Permanent Electors Register
- A built-in margin of error

Elections Calgary printed more than 100 per cent of eligible voters to ensure adequate supply. Voting stations received 70 per cent of their allocated ballots pre-packed in their election cart. The remaining 30 per cent were delivered by Area Supervisors within the first hour of election workers arriving on site. This staggered delivery model mitigated the risk of early-morning access issues with election carts and ensured ballot availability throughout the day.



A total of 29 ballot types were printed for the 2025 General Election, one for each contest.

Supply kits for each position in the voting station

To streamline operations and reduce setup time, Elections Calgary prepared dedicated supply kits for each position within the voting station. For the 2025 General Election, over 4,000 individual kits were assembled, labelled, and quality checked. Kits included all required forms, manuals, stationery and specialized materials tailored to each election worker role.

In addition to station-level distribution, kits were also provided to Area Supervisors and support centres, enabling them to supply immediate replacements or supplemental materials as required.

Accessibility

Elections Calgary worked with partners to ensure voting opportunities were accessible and inclusive. After consultation with The City’s Advisory Committee on Accessibility and reviewing best practices from other jurisdictions, the accessibility strategy focused on solutions to reduce barriers to ensure voters were able to choose the right voting opportunity to meet their needs.

Physical barriers

Efforts were made to reduce physical barriers where possible, including marking ballot(s), accessing voting stations and transportation to voting stations.

Tools within voting stations were available to voters to help them with marking their ballots:

- Tactile voting templates (a physical template to help those who are visually impaired to mark the ballot in the correct spot)
- Magnifying glasses/sheets
- Signature guides
- List of candidate names in braille
- Large print list of candidate names
- Large grip pencils

Voters could also bring a support person to assist them in marking their ballot, or request assistance from a trained election worker, who was required to maintain the secrecy of

the vote. In addition, voters were permitted to use personal assistive devices, such as a mobile phone, when reviewing forms or marking ballots.

Every voting station was reviewed for accessibility prior to use. Where possible, modifications were made to make voting stations accessible, such as installing temporary ramps, or providing an accessible voting room. For voters who could not enter a voting station, curbside voting was also available. Information on accessibility for each station, including the location of the accessible entrance, was provided through the *Where Do I Vote* tool.

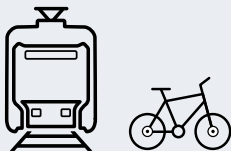
Voters could choose a variety of ways to get to their voting station. To accommodate choice, many Advance Vote stations were located close to public transportation options and Election Day stations were located close to voters’ homes.



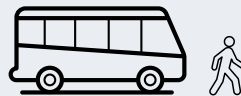
To assist voters who face barriers, Elections Calgary offered an array of assistive tools at voting stations.

93% of Calgarians had no accessibility issues at the voting station.

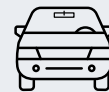
Source: 2025 telephone survey



21 of 41 Advance Vote stations were within 1 KM of LRT/BRT/Max



260 of 261 Election Day stations were within 800 metres of regular service stops (~10 minute walk)



90% of registered electors lived within a 5 minute drive from their designated Election Day voting station

Communication barriers

Voters may face additional challenges with voting due to unfamiliar terminology, complex instructions, locating the information they need to vote and language barriers.

Elections Calgary followed The City’s plain language policy and provided simple instructions inside the voting station for voters, videos online to explain the voting process and infographics where possible.

Before going to the voting station, voters could access information through multiple languages by contacting 311, which provides access to translation services for 300 languages and has text telephone (TTY) services available. A Google Translate button was also available on the electionscalgary.ca website and key documents such as the Voter’s Guide was made available online in the city’s most common languages.

At the voting station, election workers identified what languages they speak on their name badge, and a sign at the entrance to the voting station indicates what language services are available inside. Efforts were made to place election workers with specific language skills in stations that were most likely to have voters who speak the same language. Voters were also permitted to bring an interpreter, and instructions for electors were available inside voting stations in multiple languages.

Accessible voting opportunities

Multiple voting opportunities were available to meet accessibility needs, including:

- **41 Advance Vote opportunities** with a Vote Anywhere model
- **6 days of Advance Vote options**
- **Mobile voting** for care facilities and shelters
- **Outreach voting stations** at post-secondaries, hospitals, CNIB, Deaf & Hear Alberta and YW Calgary
- **Vote Bus** at various locations throughout the city
- **Mail-in voting**

Communications and engagement

The communications and engagement strategy for the 2025 General Election was designed to strengthen public trust and support broad participation by reaching all eligible voters, including individuals who encounter barriers to voting. By reducing these barriers, the voting experience is accessible to everyone. The strategy focused on inclusive engagement to ensure every voter had the information they needed to know when, where and how to vote.

A multi-phased communications plan was developed to reach various election audiences, aligning with the business timeline to ensure the right message at the right time. Most communications were digital or print-based, with an increased emphasis on media relations.

Objectives

The communications and engagement strategy focused on achieving the following objectives:

- Enhance Elections Calgary’s reputation for delivering an independent, fair and secure 2025 General Election.
- Build and maintain trust among political participants and voters in the election process and results.
- Support and promote legislative compliance among political participants.
- Encourage broad voter participation across all communities and abilities.
- Effectively convey the election narrative through a diverse range of communication channels.



Voting Equity Research Project

Communications initiatives for the 2025 General Election also aimed to respond to the findings from Elections Calgary's Voting Equity Research Project which began in 2021 after Elections Calgary received an Equity in Service Delivery Fund grant from The City. The purpose of the project was to gather high quality local evidence and develop recommendations that reduce barriers to voting and deliver recommendations that could help inform the design of voting opportunities for future municipal elections. The project used original research, including focus groups, in-depth interviews and online surveys to better understand how immigrant Calgarians view municipal elections, what factors guide voter turnout and how The City can better support new voters.

The project concluded that immigrant Calgarians would benefit from having better access to information about how municipal government works, what services it provides and simple ways to compare candidates during an election. This information would help them more confidently understand municipal government and the voting process. Another key finding highlighted that immigrant Calgarians want to hear more from their municipal government on an ongoing basis and not just during election years.

In response to the research findings, communication plans for the 2025 General Election included informational materials and tools about the roles and responsibilities of local government, and how to participate. Engagement and information sharing also occurred with community partners serving immigrant Calgarians including the Calgary Local Immigration Partnership and Calgary Public Library.

Election communication strategies

The election communication strategy was organized into multiple phases, each with distinct messaging.

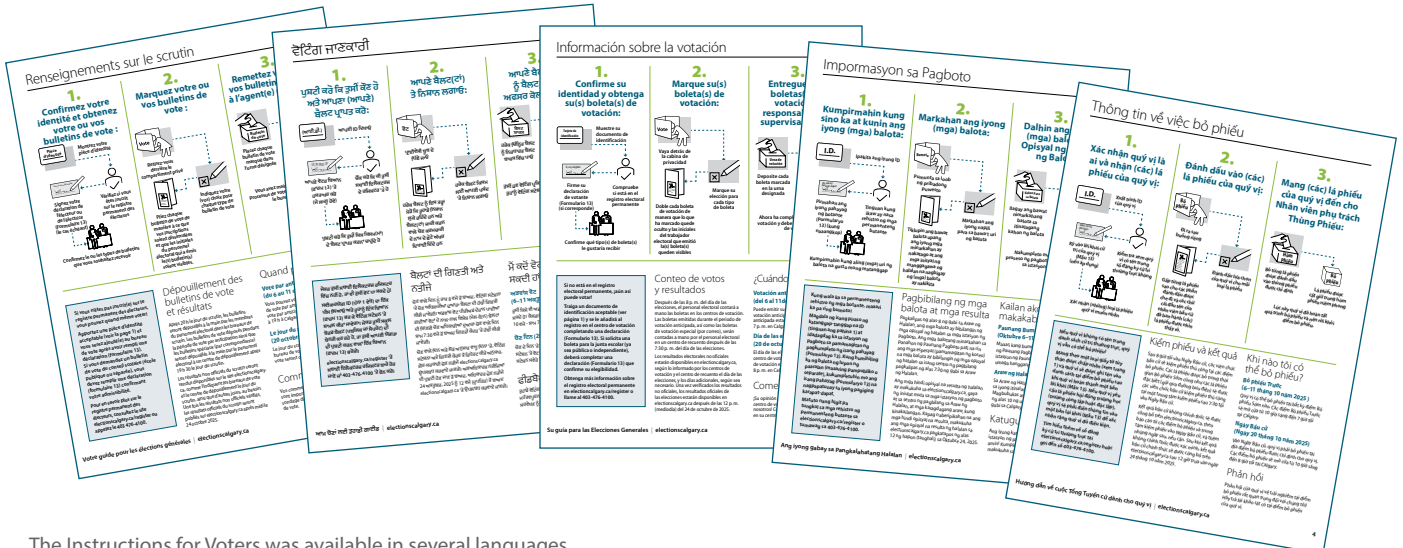
Website

The Elections Calgary website was the primary tool for information, as it had the most up-to-date and accurate information for voters, political participants, election workers and media. With commitment to plain language and accessibility, the Elections Calgary website was a primary tool to reduce confusion and provide information about:

- Who can vote
- How to vote
- When and where to vote (including the *Where Do I Vote* tool and the Voter Guide)
- Permanent Electors Register
- Voter identification
- Special (mail-in) ballots
- Accessible voting
- Election signs and campaigning
- Nominated candidates
- Results and disclosures
- General Election FAQ
- Specific information relating to candidates, local political parties and slates and third party advertisers
- Election workers and job postings

95% of Calgarians agreed that information about the election was available in a language they understood.

Source: 2025 telephone survey



The Instructions for Voters was available in several languages.

Permanent Electors Register

Key message:

Update your voter information and register to vote

This initiative promoted the new legislative requirement for voters to be on the Permanent Electors Register between June 25 to August 1, 2025. During this period, voters were encouraged to visit Elections Alberta’s voter registration website ([VoterLink](#)) to review and update their information ahead of Election Day, or to add themselves to the registry if they were not already registered. Voters who did not register by the Elections Calgary promoted deadline could still be added to the Permanent Electors Register at the voting station.

A second round of this messaging was delivered as part of a broader general awareness campaign that ran in mid-September of 2025.



Worker recruitment

Key message:

Work with us!

The external recruitment campaign ran from August 5 to 20, 2025, aimed at hiring over 3,800 election workers. An internal recruitment campaign, *Work the Vote – Get Involved!* ran from April to May 2025, aimed at recruiting for key support roles for the General Election. This year, the *Work the Vote!* program was expanded to include CUPE Local 38 employees as well as Management Exempt staff. The main communication tool for this campaign was Employee Communications and all staff emails from the Chief Administrator’s Office.



General awareness

Key message:

General information about the election and voter requirements.

Leading up to October, a general awareness campaign about the 2025 General Election ran on TV from September 7 to 13, 2025 and on radio from September 14 to 20, 2025. A full-page ad in the Calgary Herald also ran and included voter information similar to the content of the Voter Guide.

To reach the public for all phases, Elections Calgary:

- Engaged in traditional and digital media marketing.
- Expanded marketing into new areas, including cinema advertising and different distribution providers for print materials due to labour disputes.
- Included ethnic outlets in marketing/communications/outreach plans.
- Increased media availability and presence.



Elections Calgary had booths at the Afro-Caribbean Fest and Franco Festival, providing information about the upcoming election to voters and answering their questions.

Most Calgarians found voting information easy to access:

91% could easily find eligibility requirements.

88% knew what identification to bring.

82% found when to vote.

81% found where to vote.

Source: 2025 telephone survey

Advance Vote

Key message:

Vote early, Vote Anywhere

Promoting the vote early, the Vote Anywhere model of the Advance Vote was intended to encourage voters to cast their ballots during the Advance Vote and therefore minimize wait times at voting stations on Election Day. The Vote Anywhere model provided voters with the opportunity to vote at the nearest location to them, whether it be a workplace or residence. Promotion ran from September 22 to October 12, 2025.

Election Day

Key message:

Your community, your vote, your impact. Go vote!

These communications ran from October 13 to 20, 2025 and were a final opportunity to remind people to vote on Election Day if they had not already, along with other information about how, when and where to vote.

Increased media presence

Elections Calgary greatly increased its media accessibility and collaborated with our media partners for the 2025 General Election, mainly to communicate the many legislative changes to the election process (Permanent Electors Register, hand counting ballots, candidate disclosures, local political parties, etc.) and expectations around results reporting, as well as increased transparency around the election process. There were 39 media availabilities and releases sent between March and October 2025 related to the General Election. A half day media technical briefing was held on September 19, 2025.

Election coverage by media was steady from October 2024 through August 2025, where it started to sharply increase. Most coverage related to Elections Calgary activities appeared on TV and radio outlets.

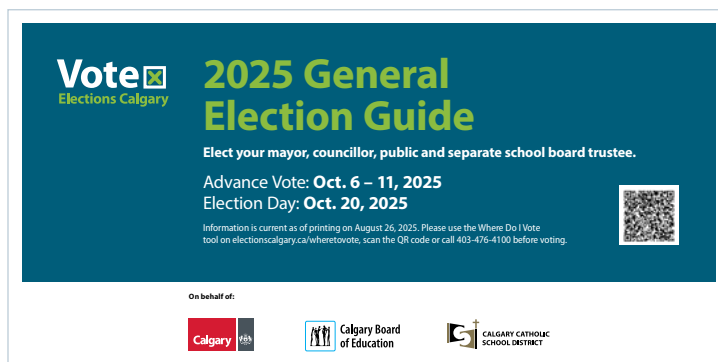


Returning Officer Kate Martin speaking to media at the counting centre.

Voter Guide

A newspaper-style guide that contained information, key election dates and deadlines, official Notice of Election and Requirements for Voter Identification, voting information and checklist (including special mail-in ballots and accessible voting), Advance Vote and Election Day voting station locations and times, along with ward maps.

Due to potential or real Canada Post service disruptions, a multi-scenario tactic plan for the Voter Guide was developed. The Voter Guide was mailed to Calgary households the week of September 8, 2025 to ensure information was delivered directly to Calgarians in the event of a disruption to Canada Post services.



Voter Information Card

A card outlining voter eligibility, checklist and voting opportunities (including the resident's designated Election Day voting station) was mailed to households starting the week of September 23, 2025. A second Canada Post service disruption occurred on September 25, 2025. Roughly 70 per cent of all Calgary households received a Voter Information Card before the 2025 General Election took place.

Where Do I Vote tool

Building on its successful use in previous elections, the *Where Do I Vote* tool continued to be a key digital service for voters during this election. Two tailored versions of the tool were provided: one for Advance Vote and one for Election Day.

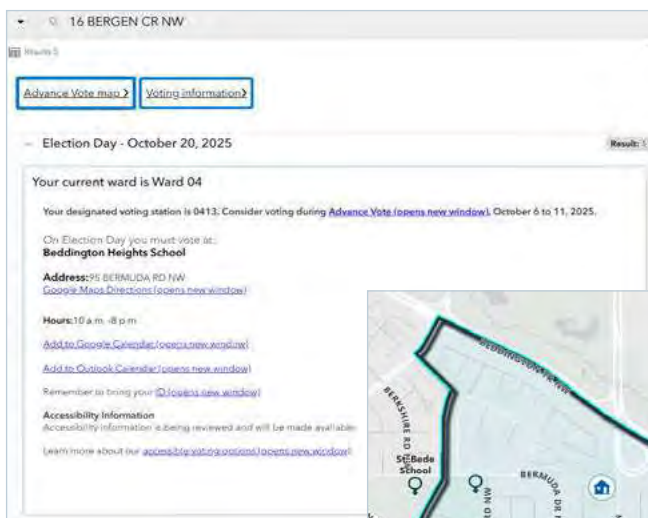
During the Advance Vote, the tool supported a Vote Anywhere model, allowing voters to cast their ballots at any Advance Vote station across the city. On Election Day, the tool directed voters to their designated voting station, in accordance with legislative requirements.

Using a voter’s residential address, the tool displayed their ward, the names of the nominated candidates in their ward. The tool also displayed the names of nominated candidates and voting station(s) available to the voter. It also provided information on accessibility supports available at each voting station, helping voters make informed choices about where and how to vote.

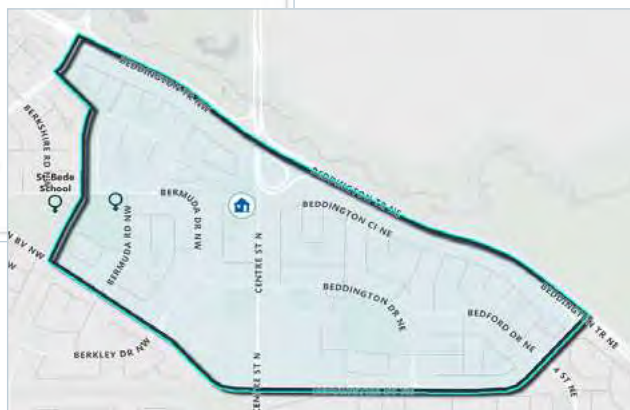
Ahead of the election, all voting stations underwent facility inspections. These inspections included an accessibility checklist based on federal and provincial accessibility standards. Where required, modifications and remediations, such as the installation of ramps, were implemented to improve accessibility.

The *Where Do I Vote* tool remained a critical support for both the public and election staff providing clear, reliable information about where individuals can cast their vote. The tool was well utilized with a total of 95,244 visits on Election Day, which peaked between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. with over 14,000 visits per hour.

This tool is consistently a key support for finding out where an individual can and should go to vote.



The *Where Do I Vote* tool helped voters locate Advance Vote and Election Day voting stations.



Canada Post service disruptions

Canada Post experienced multiple service disruptions during the lead up to the 2025 General Election. Given that key election materials are distributed by mail to voters, Elections Calgary established a contingency plan in the event of a labour disruption, with three different scenarios. According to the 2025 telephone survey, approximately 12 per cent of Calgarians reported that the Canada Post strike affected their voting experience. Of those impacted, 81 per cent indicated that the impact was negative.

Election integrity

A key piece of communications undertaken by Elections Calgary revolved around election integrity and transparency. This included tactics such as:

- Creating a new General Election FAQ webpage
- Video about voting station location and selection process
- Episode on the *Calgary Conversations* podcast about the upcoming General Election
- Creating a “Lifecycle of a Ballot” infographic to showcase the process and security measures surrounding ballots
- Increased opportunities for media availabilities and participation in mock election processes
- Participation in an *Ask Me Anything* Q&A on Reddit



Returning Officer, Kate Martin and Substitute Returning Officer, Andrew Brouwer appear on an episode of the *Calgary Conversations* podcast.

Election call centre

New for 2025, a dedicated call centre was set up to provide election support during the 2025 General Election, separate from The City’s 311 operations. The call centre supported public inquiries through telephone calls, emails and 311 tickets.

In addition, when voting stations were active, the call centre also received calls from the Presiding Deputy Returning Officer (PDRO) on the PDRO Helpline. A PDRO is the individual who is hired to oversee a voting station.



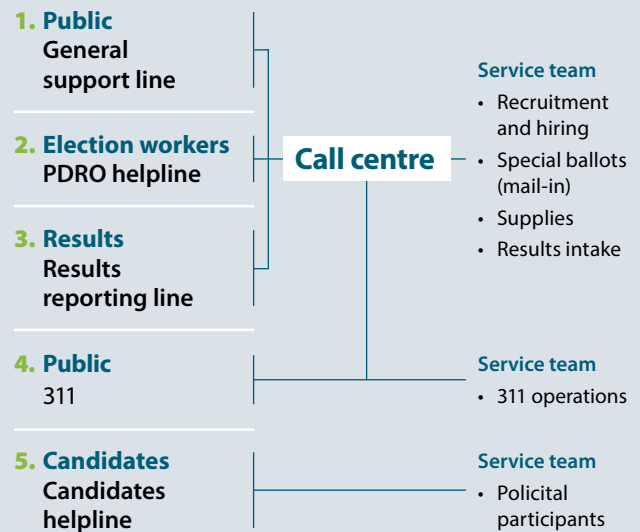
To manage the volume and complexity of inquiries during the election period, Elections Calgary also implemented a ticketing system for the call centre. The platform allowed the team to track and resolve over 7,000 tickets, including both public inquiries and operational issues from voting stations.

Monitoring of the ticket system improved visibility into issues trends, faster escalation where required, and stronger documentation to support post-election reviews.

Goals of the call centre

- **Consistent customer service.** To provide consistent and reliable customer service to the public and election workers.
- **Operational efficiency.** Provide frontline customer service so that specialty teams can focus on operational work and less on routine public inquiries.
- **Data for continuous improvement.** A centralized call centre provides data and insight into common bottlenecks and issues encountered by voters and election workers.

Telephone support lines



Public inquiries

Total number of calls to the main election telephone line:
5,691

Total number of calls to 311 call centre:
2,089

Voting stations inquiries to the PDRO Helpline:

1,797 calls during the Advance Vote period

1,202 calls on Election Day

Community partnerships

Elections Calgary worked with City of Calgary partners to help connect with those outside of the regular distribution channels and help identify any barriers to information and changes to content or messaging that might be required.

- Advisory Committee on Accessibility
- Alberta Council of Disability Services
- Anti-Racism Program
- Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (CLIP)
- Calgary Police Service
- Calgary Public Library
- Calgary Transit
- City of Calgary Archives
- Community Social Workers
- Community Strategies
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- Deaf & Hear Alberta
- Dream Centre
- Hospitals: Foothills Medical Centre, Peter Lougheed Centre, Rockyview General Hospital, South Health Campus
- Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators
- Post-Secondary Institutions:
University of Calgary, SAIT, Mount Royal University
- Youth Employment Centre
- YW Calgary

In collaboration with the Calgary Public Library, Elections Calgary created a high-visibility, interactive public engagement space at the Central Public Library. For the 2025 General Election, the space served as a temporary civic engagement and media literacy exhibit designed to support voter education on general elections, democratic roles and reliable information through hands-on activities.



A display in the Municipal Complex by City of Calgary Archives showcasing historical election materials.



2025 General Election display in the Central Public Library.

Responding to legislative change

Use of a Permanent Electors Register

As set out in the Act, Elections Calgary must use data from Elections Alberta to establish a Permanent Electors Register. Before receiving the elector data, Elections Calgary worked with Elections Alberta to establish a formal data-sharing agreement that outlined the governance, authorized uses, privacy protections and security requirements for handling a Permanent Electors Register.

Once the agreement was in place, Elections Calgary provided Elections Alberta with a complete geospatial dataset of Calgary’s addressing data. Elections Alberta added voters’ information to the data set which was used to create the Permanent Electors Register.

With the requirement to use the Permanent Electors Register, Elections Calgary chose to implement live strike-off during Advance Vote. Elections Calgary partnered with a third party provider to manage the Permanent Electors Register software solution, enabling the use of laptops at Advance Vote locations.

This allowed election workers to update voter information in real time at the voting station.

Unlike Advance Vote, Election Day did not use live strike-off. Instead, each voting station received a printed elector list specific to its Voting Subdivision.

Following the General Election, Elections Calgary initiated the post-election update cycle required to ensure the Permanent Electors Register remains accurate. Since Election Day voting stations used paper elector lists, forms capturing changes to voters’ personal information were used to update the Permanent Electors Register.

Transition to a manual ballot counting process

A process to manually count paper ballots was developed to align with new legislative requirements. To maintain the accuracy and integrity of election results, this shift to a fully manual counting process prompted several procedural adjustments to our voting processes.

To ensure the chosen counting method was reliable, efficient and easy for election workers to learn, Elections Calgary conducted three rounds of structured testing between May 2024 and June 2025. Research was conducted to identify common counting methods used provincially, federally and internationally. The first round tested best practice counting methods to determine which produced the most efficient and accurate results. The second test focused on timing the selected method to understand how long the process would take under real voting conditions. The final test refined the training instructions, ensuring they were intuitive and well-suited for election workers of varying experience levels.



Sample ballots used in ballot counting testing

Staffing model enhancements

To support voting station operations and strengthen end-of-night processes, several adjustments were made to the staffing model. These enhancements were designed to improve workflow efficiency, ensure accurate ballot management and better align roles with operational requirements.

- Creation of the Counting Officer role to support the end-of-night hand count of ballots.
- Revised estimations on the number of voters each Deputy Returning Officer could process per day.
- An increase of 39 per cent to the number of voting stations on Election Day to reduce the number of voters and ballots to be counted at each voting station.
- Adjusted Election Day voting station opening times to 10 a.m. (previously 8 a.m. in 2021), to accommodate the additional time required at the end of the night for the hand count and ballot accounting.
- Expanded the scope of the role of the Assistant Presiding Deputy Returning Officer to include quality control of legislated processes, including completion of forms.
- Updated the pay model and rates to align with other jurisdictions and provide an hourly rate for each role to be used when daily estimated hours of work were exceeded.

Elections Calgary received a total of **11,410 applications**, from which **3,802 election workers** were hired to support the 2025 General Election.



Elections Calgary hired 3,802 election workers to support the delivery of the 2025 General Election.

96% of Calgarians found election workers to be helpful.

Source: 2025 telephone survey

Expanded *Work the Vote!* program

The *Work the Vote!* program was piloted during the 2021 General Election. It was designed to increase employee engagement in the electoral process and assign City staff to Election Day support positions. The 2021 pilot program offered Management Exempt employees the opportunity to support Election Day operations and resulted in over 100 staff members serving in key roles such as Area Supervisors and support centre Leads.

The program was expanded for the 2025 General Election to include both Management Exempt employees and CUPE Local 38 employees.

A total of 276 City staff participated in the program in 2025, filling essential positions that strengthened the integrity of election operations and provided employees with leadership and election experience. Program roles included:

- **Area Supervisors:** Oversaw up to three voting stations, helped resolve issues on site and supported PDROs throughout the day.
- **End of night crew:** Assisted voting stations with ballot counting and closing procedures.
- **Check-in crew:** Helped verify the return of critical materials and ensured election workers were properly checked in at support centres.
- **Results crew:** Received calls from PDROs and enter unofficial results data in the system.

Increased voting opportunities

Elections Calgary expanded access to voting by offering a wide range of convenient and accessible voting opportunities across the city. This approach resonated with voters.

97% of Calgarians found voting stations convenient to access.

Source: 2025 telephone survey



There was a total of 380 voting opportunities for the 2025 General Election.

Advance Vote took place between October 6 to 11, 2025 at 31 voting stations across the city. During this period, voters could cast their ballots at any one of these 31 voting stations regardless of where they lived. Additional voting opportunities were offered at Community organizations including CNIB Calgary, YW Calgary and Deaf & Hear Alberta as well as the following four hospitals:

- Foothills Medical Centre
- Rockyview General Hospital
- Peter Lougheed Centre
- South Health Campus



Elections Calgary partnered with Deaf & Hear Alberta, YW Calgary and CNIB Calgary to offer additional accessible voting opportunities.

Additional voting opportunities were also offered at three post-secondary institutions:

- SAIT
- University of Calgary
- Mount Royal University

A vote bus operated as a mobile voting station, visiting 11 locations during the six days of the Advance Vote to enhance accessibility. Voting was also made available at 58 care facilities and five shelters, with schedules posted in advance. The 2025 Advance Vote recorded participation from 96,549 eligible voters, a 32 per cent decrease from the 2021 General Election.

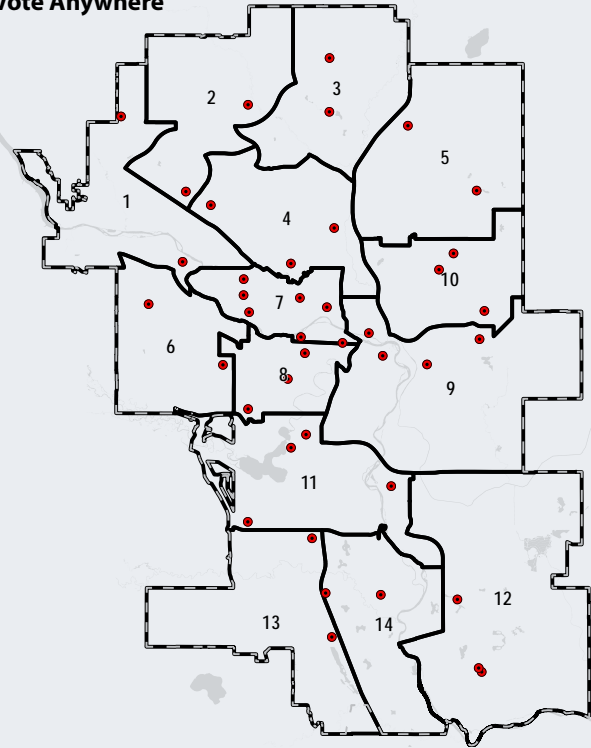
On Election Day, October 20, 2025, Elections Calgary offered voting at 261 stations across the city, open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. This represents an increase of 73 voting stations compared with the 188 used during the 2021 General Election. On Election Day, voters were required to cast their ballots at their designated voting station.



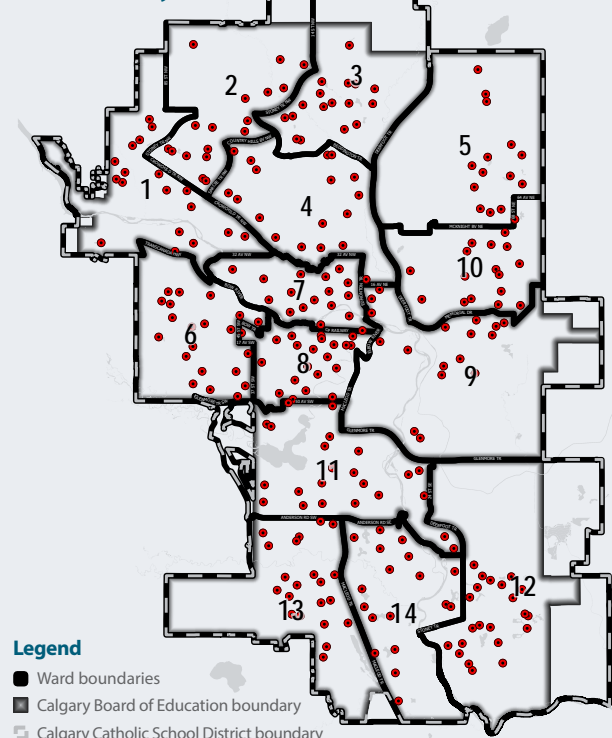
The Elections Calgary Vote Bus could be seen serving voters at 11 stops across the city during the Advance Vote.

Advance Vote: 31

Vote Anywhere



Election Day: 261



- Legend**
- Ward boundaries
 - Calgary Board of Education boundary
 - ▨ Calgary Catholic School District boundary
 - Rivers and lakes
 - Election Day station

Voters could cast their ballots at one of 31 Advance Vote stations between October 6-11, or at their designated voting station on Election Day.

Special (mail-in) ballots

Special (mail-in) ballot requests were open from August 13 to October 20, 2025. Over 3,700 requests for mail-in ballots were received for the 2025 General Election. Voters were able to request their mail-in ballot package online, by telephone or in person.

Due to Canada Post service disruptions, all special (mail-in) ballot packages were distributed by courier or made available for in-person pickup. Completed mail-in ballots were accepted until 12 p.m. on Election Day. A total of 1,364 votes were cast by special (mail-in) ballots.



Large central counting centre

For the 2025 General Election, the use of vote tabulators was prohibited. As a result, separate paper ballots for each contest were used rather than composite tabulator-readable ballots. To manage the increased volume efficiently and securely, Elections Calgary established a large, centralized counting centre for:

- Advance Vote ballots
- Special (mail-in) ballots
- Recounts

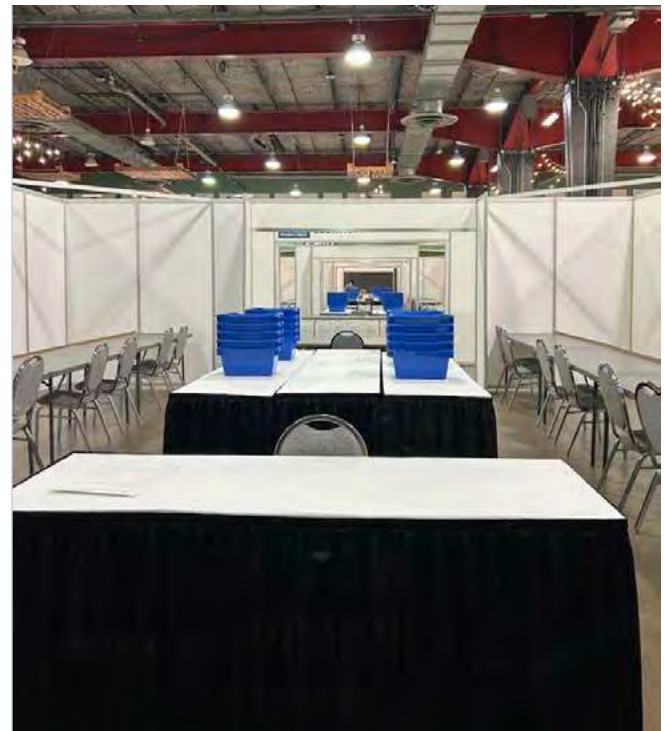


The Big Four Roadhouse Building provided 60,000 square feet of space to secure and count ballots for Advance Vote and two recounts.

Elections Calgary secured the Big Four Roadhouse Building, a multi-purpose event facility in Stampede Park, located southeast of the downtown core. This venue's expansive, secure and highly configurable layout made it well-suited to centrally manage and count Advance Vote, special (mail-in), care facility and shelter ballots. Approximately 60,000 square feet was available for ballot counting operations.

On Election Day, 670 election workers arrived at the counting centre in the late afternoon, received a refresher training session and opened ballot boxes at 7:30 p.m. to begin the count, in keeping with the Act. Counting for the mayoral contest was concluded by 1 a.m.

Election workers returned on October 21 to complete the counting of councillor, public school trustee and separate school trustee contests. The count began at 9 a.m., and all ballots were fully counted by 9 p.m.



The counting centre was divided up into sections where each team would count their assigned set of ballots.

Conducting two recounts

Changes to the Act introduced new recount criteria for the 2025 General Election. Elections Calgary conducted two recounts: a Ward 12 councillor recount carried out under the preliminary recount provisions in the Act, and a city-wide mayoral recount completed under the recount on request provisions in the Act.

Ward 12 councillor preliminary recount

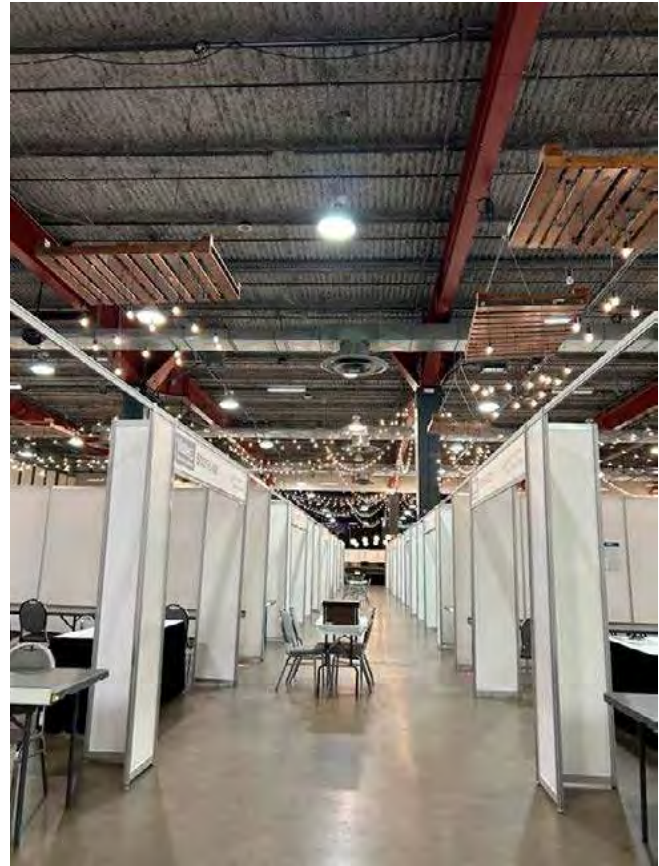
Under Section 98(1)(b) of the Act, a returning officer may initiate a recount when the number of either of the following could affect the election outcome had they not been objected to or rejected:

1. Valid ballots that were objected to, or
2. Rejected ballots, excluding blank ballots on which no vote was cast by a voter.

Applications for a recount under Section 98 were to be submitted within 44 hours after the close of voting stations. For the 2025 General Election, this deadline fell on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at 4 p.m.

Upon reviewing the unofficial results for the Ward 12 councillor contest, the Returning Officer determined that, in accordance with Section 98(1)(b)(ii) of the Act, the number of rejected ballots (excluding blank ballots on which no votes were cast) was sufficient to potentially affect the result. Exercising the discretionary authority provided under the Act, the Returning Officer directed that all ballots cast in the Ward 12 councillor contest be recounted.

The recount took place at the counting centre on October 23, 2025. It included ballots from all 67 voting opportunities in Ward 12 including special (mail-in) ballots, care facilities, Advance Vote and Election Day stations. A total of 146 election workers participated in the recount process. Counting began at 9 a.m., and all ballots were recounted by 6:30 p.m. the same day. The overall variance for each candidate's result was small, fluctuating between -0.20 per cent and +0.25 per cent.



City-wide mayoral recount on request

Under Section 98.1(1)(a) of the Act, the Returning Officer must conduct a recount when an application is received from the candidate with the second highest number of votes and the margin between that candidate and the leading candidate is within 0.5 per cent of all valid ballots cast. Applications under Section 98.1 must be submitted within 72 hours of the posting of official results. For the 2025 General Election, this deadline fell on Monday, October 27, 2025, at 12 p.m.

The Returning Officer received a recount application within the legislated timeframe. Guidance from Alberta's Ministry of Municipal Affairs confirmed that the recount threshold set out in Section 98.1 applies to the total number of valid ballots cast in the General Election. As a result, a city-wide mayoral recount was conducted on October 27, 2025, at the Big Four Roadhouse Building. The recount included ballots from all 380 voting opportunities across the city and involved approximately 450 election workers.

The recount confirmed the original 2025 General Election result. The second place candidate gained six additional votes, for a percentage increase of 0.01 per cent, while the leading candidate gained 41 votes for a percentage increase of 0.05 per cent, resulting in a minor shift in overall totals and no change to the 2025 General Election result.

Political participants

For the 2025 General Election, changes to the Act introduced new obligations for political participants. Elections Calgary focused on ensuring that all political participants understood the new requirements and had equitable access to information, tools and individualized support leading up to and during the election.

For the 2025 General Election, candidates were required to submit a notice of intent to be nominated. As required by the Act, Elections Calgary published a public register listing all individuals who submitted a notice of intent, separate from the register of official candidates. Between October 2024 and Nomination Day on September 22, 2025, Elections Calgary received 154 notices of intent to be nominated. Of those, 127 candidates went on to submit official nomination papers during the January 2 to September 22, 2025 nomination period.

The municipal ballots included 9 mayoral candidates and 73 councillor candidates. School board ballots had 31 CBE candidates and 13 CCSD candidates. Three CCSD trustee positions were filled by acclamation in the following wards:

- **CCSD School Board Ward 2**
(City of Calgary Wards 3 and 5)
- **CCSD School Board Ward 5**
(City of Calgary Wards 9 and 10 and the City of Chestermere)
- **CCSD School Board Ward 6**
(City of Calgary Wards 11 and 12)

The 2025 General Election marked the introduction of local political parties and slates, a pilot program introduced by the provincial government in Calgary and Edmonton. Three local political parties registered with Elections Calgary for the 2025 General Election, while no slates registered. Only Council candidates were permitted to run as members of these local political parties. Participation of local political parties in school board elections was not permitted under the legislation.

Consistent with legislative requirements, Elections Calgary maintained and published a public registry of all registered local political parties and third party advertisers. A total of five third party advertisers were registered during the 2025 General Election advertising period from May 1 to October 20, 2025. Out of the 73 councillor candidates, 42 per cent (2 mayoral candidates and 29 councillor candidates) ran as member candidates of a local political party. Ballot design reflected this change by displaying the local political party affiliation beside the candidate’s name where applicable.

Legislative amendments also expanded campaign disclosure requirements for candidates, local political parties and third party advertisers. The new *Expense Limits Regulation* further introduced updated spending limits for both 2024 and 2025. To support political participants in understanding these changes, Elections Calgary delivered a comprehensive, multi-channel information strategy. This included 13 e-newsletters, a virtual and in-person candidate information session and personalized one-on-one assistance by phone and in person. These supports ensured that all participants, regardless of experience or resources, had equal access to the guidance needed to fulfill their legislative obligations.

To assist local political parties specifically, electionscalgary.ca was updated with a dedicated section outlining all registration requirements and obligations. This resource hub also provided access to both online and in-person information sessions, ensuring these new participants had clear, consistent and easily accessible guidance throughout the election.

2025 General Election costs

The budget for the 2025 General Election was set in 2022 at \$9.3 million including both base Election budget and a one-time election event budget. Elections Calgary also delivers school trustee elections for both the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School District, coordinating these processes alongside the General Election. Through an existing cost-sharing agreement, the two school boards collectively fund 30 per cent of the eligible election delivery costs.

42% of candidates ran as members of a local political party.

2025 General Election costs

Category	Expenditure	Description
Election operations	\$12,604,024	Election supplies, rentals, salaries, technology, administration
Voter engagement and communications	\$981,406	Advertising, voter communication, design services
Voting station workers	\$2,407,864	Recruitment, training, pay
TOTAL	\$15,993,294	

Conclusion

What we heard

To better understand the voting experience, Elections Calgary conducted surveys with voters and the general public. The results provide valuable insight into what worked well and where improvements can be made.

Voter experience survey

A voter experience survey available at all voting stations showed the following results, from 8,434 responses:

Question:

How did you hear about the 2025 General Election?

Top 3 methods:

- **Social media** (41 per cent)
- **Voter Guide delivered to my home** (36 per cent)
- **Media (news) story** (36 per cent)

Question:

How long was your wait time to vote?

- **30 minutes or less** (57 per cent).
Of those, 28 per cent was less than 5 minutes.

Question:

To what degree do you agree with the following statements about the election process:

- **Election workers were pleasant and respectful** (78 per cent)
- **Election workers were helpful and answered my questions** (74 per cent)
- **Voting station was accessible** (73 per cent)
- **Voting hours were convenient** (65 per cent)
- **My voting station was convenient to get to** (79 per cent)

The complete survey results for the voter experience survey can be found on electionscalgary.ca.

Telephone survey

A representative telephone survey was conducted with 500 Calgarians 18 years old and older showed the following responses:

• Top 3 reasons for not voting:

- Too busy/working (21 per cent)
- Not eligible to vote (16 per cent)
- Out of town (11 per cent)

• 12 per cent had their voting experience impacted by the Canada Post strike

- **74 per cent found the wait time to vote reasonable**
- **93 per cent had no accessibility issues at the voting station**

The complete survey results for the communication effectiveness survey can be found on electionscalgary.ca.

Program improvements, legislative advocacy and next steps

After each election, Elections Calgary conducts a thorough review of the legislative framework, programs, technology and election processes. This evaluation helps ensure election delivery remains efficient, accessible and fully compliant with legislative requirements, while also enabling Elections Calgary to adopt and adjust processes to ensure well run election events. Program improvements will be identified and expanded upon over the next four years.

Program improvements

Feedback was collected from staff and election workers through focus groups, surveys and lessons learned sessions. Information from this feedback, along with voter feedback collected from the representative survey and the voting station survey will inform program improvements for the 2029 General Election.

Elections Calgary will continue work to investigate improvements that can be made to voting stations, including:

- Reviewing and enhancing the accessibility checklist and approval process for facility inspections,
- Reviewing the staffing model for voting stations,
- Reviewing processes and training for election workers,
- Investigating best practices and recommendations for onsite voting at care facilities, and
- Increasing the number of voting stations and election workers as the city's population increases.

Elections Calgary will be exploring worker pay improvements for the 2029 General Election in the following areas:

- Conducting a review of worker compensation and comparison with other jurisdictions,
- Hiring a dedicated team to process worker pay,
- Providing an option for direct deposit, and
- Increasing the frequency of pay (e.g. after training, after working Advance Vote and Election Day, after recount(s)).

Legislative advocacy on administrative processes

Following the 2025 General Election, Elections Calgary conducted a review of the Act considering the lessons learned in order to engage in advocacy to recommend legislative changes that would close gaps and improve clarity in the administration of future election events. Elections Calgary's recommendations focused on enhancing:

- Clear and more timely direction from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs,
- More workable administrative timelines,
- Stronger alignment between legislative language and election processes, and
- Increased integrity, transparency and accountability across the election system.

Elections Calgary consulted with Alberta Municipalities and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Key areas identified for improvement included:

- **Permanent Electors Register:** The need for clearer guidance and direction on how the Permanent Electors Register should be administered.
- **Recount processes:** Greater clarity on what triggers a recount and which ballots must be included.
- **Campaign disclosures:** The need for consistent disclosure requirements across all political participants to reduce misinterpretation and support compliance.
- **Institutional voting:** Clarifying rules for voting in qualifying facilities (such as long-term care and supportive living facilities) to support consistent and accessible institutional voting.
- **Implementation timelines:** Allowing more time between the introduction of legislative changes and their implementation so local jurisdictions can accurately prepare.

Next steps

Over the next four years, Elections Calgary will continue to plan for the next General Election in 2029. Highlights of the work that will be planned each year is outlined below.

2026 (Year 1)

Disposition of **2025 General Election** materials

Receive and post candidate and local political party campaign disclosure statements for the 2025 calendar year

Receive and post third party advertiser contribution statements and election advertising returns for the **2025 General Election** advertising period (May 1 – October 20, 2025)

Accept candidate notices of intent to be nominated for the 2029 General Election

Accept registration applications from local political parties, slates and third party advertisers for the **2029 General Election**

Refine four-year and by-election readiness plans and budget

Issue election summary report (this report)

Begin population review in preparation for potential ward boundary adjustment recommendations

Advocate legislative changes with respect to the administration of the LAEA

2027 (Year 2)

Establish processes for the 2029 General Election (i.e., hiring, voting, materials, technology and logistics)

Receive and post campaign disclosure statements from registered candidates and local political parties for the 2026 calendar year

Accept candidate notices of intent to be nominated for the **2029 General Election**

Accept registration applications from local political parties, slates and third party advertisers for the **2029 General Election**

Update City bylaws and policies, if required

Prepare requests for proposals, if required

Partner engagement

2028 (Year 3)

Receive and post campaign disclosure statements from registered candidates and local political parties for the 2027 calendar year

Accept candidate notices of intent to be nominated for the **2029 General Election**

Accept registration applications from local political parties, slates and third party advertisers for the **2029 General Election**

Onboard limited term staff, corporate partners and trainers

Formalize external partner strategies

Book voting stations

Update ward boundary bylaw, if required

Propose changes to the election bylaws, if required

2029 (Year 4)

Accept candidate nominations and registration applications from local political parties, slates and third party advertisers

Receive and post campaign disclosure statements from registered candidates and local political parties for the 2028 calendar year

Receive and post campaign disclosure statements from registered candidates and local political parties for the period of January 1 – July 31, 2029.

Receive and post third party advertiser contribution statements and election advertising returns for the period of May 1 – July 31, 2029

Continue onboarding, training and integration of staff and corporate partners

Conduct voting station facility inspections

Order, receive and kit election materials

Hire and train election workers for voting stations

Conduct the **2029 General Election**

Elections Calgary is a division of the City Clerk's Office responsible for independently and impartially administering the Returning Officer's accountabilities in general elections, by-elections and votes of the electors on behalf of The City of Calgary, the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) and the Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD).

On behalf of:

