

## Candidate Electoral Support Program (CESP) Policy

### Policy Statement

The Nova Scotia *Elections Act* (the *Act*) now recognizes criteria of eligible election expenses related to childcare, spousal care, eldercare, or a candidate's disability during an election. The *Act* provides financial support for candidates who incur additional costs during an election under the existing spending limit and provided they receive a minimum of 10 percent of the valid votes cast. This Elections Nova Scotia (ENS) policy addresses the barriers to participation through the Candidate Electoral Support Program (CESP) for those that meet these criteria.

### Policy Objectives:

- Provide support to persons with disabilities and persons with dependents who are intending to participate as candidates in provincial elections and by-elections
- Explain the nature of the financial barriers for persons with disabilities who intend to run as candidates in a provincial election or by-election
- Explain the nature of the financial barriers for persons who incur additional costs for childcare, eldercare, or spousal care who intend to run as candidates in a provincial election or by-election

### Scope

This policy provides ENS staff, ROs, and candidates with a clear understanding of the guidelines that govern the CESP.

- 1) The policy clarifies the process for eligible candidates or their agents to request reimbursement under CESP.
- 2) The CESP policy is designed to provide ENS staff, including ROs, with a clear understanding of their responsibilities for processing CESP requests.

**Note:** *To claim the CESP the candidate must receive 10% of the valid votes their district, the same criteria for eligibility for other election expense reimbursement. As well, eligible expenses incurred under this program must be within the limit imposed by the existing spending limits available to candidates.*

## Authority

### ***Elections Act (the Act)***

Section 166(i)(vii) of the *Act* includes a provision that provides funding for eligible candidates who incur additional costs for disability, childcare, eldercare or spousal care.

## Definitions

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Candidate	For the purposes of this program, a candidate means a person who has been officially nominated as a candidate pursuant to Section 67 of the <i>Act</i> .
Period of eligibility	All eligible costs incurred between the date of the writ to 8:00 pm on election day.
Writ Period	The period from the issuance of the writ to 8:00 pm on election day. Writ periods last no fewer thirty days and not more than forty-six days from the date of the writ.
Election Expense	Means all expenses incurred during the writ period pursuant to section 166(i)
Assistive Technology & Associated Communications Costs	The additional cost of using an assistive device, such as an iPad or screen reader to communicate with the electorate. Items of a capital nature cannot be claimed. Rental cost of equipment is covered.
Attendant Costs	The additional cost incurred by a candidate who has a disability for a personal assistant or notetaker. An attendant is expected to double as the candidate's driver. Exceptions to this rule would require written preapproval by ENS.
External Care Costs	The additional cost of caring for a candidate's dependents (including childcare, spousal care, or eldercare) during the writ period.
Disability	Includes a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society

	(from Nova Scotia <i>Accessibility Act</i> )
Interpretation Costs	The additional cost of an interpreter (for example American Sign Language (ASL)).
Transportation Costs	The additional cost of vehicle rental, operating cost of an accessible vehicle, or a driver if needed. (As per the definition of Attendant Costs in the policy, an attendant is expected to double as the candidate's driver. Exceptions to this rule would require prewritten approval by ENS.)
Other Costs	Other additional costs that represent barriers to participation for candidates with disabilities, which may be considered, based on documents presented for consideration.

**Policy Overview**

During electoral events in Nova Scotia, candidates may become aware of the nature of the barriers to political participation or engagement with the electorate. The implementation of the CESP provides an opportunity to apply and receive financial support for eligible candidates with disabilities and/or dependents, to lessen or eliminate existing financial barriers. Overall the program is designed to remove barriers for all eligible candidates running in a provincial election.

ENS is responsible for the administration of the *Act*, and has developed this policy to provide a clear reference for guidelines on applying for support under CESP, as well as a guide for ENS staff and ROs to integrate this policy with existing practices.

**Accountability and Responsibilities**

**Elections Nova Scotia (ENS)**

- ENS is responsible for the administration of the *Act*.
- ENS is responsible for the development and maintenance of this policy.

The following are the major roles and responsibilities under the CESP Policy.

**Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)**

- The CEO is responsible for administering the *Act*.

The CEO shall supervise and be responsible for all matters relating to the work, conduct and administration of ENS and those employed by ENS.

### **Assistant Chief Electoral Officer (ACEO)**

- The ACEO shall assist the CEO in the administration of the *Act* and the performance of his duties.
- The ACEO has the powers and the duties of the CEO in the absence or illness of the CEO or in the event of vacancy in the office of the CEO.
- The ACEO is responsible for specific duties, responsibilities and powers conferred upon by the CEO.

### **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)**

- The CFO is responsible for specific duties, responsibilities and powers conferred upon by the CEO.
- The CFO is responsible for training ROs on their responsibilities as defined herein and the guidelines for persons with disabilities and/or dependents to qualify for support under CESP
- The CFO is responsible for training official agents for candidates on the guidelines for the benefit, and the process for claiming the benefit after an election.
- The CFO must ensure that ENS staff and contractors:
  - a. Follow the policy, and the guidelines pertaining to documentation and confidentiality.
  - b. Ensure that the CESP Policy is integrated into ENS processes,
  - c. Ensure that staff administering the reimbursement of disability- or dependent-related election expenses are trained and knowledgeable in their applicable responsibilities and duties under the CESP Policy.
- The CFO shall review and approve eligible candidate applications for support under CESP,
- The CFO shall review and approve re-imbursments to eligible candidates for claims.
- The CFO shall process claims for reimbursement and includes information in post-election reports on the program costs.

### **ENS Staff**

With respect to the CESP Policy all employees at ENS headquarters must:

- a. Follow directives and understand their responsibilities pertaining to the CESP Policy.
- b. Execute their duties in respect of the policy's purposes and directives, and any guidelines or definitions that apply to the execution of their duties.

- c. Help inform candidates of the CESP if asked and guide candidates to the ENS website for more information including the brochure.
- d. Refer any questions regarding the CESP to the CFO.
- e. Review and process claims for the CESP benefit as directed by the CFO.

### **Returning Officers (ROs)**

With respect to the CESP Policy all ROs must:

- a. Follow directives and understand their responsibilities pertaining to the CESP Policy,
- b. Execute their duties in respect of the policy's purposes and directives, and any guidelines or definitions that apply to the execution of their duties,
- c. Ensure all candidates are made aware of the CESP and guide candidates to available resources on the ENS website for more information,
- d. Refer any questions regarding the CESP the RO is unable to answer to the CFO.

### **Candidates and Official Agents**

- A nominated candidate is responsible to sign a self-declaration that they are eligible for the CESP benefit.
- The official agent of a nominated candidate must sign the Declaration on the financial submission form for a CESP claim by the candidate.

## **Policy Directive**

### **Coverage for eligible candidates with disabilities under CESP**

- During the writ period CESP will cover any reasonable incremental cost(s) candidates with disabilities incur related to their disability while running in a provincial electoral campaign during the writ period, provided that they meet the minimum threshold of ten percent of the valid votes cast. These additional costs may include:
  - a. transportation costs,
  - b. attendant costs,
  - c. interpretation costs,

- d. assistive technology and associated communications costs, and
- e. other costs that represent barriers to participation for candidates with disabilities.
- If the candidate qualifies for reimbursement of election expenses, incremental costs are reimbursable to the candidate's campaign with submission of documentation including original receipts and bank statements for all expenses claimed over \$25. Documentation of costs normally incurred is also required to substantiate the claim.
- An eligible candidate's maximum reimbursement and spending limits for election expenses are not adjusted for these expenses.

### **Coverage for eligible candidates with dependents under CESP**


- During the writ period, CESP will cover any reasonable incremental cost(s) candidates with dependents incur over and above those they normally incur provided that they meet the minimum threshold of ten percent of the valid votes cast. These additional costs may include:
  - a. childcare costs\*,
  - b. spousal care costs.
  - c. eldercare costs.
- If the candidate qualifies for reimbursement of election expenses, incremental costs are reimbursable to the candidate's campaign with submission of documentation including original receipts and bank statements for all expenses claimed over \$25. Documentation of costs normally incurred is also required to substantiate the claim.
- An eligible candidate's maximum reimbursement and spending limits for election expenses are not adjusted for these expenses.

*\*Childcare costs are available to eligible candidates who are a parent or legal guardian*

**Guidelines for candidates to qualify under CESP:**

- They must be a nominated candidate in a provincial election.
- The candidate must receive 10% of the valid votes cast in their district, the same criteria for eligibility for other election expense reimbursements.
- The monetary total of eligible expenses incurred must be within the candidate’s spending limit in their district to be eligible for reimbursement.
- The candidate must sign a declaration stating that they are eligible for the benefit.
- The official agent and the candidate must complete and sign the financial submission for support.

**Policy Contact:** Questions regarding this program should be directed to the CFO

<b>CR File No:</b>		
<b>Prepared by:</b> Naomi Shelton, Director of Policy and Communications <b>Date:</b> July 7, 2021		<b>Effective Date:</b> May 6, 2021
<b>Approved by:</b> Dorothy Rice, Chief Electoral Officer  <b>Signature:</b>   <b>Date:</b> October 4, 2024		<b>Reviewed by:</b> Li Chao, Chief Financial Officer Naomi Shelton, Director of Policy and Communications Marley Price, Inclusion Officer <b>Date:</b> October 2024
<b>Version No.:</b> 2.0	<b>Change Date:</b> October 2024	<b>Change Description:</b> Policy updates made during first annual review, October 2024
<b>Review Frequency:</b> Every three years - review complete Oct. 2024 – Next review October 2027		

## CLAIM- Candidate Electoral Support Program (CESP)

(please print)

Candidate Name \_\_\_\_\_

Official Agent Name \_\_\_\_\_

Electoral District \_\_\_\_\_

Complete if incremental costs were incurred by an eligible candidate in relation to a disability, or for childcare, eldercare or spousal care of a dependent.

List and describe the nature of the election expenses incurred and the amounts claimed. (supporting documents must be included with claim- invoice, receipt, bank statement PLUS documentation of amount normally paid).

Description of election expense	Date of expense (start and finish)	Amount paid	Less amount normally paid	Net amount eligible for reimbursement.
Sample- childcare	April 1-May 1, 2021	\$1,200	\$800	\$400
Total (to be included on Form 2-3E)				



**Declaration (by Official Agent)**

*I, the undersigned Official Agent, file with the Chief Electoral Officer a completed Form xx, Candidate's Claim for Candidate Electoral Support Program (CESP)*

*I declare, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that only claims for a CESP benefit permitted under the Elections Act and this policy were included, and that the information contained in this Form is complete, accurate and in compliance with the Elections Act.*

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ , Nova Scotia on \_\_\_\_\_(date)

Signature of Official Agent	date
-----------------------------	------

I declare that I (Candidate) am eligible for the benefits, provided under the Candidate Electoral Support Program (CESP), as claimed.

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ , Nova Scotia on \_\_\_\_\_(date)

Signature of Candidate	date
------------------------	------