



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
ALBERTA  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK

September 11, 2015

Dr. Richard Starke,  
MLA, Vermillion-Lloydminster  
PC Caucus office  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 9820 107<sup>th</sup> Street  
Edmonton, AB T5K 1E7

Dear Dr. Starke,

Please find attached my report in response to your June 25, 2015 letter requesting a review of the staffing process for constituency offices of ND Members following the May 5, 2015 general election.

Sincerely,

W. J. David McNeil  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

cc. Hon. Robert E. Wanner, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Members of the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services  
Hon. Brian Mason, Government House Leader  
Mr. Nathan Cooper, MLA, Official Opposition House Leader  
Mr. Greg Clark, MLA  
Dr. David Swann, MLA  
Ms Deborah Drever, MLA  
Ms Marguerite Trussler, Q.C., Ethics Commissioner  
Mr. Marlin Schmidt, MLA, Government Whip  
Mr. Jim Gurnett, Executive Director, Government Caucus

**Post-Election ND Constituency Office Staffing  
Process**

**Review Report**

Dr. W.J. David McNeil

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

## Post-Election ND Constituency Office Staffing Process

### Review Report

#### Introduction

On Thursday, June 25, 2015 the attached letter and related attachment were received from Dr. Richard Starke, MLA, Vermilion-Lloydminster and PC Caucus House Leader (Attachment 1 a-f). The letter raised questions as to possible partisan involvement of the New Democratic Party in the recruitment and selection of the constituency staff of New Democrat MLAs and requested that the Clerk conduct an investigation of the practices followed in the selection of ND Members' constituency staff.

#### Authority

Under the *Financial Administration Act* the Deputy Head of a department has final accountability for the expenditure of funds voted by the Assembly to that entity. In the case of the budget for the Legislative Assembly, the Clerk of the Assembly bears the final responsibility for ensuring that funds are expended in accordance with the *Act*, Members' Services Committee Orders, expenditure guidelines and policies in place in any area of the Assembly's operations. If there are questions raised as to the legitimacy of expenses or that business is not being conducted in accordance with legislation, orders or guidelines, then it is the responsibility of the Clerk to review these matters.

#### Background

Through the Legislative Assembly budget, Members are provided with a specific budget allocation to fund the leasing, operation and staffing of constituency offices. One of the overriding principles guiding the operation of the offices is that business be conducted on a non-partisan basis. While Members are elected as representatives of specific political parties by the majority of citizens supporting that party in their constituency, once elected they act and must be seen to act as representing all citizens therein. As the Member is the expenditure officer for the constituency office budget, he or she has the sole responsibility for decision making with respect to the expenditure of these funds including the hiring and management of the staff of the office.

This principle received its first emphasis by the Speaker in the orientation of new Members. This principle is also reflected in the Constituency Services Order RMSC 1992, c.C-1 (authorized pursuant to Section 39 of the *Legislative Assembly Act*), especially noting sections 5, 6, 10 and 11 (Attachment 2). Pursuant to this order there are documents entitled "Expenditure Guidelines for Members" (Attachment 3) and "Website Guidelines" (Attachment 4) which provide further clarification as to appropriate expenditures from constituency office budgets. In addition, the "Constituency Employment Recruitment Guide" and "Constituency Compensation Plan" were also reviewed with all new Members at the initial Members' session and subsequent group orientations.

## Review of Complaint

The attached advertisements for employment opportunities in certain constituency offices appear to have been developed by staff on the ND transition team who at the time were employed by the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO) on the recommendation of the ND caucus. The author(s) of these employment opportunity ads had no prior consultation with the Human Resources branch of the LAO in their drafting.

The LAO Human Resources branch first became aware of these advertisements on May 20, 2015 and immediately advised the Clerk of their concerns regarding their content. More specifically the concerns were:

1. Some of the ads indicated that the jobs being recruited to were permanent full-time positions. The fact is that all constituency assistants are hired on employment contracts for specified periods and all contracts contain a clause providing for termination upon an election or by-election being called. They are not permanent positions.
2. The ads indicated that the constituency assistant would report to both the Member and the Director of Caucus. The employment contracts entered into with constituency staff clearly indicate that the staff person reports to the Member alone as he/she is the expenditure officer for the funds allocated to the constituency. In order to ensure the non-partisan requirement of the work of the constituency office it would be totally inappropriate for the staff member to receive direction from a partisan chief of staff of a caucus.
3. The ads create the impression that constituency staff are employed by the New Democrat Government Caucus as an employment equity employer. The fact is that that staff are employed by the Legislative Assembly Office on the recommendation of the Member alone. The caucus is not the employer. The terms and conditions of employment are those set out in the Constituency Compensation Plan approved by the Members' Services Committee in 2006. Under the plan, the Member determines the working level of each employee based on the operational needs of the office. The rate of pay for each employee is determined by the Member in comparison to the pay grids established for three working levels. Constituency employees are eligible for normal cost-of-living adjustments granted to the Opted-Out and Excluded employees of the Public Service of Alberta. Constituency staff, as employees of the Legislative Assembly Office, are not eligible for inclusion in any bargaining unit in accordance with section 12(1) (g) (i) of the *Public Service Employee Relations Act*. The employment contracts for constituency staff thus do not recognize any voluntary association with any bargaining unit, however the terms and conditions of employment for these Opted-Out and Excluded employees are similar to those negotiated in the Alberta Public Service by the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE).

4. The salary range published in the ads did not reflect the range of salaries outlined in the Constituency Office Pay Grids approved by the Members' Service Committee and provided to Members at their initial administrative orientation sessions.
5. There is some ambiguity in the ads regarding one of the duties stated of "liaising with caucus staff on scheduling and outreach activities". In keeping with the non-partisan nature of constituency duties, staff in a constituency office should not be involved with any caucus outreach activities if they are partisan in nature.
6. There was a concern that the ads directed that all applications for constituency positions be submitted to Brian Stokes, Office of the Premier-designate via a Legislative Assembly email address instead of to the Member, the expenditure officer responsible for making decisions with respect to the spending of constituency funds. At the time Mr. Stokes was an employee of the Legislative Assembly Office as a member of the ND transition team.

#### Response

Given the concerns identified with the ads that had been brought to the attention of the HR Branch, the Clerk immediately advised Speaker Zwozdesky of these concerns. The Speaker committed to advising the newly appointed Government House Leader of these issues with a view to effecting a change in the approach to recruiting constituency office staff. On May 25, 2015, the day after the swearing-in of the new cabinet, the Director of HR received an email from an ND caucus staff member seeking approval for a draft ad for the recruitment of constituency staff (attachment 5). The caucus representative was advised on or around May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015 that the ad was acceptable and could be proceeded with. It was understood that all subsequent advertising would follow this approach. After this date, the LAO was unaware of any further instances of the initial advertising approach being used.

Following receipt of the complaint from Dr. Starke, I undertook to review the matter. As a part of this review I met with the Government Whip, Mr. Schmidt and the Director of the Government Caucus, Mr. Gurnett, in order to obtain information regarding the process by which ND Members were involved in the selection of their constituency office staff. They indicated that all resumes received from the initial advertising were forwarded to the respective Members and that caucus staff employed by the Legislative Assembly Office assisted the Members in screening and subsequently interviewing candidates. They asserted that decisions regarding the hiring of constituency office staff were made by the individual Member following the interview process.

## Conclusion

While the initial advertising developed by the ND transition team raised a number of concerns as identified in this report, the timely intervention of the then Speaker and Government House Leader appears to have resulted in a recruitment and selection process that was consistent with the requirements of the *Financial Administration Act*, Members' Services Committee Orders and the Constituency Employment Recruitment Guide and the Constituency Office Compensation Plan as approved by the Members' Services Committee.



W. J. David McNeil  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
September 11, 2015



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
ALBERTA

**COPY**

Thursday, June 25, 2015

Dear Dr. McNeil:

Staff working in constituency offices across the province provide a crucial service to all Albertans. The requirement for these employees to be strictly non-partisan in performing their duties on behalf of the Legislative Assembly Office was reinforced during recent training sessions held in Calgary.

A number of constituency offices across the province have vacancies and are advertising for new employees. The Progressive Conservative caucus was shocked that published advertisements requesting applicants for these positions indicate that the applications and resumes be sent to Mr. Brian Stokes at [brian.stokes@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:brian.stokes@assembly.ab.ca). Mr. Stokes is Executive Director of the Alberta New Democratic Party. The ads further go on to state that "Alberta's New Democrat Government Caucus is an employment equity employer", and that the Constituency Assistant reports "to the MLA and the Director of Caucus". There is no mention that these employees are, in fact, employed by the Legislative Assembly Office. I have attached copies of several of these advertisements, seeking applicants for the constituencies of Calgary-Cross, Peace River, Edmonton-Manning, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater, Lethbridge-East, and Banff-Cochrane.

The partisan involvement of the New Democratic Party in the advertising and selection of employees of the LAO is reprehensible and a clear violation of the non-partisan nature of the constituency office. If these ads have resulted in any hiring of constituency office staff, we submit that those hirings must be reviewed by the LAO to determine if there was any political influence in the selection of the successful candidate. Given that the Executive Director of the NDP was given authority over the hiring process, the ability of these new employees to perform their responsibilities in a totally non-partisan manner, as was stressed during the recent orientation session, is called into question.

It is our understanding that several of these positions remain to be filled. If the process of having Mr. Stokes reviewing all applications, and the false assertions that these positions report to the NDP Director of Caucus is continuing, the non-partisan nature of these positions is severely, perhaps irrevocably, compromised.

I respectfully request that you conduct a full investigation of these practices and take the appropriate remedial action.

Respectfully,

Richard Starke

MLA Vermilion-Lloydminster, PC Caucus House Leader

c.c. Marguerite Trussler, Ethics Commissioner

**ATTACHMENT 1a****EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY - CALGARY  
CROSS Constituency Office**

May 19, 2015 at 12:44pm

**Constituency Assistant Permanent Full-time**

Ricardo Miranda is seeking a full-time Constituency staff member.

**General Description** Reporting to the MLA and the Director of Caucus, the Constituency Assistant will be the primary liaison between the MLA and their Constituency, community groups, stakeholders and individuals. Working in a challenging, variable environment the Constituency Assistant will be responsible for office administration, community outreach and organizing, event planning, coordinating communications, casework and the day-to-day operations of the MLA Constituency Office.

**Duties:**

- § Ensuring that the office is accessible to constituents through regular and consistent hours of operation
- § Phone, email and other correspondence
- § Administrative duties, including budgeting and file management
- § Monitoring community activities and reporting to the MLA
- § Engaging in casework on behalf of constituents
- § Performing outreach to community organizations and individual constituents as directed
- § Representing the Member at public and community functions when required
- § Coordinating advertising and constituency mailings and online communications
- § Coordinating part-time and temporary staff and interns
- § Liaising with caucus staff on scheduling and outreach activities
- § Liaising with Legislative Assembly of Alberta administrative staff regarding constituency office administration

**Qualifications and Skills:**

- § Degree in a relevant field or equivalent work experience
- § Excellent written and verbal communications skills
- § Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- § Familiarity with MS Windows, Office, databases and CMS web updates
- § Willingness to work flexible hours, including evenings and weekends
- § Experience with community organizing
- § Knowledge of government bodies and non-governmental agencies including Service Alberta, AISH, income support, etc.
- § A strong understanding of the political history of the Constituency and of Alberta politics

**Compensation:** \$54,264 to \$66,828 per annum depending on education and experience. An excellent benefits package is also provided. Alberta's New Democrat Government Caucus is an employment equity employer.

**Terms:** this position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.

Please send application, including cover letter, resume and three references (in confidence) to:

Brian Stokes, Office of the Premier-designate

Email: brian.stokes@assembly.ab.ca

All applicants are thanked for their interest. Only applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.



**ATTACHMENT 1b**



Debbie Jabbour NDP

May 26 at 5:04pm

I'm looking for a constituency assistant for both office locations, High Level and Peace River.

"Reporting to the MLA and the Director of Caucus, the Constituency Assistant will be the primary liaison between the MLA and their Constituency, community groups, stakeholders and individuals. Working in a challenging, variable environment the Constituency Assistant will be responsible for office administration, community outreach and organizing, event planning, coordinating communications, casework and the day-to-day operations of the MLA Constituency Office."

For full job description and further information please contact [brian.stokes@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:brian.stokes@assembly.ab.ca)

Like · Comment



Heather Sweet MLA for Edmonton Manning

May 26 at 7:55pm

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Edmonton-Manning Constituency Office

Constituency Assistant Permanent Full-time

Heather Sweet is seeking a full-time Constituency staff member.

**General Description** Reporting to the MLA, the Constituency Assistant will be the primary liaison between the MLA and their Constituency, community groups, stakeholders and individuals. Working in a challenging, variable environment the Constituency Assistant will be responsible for office administration, community outreach and organizing, event planning, coordinating communications, casework and the day-to-day operations of the MLA Constituency Office.

**Duties:**

Ensuring that the office is accessible to constituents through regular and consistent hours of operation

Phone, email and other correspondence

Administrative duties, including budgeting and file management

Monitoring community activities and reporting to the MLA

Engaging in casework on behalf of constituents

Performing outreach to community organizations and individual constituents as directed

Representing the Member at public and community functions when required

Coordinating advertising and constituency mailings and online communications

Coordinating part-time and temporary staff and interns

Liaising with caucus staff on scheduling and outreach activities

Liaising with Legislative Assembly of Alberta administrative staff regarding constituency office administration

**Qualifications and Skills**

Degree in a relevant field or equivalent work experience

Excellent written and verbal communications skills

Ability to work independently and as part of a team

Familiarity with MS Windows, Office, databases and CMS web updates

Willingness to work flexible hours, including evenings and weekends

Experience with community organizing

Knowledge of government bodies and non-governmental agencies, including Service Alberta, AISH, income support, etc.

A strong understanding of the political history of the Constituency and of Alberta politics

**Compensation** \$54,264 - \$66,828 per annum depending on education and experience. An excellent benefits package is also provided. Alberta's New Democrat Government Caucus is an employment equity employer.

**Terms** this position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found

Please send application, including cover letter, resume and three references (in confidence) to:

Brian Stokes, Office of the Premier-designate

Email: [brian.stokes@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:brian.stokes@assembly.ab.ca)

All applicants are thanked for their interest. Only applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.

**ATTACHMENT 1d**

Maria Fitzpatrick

May 27 at 4 12pm

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Lethbridge-East Constituency Office

Constituency Assistant Permanent Full-time

Maria Fitzpatrick is seeking a full-time Constituency staff member.

**General Description:** Reporting to the MLA, the Constituency Assistant will be the primary liaison between the MLA and their Constituency, community groups, stakeholders and individuals. Working in a challenging, variable environment the Constituency Assistant will be responsible for office administration, community outreach and organizing, event planning, coordinating communications, casework and the day-to-day operations of the MLA Constituency Office.

**Duties:**

- § Ensuring that the office is accessible to constituents through regular and consistent hours of operation
- § Phone, email and other correspondence
- § Administrative duties, including budgeting and file management
- § Monitoring community activities and reporting to the MLA
- § Engaging in casework on behalf of constituents
- § Performing outreach to community organizations and individual constituents as directed
- § Representing the Member at public and community functions when required
- § Coordinating advertising and constituency mailings and online communications
- § Coordinating part-time and temporary staff and interns
- § Liaising with caucus staff on scheduling and outreach activities
- § Liaising with Legislative Assembly of Alberta administrative staff regarding constituency office administration

**Qualifications and Skills:**

- § Degree in a relevant field or equivalent work experience
- § Excellent written and verbal communications skills
- § Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- § Familiarity with MS Windows, Office, databases and CMS web updates
- § Willingness to work flexible hours, including evenings and weekends
- § Experience with community organizing
- § Knowledge of government bodies and non-governmental agencies, including Service Alberta, AISH, income support, etc.
- § A strong understanding of the political history of the Constituency and of Alberta politics

**Compensation:** \$54,264 - \$66,828 per annum depending on education and experience. An excellent benefits package is also provided. Alberta's New Democrat Government Caucus is an employment equity employer.

**Terms:** this position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.

Please send application, including cover letter, resume and three references (in confidence) to:

Brian Stokes, Office of the Premier-designate

**Email:** brian.stokes@assembly.ab.ca with a cc to maria.fitzpatrick@assembly.ab.ca

All applicants are thanked for their interest. Only applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.

**ATTACHMENT 1e**

Colin Piquette

May 28 at 7:30am

I'm looking for a constituency assistant. Interested? Check out below

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Athabasca Sturgeon Redwater Constituency Office  
Constituency Assistant Permanent Full-time

Colin Piquette is seeking a full-time Constituency staff member.

**General Description:** Reporting to the MLA, the Constituency Assistant will be the primary liaison between the MLA and their Constituency, community groups, stakeholders and individuals. Working in a challenging, variable environment the Constituency Assistant will be responsible for office administration, community outreach and organizing, event planning, coordinating communications, casework and the day-to-day operations of the MLA Constituency Office

**Duties**

Ensuring that the office is accessible to constituents through regular and consistent hours of operation

Phone, email and other correspondence

Administrative duties, including budgeting and file management

Monitoring community activities and reporting to the MLA

Engaging in casework on behalf of constituents

Performing outreach to community organizations and individual constituents as directed

Representing the Member at public and community functions when required

Coordinating advertising and constituency mailings and online communications

Coordinating part-time and temporary staff and interns

Liaising with caucus staff on scheduling and outreach activities

Liaising with Legislative Assembly of Alberta administrative staff regarding constituency office administration

**Qualifications and Skills**

Degree in a relevant field or equivalent work experience

Excellent written and verbal communications skills

Ability to work independently and as part of a team

Familiarity with MS Windows, Office, databases and CMS web updates

Willingness to work flexible hours, including evenings and weekends

Experience with community organizing

Knowledge of government bodies and non-governmental agencies, including Service Alberta, AISH, income support, etc.

A strong understanding of the political history of the Constituency and of Alberta politics

**Compensation:** \$54,264 - \$66,828 per annum depending on education and experience. An excellent benefits package is also provided. Alberta's New Democrat Government Caucus is an employment equity employer.

**Terms:** this position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.

Please send application, including cover letter, resume and three references (in confidence) to:

Brian Stokes, Office of the Premier-designate

Email: [brian.stokes@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:brian.stokes@assembly.ab.ca)

All applicants are thanked for their interest. Only applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.

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**Esmé Comfort: Canmore Town Councillor** shared Cam Westhead - MLA for Banff-Cochrane's photo  
May 27 at 12:54pm

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## ATTACHMENT 1f



**Cam Westhead - MLA for Banff-Cochrane**  
May 27

### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

#### Banff-Cochrane Constituency Office

Constituency Assistant Permanent Full-time

Cam Westhead is seeking a full-time Constituency staff member

**General Description:** Reporting to the MLA and the Director of Caucus, the Constituency Assistant will be the primary liaison between the MLA and their Constituency, community groups, stakeholders and individuals. Working in a challenging, variable environment the Constituency Assistant will be responsible for office administration, community outreach and organizing, event planning, coordinating communications, casework and the day-to-day operations of the MLA Constituency Office.

#### Duties:

- Ensuring that the office is accessible to constituents through regular and consistent hours of operation
- Phone, email and other correspondence
- Administrative duties, including budgeting and file management
- Monitoring community activities and reporting to the MLA
- Engaging in casework on behalf of constituents
- Performing outreach to community organizations and individual constituents as directed
- Representing the Member at public and community functions when required
- Coordinating advertising and constituency mailings and online communications
- Coordinating part-time and temporary staff and interns
- Liaising with caucus staff on scheduling and outreach activities
- Liaising with Legislative Assembly of Alberta administrative staff regarding constituency office administration

#### Qualifications and Skills:

- Degree in a relevant field or equivalent work experience
- Excellent written and verbal communications skills
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Familiarity with MS Windows, Office, databases and CMS web updates
- Willingness to work flexible hours, including evenings and weekends
- Experience with community organizing
- Knowledge of government bodies and non-governmental agencies, including Service Alberta, AISH, income support, etc.
- A strong understanding of the political history of the Constituency and of Alberta politics

**Compensation:** \$54,264 - \$66,828 per annum depending on education and experience. An excellent benefits package is also provided. Alberta's New Democrat Government Caucus is an employment equity employer.

**Terms:** this position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.

I'm hiring staff for my Constituency Office located in Canmore. Those interested in part-time work are also encouraged to apply. This position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.

We are investigating the feasibility of opening a second office in Cochrane depending on finding a suitable space that is in line with our budget. We also plan to hold "pop-up" offices in smaller communities on a rotating basis if our budget allows.

Please send application, including cover letter, resume and three references (in confidence) to:  
Brian Stokes, Office of the Premier-designate  
Email: [brian.stokes@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:brian.stokes@assembly.ab.ca)  
All applicants are thanked for their interest. Only applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.

Arun Séamus Suninder Smith-Thompson, Marcella Campbell, Donna Bitz and 3 others like this

2 shares

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**CONSOLIDATION**

**REVISED  
MEMBERS' SERVICES COMMITTEE ORDERS**

**(Pursuant to the Legislative Assembly Act)**

**RMSC 1992, c. C-1**

**CONSTITUENCY SERVICES ORDER**

**MEMBER'S SERVICES ALLOWANCE**

**1(1)** Every Member is entitled to a Member's Services Allowance to be applied to payment for the goods and services provided for in sections 2 to 7.

**(2)** In this Order, "Allowance" means Member's Services Allowance.

**(3)** The amount of the Member's Services Allowance for a Member in each fiscal year shall be the sum of the following where E is the number of electors in the most recent list of electors compiled for the Member's electoral division under Part 2 of the *Election Act*, and where C is the population in the electoral division according to the Alberta Population Estimates as reported annually by Alberta Finance;

(a) (i) \$27,626 for office operations in constituencies identified as "rural" in Schedule "A";

(i.1) \$33,151 for office operations in constituencies identified as "urban" in Schedule "A";

(ii) \$88,324 for staffing;

(iii) \$2,940 for supplies;

(b)  $\$1.30 \times \frac{E}{1.5}$  ;

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(c) \$2,923 plus \$0.0757 x (C - 14,000);

(c.1) plus an adjustment amount based on the table below where the matrix score for the constituency is as outlined in the Schedule to this Order;

Matrix Score	Adjustment
-18 to 0	\$6,120
1 to 4	\$9,180
5 to 9	\$12,340
10 to 15	\$18,509
16+	\$24,679

(d) less any amount transferred by the Member by authorization in writing from his Member's Services Allowance pursuant to section 12.

#### **CONSTITUENCY OFFICE**

**2(1)** The Allowance may be used to pay expenses relating to the Member's constituency office and such other expenses as provided for in this Order.

**(2)** The Clerk shall, on the request of a Member, enter into the agreements on behalf of the Member that are necessary to provide the things referred to in this section to the Member, and the Clerk shall pay the cost of them.

#### **GENERAL USE OF ALLOWANCE**

**3** The Allowance may be applied to the cost of

- (a) rental office space, furnishings, fittings and office equipment including electronic equipment,
- (b) office and secretarial assistance and related services,
- (c) reasonable living and travelling expenses for staff working for the Member to travel to Edmonton or to the Member's constituency;

- 
- (d) reasonable living and travelling expenses for the staff of a Member's constituency office in connection with travel within the Member's electoral division;
  - (d.1) reasonable living expenses incurred by a Member in connection with
    - (i) travel within the Member's electoral division, or
    - (ii) departure or arrival at the airport closest to the Member's constituency,  
requiring an overnight stay at a location 60 kilometres or more from the Member's permanent residence.
  - (d.01) reasonable living and travelling expenses for the staff of Member's constituency office to attend a seminar or other non-partisan event in Alberta related to the performance of the staff member's duties in the constituency office.
  - (e) a residential security system for the Member subject to the requirements in section 3.1.

**RESIDENTIAL SECURITY SYSTEM**

**3.1(1)** On the production of receipts and subject to a maximum of \$1,500 per fiscal year for each residence, the Allowance may be used to reimburse a Member for expenses incurred for the installation or monitoring of a security system, or both, at

- (a) The Member's permanent residence as defined in section 5(2) of the *Members' Allowances Order* (RMSC 1992, c. M-1), and



- 
- (b) The Member's temporary residence maintained pursuant to section 35 of the *Legislative Assembly Act*.

(2) Section 14 of this Order does not apply to this section.

**IDEM**

**4** The Allowance may be used, on the production of receipts, to reimburse a Member for minor expenses incurred by him that are necessary for and incidental to the purpose of an agreement under section 2(2).

**COMMUNICATION**

**5(1)** The Allowance may be used to pay expenses which relate to non-partisan communication between the Member and his constituents, including payment for

- (a) the cost of printed items to be sent to constituents and the cost of postage for such items;
- (b) the cost of advertisements;
- (c) the rental or purchase of mobile automobile telephones; and
- (d) reasonable expenditures for registration, materials and tuition fees for a Member learning another language.

(2) An item may not be paid for under subsection (1) if it bears any political party logo, promotes political party activities, solicits political party funds or memberships or contains personal criticism of another Member.

(3) If a Member contracts for a service to facilitate communication, the Member shall, where reasonably possible, contract with a person who is licensed and insured to carry out that service.

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**GIFTS, PROMOTIONAL ITEMS**

**6(1)** Subject to subsection (2), this Allowance may be used for the purchase of

- (a) pins, flags or other things suitable for the Member's constituents and others, or
- (b) items suitable as gifts to be given in the course of the Member's duties.

**(2)** Purchases under this section are subject to the following restrictions:

- (a) the value of an item must not exceed \$400;
- (b) the following items are prohibited:
  - (i) alcohol,
  - (ii) currency in the form of cash, cheque, bank draft or money order, and
  - (iii) cash-in-kind where its use is unrestricted;
- (c) an item must not be given to another Member; and
- (d) an item must not be given under personal or partisan circumstances.

**7** Repealed April 1, 2001.

**USE OF SUPPLIES OR EQUIPMENT**

**8** Reasonable supplies or equipment paid for out of the Allowance or provided to a Member pursuant to section 1.1 of the *Administrative Services Order* (RMSC 1992, c. A-1) may be used in the Member's constituency office or residence in connection with the Member's official duties.

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**GENERAL RESTRICTIONS**

**9 Nothing in this Order**

- (a) requires rental office space to be located within the boundaries of the electoral division the Member represents,
- (b) affects the right of a Member to have the Clerk enter into an agreement on his behalf under section 2(2) in respect of secretarial assistance and services, notwithstanding that there is no agreement in respect of rental office space for that Member, or
- (c) prohibits an agreement under section 2(2) whereby a Member shares with one or more other persons, in the proportions they determine, the use and cost of any of the things referred to in section 3.

**RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

**10** A constituency office may not be used for promoting political party activities; holding party events; conducting election, nomination or leadership campaigns; storing or distributing party material or information; sale of party memberships; or soliciting of financial contributions.

**CONSTITUENCY OFFICE SIGNS**

**11(1)** Signs or directory entries relating to a constituency office shall refer to it as such, and signs and entries shall include only, all or any of the following:

- (a) the name of the Member;
- (b) the name of the electoral division;
- (c) the designation "constituency office";
- (d) the address, telephone numbers and hours of operation of the office and of any other office operated by the Member;

- 
- (e) directions to reach the office; and
  - (f) in the case of a sign, the coat of arms of the Legislative Assembly.

(2) All constituency office signage erected after February 20, 1991, must comply with this Order.

(3) Failure to comply with this section will result in the office not being recognized as a constituency office, and funding for the constituency office will cease until compliance with the Order.

#### **TRANSFER TO CAUCUS OFFICE**

12 A Member may authorize in writing to the Clerk the transfer of up to 25% of the total of his constituency office communication and promotional allowances to the office of his caucus to be used for administration or research in the caucus office.

#### **VACANCY IN CONSTITUENCY**

13 During a period when a constituency has no Member, the Member's Services Allowance may be expended as if there were a Member, providing each expenditure is authorized by the Clerk.

#### **CROWN PROPERTY**

14 Anything purchased for a Member's continuing use pursuant to this Order remains the property of the Crown in right of Alberta.

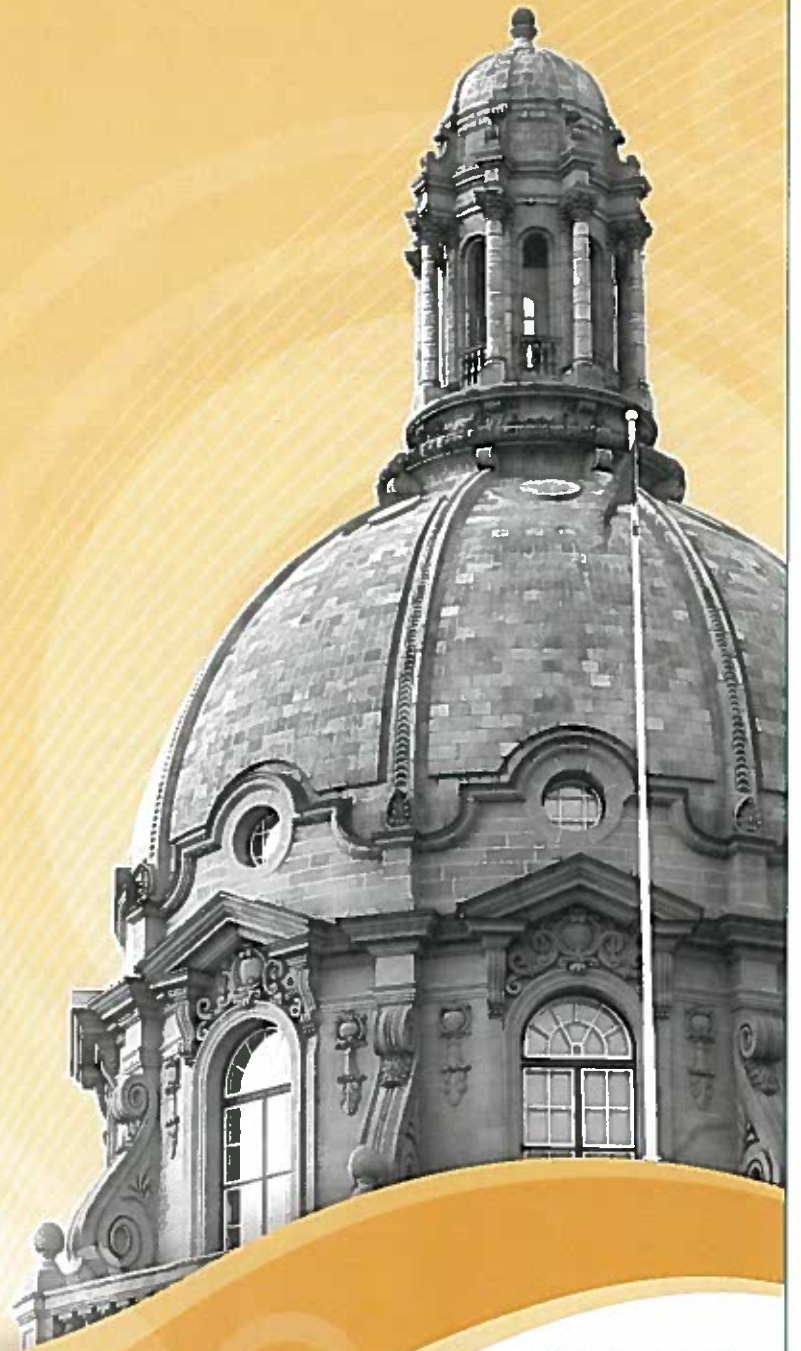
#### **APPEALS**

15(1) If any question arises as to the payment of any amount or the provision of any service or thing under this Order, the question shall be decided in the first instance by the Speaker, subject to appeal to the Members' Services Committee.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), if a question arises under subsection (1) in relation to the Speaker, the question shall be decided by the Members' Services Committee.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA  
**EXPENDITURE  
GUIDELINES**

**FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**



# CONTENTS

## Expenditure Guidelines

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# EXPENDITURE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are in place to assist  
Members in determining appropriate  
expenditures as provided for under  
Members' Services Committee orders.



# EXPENDITURE GUIDELINES

Constituency Services Order (RMSC 1992, c. C-1, as amended) provides an annual Members' Services Allowance (MSA) for each Member of the Legislative Assembly to pay for goods and services to facilitate the carrying out of his or her duties on behalf of constituents within the province of Alberta. The order also sets out what types of expenses may or may not be authorized or under what conditions they may be incurred.

The MLA is the sole authorized Expenditure Officer of his or her MSA, and an MLA's original signature is required on all purchase orders or approvals, staff personal expense claims, invoices or recommendations to contract.

## Supporting Documentation

Detailed receipts are required to support a reimbursement or charge to assess compliance with policy, to perform reasonability checks and to document the transaction. Specifically, **detailed original receipts** must be submitted to support all credit card purchases/receipts, direct debit purchases/receipts and personal expense claims as well as explanatory comments, where appropriate, detailing the nature, purpose and number of participants at the event that gave rise to the expenditure. Without the supporting information it is not possible for LAO staff or the Auditor General to assess compliance with policy, perform reasonability tests and verify proper support for claim reimbursement.

To assist the LAO in carrying out these reasonability checks, we request that all Members submit their claims and accompanying receipts on a monthly basis.

## Expense Compliance Guide

As a guide most MSA expenditures fall into one of the following categories:

- constituency office operations and associated travel expenses
- promotions and gifts
- constituency communications
- security systems for Members' residences



## CONSTITUENCY OFFICE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES AND ASSOCIATED TRAVEL EXPENSES

<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Noncompliant</b>
constituency office rent(s), premise operating costs, office utilities and office signage costs	signage that fails to comply with clause 11 of the Constituency Services Order
office and computer equipment (beyond what is provided by the LAO)	any office space, supplies, stationery, or other materials or services, including storage or distribution, used for promoting political party activities, holding party events, conducting election, nomination, or leadership campaigns, selling party memberships or soliciting financial contributions for partisan activities
furniture, fixtures, office supplies, first aid supplies, stationery, security systems (beyond what is provided by the LAO) and maintenance expenses for equipment purchased through the MSA	location is less than 60 kms from Member's permanent residence
constituency office staff salaries and wages, staff employer contributions, staff supplementary benefits (like conference or course fees) and staff travel expense reimbursement	travel is not in the Member's electoral division
other services that may be required like snow shoveling, office cleaning/janitorial service or courier service (beyond what is provided by Service Alberta)	
reimbursement of living expenses (e.g. accommodations, meals) connected with constituency travel where an overnight stay is required	
Constituency event tickets for constituency office employees where the Member requires their attendance in the course of their duties.	

# EXPENDITURE GUIDELINES

CONTINUED

## SECURITY SYSTEMS FOR MEMBERS' RESIDENCES

<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Noncompliant</b>
installation and monitoring of a security system in a Member's permanent residence as defined in section 5(2) of the Members' Allowances Order, RMSC 1992, c. M-1 (max. \$1,500/fiscal year; submitted by personal expense claim)	security systems for vacation properties or other residences that do not meet the definitions in the order
installation and monitoring of a security system in a Member's temporary residence maintained pursuant to section 35 of the <i>Legislative Assembly Act</i> (max. \$1,500/fiscal year; submitted by personal expense claim)	payment of vendors directly by the Legislative Assembly Office

## PROMOTIONAL EXPENSES

<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Noncompliant</b>
lapel pins, flags	cash donations, currency, cheques, money orders, bank drafts, cash-in-kind where use is unrestricted
presentation books, annual magazine subscriptions	livestock, pets
art, craft items, collectibles or commemorative items	any item with a partisan identification
tangible items appropriate for MLAs to give in the course of their duties for that particular occasion	alcohol
	items valued over \$400
	items given to another Member or under personal or partisan circumstances

» CONTINUE

**COMMUNICATIONS EXPENSES**

<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Noncompliant</b>
expenses related to the design, production and delivery of printed items (such as constituency/MLA reports or survey brochures) to be sent to constituents, including business reply charges or bulk/unaddressed mail postage expenses	expenses related to the design, production and delivery of printed items to be sent to individuals who are not constituents
postage for mailing correspondence from the constituency office	any item that bears any political logo, promotes political party activities, solicits political party funds or memberships or contains personal criticism of another Member
advertisements, including those that use the provincial Coat-of-Arms, the Legislative Assembly logo, Legislature Building graphic, and/or symbols of the Legislative Assembly	advertising which does not use “MLA” or “Member of the Legislative Assembly,” the name of the Member’s electoral division, or “Legislative Assembly of Alberta”
expenses related to the purchase or rental of cellular telephone equipment, <b>Blackberrys or personal digital assistants (PDAs)</b> and peripherals for MLAs (beyond what is provided by the LAO)	advertising or printed item which uses a Government of Alberta visual identity symbol exclusively or refers to a Member’s title as a Member of Executive Council or other government entity without reference to a Member as an MLA
charges for telephone services not covered by the LAO (i.e. extra lines, extra telephone sets, additional services like call forward or call display)  (beyond what is provided by the LAO)	<b>the purchase of alcohol for any purpose</b>
fax line rental (beyond what is provided by the LAO)	monetary contributions to, payments on behalf of or advertisements of sponsorship (charitable or commercial)
temporary signage expenses	supplies or services required to conduct events where the MLA is not present or which are not for the benefit of communicating with constituents

» CONTINUE

# EXPENDITURE GUIDELINES

CONTINUED

Acceptable	Noncompliant
directory advertising expenses (beyond those paid by LAO)	
annual newspaper or magazine subscription to the Member's constituency or Legislature office	
supplies and services required to conduct constituency meetings, forums, roundtable discussions or "meet your MLA" social events	
lunch/dinner meetings, whether it is in their constituency or not, attended by both the Member and constituent(s)	
constituency office coffee/hosting/meeting supplies	
internet and other on-line computer charges (beyond what LAO provides)	
MLA/constituency website design, development, hosting, maintenance or other related services, including registration of domain names	
<p>constituency event ticket costs for the Member and the Member's spouse or partner to attend a non-partisan constituency event, net of any charitable donation eligible for a receipt for tax purposes.</p>	<p>tickets to meetings, conferences, dinners or other events which do not occur in the constituency or, if an urban constituency, in the municipality in which the electoral division resides; which do not relate to a Member's representation of their constituency; or the part of the value of the ticket that is a charitable donation</p>

## Guidelines Regarding Non Legislative Assembly MLA Expenses

The Legislative Assembly Office is authorized under the *Legislative Assembly Act* to pay vendors directly on behalf of or reimburse Members for expenditures that they incur in the course of their duties as MLAs. Specifically, the Members' Services Committee Orders designate the type and nature of allowable expenditures. For the most part the expenses relate to the MLA's representation of constituents. The Speaker and, on appeal, the Members' Services Committee can review expenditures when a question arises as to whether an expenditure is allowable under the order.

## Other Noncompliant Expenses

Not all expenses an MLA incurs may be claimed. In particular, anything relating to a function of the executive branch of government is not within the purview of the legislative branch.

**Expenses for the following bodies are not the responsibility of the Legislative Assembly:**

- operations of the Minister's Office (e.g. Ministry of Finance and Enterprise) or expenses incurred when representing a Minister of the Crown (as delegated)
- operations of the offices of the Cabinet Policy Committees (e.g. Cabinet Policy Committee on Community Services)
- government committees, standing or special (e.g. Forestry Industry Sustainability Committee; Agenda and Priorities)
- government boards (e.g. Treasury Board, Northlands Park Board)
- government agencies (e.g. Agriculture Financial Services Corporation)
- government secretariats (e.g. Regulatory Review Secretariat)
- government councils (e.g. Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta)
- government foundations (e.g. Wild Rose Foundation)
- government commissions (e.g. Alberta Grain Commission)
- government authorities (e.g. Alberta Science and Research Authority)
- government task force (e.g. Western Legislative Forestry Task Force)
- government institutes (e.g. Alberta Agricultural Research Institute)

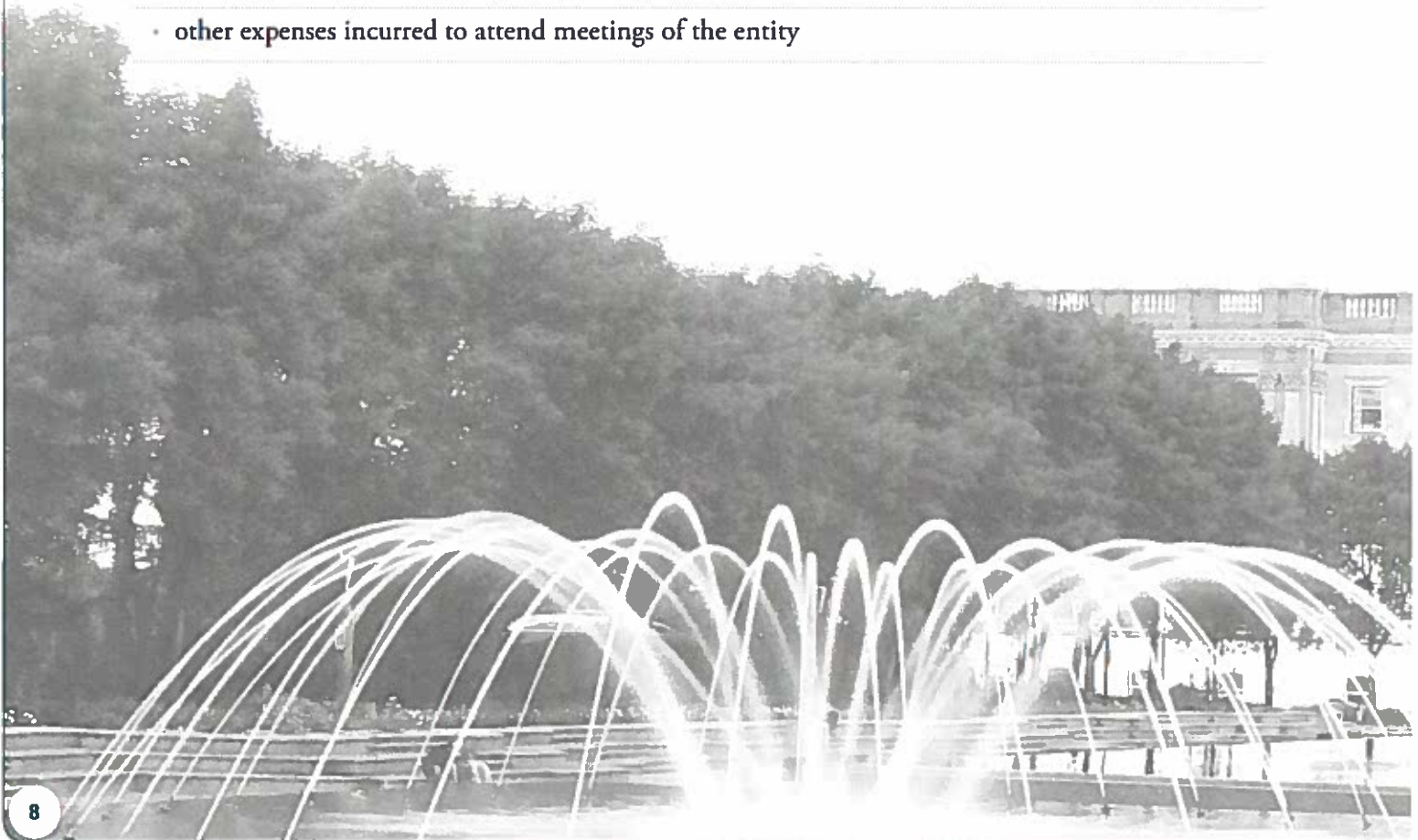
# EXPENDITURE GUIDELINES

CONTINUED

Should a Member be appointed to any of these entities through legislation, an order in council or a ministerial order, any expenses incurred on behalf of the entity would be the responsibility of the entity (or the government department responsible for its operations) to reimburse based on the approved terms of reference in the legislation or order.

## Expenses on behalf of these entities may include

- automobile expenses
- airline travel
- meals, lodging and other travel expenses
- hosting
- office administration expenses
- other expenses incurred to attend meetings of the entity







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## **Financial Management and Administrative Services**

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901 Legislature Annex  
9718 - 107 Street NW  
Edmonton, AB T5K 1E4  
Phone: 780.427.2477  
Fax: 780.415.1714

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This policy document is available in its entirety on  
OurHouse.

**[http://ourhouse/Services/Documents/Financial/  
FS\\_Guidelines\\_MembersExpenditures.pdf](http://ourhouse/Services/Documents/Financial/FS_Guidelines_MembersExpenditures.pdf)**

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Revised July 17, 2009

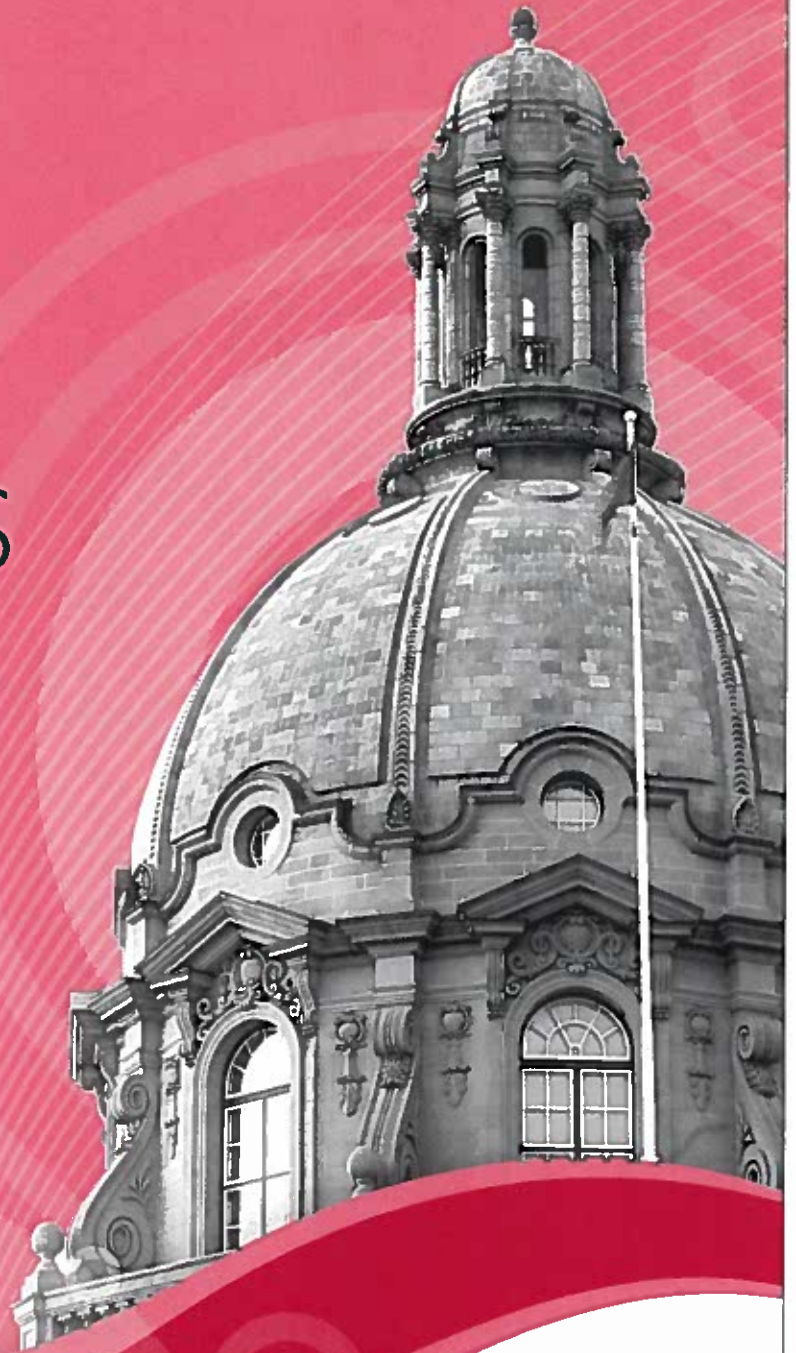
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

# WEBSITE GUIDELINES

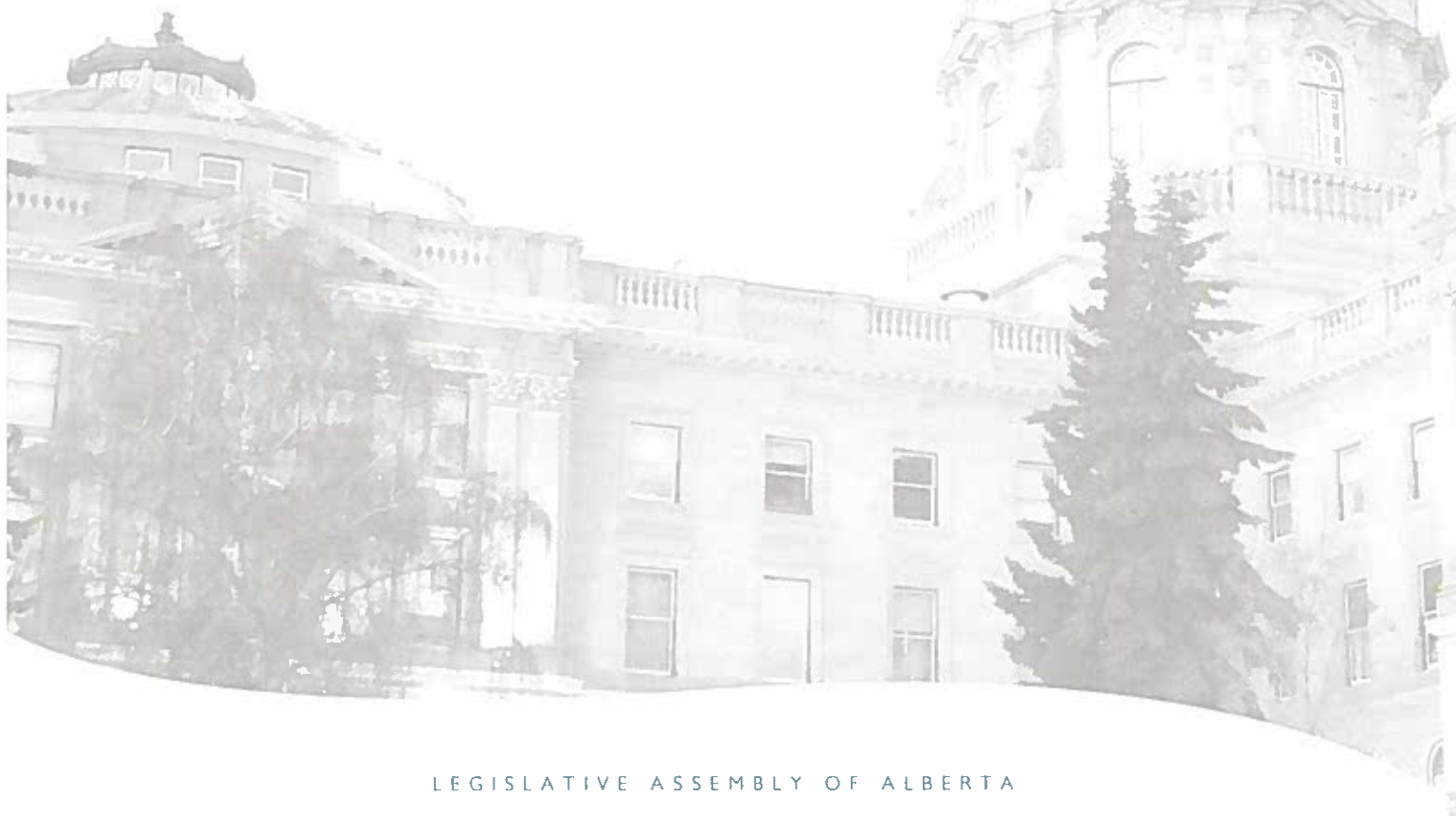
**FOR MEMBERS OF  
THE LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY,  
CONSTITUENCY  
OFFICES AND  
CAUCUS OFFICES**



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## Website Guidelines

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• Authorities Applicable to Websites	2 - 3
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# WEBSITE GUIDELINES

## **Introduction**

Either in their capacity as representatives of and in a particular electoral division or as they carry out their government or opposition role in the Legislative Assembly, an important role of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) is to communicate with the citizens of Alberta. This activity is carried out by individual Members and through each caucus office. Media used for this has included print, radio, television, signage on buildings and vehicles and personal appearances.

In this Internet age all caucuses and many MLAs are using websites and social media sites such as MySpace and Facebook as an additional communications tool. We anticipate that this trend will continue. To assist you as Members, constituency staff and caucus staff, we have developed guidelines regarding the development of, maintenance of and responsibility for websites and social media sites.



# WEBSITE GUIDELINES

CONTINUED

## Authorities Applicable to Websites<sup>1</sup>

**MLAs:** MLA communication with constituents is governed by section 5 of the Constituency Services Order (RMSC 1992, c. C-1, as amended). The Order states:

- 5(1) The Allowance may be used to pay expenses which relate to non-partisan communication between the Member and his constituents...
- (2) An item may not be paid for under subsection (1) if it bears any political party logo, promotes political party activities, solicits political party funds or memberships or contains personal criticism of another Member.
- (3) If a Member contracts for a service to facilitate communication, the Member shall, where reasonably possible, contract with a person who is licensed and insured to carry out that service.

The Expenditure Guidelines for Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta also apply to MLA/constituency websites.

**Caucuses<sup>2</sup>:** Caucus communications are referred to in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta Expenditure Guidelines for Caucus, Effective December 14, 2006. Page 2 states that the purpose of a caucus budget is to conduct activities in support of the Members' parliamentary role, which includes "support the communication of policy positions and debate on legislative matters important to Albertans." Advertising and communications are a legitimate type of caucus expense subject to the prohibition in page 3 that states that:

- Caucus activities and transactions should be separate and distinct from party activities, party identity (logos, colours, web pages), events or transactions and particularly election activities. Furthermore, during an election period Caucus activities and expenses should be restricted to ensure that there is no perception of utilizing these funds for electioneering activities.

- There should be no appearance of influencing the voting public by making payments to individuals or organizations that are donations (cash or in-kind) or are of a fundraising nature.

Caucus management is directed to refer to the most current version of the Expenditure Guidelines for Caucus for details on allowable expenses.

<sup>1</sup> Where appropriate, "website" and "social media site" may be used interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this document "Caucus" will refer to either Caucus or Independent Member.

## Funding

**MLAs:** Section 1 of the Constituency Services Order entitles every Member to a Member's Services Allowance (MSA) each fiscal year. An MLA may use these funds for communications expenses authorized under section 5, including website development, hosting, maintenance, or security. Domain name registration on behalf of Members and constituency offices are paid by the Legislative Assembly Office (Information Technology Services branch).

**Caucuses:** Each year the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services approves funding for each caucus via a formula. Each caucus may allocate the funds not dedicated to committee support, subject to budgetary restriction, to the operations of its office. This includes website development, hosting, maintenance, security or domain name registration.

## Considerations and Guidelines

### Who is developing or maintaining your site?

If a professional is developing your site for a fee, we require the execution of an independent contractor agreement to protect you and the Legislative Assembly Office. Any contract for web design must be reviewed by the LAO and signed by the Clerk, and its term should not extend past twelve (12) months. Alternatively, if a volunteer will be providing design, maintenance or other assistance with your website, we require a volunteer placement agreement to be completed for the same reason. The agreement defines the services being provided, scope of the project, deadlines, costs, input from the Member or caucus, responsibilities of the contractor, insurance, privacy/confidentiality issues, approvals and dispute resolution mechanisms. Contact Human Resource Services (HRS) for details on the contracting process and required approvals.

# WEBSITE GUIDELINES

CONTINUED

## Other considerations:

- **If someone is volunteering to design or maintain your website, what are their qualifications?** While having someone volunteer to provide services is a great way to keep costs down, you must be certain that the individual has the adequate training and experience to provide you with a professional-looking website that is compliant with current Orders and any relevant guidelines. Ultimately, you as the Member or the caucus whip or director of caucus/chief of staff are responsible for the website, so you must be aware of and comfortable with both the content and technical elements of your website.
- **Are there any risks?** It is your responsibility as the Member or the caucus whip or director of caucus/chief of staff to be aware of all design and content on your website. You should ensure that you provide effective oversight of all persons involved to ensure that you do not experience any technical, legal, procedural or confidentiality issues due to your selection or supervision of the person(s) involved with your website.
- **Who is updating content?** If your staff is responsible for updating the site, does s/he have the skill set to do so? Staff may require training to ensure that s/he has the appropriate knowledge and skills to properly maintain the website.
- **Who owns the site?** Pursuant to the independent contractor or volunteer agreement any site developed or maintained with Legislative Assembly Office funds or resources becomes the property of the Legislative Assembly Office. It must be clear in any agreement that the Legislative Assembly Office on behalf of the Member or caucus owns the website it pays for and is responsible for the content, regardless of media, on the site. Copyright is retained by the Legislative Assembly Office.

You should ensure you have the answers to these questions before proceeding to avoid confusion, time delays or future problems.

## IT Impacts

There will be a number of technical considerations to take into account before initiating or updating your website. The Legislative Assembly Office does not host, design, maintain or troubleshoot MLA/constituency or caucus websites. Therefore, you must ensure that you are clear about what your service provider/web host will provide. Have you considered the following?

- ***Who will do the web hosting?*** As the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO) does not provide web hosting support or services, you need to select a third party to provide hosting services. Any contract for web hosting must be reviewed by the LAO and signed by the Clerk, and its term should not extend past twelve (12) months. Contact Human Resource Services (HRS) for details on the contracting process and required approvals. Hardware or software purchased using LAO funds to facilitate website hosting are the property of the Legislative Assembly Office and are to be used solely for hosting that MLA/constituency or caucus website. These resources may not be used to host or to support any external, third-party websites.
- ***What level of web hosting/service do you need?*** Service providers can provide different levels of service for different costs depending upon certain criteria like the level of complexity, the size and media to be used (i.e., print, audio, video, pictures).
- ***Is your site dynamic or static?*** If your site will only have posted information for the reference of people who visit it, it may be fairly easy to update and not require a high level of service. However, if you have a more sophisticated website where visitors have the opportunity to interact with the site (e.g., complete surveys, sign up for newsletters, download podcasts, etc.), this may require a higher level of service from your web host.

You must not load or operate any applications or devices supporting your website that may impair the functionality, performance or security of any IT resources provided by the LAO. If you are unsure as to what the effects of implementing a website are to your current systems or if you have some general questions about websites, please contact the Manager of IT Operations in the Information Technology Services (ITS) branch.

# WEBSITE GUIDELINES

CONTINUED

## Costs

As noted above, funding is provided to Members and caucuses that may be used to pay for the development and operations of a website. You should consider the following when budgeting for a website:

- What are the one-time costs, like development?
- What are the periodic fixed costs, like web hosting?
- What are the variable costs, like content updates and enhancements?

Remember that website expenses will be expensed in the fiscal year to which they relate.

## Declaration of Domain Names/Websites with the LAO

Members who establish websites for the purposes of communicating with constituents and wish to pay for the design, development and operating costs from their MSA must complete the prescribed declaration form and file it with the Financial Management and Administrative Services branch. Declaration forms are available on Our House, the LAO's intranet site. These websites may be eligible for MLA liability insurance coverage\* and will be subject to the Guidelines on Dissolution of the Alberta Legislative Assembly at the call of a general election or by-election. Caucuses are also required to complete the declaration form.

**Warning:** Websites that are operated by the MLA or caucus that are not funded through the LAO and are not declared with the LAO may not be eligible for MLA liability coverage.\*

\* MLA liability coverage is subject to the terms and conditions of coverage maintained by the Risk Management and Insurance Division, Alberta Finance.

## Domain Names

A domain name is both the website's address as well as a meaningful identification for your site. When considering what domain name you wish to adopt, please consider that a consistent naming approach will make it easier for citizens to find your site and allow for easy administration at the call of a general election or by-election.



**Member/Constituency Office Website:** The LAO has purchased, registered and retained exclusive use of domain names bearing the names of all electoral divisions. In advance of developing a constituency website a Member must contact the ITS branch to arrange for the use of a domain name for his/her constituency. This domain name belongs to the LAO and cannot be transferred to a political candidate or party or to a Member for personal use.

**Caucus Website:** For a caucus the domain name must conform to any conditions arising from the most current version of the approved Legislative Assembly of Alberta Expenditure Guidelines for Caucus.

When registered to the caucus with the LAO and/or paid with Legislative Assembly funds, the domain name belongs to the LAO and cannot be transferred to candidates or the party at election time. Use of a political party name outside the context of its caucus is not appropriate for a domain name paid for by the LAO.

## Data Security

When selecting a provider for web hosting, it is very important that you know on whose server the website data resides. If you are collecting information from those who access the site, you must be clear that you know where that information resides and how it is protected. This is especially important if any personal information that could identify individuals is collected to ensure that its confidentiality is protected.

We **strongly suggest** that you select service providers or website hosts that **do not store** your data outside of Canada. Data stored in the United States may be subject to the USA Patriot Act and eligible for disclosure to U.S. authorities. Data resident in another jurisdiction may be subject to that country's legislation. This may impact your ability to protect the integrity, security and privacy of the data you are posting or collecting.

## Content and Design

Content is governed by the rules and principles noted in page 2 of these guidelines, *Authorities Applicable to Websites*. Thought should be given to the following when considering appropriate content:

- Is this site assisting citizens in providing access to the Member or caucus? Is Member or staff contact information like names, addresses, telecommunications numbers and e-mail addresses clearly identifiable?
- Are links or information regarding nonpartisan community resources included? Is there a

# WEBSITE GUIDELINES

CONTINUED

link to the Alberta Legislative Assembly website, other jurisdictions' websites?

- Links to other websites **should be clearly labelled**. It should not be misleading as to whose website it is.
- Disclaimers should be included in several locations within the website and in close proximity to the related material. This is important because visitors may jump from one web page to another and come to the site from different entry points.
- Does the content focus on issues, legislative activities, policy positions or constituency or caucus events?
- Will information be updated on a timely basis?
- Could any content published on the website be considered defamatory? If there is any concern, legal advice must be sought. Members or caucus management should contact the Office of Parliamentary Counsel before posting.

Note that the rules on content apply to web logs (aka. "blogs"), podcasts, chat facilities, discussion streams or social media sites. Also be aware that Member or caucus websites **must not include links to any political party sites**.

A well-designed website can enhance a citizen's ability to find and use the information on the site. Keep your audience in mind when designing your site. Appropriate HTML language should be used to ensure that search engines can find information easily. You may want to have a search engine, breadcrumb navigation and a site map. An aesthetically pleasing site that uses clear, crisp graphics, fonts and photos can make the site more usable by citizens. You should also design your website to protect it against e-mail addresses being harvested for spamming.

Access to Legislative Assembly visual identity symbols in digital form is available from Communications Services. Access to media clips of speeches during legislative sessions is available from House Services, Hansard Branch.

If you plan to provide links to other nonpartisan community resources on your site, it is appropriate to contact the site's webmaster to obtain permission first. Alternatively, it is advisable to include a "permission to link" statement on your site so that other entities interested in linking to your site are required to ask your permission.

### **Interactivity**

If you plan to have interactive elements as part of your site, make sure that the user's privacy is protected. The information collected must be used for work in support of the Member's roles only and access to it should be strictly controlled. "Cookies" should only track general activity, not specific addresses or personal information. Caution should be exercised in the collection or transmission of personal information at any time and via any medium. This includes collecting personal information for e-newsletters or other notices of interest. See also "Data Security" (page 7 of these guidelines) if a third party is providing this service and/or storing personal information on your behalf.

**Any interactive tool**, including a blog, social interface or chat tool, should be used with caution to ensure that it does not contravene copyright or contain defamatory material or content not authorized under relevant Orders or guidelines.

### **Copyright/Intellectual Property**

If you or your developer wants to use any text, graphic, picture or other attribute from an outside source, you need permission and may have to pay for its use. In addition, your content should be clearly identified to protect it as copyrighted. Members and their website developers must be aware that images they use may require a license or fee for use. Some attributes have terms of use by which you must abide. It is the responsibility of the Member or director of caucus/chief of staff to ensure that adequate efforts have been made to determine that there is no breach of copyright, terms of use, usage guidelines or other intellectual property rights, including those of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta/Legislative Assembly Office.

# WEBSITE GUIDELINES

CONTINUED

## Terms of Use

A “terms of use” statement lets the website users know what the site is for and how you will use any information collected from them. It is important that you let users know that this is a nonparty site if a caucus website or a nonpartisan site if a Member’s website.

## Election

Declared Member/constituency office website and caucus website content or operations are governed by the Guidelines on Dissolution of the Alberta Legislative Assembly at the call of either a by-election or general election.

## Monitoring and Compliance

**Member/Constituency Office:** As with any other constituency communications, when an expense is incurred, the website or social media site in question will be reviewed by the LAO to ensure that it is compliant with the Constituency Services Order and any associated guidelines before payment is made.

If the LAO receives a complaint or discovers a noncompliant site, it will investigate to ensure compliance with these website guidelines.

If the operation of a Member’s website interferes with the operations and security of any Legislative Assembly IT hardware or software, the LAO will take immediate action to ensure that any threat to the operation/security of the Assembly information technology infrastructure is eliminated.

**Caucus:** Prior to the payment of any communications expense associated with the caucus website(s) or social media site(s) it maintains, the LAO reserves the right to review the site to ensure it meets these website guidelines or the most current version of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta Expenditure Guidelines for Caucus.

If the LAO receives a complaint or discovers a noncompliant site, it will investigate to ensure compliance with these website guidelines.

If the operation of a caucus website interferes with the operations and security of any Legislative Assembly IT hardware or software, the LAO will take immediate action to ensure that any threat to the operation/security of the Assembly information technology infrastructure is eliminated.

## **Appeals**

If any question arises with respect to the application of these guidelines, the question shall be decided in the first instance by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, subject to appeal to the Members' Services Committee. If a question arises to the application of these guidelines in relation to the Speaker, the question shall be decided by the Members' Services Committee.







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## **LAO CONTACTS:**

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Human Resource Services: 780.427.1364  
Information Technology Services: 780.422.1680  
Financial Management and Administrative Services: 780.427.2477  
Parliamentary Counsel: 780.422.4837  
Communications Services: 780.427.1653  
Hansard: 780.427.1875

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Publications Available and Referenced on Our House (<http://ourhouse>):

- Website Guidelines for Members of the Legislative Assembly, Constituency Offices and Caucus Offices
  - Expenditure Guidelines for Members of the Legislative Assembly
  - Expenditure Guidelines for Caucus
- 

Publications Available and Referenced on Legislative Assembly of Alberta website ([www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca)):

- Guidelines on Dissolution of the Alberta Legislative Assembly
  - Consolidated Members' Services Committee Orders
- 

**Effective: April 2012**

Printed under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta



**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

**[CONSTITUENCY NAME] Constituency Office**

**Constituency Assistant Full-time**

[MLA NAME] is seeking a full-time Constituency staff member.

**General Description:** Reporting to the MLA, the Constituency Assistant will be the primary liaison between the MLA and their Constituency, community groups, stakeholders and individuals. Working in a challenging, variable environment the Constituency Assistant will be responsible for office administration, community outreach and organizing, event planning, coordinating communications, casework and the day-to-day operations of the MLA Constituency Office.

**Duties:**

- Ensuring that office is accessible to constituents through regular and consistent hours of operation
- Phone, email and other correspondence
- Administrative duties, including budgeting and file management
- Engaging in casework on behalf of constituents
- Performing outreach to community organizations and individual constituents as directed
- Coordinating advertising and constituency mailings and online communications
- Coordinating part-time and temporary staff and interns

**Qualifications and Skills:**

- Degree in a relevant field or equivalent work experience
- Excellent written and verbal communications skills
- Familiarity with MS Windows, Office, databases and CMS web updates
- Willingness to work flexible hours, including evenings and weekends
- Knowledge of government bodies and non-governmental agencies, including Service Alberta, AISH, income support, etc.

**For more information please contact [MLA.LASTNAME@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:MLA.LASTNAME@assembly.ab.ca).**