Elections database user guide for municipalities

Alberta

Questions concerning this user guide, or further information on the Elections Database are welcome and can be directed to:

 Elections Database User Guide for Municipalities | Alberta Municipal Affairs

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Introduction

In Alberta, Municipal Elections occur every four years on the third Monday in October. Municipalities are responsible for submitting election information, including municipal candidates that are running for elected office, election results and election details, through the Elections Database (EDB).

System Requirements for the Elections Database

To be able to add or remove information to or from the database, you need to have the following:
- A connection to the internet with at least Windows 7.
- A basic understanding of how to use an internet browser such as Google Chrome, Firefox or Internet Explorer. The database has not been tested on other browsers.
- An updated version of Adobe Reader, which can be downloaded for free here: https://get.adobe.com/reader/.
- A working email address.
- A MAConnect ID and password.

MAConnect

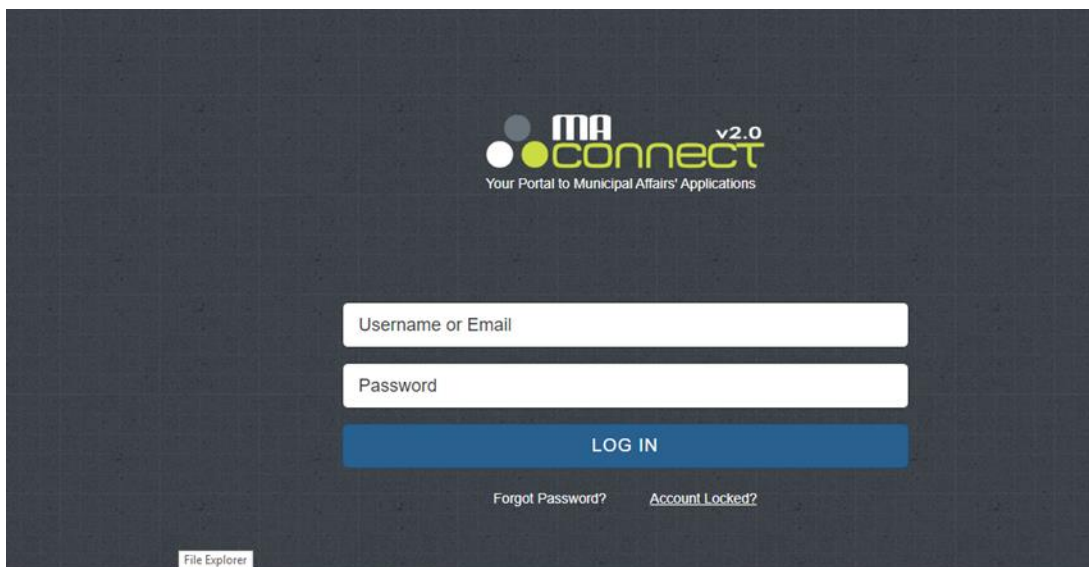To access the Elections Database you must login to the Municipal Affairs web portal: MAConnect.

Figure 1: MAConnect Webpage

If you already have a UserID and password, login directly to the site www.maconnect.alberta.ca.
All municipal users of the EDB are given "Returning Officer" access and able to add/edit election information. EDB Returning Officer access does not does not mean that you are the "Returning Officer" for your municipality.

New User

Each municipality has a Stakeholder Administrator that manages access requests to the EDB on behalf of their municipality. If you do not have a MAConnect account and password, you will be required to contact your Stakeholder Administrator.
If you do not know who this is, please send an email to lgs.update@gov.ab.ca asking who is the Stakeholder Administrator for your municipality or call 780-427-2225 and ask to speak with a Municipal Information Advisor.

Once EDB access has been approved, you will receive an email from MAConnect with your UserID, temporary password and link to the MAConnect web portal. You must register your account within **30** days after receiving the email. If you do not, your password will expire and you will require a password reset. After **60** days after password expiry, your account will be deleted and you will have to get it created again.

Steps:

- Log into MAConnect using your email and temporary password and click the 'Log In' button.
- The 'Change Password' screen will open and you will be required to enter:
  - a new password
  - verify your password, and
  - a minimum of four (4) personal security questions.

- Click on the 'Save' button.
- You will receive an email from MAConnect@gov.ab.ca indicating you have successfully registered your MAConnect account.

90 Day Password Expiry

As per the Government of Alberta (GoA) password requirements, all registered users are required to change their password every **90** days. If **90** days have passed, the next time the User logs in, the 'Change Password' screen will appear with a message that says "Your password has expired. Please reset your password to continue".

Forgot Password?

If you cannot remember your password, hit the "Forgot Password" link underneath the blue "LOG IN" button on the MAConnect home page.

Steps:

The 'Reset Password' screen opens and you are required to enter the following:

- Username or Email – Enter your Username or email address. This is a required field.
- Password Reset Method - Select either "Use my email", which will send a password reset link to the email associated with your account or "Use my security questions", which will allow you to answer the security questions you set up when you registered your account.
- I'm not a robot – Check the box to the left of this field. You may or may not be asked to select specific images and follow the instructions. If you cannot read the image, click on button to refresh the image. Once the images are verified, a green checkmark will appear. This is a security measure.
- Click on the 'Next' button in order to proceed to the next step in the process.
- If the "Use my email" password reset method was selected, the main MAConnect Login Screen will appear and a confirmation message will indicate that an email was sent. Open your email and click on the link within 24 hours to reset your password.
- If the "Use my security questions" password reset method was selected, enter answers for two (2) personal security questions that you previously set up.

Account Locked?

A user has up to **10** invalid login attempts. After that, the account will be locked for one hour. New users not yet approved (pending) are not locked as they do not have access. If you cannot remember your password, please reset your password by clicking on the "forgot password" link on the MAConnect login page.

GoA Password Requirements

Minimum password length is eight (8) characters and maximum length is 14 characters.

- Passwords must contain characters from at least three (3) of the four (4) classes:
  - English upper case letters A, B, C…Z
  - English lower case letters a, b, c…z
  - Westernized Arabic numerals 0, 1, 2…9
  - Non alphanumeric ("special characters") such as punctuation symbols

Passwords may not contain your first name, last name or Username. A password cannot be re-used once it expires.

Elections Database

The EDB was designed to streamline election reporting for Returning Officers. Municipal Affairs (MA) is responsible for creating General Elections, as well as Senate and/or Referendums elections. It is the responsibility of the municipality's Returning Officer to create a Summer Village Election or By-Elections.

Municipal Dashboard

Once you access the EDB, you will see the dashboard for your municipality. Key information included on the dashboard includes:

1. Municipal Information – if you click on the arrow icon, this area will expand and provide constituency information for the municipality (orange shaded area).
2. Green "New Election" button – click this button to create a new by-election or summer village election.
3. Upcoming Municipal Elections Tab – contains recent elections, including the upcoming general/senate election.
4. Municipal Election History Tab – provides a list of past elections. Clicking on the magnifying glass icon will give you a read-only view of that Election information.
5. Upcoming senate elections – includes recent senate elections, including the upcoming senate election.
6. Current Elected Officials – provides a reference list of current Elected Officials for your municipality. Please check the list when you logon to ensure the information is up-to-date and email any corrections to lgs.update@gov.ab.ca.

Figure 2: Municipal Dashboard

Creating / Editing Elections

Municipal General Election / Senate and/or Referendum

Alberta Municipal Affairs is responsible for setting up the General Senate and Referendum Elections within the Elections Database. The Ministry will enter in the official General Election, Senate and Referendum dates into the system and create the election. It is then the responsibility of the Returning Officer to ensure all fields within the EDB have been completed and are accurate.

Steps

- Login to MAConnect and click the link to go to the Elections Database.
- You will be taken to your Municipal dashboard.
- Under the Upcoming Municipal Elections tab,
  - For 2021, a General Election has already been created within the system. You can now view/edit the election details by clicking the 'Edit' pencil icon 🖉 to be taken to your Election Details tab.
- Under the Upcoming Senate/Referendum Election tab,
  - If a Senate / Referendum election has been called, you can view/edit the election details by clicking on the pencil icon 🖉 which will direct you to the Elections Details Screen.

Summer Village Election

Summer Villages set up their elections during the peak summer months every four years. Nominations for councillors can be received from June and/or July. Election day must be four weeks after the acceptance of candidate nominations. As the candidate nomination date and election date varies by summer village, the responsibility for adding summer village elections is allocated to the municipality.
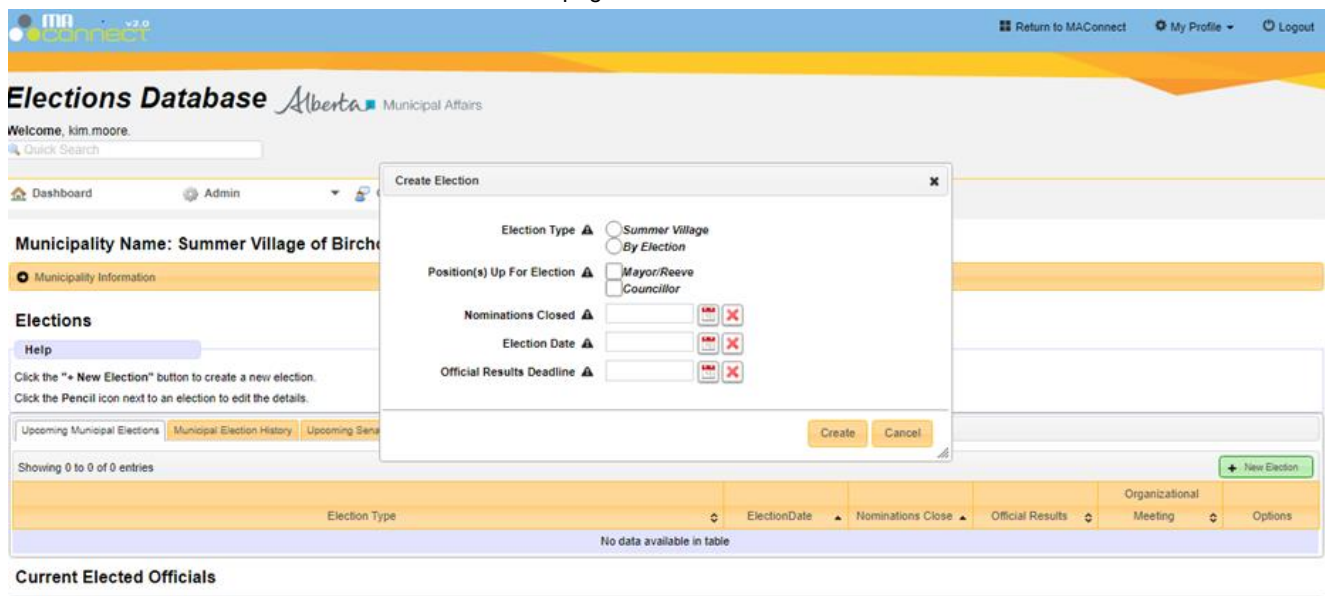
Key Information and Dates:

You will be required to enter the following key dates to create a Summer Village Election:
- Nominations Closed Date
- Election Date
- Official Results Deadline

You will not be able to create a Summer Village Election without entering all key dates.

Steps:
- Login to MAConnect and click the icon to go to the Elections Database.
- You will be taken to your Summer Village dashboard.
- Go to the green button called 'New Election'. Click this button to launch the Create Election form.
- Under election type, click on "Summer Village".
- Under Positions Up for Election, click "Councillor"
- Enter the key dates for nomination closed, election date and official results deadline by clicking on the respective calendars.
- Push the yellow create button.
- You will be directed to the elections details page.

Figure 3: Creating a Summer Village Election

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By-Elections

Municipalities and Summer Villages must submit their by-election results in the EDB.

Key Information and Dates:

You will be required to enter the following key dates to create a by-election:
- Nominations Closed Date
- Election Date
- Official Results Deadline
- Date of Resignation for each council member

You will not be able to create a By-Election without entering the above information.

Steps:
- Login to MAConnect and click the icon to go to the Elections Database.
- You will be taken to your municipal dashboard.
- Go to the green a button called 'New Election'. Click this button to launch the Create Election form.
- Under election type, click on "By-election".
- Under Positions Up for Election, click Mayor/Reeve and/or "Councillor".
- Enter the key dates for nomination closed, election date and official results deadline by clicking on the respective calendars.
- Indicate the date(s) of resignation for council member(s).
- Push the yellow create button.
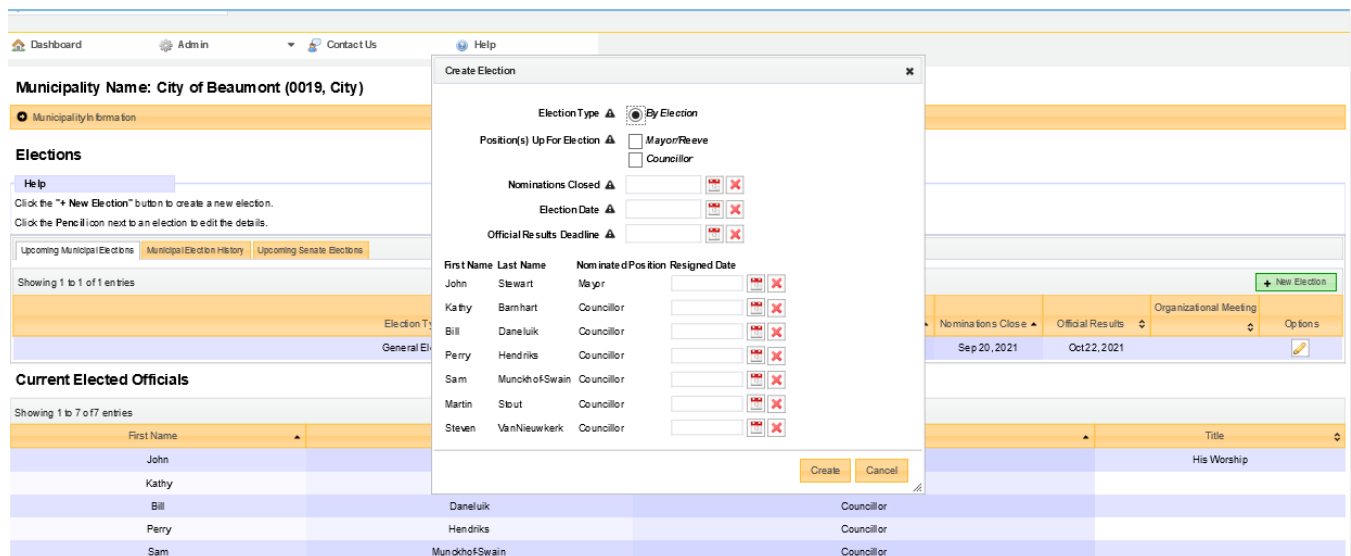- You will be now be directed to the elections details page for the by-election.

Figure 4: Creating a By-Election

Getting Started

You have now added important information about your Municipality for the Municipal General Election.
Returning Officers should take the time to enter all required information on the EDB. It is recommended to complete as many fields as possible. Mandatory fields will be displayed by ⚠ and the form will not save if a mandatory field is empty or an error is present on the form.

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Election Details

The Elections Details screen contains the contact information for returning officers for both a Municipal and Senate/Referendum election.

Municipal Elections

💡 **Key Information and Dates (Municipal Election):**

You will be required to enter the contact information for returning officers:

- The email address and cell phone numbers for returning officers are considered private and will NOT be published.

- The number of eligible voters have been populated with the most recent federal census count. If you have a voter list or a more recent census, you can enter the most recent count.

- Contact information for the returning officer should be updated if there is any changes to the information during the election period.

- After the municipal election, the organizational meeting date should be entered as this represents the official date that elected officials take office.

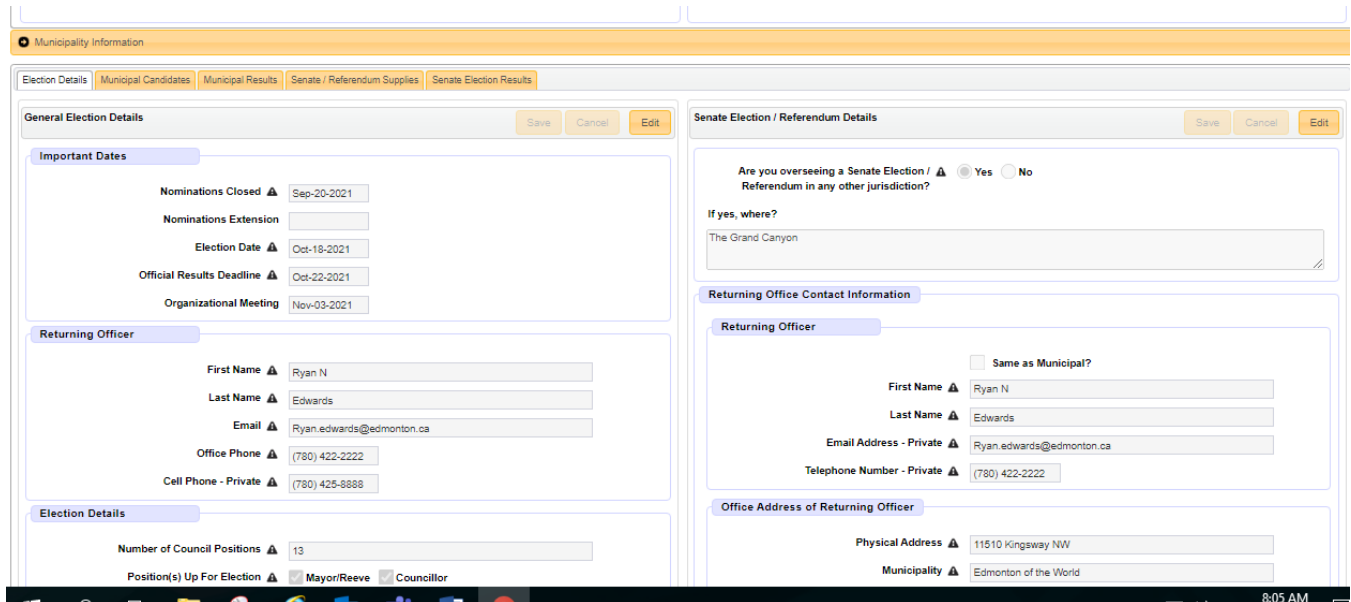**The Election Details screen(s) should be completed as soon as possible.**

Figure 5: Elections Details

Steps

- Login to MAConnect and click the link to go to the Elections Database.
- You will be taken to your Municipal dashboard.
- In the Upcoming Elections tab, you will see your upcoming election.
- Click on the 'Edit' pencil icon. You will be taken to your Election Details tab.
- Click the orange "edit" button on the left-hand side to start entering data.
- Check your data entry and make sure all mandatory fields marked by ⚠ are completed.
- Press the orange "save" button on the left hand of the screen.
- You will see a 'Saved Successfully' message. If any of the mandatory fields have not been completed they will be identified and you will be required to fill them in.

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<u>Senate Election</u>

Key Information and Dates (Senate / Referendum):

- The details you provide in this section will be used to generate the Election Proclamation and will be posted on Elections Alberta's website. The Returning Officer's name, office address, public telephone number and public email address will be used for these purposes.

- The private telephone number and email address will not be posted online. These will only be used by Elections Alberta to contact the Returning Officer if there are questions or concerns relating to the form, supply shipments or results reporting.

- If your office address is not mailable, please include the street address. Supplies will be sent to this address.

- To help voters find election information for their municipality, the "Where to Vote Information" will be posted on Election Alberta's website. Provide the URL for the webpage where this information can be found.

- If you are holding an advance or special ballot vote, provide information of the dates they are scheduled to commence. This allows Elections Alberta to prioritize ballot printing and supply shipments for areas that will require these items sooner.

- If you are providing the Blind Elector Template at your polls and are receiving ballots from Elections Alberta, Elections Alberta will supply you with the matching template for each ballot style. Elections Alberta will contact you to determine how many to ship.

- If your municipality has passed a bylaw to use alternative voting equipment, indicate which equipment will be used. Municipalities using alternative voting equipment will not receive ballots or blind elector templates from Elections Alberta.

Steps:
- To start entering information on the Senate Election and/or referendum, push the orange "edit" button on the right hand side.
- Complete all data fields and ensure all mandatory fields are completed.
- Push the orange "save" button on the right hand of the screen.
- You will see a 'Saved Successfully' message. If any of the mandatory fields have not been completed they will be identified and you will be required to fill them in.

Candidate Nominations

Once you have completed the Municipal portion of the "Election Details" screen for your Municipality, then you can enter Candidate(s) for the upcoming municipal election.

Key Information and Dates:

- The final list of candidates must be entered and finalized on the EDB twenty-four (24) hours after the close of nominations on nomination day. A button will appear after 24 hours after the close of nominations, and the Returning Officer will be prompted to complete this action.
- Returning Officers are not required to send a signed copy of their Candidate Nominations List to Municipal Affairs, when it is completed in the EDB.
- You will be contacted by Municipal Affairs if you do NOT finalize your municipal candidate information.

You must complete the Municipal "Election Details" before entering your candidate list.

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Figure 6: Municipal Candidates

Steps:

Login to MAConnect and click the link to go to the Elections Database.

- You will be taken to your Municipal dashboard.
- In the "Upcoming Municipal Elections" tab, find the election you want to edit.
- Click on the 'Edit' pencil icon for the election. You will be taken to your Election Details tab. You **will not be able** to add candidates until the "Elections Details" information has been completed.
- Click the orange "Municipal Candidates" tab.
- For the **General Municipal or Summer Village Elections** the current council has been entered for you.
  - Under actions for each council member that is NOT running for election, hit the red X button to remove the selected council member from the candidate list.
  - A popup menu will appear so you can confirm that the council member will not be running.
  - Press the "confirm" button to confirm that the individual will not be running or "cancel" button if the red x button was pushed in error.
- To add new candidates:
  - Complete all data fields for each candidate.
  - Ensure all information marked with a ⚠ have been completed.
  - Push the orange "Add" button.
  - A popup menu will appear asking you to confirm the candidate information was entered correctly.
  - Push the "orange" proceed button if correct, or the orange "cancel and correct" button" to make changes.
- To edit candidates:
  - Push the orange "edit" button.
  - All data fields for candidates will now be editable.
  - Make the required changes.
  - Push the orange "save" button to save all changes.
- To submit your official candidate list to Municipal Affairs:
  - Within the Municipal Candidates tab, click the orange button called "Finalize Candidates".
  - A popup menu will appear. Press "confirm" to submit the results to Municipal Affairs or "cancel" to modify the information.
- To print candidate list:
  - Within the Municipal Candidates Tab, click the orange button called 'Print Candidates List'.
  - A popup window will open. Push the Download button".
  - The pdf file of all your candidates will appear on the screen. As the contact information for the returning officer is considered personal information, it is omitted from the printed form.

Municipal Election Results

Key Information and Dates:

- The unofficial election results should be entered in the EDB by noon the next day after the election date.
- Prior to finalizing your election results, the municipal candidates list must be finalized.

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- The official election results are due four (4) days after the election date.
- Please note that you will be contacted by Municipal Affairs if your unofficial and/or official results are not submitted on time.

You will not be able to add or edit your election information once the election results have been finalized.

Ward	Nominated Position	Incumbent	First Name	Last Name	Acclaimed	Votes	Elected
	Mayor		Tony	Carter		15	☐
	Mayor		Ryan	Edwards			☐
	Councillor	✓	Tim	Cartmell			☑
	Councillor	✓	Tony	Caterina			☑
	Councillor		Ryan	Edwards		33	☑
	Councillor	✓	Bev	Esslinger			☑
	Councillor	✓	Sarah	Hamilton			☑
	Councillor	✓	Ben	Henderson			☑
	Councillor	✓	Don	Iveson			☑
	Councillor	✓	Andrew	Knack			☑
	Councillor	✓	Scott	McKeen			☑
	Councillor	✓	Mike	Nickel			☑
	Councillor	✓	Aaron	Paquette			☑

Figure 7: Election Results

Steps:
- Login to MAConnect and click the link to go to the Elections Database.
- You will be taken to your municipal dashboard.
- On the dashboard you will see the already created election in the data grid within the Upcoming Elections tab. Click on the 'Edit' pencil icon.
- You will be taken to the Election Details tab. Beside this tab is another tab called Election Results.
- Click on the tab and you will be taken to the Election Results screen for the election. The screen will be pre-populated with the candidates that were previously entered for the election. The system will identify if they are the Incumbent and/or Acclaimed.
- To add the unofficial election results:
  o Enter in the following information – number of actual voters, number of votes for each candidate, and if they are elected.
  o Click "Yes" if you want to SUBMIT your unofficial results to Municipal Affairs or "No" if you want to save and continue entering data.
  o The Unofficial Results of your election should be finalized and submitted to Municipal Affairs by noon the next day after the municipal election.
- To declare your results as official:
  o Click the Election Results tab:
    ▪ Check all data information for accuracy.
    ▪ Ensure all mandatory information, including the organizational meeting date has been completed.
    ▪ Click the "Finalize Official Results" button.
    ▪ A popup menu will appear asking you to confirm or cancel. You will NOT be able to edit the election results once you confirm your official results.
    ▪ You will see a 'Saved Successfully' message. If any of the mandatory fields have not been completed, they will be identified and you will be required to fill them in.
- To print your election results:
    ▪ Within the Election Results tab, click the orange button called 'Election Results'.
    ▪ A popup window will open. Push the Download button".

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- The pdf file of all your candidates will appear on the screen. As the contact information for the returning officer is considered personal information, it is omitted from the printed form.

Senate/Referendum Supplies

Key Information and Dates:

- For the 2021 Senate/Referendum Election, supply orders should be entered no later than **September 6, 2021.**
- Information can be entered and changed as many times as you need prior to the deadline.
- After the deadline, all changes should be communicated directly to Elections Alberta, not entered in the EDB.

Figure 8: Senate/Referendum Supplies Screen

Steps:
- Login to MAConnect and click the link to go to the Elections Database.
- You will be taken to your municipal dashboard.
- On the dashboard you will see the already created election in the data grid within the Upcoming Elections tab. Click on the 'Edit' pencil icon.
- You will be taken to the Election Details tab. Beside this tab is another tab called Senate/Referendum Supplies.
- Enter the details for the supplies you wish to receive from Elections Alberta.
  - Regular Ballots: When ordering ballots, consider the total number of ballots required for all voting opportunities: election day, advance vote, institutional vote and special ballot. Ballots will be sent packaged in books of 25. List the total number of ballots required, rounded up to the nearest 25.
  - Special Ballots: In this space, indicate how many write-in special ballots you will need. Only make a ballot request here if you are using this ballot type before Nomination Day.
  - Posters: As required by the Act, indicate if you would like Elections Alberta to supply the Direction for Guidance of Voters and Secrecy of Voting posters, or if you would prefer to print the poster yourself. If you select "No", you will be provided with an electronic print package - to be shared with your chosen printer.
  - Translated Voting Instructions: Can be provided as a double-sided, letter-sized sheet of paper. It details how to mark the ballot in 19 different languages. Indicate if you would like to receive these and to what volume.
  - Post-Election: Ballots must be retained for three-months post-election. In the event of a judicial recount, Elections Alberta must collect voting materials from your municipality to manage the court challenge. This information helps us to contact the custodian in a timely and efficient manner and arrange for immediate pickup. Please indicate who is acting as custodian and where voting materials will be retained.
- Save the information using the button at the bottom of the page.

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<u>Print Proclamation</u>

Municipalities must post the proclamation of a senate election and/or referendum provided by Elections Alberta at all polling stations. The proclamation will be available to all Alberta municipalities once the writ has been dropped. To obtain a copy of the proclamation:

Steps:

- Go to the Senate/Referendum Supplies Screen.
- Push the orange "Print Proclamation" button at the bottom of the screen.
- A popup window will appear. Click "Download Report". The report will now appear on the screen.

<u>Print Senate Ballot Instructions and Print Referendum Instructions</u>
Municipalities using tabulators are required to print copies of the Senate Ballot Instructions and Referendum Instructions at all polling stations.

Steps:

- Go to the Senate/Referendum Supplies Screen.
- Push the orange "Print Senate Ballot Instructions" or the "Print Referendum Instructions" button at the bottom of the screen.
- A popup window will appear. Click "Download Report". The report will now appear on the screen.
- Send the required number of the document(s) to the printer.

- Print Senate Ballot Instructions" should only appear if the senate candidates have been submitted by EA and approved by MA and the municipality is using tabulators.

Figure 9: Senate Referendum Screen (Bottom)

Senate Election Results

Key Information and Dates:

- For the 2021 Senate Election, unofficial results can be entered on election day.
- Information can be entered and changed as many times as you need prior to the deadline of October 25, 2021.
- After the deadline and the results have been finalized, all changes should be communicated directly to Elections Alberta.

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Figure 10: Senate Election Results Screen

Steps:
- Login to MAConnect and click the link to go to the Elections Database.
- You will be taken to your municipal dashboard.
- On the dashboard you will see the already created senate election/referendum in the data grid within the Upcoming Senate elections/referendums tab. Click on the 'Edit' pencil icon.
- You will be taken to the Election Details tab. Click on the Senate Election Results tab.
- The screen will be pre-populated with the Senate Elections Candidates that were entered by Elections Alberta. The system will identify each candidate by their federal political party alignment.
- To add the unofficial election results:
  - Enter in the following information – Number of Actual Voters, Number of Blank Ballots, Number of Rejected Ballots, and number of votes by candidate.
  - You can click the 'Save Unofficial" button to save your work any time. The "save unofficial" button will allow you to save incomplete data.
  - The Unofficial Results of the senate election should be entered and saved in the EDB by noon the day following the municipal election.
- To declare your results as official:
  - Click the Senate Election Results tab
    - Check all data information for accuracy.
    - Ensure all mandatory information has been completed.
    - Click the "Finalize Official Results" button.
    - A popup menu will appear asking you to confirm or cancel. You will NOT be able to edit the senate election results once you confirm your official results.
    - You will see a 'Saved Successfully' message. If any of the mandatory fields have not been completed, they will be identified and you will be required to fill them in.
- To print your senate election results:
  - Within the Senate Election Results tab click the orange button called 'Print Senate Election Results'. The report will be generated based on the button (unofficial or official) that you pushed.
  - A popup window will open. Push the Download button.
  - The pdf file containing the results from the Senate election for your local jurisdiction will appear. You can print or save this for your own records.
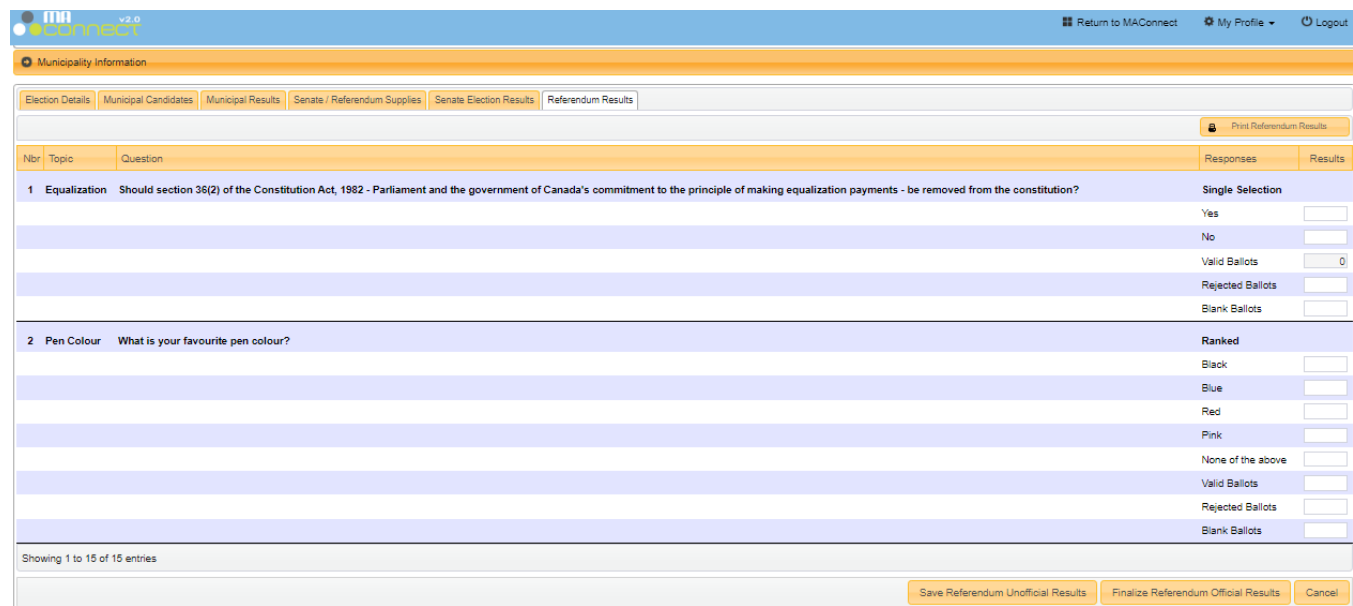
    Note: results do not need to be submitted to Elections Alberta in another format – by submitting in the EDB you have submitted the results.

Classification: Public

Referendum Results

💡 **Key Information and Dates:**

- For the 2021 referendum, unofficial results can be entered on election day.
- Information can be entered and changed as many times as you need prior to the deadline of October 25, 2021.
- After the deadline and the results have been finalized, all changes should be communicated directly to Elections Alberta.

Figure 11: Referendum Results Screen

Steps:

- Login to MAConnect and click the link to go to the Elections Database.
- You will be taken to your municipal dashboard.
- Click the orange Senate Elections/Referendum tab. On the dashboard you will see the already created senate election/referendum in the data grid. Click on the 'Edit' pencil icon.
- You will be taken to the Election Details tab. Click on the Referendum Results tab.
- The screen will be pre-populated with the referendum questions that were entered by Elections Alberta.
- To add the unofficial election results:
  o Enter in the following information – Number of votes for each option, number of valid ballots (will be auto-calculated if the referendum question is a single selection), number of rejected ballots, and number of blank ballots for each referendum question.
  o You can click the 'Save Unofficial" button to save your work any time. The "save unofficial" button will allow you to save incomplete data.
  o The Unofficial Results of the referendum should be saved in the EDB by noon the day following the municipal election.
- To declare your results as official:
  o Click the Referendum Results tab
    ▪ Check all data information for accuracy.
    ▪ Ensure all mandatory information has been completed.
    ▪ Click the "Finalize Referendum Official Results" button.
    ▪ A popup menu will appear asking you to confirm or cancel. You will NOT be able to edit the referendum results once you confirm your official results.
- To print your referendum results:
    ▪ Within the Referendum Results tab click the orange button called 'Print Referendum Results'.

- A popup window will open. Push the Download button.
- The pdf file containing the results from the referendum for your local jurisdiction will appear. You can print or save this for your own records.

Note: a print out of the results does not need to be submitted to Elections Alberta – by finalizing your referendum results in the EDB, you have submitted your results to Elections Alberta.

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