

What is Political Financing?

A Plain-Language Checklist for Financial Agents (Canada - General Guide)

**Who this is for:**

Financial Agents / Official Agents / CFOs / campaign treasurers and finance volunteers.

Why this matters:

Political financing is not just “raising and spending money.” It’s the system of rules that makes money in politics traceable, lawful, and reportable.

***Disclaimer:** This checklist is educational and general. Requirements vary by jurisdiction and election level (federal/provincial/municipal). This is not legal advice.*

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Political Financing in One Sentence

Political financing is the set of rules and records that track where money comes from, how it is used, and how it is reported during and after a political campaign or regulated period.

If you can answer these three questions with evidence, you're doing it right:

1. Where did the money come from?
2. Where did the money go?
3. Can you prove it and report it correctly by the deadline?

The Golden Rule

“No Record = No Transaction”

If you can't prove it, it's a problem - even if it was honest.

For every transaction, you want a paper trail:

- source (who/where)
- date
- amount
- purpose
- proof (receipt, invoice, contract, bank record ...)

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The Financial Agent's Job



Your role is to make the campaign's finances clean, defensible, and reportable.

You are successful if you can:

- produce a complete contribution log
- produce a complete expense log
- match records to bank activity (deposits and payments)
- provide supporting documents (receipts, invoices, agreements)
- assemble a final reporting package by the deadline

What Political Financing Usually Covers

1.

Money coming in

- Contributions (who, how much, when, method)
- Transfers (between related political entities, where allowed)
- Fundraising revenue (tickets, events, online fundraising)
- Loans / credit (where permitted)
- Other regulated inflows (depends on jurisdiction)

2.

Money going out

- Campaign expenses (ads, signs, events, staffing, travel, etc.)
- Financial/administrative costs (bank fees, accounting support)
- Repayments (loans/advances where applicable)
- Refunds/returns (ineligible contributions, cancellations, etc.)

3.

Reporting and compliance

- Tracking and documenting transactions
- Reconciling to bank statements
- Filing required returns by deadlines
- Audit readiness (where audit is required)

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