

RUNNING FOR COUNCIL IN PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

A Practical Candidate Manual for the 2026 Municipal Election

PART I — THE CANDIDATE MINI-BOOK

(Printable PDF / handbook version)

1. Why Run for Council?

Municipal councils make decisions that affect daily life more than any other level of government: property taxes, roads, housing approvals, staffing levels, by-laws, and enforcement. These decisions shape affordability, local jobs, and community trust.

Prince Edward County needs candidates who:

- understand budgets and trade-offs,
- are comfortable reading data and staff reports,
- can ask disciplined questions,
- and represent families, workers, and year-round residents — not just legacy interests.

Running for council is demanding, but it is one of the most direct ways residents can influence outcomes.

2. Offices You Can Run For

In Prince Edward County, candidates may run for:

- Mayor
- Councillor (by ward)

Before deciding, confirm:

- ward boundaries,
 - number of councillors per ward,
 - and the scope of responsibilities for each office.
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3. Eligibility Requirements (Ontario)

To run in a municipal election, a candidate must:

- be a Canadian citizen,
- be at least 18 years old,
- be a resident of the municipality **or** own or rent property in it (or be the spouse of an owner/renter),
- not be disqualified under the Municipal Elections Act.

If your eligibility depends on property ownership rather than residency, confirm details with the Clerk early.

4. Key Election Timeline (2026)

Plan backward from election day.

Typical Ontario municipal timeline:

- **May 1, 2026** — Nomination period opens
- **August 28, 2026 (2:00 pm)** — Nomination deadline
- **October 26, 2026** — Election Day

Local administrative details are issued by the Prince Edward County Clerk.

5. How to Register (Nomination Process)

Step-by-step:

1. Obtain the candidate package from the Clerk.
2. Complete the nomination form.
3. Collect required endorsement signatures (typically 25).
4. File the nomination in person with the Clerk.
5. Pay the filing fee for the office.
6. Receive confirmation and compliance instructions.

Important: you cannot raise or spend campaign funds until after filing.

6. Building a Credible Platform

A strong platform is:

- realistic,
- measurable,
- tied to council authority.

One-Page Platform Structure

- **Opening statement:** what problem you will address.
- **Three priorities:** each with a specific outcome.
- **How it happens:** first 90 days, first year, full term.
- **Budget lens:** what changes, reallocations, or efficiencies are involved.

Avoid promising things council cannot control.

7. Message Discipline

Voters decide quickly.

The 30-Second Pitch

- Who you are
- Why you're running
- Two issues you'll focus on
- Why you're credible
- Ask for support

Three Proof Points

- Professional or governance experience
 - Community involvement
 - One data-backed local issue
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8. Canvassing and Voter Contact

PEC elections are won door-to-door.

Door-Knocking Basics

- Keep visits under 2 minutes.
- Ask one question: “What matters most to you locally?”
- Listen more than you talk.
- Record issues and support level.

Tracking

Use a simple spreadsheet or CRM:

- Name
 - Address
 - Issue
 - Support level (strong / lean / undecided)
 - Follow-up needed
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9. Digital Campaigning (Lean and Effective)

You do not need a complex digital operation.

Minimum setup:

- One-page website (bio, priorities, contact)
- One social channel you can sustain
- Email list (weekly updates)

Best local content:

- Short videos (30–60 seconds)
 - Plain-English explanations of public documents
 - “What I heard at the doors” summaries
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10. Signs, Literature, and Visibility

Signs help name recognition but do not replace canvassing.

Minimum print:

- One-page handout
- Limited signs, strategically placed

Do not overspend early.

11. Volunteers

Effective volunteer roles:

- canvassers,
- phone/text team,
- sign crew,
- election-day runners.

Retention matters more than volume.

12. Fundraising and Financial Compliance

Key rules:

- Track every donation and expense.
- Keep all receipts.
- File financial statements on time.

Late or inaccurate filings can disqualify candidates from future elections.

13. Common Pitfalls

Avoid:

- running on provincial or federal issues,
- arguing online instead of canvassing,

- vague platforms,
 - sloppy finances,
 - personality conflicts,
 - promising what staff cannot deliver.
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14. Governing Readiness

Voters increasingly expect competence.

Candidates should understand:

- operating vs capital budgets,
 - staffing and procurement,
 - how planning approvals work,
 - council vs staff roles,
 - how to read a staff report critically.
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15. Election Day and GOTV

Final 72 hours matter most.

- Identify supporters.
- Remind them how and when to vote.
- Provide assistance if needed.
- Stay calm and visible.