



**OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER
BUREAU DU DIRECTEUR PARLEMENTAIRE DU BUDGET**

OEA Webinar: Evaluation of Federal Election Party Platforms

The PBO's Mandate During Federal Elections

September 16, 2021

The PBO

Origin

2006 - *Federal Accountability Act*

2008 – First PBO

Purpose

Increase transparency and ensure credibility of the government's fiscal forecasting and budgeting

Ultimate goal

A better informed Parliament = greater accountability

PBO's Mandate when Parliament Is Dissolved

Parliament of Canada Act 2017

When Parliament is dissolved...

79.21 (1) During [the campaign period], the PBO **shall**, at the request of an authorized representative or a member, estimate the financial cost of any election campaign proposal that the authorized representative's party or the member is considering making.

EPC Service Delivery Principles

Equity: PBO's limited resources will be divided equally among all parties with representation in the House of Commons.

Transparency: the estimates published by PBO will have sufficient detail to allow an informed and motivated individual to understand the core cost drivers that influence the figures.

Credibility: The PBO will only provide political parties with cost estimates it deems to be credible. This means that proposals from political parties must have sufficient detail to allow the PBO to prepare quantitative analysis.

Election Proposal Costing

What's the cost?



Who can submit requests?

- **House of Commons – Two Groups Eligible**
 - Recognized parties (Liberals, Conservatives, Bloc, NDP)
 - Independents (includes members of smaller, unrecognized parties and independent members)
 - Must have had representation in the House of Commons at the time of dissolution

What will be costed?

Financial cost of proposals, **not platforms**

Not assessing the feasibility nor the policy merits of proposals

We can only cost proposals that are:

- Specific and sufficiently detailed
- Legally and practically feasible
- Within federal jurisdiction
- Intended for a party's own platform

How are requests managed?

Confidentially – Proposals not shared with other parties, the media or the public. PBO analysts are not informed which party submits the request.

Publication – Once official notification from party is received, cost estimate is then published on our website.

Parties determine when and if estimates are published.

Engaging with departments

- MOUs are in place with key departments.
- Ministers are never informed of the assistance that is actually provided.
- We correspond with Deputy Ministers to request assistance.
- We share as few details as possible with departments and never the party's name.

Resources Published by the PBO During the Election Period

- [2021 Election Proposal Costing Baseline](#)
- [Ready Reckoner](#)
- [Public debt charges calculator](#)
- [44th General Election PBO Estimates](#)

Process: Key Milestones

- **August 15**
 - PBO begins to accept costing requests from political parties
- **September 19**
 - Last day for political parties to submit requests
 - Last day for PBO to publish costings
- **September 20**
 - 44th General Federal Election





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Questions

