

DAAC

**Digital Advertising
Alliance of Canada**



DAAC

**The Self-Regulatory
Principles of Transparency
for Political Advertising
for Federal Elections**

March 2025



OVERVIEW

This guidance explains how the Digital Advertising Alliance of Canada's ("DAAC") Self-Regulatory Principles of Transparency apply to online digital political advertising in federal elections and by-elections.

For participants of the DAAC's Self-Regulatory Program for Interest-Based Advertising, the existing DAAC Principles and definitions remain in full force and effect.

This guidance responds to the growing use of digital advertising platforms and technologies to reach potential audiences with political advertising and creates new tools to provide greater transparency to such emerging practices.

These principles ensure that voters receive **clear and meaningful disclosure** about political advertisements and their sponsors while also integrating **advertising registry requirements** for greater transparency.



I. DEFINITIONS USED

A. Political Advertising

Political Advertising means paid-for communications that promote or oppose a political party or candidate, including advertising that takes a position on an issue associated with a registered party or candidate, even if the name of that party or candidate is not explicitly mentioned.

Under the *Canada Elections Act*, political advertising that appears during an election period (from the call of an election to the day of the election) is referred to as “election advertising” and is closely regulated. During this time, parties, candidates and third parties are subject to spending limits and to transparency requirements.

When a fixed date election is to occur federally, there is also a second regulated “pre-election period” from June 30 of the election year until the election is called, in mid-September. During this time, only “partisan advertising” is regulated. Such advertising also includes material that promotes or opposes parties and candidates directly but does not include advertising that only takes a position on an issue with which a party or candidate is associated. To put it more directly, issue advertising that does not promote or oppose candidates or parties remains unregulated in the pre-election period.

A distinct spending limit applies to the pre-election period, while the transparency requirements are the same. Political advertising that appears outside of these two periods is not regulated under federal election law.¹

¹ For greater precision, see the definitions of “election advertising” and “partisan advertising” contained in subsection 2(1) of the *Canada Elections Act* as amended by Bill C-76, https://www.parl.ca/Content/Bills/421/Government/C-76/C-76_4/C-76_4_PDF.



I. DEFINITIONS USED

B. Political Advertiser

Political Advertiser means a person or entity that pays for the display of a Political Advertisement. A Political Advertiser may be a political party, candidate, third party, or a local constituency association that is registered with Elections Canada. During the pre-election period it may also include an “eligible party,” meaning a political party that has pre-qualified for registration once the election period begins.

C. Political Advertisement

Political Advertisement means an advertisement that contains Political Advertising. A Political Advertisement may be delivered in various formats, such as display, native, video and mobile ad sizes.

D. Online Platform

A digital service, website, or application that sells, displays, or distributes paid political advertisements in Canada.

Platforms with over 3 million monthly unique visitors (English), 1 million (French), or 100,000 (other languages) must comply with political ad registry obligations under the *Canada Elections Act*.²

² *Canada Elections Act*, s. 325.1



II. TRANSPARENCY

A. Enhanced Political Advertisement Notice

A Political Advertiser must include a clear, meaningful, and prominent notice in or around each Political Advertisement to ensure transparency for voters.

A Political Advertiser satisfies this Principle if it provides the icon/wording through a setting or mechanism that is consistent with this Principle, whether it is provided by a platform, operating system, or vendor.

During the federal pre-election and election periods, advertising that is regulated under the *Canada Elections Act* must contain the information set out under the heading Political Advertisement Notice.



II. TRANSPARENCY

B. Political Advertisement Notice

A Political Advertiser should provide clear, meaningful, and prominent notice in connection with its Political Advertisement. Such notice should be linked from a clear, meaningful disclosure in or around the advertisement.

Where the Political Advertiser is a **candidate** or a **political party** placing advertising that is to run during the federal pre-election and election periods, the disclosure need only indicate that the ad was authorized by the **official agent** of a candidate or by the **registered agent** of a political party.³ For example, a disclosure may be simplified to state: “Authorized by the [official/registered] agent of [Candidate/Party].”

A **registered association** that places advertising must include a disclosure indicating the authorizing agent. For example, a simplified disclosure may state: “Authorized by the electoral district agent of [Party Name].”

Where the Political Advertiser is a registered **third party** placing advertising that is to run during the federal pre-election and election periods, the disclosure is to be more detailed, including:

- a) The name of the Political Advertiser;
- b) A telephone number;
- c) A civic or Internet address; and,
- d) An indication that the advertiser has authorized the ad.

Commentary: The DAAC’s transparency icon, when used through the DAAC’s platform, provides this notice upon icon interaction and links to a detailed disclosure page containing the fulsome information. For platforms that build DAAC icon support within their own ad trafficking process, the DAAC encourages this same disclosure to be available upon icon interaction.

³ *Canada Elections Act*, s. 320.



II. TRANSPARENCY

C. Political Advertising Registry Requirements for Online Platforms

An Online Platform that sells advertising space must maintain a public registry⁴ of all partisan and election advertising during the regulated periods.

The registry requirements include:

- a) A copy of the ad;
- b) The name of the advertiser; and,
- c) The authorization statement.

The ad should appear in the registry on the day it first appears on the Online Platform. The Online Platform may include ads that do not fall under the *Canada Elections Act* as a precautionary measure.

The registry must be publicly accessible through an easily identifiable link on the Online Platform's website. The registry should be publicly available for two years, and the contents should be saved for an additional five years.

Commentary: *Online Platforms that do not wish to maintain their own registry may contract with the DAAC to fulfill these registry obligations. The DAAC's program provides a registry-building tool that allows participants to preserve a copy of the ad and who authorized it on an ongoing basis, even during unregulated periods, and provides a front-end interface to display the advertisements in a unified way. The DAAC's registry builder tool is designed to adapt to future Elections Canada requirements in a nimble way, ensuring ongoing alignment as regulatory expectations evolve.*

⁴ *Canada Elections Act*, s. 325.1

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