

Interpretation Ruling of the Chief Electoral Officer

Eligibility to Vote and Provincial District Affiliation Based on Residence

Issued pursuant to the Rules Governing the 2026 Nova Scotia Liberal Party Leadership Convention, including Rules 5, 7, 55-61, 79 and 100.

The Chief Electoral Officer ("CEO") is responsible for certifying Delegate lists, determining Provincial District affiliation, adjudicating challenges, and interpreting the Leadership Rules.

Purpose

This Interpretation establishes the principles governing:

1. Whether a Member is eligible to vote as a Delegate in the 2026 Leadership Election;
2. The Provincial District with which a Member shall be affiliated for voting purposes; and
3. The application of those principles to students and other Members whose circumstances may involve more than one place of residence.

This Interpretation shall be applied in a manner that is fair and equitable and in the best interests of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party.

Interpretive Principle

The Leadership Rules are intended to provide eligible Members with a meaningful opportunity to participate in the selection of the Leader of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party. Accordingly, where the evidence reasonably supports more than one conclusion, the Rules should generally be interpreted in a manner that permits participation by an otherwise eligible Member, provided that doing so is consistent with the Rules and the integrity of the voting process. This approach is consistent with the requirement in Rule 100 that the Rules be interpreted fairly and equitably.

Accordingly:

1. Technical defects, ambiguities, or uncertainties shall not, without more, result in the disenfranchisement of an otherwise eligible Member.
2. Questions relating to ordinary residence shall be determined having regard to the practical realities of the Member's circumstances, including educational, employment, family, and other temporary absences.
3. The concept of ordinary residence shall be interpreted broadly and purposively so as to identify a Member's genuine principal home rather than through the application of rigid or technical tests.

4. Nothing in this Interpretation shall be construed so as to permit a Member to claim a residence that is artificial, temporary, or established primarily for the purpose of affecting the outcome of the Leadership Election.
 5. At all times, the Member bears the burden of establishing the desired Provincial District within timelines set by the CEO in his sole discretion and communicated to the Member.
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1. Governing Principle

Membership in the Nova Scotia Liberal Party is restricted to persons who ordinarily reside in Nova Scotia. The Party maintains a register identifying the Provincial District in which each Member is resident.

In applying this Interpretation, the CEO shall be guided by the principle that eligible Members should be permitted to participate in the Leadership Election whenever reasonably consistent with the Rules and the integrity of the voting process.

For the purposes of the Leadership Election, a Member is ordinarily resident where the Member has established their principal home. A temporary absence for educational, employment, family, or other purposes does not, by itself, alter a Member's ordinary residence.

In determining ordinary residence, the CEO shall consider all relevant circumstances. Relevant considerations may include:

- the permanence of the Member's living arrangements;
- the purpose and duration of any absence;
- where the Member ordinarily resides when not attending school or temporarily working elsewhere;
- where the Member maintains significant personal and residential ties;
- the address used by the Member for governmental, educational, financial, or other official purposes;
- the Member's stated intention regarding residence; and
- any other circumstance the CEO considers relevant.

No single factor shall be determinative and each case shall be assessed on its own facts.

2. Assessing the Permanence of a Residence

In assessing the permanence of a Member's living arrangements, the CEO shall consider whether the residence functions as the Member's settled and principal home.

The CEO may consider factors including:

- the duration and continuity of residence;

- the nature of the accommodation;
- where the Member ordinarily returns when temporarily absent;
- the location of significant personal and residential ties; and
- any other circumstance relevant to determining whether the residence is genuinely the Member's principal home.

For greater certainty, permanence does not require that a Member own the residence, reside there indefinitely, or intend to remain there permanently. A rented dwelling, student residence, or other accommodation may constitute a Member's principal home where the facts support such a conclusion.

The question in every case is whether the location genuinely functions as the Member's principal home rather than a temporary place of convenience or accommodation.

3. Students from Outside Nova Scotia Studying in Nova Scotia

A person who comes to Nova Scotia for the purpose of attending a university, college, or other educational institution may be eligible for membership and voting rights if that person has established their principal home in Nova Scotia. Membership eligibility is based upon ordinary residence in Nova Scotia.

The fact that such a person maintains ties to another province, returns home during academic breaks, or intends eventually to return to another province does not necessarily prevent them from becoming ordinarily resident in Nova Scotia.

Where the evidence demonstrates that a student's principal home is in Nova Scotia, the student shall be regarded as ordinarily resident in Nova Scotia and eligible to participate as a Member and Delegate, subject to compliance with all other applicable Rules.

4. Nova Scotia Students Studying Outside Nova Scotia

A Member who is ordinarily resident in Nova Scotia and who leaves the Province temporarily to pursue educational opportunities elsewhere does not cease to be ordinarily resident in Nova Scotia solely because of that temporary absence.

Where a Member's absence is primarily for educational purposes and Nova Scotia continues to be the Member's principal home, the Member shall continue to be regarded as ordinarily resident in Nova Scotia.

Accordingly, a Nova Scotia student attending a university, college, internship, exchange program, or other educational institution outside Nova Scotia will generally remain eligible for membership and voting rights where Nova Scotia continues to be the student's principal home.

5. Provincial District Affiliation

Each eligible Delegate must be affiliated with one Provincial District for the purposes of voting in the Leadership Election. Votes are allocated and counted within the Provincial District to which the Delegate is affiliated.

The applicable Provincial District shall be the Provincial District in which the Member is ordinarily resident.

For the purposes of the Leadership Election, a Member's Provincial District shall be the Provincial District associated with the Member's ordinary residence as of the date the Member registered or renewed membership for the purposes of participating in the Leadership Election, unless the CEO approves a subsequent change in Provincial District affiliation under Rules 55 and 56, based on a bona fide change of the Member's ordinary residence.

At the time of registration or renewal, a Member identifies the Provincial District in which the Member is ordinarily resident. The CEO will ordinarily treat that declaration as establishing the Member's Provincial District affiliation unless there is evidence that:

1. the information provided was inaccurate when made;
2. the Member subsequently established ordinary residence in another Provincial District;
3. the claimed residence was temporary, artificial, or otherwise inconsistent with the Member's principal home; or
4. the Member was otherwise not eligible for membership under the NSLP By-Laws.

Where a Member maintains more than one residence or where a Member's ordinary residence is disputed, the CEO shall determine the appropriate Provincial District having regard to the principles set out in this Interpretation and the evidence provided by the Member.

Students Resident in Nova Scotia

A student who is ordinarily resident in Nova Scotia when registering or renewing membership shall be affiliated with the Provincial District in which the student's principal Nova Scotia residence is located.

Nova Scotia Students Temporarily Studying Elsewhere

A student who remains ordinarily resident in Nova Scotia despite studying elsewhere shall be affiliated with the Provincial District containing the Member's principal Nova Scotia home at the time of registration or renewal, unless a bona fide change of ordinary residence is subsequently established and approved by the CEO.

6. Subsequent Changes of Residence

Rule 55 permits a Member to request a change in Provincial District affiliation. Such requests must be submitted in accordance with the Leadership Rules and supported by any information or documentation requested by the CEO.

A Member seeking a change of Provincial District affiliation bears the burden of demonstrating that the Member has established ordinary residence in the new Provincial District and that the change reflects a genuine change in the location of the Member's principal home.

The CEO may approve a requested change where satisfied that:

- the Member has established ordinary residence in the new Provincial District;
 - the change reflects a bona fide change in the Member's principal home; and
 - the request is not based upon a temporary, artificial, or strategic arrangement intended primarily to affect the outcome of the Leadership Election.
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7. Evidence

Pursuant to Rules 55 to 61, the CEO may require a Member to provide information or documentation relevant to a determination of ordinary residence or Provincial District affiliation and may consider any information that the CEO considers reliable and relevant.

Relevant information may include:

- government-issued identification;
- educational records;
- lease or tenancy documents;
- utility bills;
- property records;
- tax records;
- voter registration records; and
- any other evidence bearing on the question of ordinary residence.

No particular document shall be regarded as conclusive.

8. Anti-Avoidance

A Member shall not be assigned to a Provincial District on the basis of a residence that is temporary, artificial, or maintained primarily for the purpose of affecting the outcome of the Leadership Election.

Where the CEO determines that a claimed residence does not constitute the Member's principal home, the CEO may assign the Member to the Provincial District that the CEO determines reflects the Member's ordinary residence.

Where the CEO determines that a Member's claim of residence was false and that the Member was not eligible for membership under the NSLP By-Laws, the CEO may determine that the individual is not an eligible Delegate and direct that the individual be removed from the Delegate list.

Before determining that a Member is not an eligible Delegate or directing that a Member be removed from the Delegate list, the CEO shall provide the Member with a reasonable opportunity to provide information respecting the Member's residence, Provincial District affiliation, and eligibility for membership.

9. Conclusion

For the purposes of the 2026 Leadership Election:

1. Eligible Members should be permitted to participate wherever reasonably consistent with the Rules and the integrity of the voting process.
2. Ordinary residence is determined by the location of a Member's principal home.
3. A temporary absence for educational, employment, or similar purposes does not by itself change ordinary residence.
4. Students studying in Nova Scotia may establish ordinary residence in Nova Scotia and thereby become eligible Members and Delegates.
5. Nova Scotia students temporarily studying elsewhere generally remain ordinarily resident in Nova Scotia if Nova Scotia remains their principal home.
6. A Member's Provincial District is ordinarily determined based on the Member's ordinary residence at the time of registration or renewal, subject to any subsequent bona fide change approved by the CEO.
7. Members shall vote in the Provincial District in which they are ordinarily resident.
8. The CEO retains final authority to determine questions of residence and Provincial District affiliation in accordance with the Leadership Rules.

Dated: September 4, 2026

**Hugh Wright
Chief Electoral Officer
2026 Nova Scotia Liberal Party Leadership Election**