



2026

**LOCAL
ELECTION**

ENDORSEMENT GUIDE

Endorsements can **MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE** in local elections. Many CUPE members look to their union for information so that they can **MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS**, seeking advice from the very workers who deliver the services local governments provide. This is exactly what an endorsement is: information to help a voter **MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION** directly from those who have experience.

If your Local represents workers in a local government or school district, here are some tips on how to do an endorsement for the upcoming election.

CUPE AND LABOUR COUNCIL ENDORSEMENTS

This Guide is designed to help CUPE locals make their own endorsements in this year's local government election campaign. At the same time, local labour councils are also making endorsements, and their process will naturally include the input of CUPE locals where those locals are affiliated.

One of the most effective ways to ensure the best candidates are endorsed is to participate in the local labour council process, and ensure the endorsements of the council align with the interests of your Local. This works well because the endorsements produced by this process are promoted widely, and not just within CUPE.

There are times when CUPE locals are not able to participate in the local labour council process, or choose to make their own choices about endorsements. This Guide is designed to help you do just that!

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PROCESS

The content of this Guide is to help you undertake a thoughtful and objective process to choose which candidates your Local should endorse. We know, however, that many locals already have relationships with incumbent mayors, councillors, trustees and district directors. So, if you have a standing relationship with a sitting politician, or with someone who is running, and your members feel comfortable making an endorsement based on that relationship, it is fine to proceed on that basis.

We would, however, encourage that locals approach the process with an open mind, do the necessary research to meet those running, and use the resources in this Guide to make the best choices possible for your local and community.

ASSIGNING THE WORK

The work of reviewing candidates and making endorsement recommendations often falls to a local's political action committee. So if your Local has a political action committee, you can mobilize and empower members on that committee to undertake work necessary to make local endorsements.

If your Local doesn't have a political action committee, then you likely have a few options for conducting endorsements in time for CUPE's deadlines.

Consider:

- Using the capacity of the table officers to endorse candidates on behalf of your membership;
- Building a working group or adhoc committee with members of your executive; and/or
- Hosting a general membership meeting to have your members confirm your executive's endorsements.

The timelines are always a challenge when it comes to endorsements because the time between when candidates declare and when the endorsement data is needed for publication is such a small window. Do the best you can with the time you have, and focus on making sure you can deliver the endorsements with enough time that CUPE BC can share your support with CUPE members across the community.

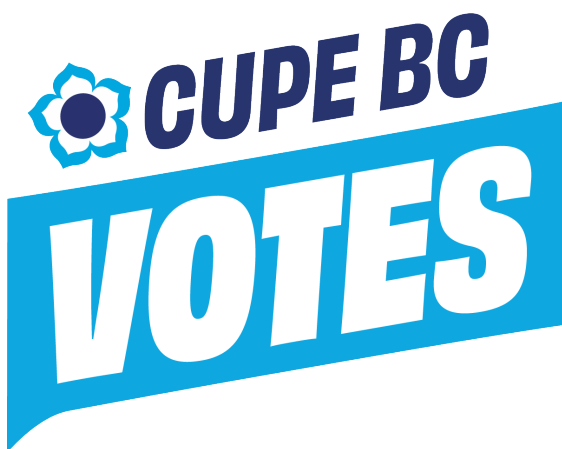


EVALUATING CANDIDATES

Here are some simple steps you can take to undertake candidate evaluation. Again, the depth of this process for your Local will depend on the level of research you want to undertake, the time and resources you have, and the state of your existing knowledge and relationship with candidates.

We have laid this process out as a series of steps:

1. A great way to start the evaluation process is to get everyone involved in the endorsement process together to establish your Local's priorities. This helps everyone understand what you want to hear from candidates to earn your endorsement.
2. Build a questionnaire that reflects your priorities. Don't make this too long, and avoid questions that have already been answered (in labour council surveys) or that are obvious yes or no responses. Beyond introductory questions, aim for six topics that will help you decide who to support.
3. Let everybody know that you're making endorsements. Reach out to candidates who have already declared. Let them know that they can contact you for a questionnaire. Make a post on your website that announces your endorsement process and provides contact information for candidates.
4. Consider interviewing candidates if time permits. Even short interviews allow you to ask follow-up questions to written questionnaire responses, and sometimes non-verbal communication can convey more understanding.
5. Keep in touch with your local labour council. As noted in this Guide, they are likely making some endorsements, and are likely interested in your choices. Also, they may have insights to share from their interviews and questionnaires. Note that most labour councils will be done the bulk of their endorsements by August 15.
6. Communicate with the Political Action Coordinator in your region early in your process so that they can support your work. Your National Representative can connect you to them.



COMMUNICATING YOUR ENDORSEMENTS

The purpose of the endorsement process is to communicate with members about who your Local recommends they support, so the communication process is as important as the candidate evolution process. The election rules permit you to communicate with your members, so be sure to promote your endorsements to members via email and your website. Just be careful not to take out any paid advertising or paid promotion of your endorsements, or promote your endorsement to the general public as this may be considered third-party advertising (see the [CUPE BC Guide to the Election Financing Act](#) for more information).

The good news when it comes to promotion of endorsements is that CUPE BC is taking most of this work on! Please be sure to submit your endorsements in accordance with the timeline below, and CUPE BC will communicate these to all CUPE members in your community. When your endorsement decisions are made, please email those to nadolph@cupe.ca

CUPE BC ENDORSEMENT PROMOTION

In the coming weeks, CUPE BC will be promoting endorsed candidates to CUPE members across the province, an outline of this plan will be sent to CUPE locals next week.

Candidates being promoted will have received an endorsement from either the affected CUPE local, or a labour council. Where CUPE local endorsements differ from that of the local labour council, the CUPE local's endorsement will take precedence. Where no endorsement information is received from the affected CUPE local in the timelines noted in this Guide, CUPE BC will promote the labour council endorsements. If no endorsement is received from a CUPE local or a labour council, CUPE BC will make no endorsement.

CUPE BC TIMELINES

Locals that endorse candidates for local elections, either directly or via their local labour council, generally promote these endorsements to their own members. This is best done before advanced voting days in your area, and not less than a week prior to election day, which is **October 17, 2026**.

Here are some important deadlines to access CUPE BC promotion of your endorsements:

- **September 1** - deadline for endorsements to be promoted prior to advanced voting.
- **September 15** - deadline for endorsed candidates to be included in the CUPE BC mail out to members.
- **October 13** - final day to provide endorsements for listing on the CUPE BC website and online endorsement tool.

HELPFUL PRINCIPLES FOR YOUR PATH TO ENDORSEMENT

Below are some principles that can help you make your endorsement decisions:

- **Build trust and a safe space for discussion.** Many people in your membership may be uncomfortable talking about elections or politics. Building trust requires a clear process such that when you ask members to vote for an endorsed candidate, they know that you've done the work to make an informed choice, and it is safe for them to ask questions and seek more information if they feel the need.
- **Build relationships.** Elections are a great opportunity to strengthen your connections with new and incumbent candidates, and strengthen bonds with other partners. These connections can be useful for years to come.
- **See the opportunities, even when unsuccessful.** Even if your endorsed candidates lose, there is still much to be gained. Your endorsement demonstrates that your Local pays attention to what happens in your community and its local governments, that you care about your employer's future, and your members are engaged and involved. This builds your power regardless of outcome.
- **Engage with members.** This process is about mobilizing members, getting them active and interested, and breaking down the barriers to political participation and action. Active members build strength in the local that helps win fights at the bargaining table and beyond.
- **Ask or help.** Political work is easier when there is a team working together, and your National Representative and the region's Political Action Coordinator are here to help. Behind them, there is a wider team of communications, research, and other CUPE specialists that can provide recommendations and help you achieve your goals.



QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

CUPE BC and the Strong Communities Working Group are here to help. Please reach out through your National Representative if you would like assistance with the endorsement process, or if you have questions.

RESOURCE 1:

Hosting Endorsement Interviews

Endorsement interviews build relationships with candidates. They can reveal more than questionnaires about the priorities and values that candidates hold. To that end, think of them as conversations where we prioritize listening and curiosity over sharing our own thoughts.

Preparation work:

- **Establish your calendar:** Determine your interview dates and ensure that most of the members of your working group are able to attend. With tight timelines it may not be possible for everybody to attend all the interviews.
 - Plan for 30-minute interviews for school district trustees, municipal councillors, regional directors, and parks board commissioners. You may consider 60-minute interviews with mayoral candidates, depending on the capacity of your working group membership. Tailor your process to the time you have and the number of interviews you need to hold.
- **Promote your process:** Let your members know that you are going through an endorsement process to promote the needs of members. Make it known to those running that you would welcome questionnaire requests from candidates. If you already know candidates in your community, reach out to them directly to promote your questionnaire.
- **Communicate with the candidates:** Use one point of contact, likely the president, or an agreed upon chair, to be the point of contact between the Local and the candidate. A short e-mail outlining your timelines for receiving questionnaire responses, conducting interviews, and making an endorsement decision provides candidates with the information they need. Once the working group has decided to interview a candidate the contact person should confirm an interview date and time.
- **Read the questionnaire responses:** Before each candidate's interview make sure you have identified areas where you want to better understand their responses.
- **Confirm your question priorities:** With your working group, prioritize questions that you want to explore with each candidate so that you can make the best use of your limited time.

During the interview:

- **Welcoming:** Have a single facilitator, likely the president or chair, welcome the candidate and help them feel comfortable.
- **Introductions:** Each member of the committee should introduce themselves to the candidate. Short introductions will help focus your time on asking questions.

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- **Intro statement:** Invite the candidate to make a short introductory statement about themselves, including their priorities in running for your local government. Let them know that your working group has questions that you'll go into afterwards.
 - **Questions:** This is the chance for your working group to ask questions! Avoid long preambles and lengthy back and forth dialogue on a particular topic unless you are seeking clarity on an item that is of particular importance to your Local. Every interview will go differently, but try to ask the same questions from one interview to the next.
 - **Wrapping up:** When 3 minutes remain, thank the candidate for coming to the interview and answering your questions. Provide them with clarity on your timelines for your endorsement decision. This is the right time to field any questions they may have for your Local.

After the interview:

- **Immediate debrief:** Reserve time after each session to quickly discuss impressions of all the candidates interviewed in that day. These are not decision-making spaces, but they help confirm shared impressions of each candidate.
- **Recommendations:** Once you have interviewed all candidates, prepare recommendations for adoption by whichever body at your Local that will make the final decision on endorsement.

RESOURCE 2:

Sample Questionnaire and Interview Questions

Use your questions to explore your Local's unique priorities with candidates rather than repeating what candidates may hear from other stakeholders in your community. Below are three sets of sample questions that you could consider asking. The first contains introductory questions. After these is a set of questions for municipalities and regional districts, followed by a set for school districts. These are built on themes that have emerged in conversations with CUPE locals.

Sample questionnaire questions are separated from interview questions. On most themes, the questionnaire samples are open-ended. Written responses may have been composed with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) programs, and this is something to consider when reviewing results. Having more difficult questions in an interview gives you greater insight into a candidate's values and ways of thinking, and better ensure the responses are genuine.

Introductory Questions:

Make sure to include a section of your questionnaire to gather personal contact information for your candidate. Afterwards, offer them some warmup questions that ease them into your priorities.

- **Questionnaire:** Why are you running for _____ (insert name of local government position)?
- **Questionnaire:** What qualities and/or experience makes you well-suited to this role in local governance?
- **Questionnaire:** What is your experience with unions, their concern for their members, and their ways of working?
- **Questionnaire:** What would you say are the top three issues facing our community, and how are you hoping to solve them in the coming four years?

Municipalities and Regional Districts:

Revenue Generation and Property Tax:

- **Questionnaire:** What revenue challenges are the municipality/regional district facing, and what solutions would you propose to address them?
- **Interview:** Property taxes are the primary municipal revenue source, yet some candidates advocate for zero percent tax increases. Vancouver recently tested this approach, resulting in significant service impacts. What is your view on zero percent property tax increases, and how would you help prevent this approach from being adopted in our community?

Workplace Safety for Frontline Workers:

- **Questionnaire:** How would you help ensure municipal/regional district workplaces and services are safer for workers and the public?
- **Interview:** Frontline worker safety is declining, and many employees no longer report unsafe public interactions because they feel unsupported by management. This hurts morale and increases the number of threatening incidents. If elected, how would you strengthen a culture of safety for employees and the public across municipal workplaces?

Privatization:

- **Questionnaire:** What is your view on privatizing publicly funded municipal/regional district services? What criteria should be used to determine whether privatization is appropriate?

- **Interview:** CUPE opposes privatization because it can weaken services, reduce job quality, and shift profits out of the community. If privatization is proposed, how would you ensure our Local is consulted, and what role should elected officials play in protecting public services?
- **Interview:** We've seen an increase in reliance on contracted consultants to provide strategic guidance on development issues in our municipality. Oftentimes these consultants present recommendations that don't operate well in our municipality or are disconnected from the frontline work done by city employees. How would you balance consultant expertise with the knowledge of municipal workers, and when should worker input take priority?

Worker Precarity and Retention:

- **Questionnaire:** What decisions could the council make that would address challenges in attracting and retaining workers?
- **Interview:** Over the past several years, precarious employment in our municipality/regional district has increased, with more temporary, part-time, and casual positions. This makes it harder to attract and retain skilled workers. What would you do as a councillor/director to improve the quality of employment offered at the municipality?

Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace:

- **Questionnaire:** What is your perspective on the current and potential future use of artificial intelligence in the delivery of the municipality's/regional district's services?
- **Interview:** Our Local is concerned that artificial intelligence may be introduced as a productivity tool at the expense of service quality, job security, and data ownership. If the municipality/regional district adopts AI, what protections would you support to safeguard current and future workers and public services?

Library Funding and Governance

- **Questionnaire:** Most of the local library's funding comes from the municipality. What is your position on the current funding provided to libraries in our community and how would you like to see access to libraries and their services improve over the next four years?
- **Interview:** Would you be interested in sitting on the library board if elected? What skills or perspectives will you be looking for in candidates for the library's board?

Living Wage (for communities without a commitment):

- **Interview:** What is your position on the municipality/regional district adopting a Living Wage policy for employees and contracted workers?

Living Wage (for communities with a commitment):

- **Interview:** We've seen the City of Vancouver replace their living wage policy with a much worse fair wage policy in their last term of government. If there is an interest at our municipality to get rid of the living wage policy and replace it with one that would reduce wages, how would you respond? How will you protect the current Living Wage policy?

Budget Priorities:

- **Interview:** When building your budget, what will be your priorities? What will you want to protect? What will you want to improve? What do you think you will be interested in changing?

Recent Increase in Managerial Roles:

- **Interview:** Our Local has seen the number of management positions and compensation grow faster than the overall workforce, affecting morale among union members whose contributions or work load concerns feel undervalued. When considering staffing priorities, how would you ensure that the ratio of managerial and non-managerial roles, and of compensation between these groups, shrinks rather than widens?

Collaboration and Conflict Resolution:

- **Interview:** Building cooperative coalitions between councillors in municipalities can be difficult. What experience do you have building productive partnerships, and how do you approach resolving conflict when it arises?

Relationship Work:

- **Interview:** If you are elected, what does a relationship with you look like for the unions representing the workers at the municipality/regional district?

Intergovernmental Relations (for Mayors only):

- **Interview:** Mayors must represent their communities to other levels of government. What relationships do you have with provincial and federal leaders, and how would you use them to advance local priorities? Given the current and evolving political climate, what approach would you take to secure support for our community? Given the current and evolving political climate, what approach would you take to secure support for our community?

School Districts:

Program Reductions:

- **Questionnaire:** Are you familiar with any programming changes from the past four years, and, if so, how do you think these have shifted the quality of programming in our school district?

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- **Interview:** Over the past four years we've seen substantial changes in support for (insert program changes) intended to improve learning outcomes for students. These changes have resulted in the loss of positions in the district. If elected, what protections for students and workers would you prioritize when considering program changes, and what consultation would you seek before making those decisions?

Workplace Safety:

- **Questionnaire:** What is your understanding of safety challenges in schools, and how would you work to ensure that schools are safer places for everybody?
- **Interview:** School safety for workers and students has declined, and many staff feel unsafe incidents are dismissed as part of the job. This ruins morale in schools, and interrupts learning for all students. What will you do to build a culture of worker and student safety in the school district?

Management Heavy Staffing Increases:

- **Questionnaire:** What criteria would you set for your school's administration when considering if your school district needs new management positions?
- **Interview:** Over the past several years, the district has increased the number of management positions while often targeting non-teaching staff who provide direct student support during layoffs. Do you have concerns about this approach? What guidance would you give administrators when creating, reducing, or eliminating positions?

Worker Precarity and Retention:

- **Questionnaire:** What decisions could trustees make that would address the challenges in attracting and retaining workers?
- **Interview:** Over the past several years, precarious employment in our district has increased, with more temporary, part-time, and casual positions. This makes it harder to attract and retain workers and maintain strong relationships with students and families. As a trustee, what would you do to improve job quality and workforce stability?

Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace:

- **Questionnaire:** What is your perspective on the current and potential future use of artificial intelligence in the school district?
- **Interview:** Our Local is concerned about the use of artificial intelligence as a productivity tool, including having employees help train AI systems. It will reduce the quality of service and job security. If the school district adopts artificial intelligence, what protections would you direct the senior management to provide for current and future workers?

Seamless Childcare:

- **Questionnaire:** What role should school districts play in providing accessible childcare in their community? If our district adopts a childcare strategy, how would you like to see it implemented?
- **Interview:** CUPE promotes Seamless Childcare, providing school-based childcare delivered by school district employees. This improves access for families, ensures continuity for students, and creates more stable employment. If opportunities arise to partner with the provincial government on a Seamless Childcare model, would you support it? As a trustee, how would you help advance discussions about district-run childcare?

Living Wage (for communities without a commitment):

- **Interview:** What is your position on the school district adopting a Living Wage policy that covers employees and contracted workers?

Living Wage (for communities with a commitment):

- **Interview:** Our school district already has a living wage commitment, but we're concerned about protecting it. If there were efforts to replace our Living Wage policy with one that reduced worker compensation, how would you respond, and what would you do to protect the current policy?

Budget Priorities:

- **Interview:** School board trustees face the yearly challenge of building a budget with little control over their revenue from the provincial government. When you get into building your budget, what will be your priorities? What will you want to protect? What will you want to improve? What will you be interested in changing?

Privatization:

- **Interview:** What is your understanding of school district services that have been privatized? What factors led to this, and how would you support bringing services back in-house? What role should trustees play in protecting public services from privatization?

Collaboration and Conflict Resolution:

- **Interview:** Building cooperative governing coalitions in school districts can be difficult. What is your experience in building collaborative, productive partnerships with others? And how do you navigate and resolve conflict with individuals when it emerges?

Relationship with Unions:

- **Interview:** If you are elected, what does a relationship with you look like for the unions representing workers at the district?