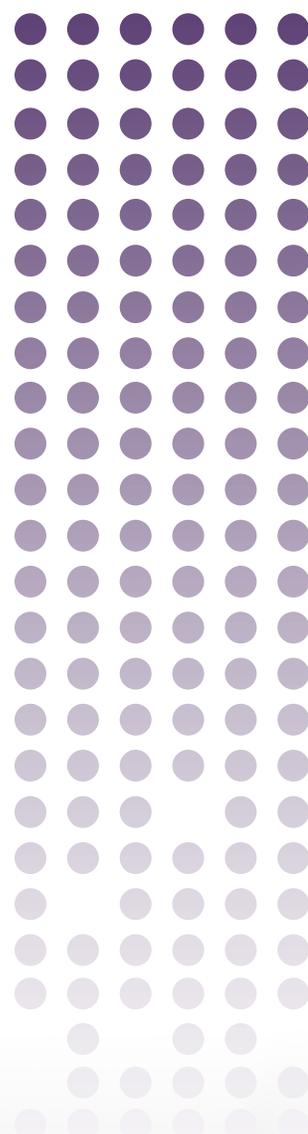




COMMISSIONER OF  
CANADA ELECTIONS

# ANNUAL **REPORT**

2024-2025



# Table of contents

- MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER ..... 1**
  
- ABOUT US..... 3**
  - Mandate ..... 3
  - By the numbers: Overview of April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025 ..... 4
  
- THE YEAR IN REVIEW ..... 5**
  - Breakdown of files..... 5
  - Referrals from Elections Canada..... 7
  - Budget of the OCCE..... 8
  - Countering foreign interference in federal elections..... 9
  - Modernizing the OCCE ..... 10
  - Election Preparation ..... 11
  - Outreach, awareness and collaboration ..... 11
  
- LOOKING AHEAD ..... 13**
  - Work related to the 45<sup>th</sup> general election ..... 13
  - Recommendations for legislative changes ..... 13
  - Funding and staffing ..... 13
  
- CONTACT US..... 14**

# MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

I am proud to present the annual report of the Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections (OCCE), which highlights the work carried out by our office between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025.

Under the *Canada Elections Act* (CEA), my role is to ensure that the rules governing federal elections are followed. This work is essential to strengthen public confidence in Canada's electoral process.

At the time of the writing of this report, the 45<sup>th</sup> federal general election had just concluded. Throughout 2024-2025, the sustained efforts to prepare for the election guided a significant portion of the OCCE's work, and allowed us to better anticipate issues that could arise in the electoral environment and respond to them effectively.

Given that the election period began shortly before the end of the fiscal year, this report does not provide a complete picture of our activities and observations related to that election. These will be examined in greater detail in the 2025-2026 annual report. Nevertheless, my office did publish some initial insights into the complaints we received during the election period. These [preliminary statistics](#) were published in June 2025, and can be viewed on our website. While this is raw data, it paints a picture of the main areas of concern identified by

Canadians and also provides some of our observations for the time period between March 23 and April 28, 2025.

Our participation in the second phase of the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in the 2019 and 2021 elections, hosting the

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*“Throughout 2024–2025, we focused on modernizing our practices and tools, strengthening partnerships, and preparing thoroughly for a potential general election. Once again this year, I want to highlight the excellent work accomplished by the entire OCCE team”*

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very first international forum on electoral law enforcement, or advancing our efforts to access Canada's Top Secret Network, have each helped us to better address emerging issues.

The electoral environment in which the OCCE operates has become increasingly complex in recent years. To address this, we have modernized our organizational structure and implemented a new operational model to better handle alleged breaches of the CEA reported to our office. Furthermore, before the dissolution of Parliament in the spring of 2025, an increase in the OCCE's budget had been announced. This funding was specifically aimed at strengthening our investigative capabilities

and providing us with the necessary tools to address the modern challenges of the electoral ecosystem. The announcement underscores the importance placed on the expertise of the OCCE and the need to work closely with a number of different partners in order to effectively combat threats to the electoral ecosystem.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that throughout the election campaign, Canadians played an essential role by reporting their concerns to my office. In fact, the significant number of complaints sent to the OCCE shows just how much Canadians are invested and care about the integrity of federal elections in Canada. Our work to review these complaints extends well beyond polling day. Investigations, analysis, outreach, and collaboration efforts continue outside of the election period. In addition to our compliance and enforcement work, as required by the CEA after a general election, we will also prepare a recommendations report, which will include proposals for legislative changes to improve the CEA's compliance and enforcement regime, drawing in part on lessons learned during the election.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to our mission this year, both from within our organization and among our partners. I also want to recognize members of the public who took the time to report situations that could contravene the CEA. Your vigilance in these matters has a meaningful impact.

Thank you for your trust.

**Caroline J. Simard**

Commissioner of  
Canada Elections



*Photo credit:  
Esther Campeau*

# ABOUT US



## Mandate

The Commissioner of Canada Elections (CCE or Commissioner) is the independent officer responsible for ensuring compliance with, and enforcement of, the *Canada Elections Act* (CEA) and the *Referendum Act*.

### The CCE's role in safeguarding the integrity of federal elections

- The Commissioner and her staff handle complaints related to federal elections and conduct reviews and investigations to determine if there has been wrongdoing under the CEA. In such cases, the Commissioner may take appropriate action to ensure that the CEA is complied with and enforced.
- The Commissioner can initiate a review or an investigation following a complaint, but she may also do so of her own initiative.
- The CCE's work contributes to maintaining the integrity of Canada's federal electoral system. The CCE and her staff work to ensure that all participants abide by the rules governing federal elections, which ensures a level playing field for all participants.

### Keep up to date with CCE news

[www.cef-cce.ca](http://www.cef-cce.ca)

Information about formal measures taken by the CCE are published on its website, social media platforms, and via [email alerts](#).

#### The CCE on social media



[X](#)



[Facebook](#)



[LinkedIn](#)



[YouTube](#)

# By the numbers: Overview of April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025

## Complaints

**22,866** NEW FILES

These files are the result of complaints filed by the general public and political entities, referrals from Elections Canada, and files opened at the CCE's initiative.



### Formal measures published on the CCE's website

**100**

ADMINISTRATIVE  
MONETARY  
PENALTIES

**9**

UNDERTAKINGS

When the CCE resolves a file by taking formal measures, details are made public on her website.

### Informal measures taken by the CCE

The CCE may choose to address files involving minor acts or omissions informally.

Informal measures are used to encourage compliance with the rules and prevent future contraventions.

**167**

Files resolved by way of  
information letters

**554**

Files resolved by way of  
caution letters

**18**

Files resolved by other methods of communication,  
such as email or telephone

# THE YEAR IN REVIEW



## Breakdown of files

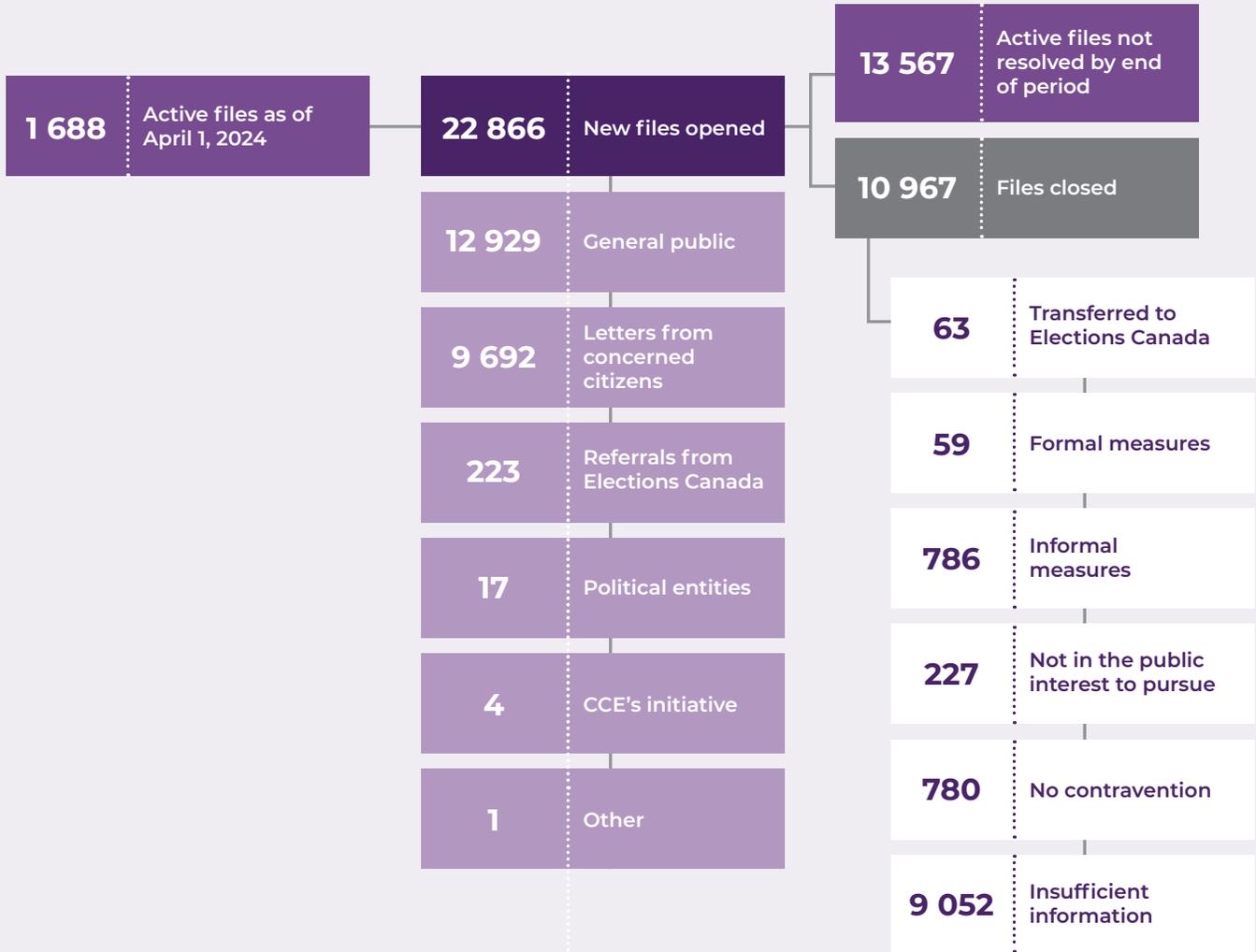
The OCCE receives complaints from the general public, as well as referrals from Elections Canada or other government agencies. For each complaint or referral received, a new file is opened by the office. The statistics in the following table show the number of files for the period between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025.

In some cases, the OCCE may receive multiple complaints related to the same event or alleged fact situation. This is often due to the amplification effect that social media can have, increasing the visibility of an issue and enticing several individuals to submit complaints or concerns to the office. In these cases, the alleged issue is reviewed as a whole, but the office opens an individual file for each complaint or letter received.

For example, before the end of the 2024–2025 fiscal year, the OCCE received nearly 10,000 letters from concerned citizens asking for an investigation into alleged interference in the electoral process. These letters related to only two separate factual situations. As such, the number of complaints was significant, but the actual number of issues raised was quite limited. This shows the impact that a small number of events can have on the number of files opened.



# Breakdown of files April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025

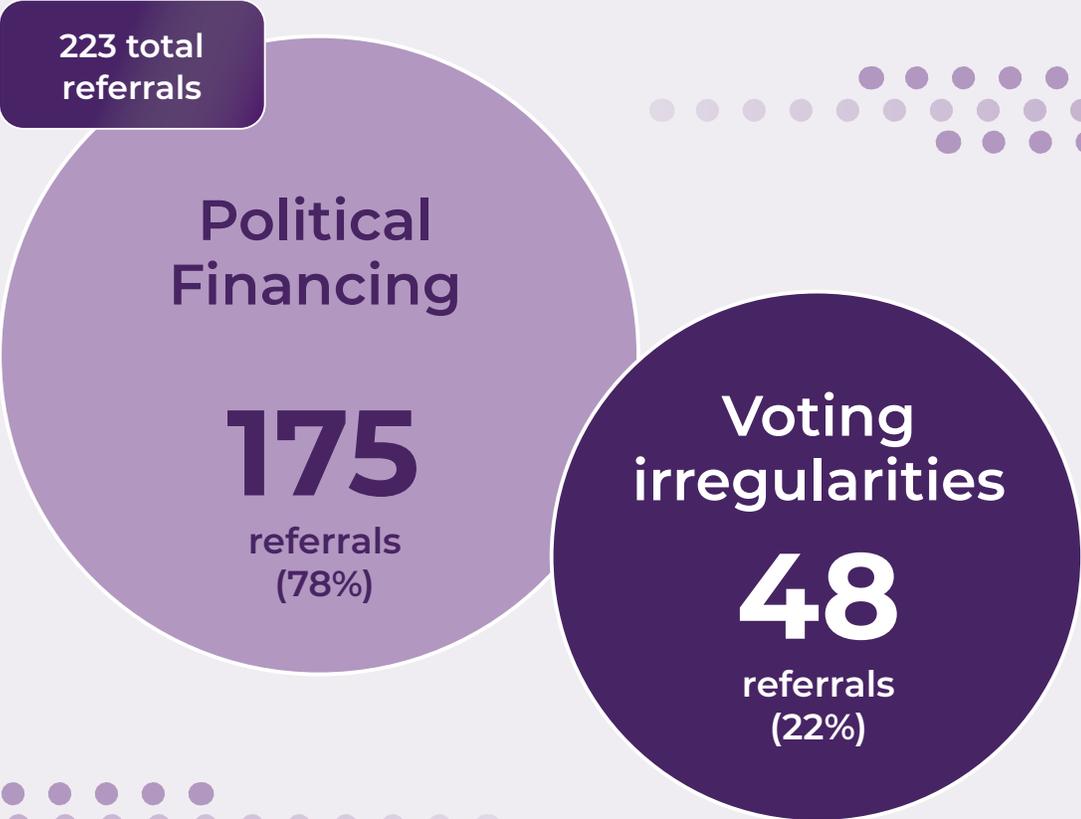


# Referrals from Elections Canada

The Commissioner routinely receives files from Elections Canada, commonly known as referrals. Between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025, Elections Canada referred 223 files to the OCCE. Of these, 175 involved potential contraventions of political financing rules. The other 48 files related to irregularities related to federal election voting rules.

Regardless of the issue, like complaints received from the public, all files referred by Elections Canada are reviewed.

## Subjects of referrals



# Budget of the OCCE

The OCCE has two sources of funding. It receives funds in part through an annual appropriation, a budget voted on by Parliament each year. This voted authority covers only the salaries of indeterminate employees.

The Commissioner can also use unappropriated funds from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) for all other expenses. This authority guarantees that the CCE has access to the funds required to conduct her investigative work while maintaining full independence from the government. These funds cover salaries for term employees, including casual employees and students. The Commissioner’s other expenses, such as the payment of consultants and expenses associated with travel and training, are also paid using unappropriated funds.

Appropriated Funds	Unappropriated Funds – CRF		Total
Salaries* of indeterminate employees	Other compensation - Salaries	Other expenses	
\$4,233,276	\$3,363,881	\$1,210,238	<b>\$8,807,395</b>

\* All employee benefits are included in the unappropriated funds from the CRF.

## Countering foreign interference in federal elections

Countering foreign interference remained a top priority for the OCCE throughout the year. On September 17, 2024, the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner of Operations testified during the second phase of the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions. The CCE explained her mandate under the CEA, especially as it relates to activities that could amount to foreign interference in federal elections.

The Commissioner also testified before the Public Inquiry on the subject of the office's review of allegations of interference in the Greater Vancouver Area during the 2021 general election. Another review, involving a nomination contest in the Greater Toronto Area, was still underway at the time the CCE testified but was completed before the end of the period covered by this report. Both reviews are now closed and in both cases, the OCCE found there was either no evidence or not enough evidence to support a breach of the CEA. Nevertheless, the review of these files provided valuable insights into investigative challenges and underscored the need for close cooperation with national security and intelligence partners.

Given its relatively limited mandate with respect to foreign interference, the CCE also stressed the importance of timely information sharing to better detect threats to Canada's democracy, including those from foreign actors.

Following her testimony, and to help inform the Inquiry's final report, the CCE submitted a list of considerations on compliance with and enforcement of the CEA in support of strengthening Canada's ability to counter foreign interference.





## Modernizing the OCCE

In 2024–2025, the OCCE undertook a major organizational transformation designed to allow it to improve its capacity to fulfill its mandate, both in the short and long term. This modernization initiative included changes to its structure and operations to improve the handling of the growing number of complaints and investigations, their increasing complexity, and the demands of a digital environment.

The office's modernization initiative stemmed from a strategic planning exercise and an independent review, both of which showed that certain adjustments were required for the OCCE to effectively carry out its mandate in light of the current electoral landscape. Essential new capabilities were identified, and the organizational structure and positions were aligned with those of similar agencies. A new risk-based case management approach was also introduced to improve efficiency and reduce duplication. Thanks to an internal resource reallocation exercise, the OCCE was able to begin stabilizing its workforce (converting some temporary positions to permanent ones) in order to reduce its dependence on contractual resources and retain the skills needed to deliver on its mandate.

These modernization efforts aim to make the OCCE more agile and responsive, particularly in a context where consecutive minority governments have, or may lead to, more frequent federal elections. Transformation efforts have centred on enhancing staff expertise, increased access to training and investments in both human and technological resources. However, the organization's current size and budget continue to be a limiting factor.

The OCCE's ability to manage and process intelligence was another key element of its modernization. The Public Inquiry, and parliamentary committees, recognized that in order to meet the modern challenges of the electoral ecosystem, there was a need to properly equip the OCCE to handle intelligence related to its mandate. In the fall of 2024, the OCCE established a dedicated team that can receive, protect, and process classified information, including intelligence, while ensuring proper safeguards between it and the OCCE's investigations. Despite this progress, the OCCE nevertheless anticipates that there will continue to be a challenge converting intelligence into admissible evidence. However, this is consistent with the challenges faced by other investigative bodies across Canada.

## Election Preparation

In parallel with its modernization initiative, the OCCE focused its attention on preparing for the 45<sup>th</sup> federal general election with a view to having the necessary processes, training, and tools in place prior to the writ period. During the same timeframe, four by-elections were also held in Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, and British Columbia, which required considerable resources.

Throughout 2024-2025, the OCCE continued to strengthen its capacity to anticipate, understand, and respond to emerging issues in the electoral environment. It developed and implemented an information management strategy that included monitoring technological trends, analyzing risks, adopting best practices, and ensuring staff knowledge was up to date. More in-depth analysis was carried out on the risks related to technology, such as artificial intelligence, including the use of deepfakes, and simulation exercises were held to validate the OCCE's operational readiness in an electoral context.

In addition, the OCCE continued to engage with various digital platforms to build effective communication channels. These exchanges were aimed at establishing effective communication channels in order to respond quickly to online activities that contravene the CEA or to gather evidence in support of investigations. These efforts proved to be successful, leading to, among other things, the rapid removal of problematic social media content during the election campaign.

## Outreach, awareness and collaboration

The OCCE reinforced its framework for collaboration with key partners by updating several memoranda of understanding and service agreements during 2024-2025. Maintaining strong relationships with a broad network of partners and stakeholders is essential to the OCCE's mandate, while also maintaining its independence.

In addition to growing and expanding its partner network, throughout the year, the office also undertook or participated in, several outreach initiatives. In September 2024, the OCCE organized and chaired the first meeting of the International Forum on Electoral Law Enforcement. This forum brought together representatives from various countries to discuss common challenges, lessons learned, and best practices. Still in its early stages, the forum aims to establish an ongoing dialogue among member organizations and support collective efforts to protect elections around the world.

In keeping with the spirit of international exchange, the OCCE hosted a delegation from South Korea's National Election Commission in October 2024, to discuss enforcement practices and topics of shared interest. In December 2024, the Deputy Commissioner of Operations also

took part in a panel on major threats to elections at the annual conference of the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL).

Throughout the year, the OCCE continued to engage with key federal partners, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), and Elections Canada. Engagement also extended to various stakeholders, including registered political parties. Meetings and information sessions on shared issues helped raise awareness of the OCCE's mandate and supported communication ahead of the election.

The OCCE also participated as an observer in the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force, which helped improve information-sharing during the general election period. Further, the CCE also took part in election simulation exercises under the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol. As in previous years, close collaboration with Elections Canada was maintained before and during the by-elections and general election to ensure effective coordination.

Additionally, the OCCE also participated in discussions with provincial electoral bodies to gain further insight into trends and lessons learned from recent provincial elections. Significant outreach efforts were also undertaken with police services across Canada to clarify roles and responsibilities during the election period and to encourage effective coordination if issues of common interest arose.



# LOOKING AHEAD



## Work related to the 45<sup>th</sup> general election

In 2025-2026, the OCCE will continue to process, review and, as required, investigate, complaints stemming from the 45<sup>th</sup> general election. Given the current minority government and the increased likelihood of another snap general election, the OCCE will also be maintaining its readiness activities. The office will also be working throughout the summer of 2025 to process any complaints received in relation to the August by-election in Alberta.

The OCCE will also compile lessons learned from the general election to adapt existing processes and further strengthen its tools. Research and analysis on emerging issues in the electoral environment will also continue. Investments in technology to enhance the office's efficiency remains a priority and the office will explore the use of emerging technologies and artificial intelligence, to assess how these may influence the OCCE's own priorities in the year ahead.

## Recommendations for legislative changes

As required by the CEA after a general election, the CCE will produce a report containing recommendations to improve the CEA's compliance and enforcement regime. Some of the proposed recommendations will stem from work accomplished in 2024–2025 during the review of Bill C-65, which died on the Order Paper when the general election was called. The CCE's recommendations will aim to expand and strengthen the administrative monetary penalties regime, to finalize the proposal to officially designate the OCCE as a recipient of information from FINTRAC, which will help strengthen its ability to carry out its compliance and enforcement work.

## Funding and staffing

Over the next year, the OCCE expects to receive the funding announced by the government in January 2025 to strengthen its capacity and provide the necessary tools address the challenges of today's electoral environment. This funding will also make it possible to begin staffing the additional positions set out in the new organizational structure. This development represents an important step in the OCCE's ongoing modernization efforts and in fulfilling its mandate.

# CONTACT US



## Have you witnessed wrongdoing under the CEA?

Let us know without delay.

### To process your complaint, we need:

- your full name\* and contact information
- a detailed description of the facts, circumstances, or actions that may constitute a breach of the CEA
- the date, location, names and contact information of the individuals involved
- any relevant documents, photos, or evidence

The review of your complaint may be delayed if this information is not provided.

**Don't delay in contacting us** – the longer you wait, the harder it may be for the CCE to gather the necessary evidence.

*\*Anonymous complaints are possible through our webform. However, in such cases, make sure to include all supporting details and documents, as we will not be able to follow up with you.*

### **File a complaint**

The easiest and fastest way to file a complaint is by using our [online complaint form](#).

You can also reach us by:

- **email:** [info@cef-cce.ca](mailto:info@cef-cce.ca)
- **telephone:** 1-855-759-6740
- **teletypewriter (TTY):** 1-855-759-6734
- **fax:** 1-800-663-4908 or 819-939-1801
- **mail:** Commissioner of Canada Elections  
30 Victoria Street  
Gatineau, Quebec  
K1A 0M6



# Commissioner of Canada Elections

30 Victoria Street  
Gatineau, Québec  
K1A 0M6

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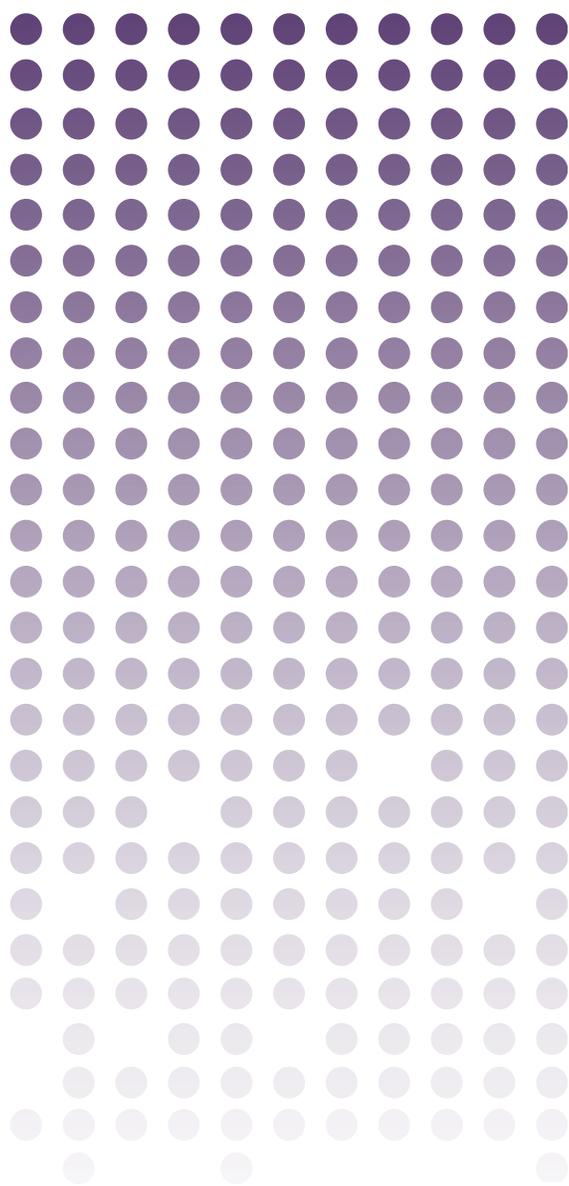
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