



Electoral Commission of South Australia  
**Election Funding – Administrative Funding Guide**

# Contents

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Purpose</b> .....                        | <b>3</b> |
| <b>Summary</b> .....                        | <b>4</b> |
| <b>Overview</b> .....                       | <b>5</b> |
| Introduction to administrative funding..... | 5        |
| Entitlement under the Act.....              | 5        |
| Types of funding available.....             | 5        |
| <b>Eligibility</b> .....                    | <b>6</b> |
| Registered political parties .....          | 6        |
| Special rule for 2025.....                  | 6        |
| Independent members of parliament .....     | 6        |
| <b>Use of funds</b> .....                   | <b>6</b> |
| <b>How to apply</b> .....                   | <b>6</b> |
| <b>Funding entitlement</b> .....            | <b>7</b> |
| Payment structure (half-yearly) .....       | 7        |
| <b>One-off payment</b> .....                | <b>7</b> |
| Purpose .....                               | 7        |
| Availability .....                          | 7        |
| How to claim.....                           | 7        |
| Funding limit .....                         | 7        |
| <b>Repayment of funds</b> .....             | <b>7</b> |
| <b>Glossary of key terms</b> .....          | <b>8</b> |
| <b>Related guides</b> .....                 | <b>8</b> |

## Purpose

This guide assists registered political parties and their agents in understanding their entitlement to administrative funding under Part 13A of the [Electoral Act 1985](#) (the Act) and the relevant provisions of the [Electoral Regulations 2024](#) (Regulations).

The information provided in this guide is general in nature. While the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA) can offer guidance on its administrative approach to Part 13A, it cannot provide legal advice.

Stakeholders should refer to the specific wording of the Act and Regulations and seek independent legal or professional advice for any matters requiring interpretation.

**Note:** This guide deals only with *administrative funding*. Separate guides are available for *advance funding*, *policy development funding* and *public funding*.

## Summary

Administrative expenditure funding is available to registered political parties and independent members of parliament who hold seats in the South Australian Parliament. It is paid as a half-yearly entitlement to assist with the reimbursement of administrative costs.

### Eligible expenditure includes:

- Administration, operation or management of party or member activities.
- Communication with members on administrative matters.
- Conferences, seminars, and meetings at which policies are discussed or formulated.
- Compliance with the Act and auditing of financial accounts.
- Expenditure and remuneration of staff.
- Training of staff and volunteers.
- Equipment or vehicles used for administrative purposes.
- Office accommodation for staff and equipment.
- Expenditure on interest payments on loans.

Payments are made twice a year and indexed annually to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Administrative funding must not be paid into a state campaign account and must not be used for political or electoral expenditure.

A one-off administrative funding payment is also available between 1 July 2025 and 3 August 2026 to assist with costs related to meeting funding and disclosure obligations. This is capped at \$200,000 for registered political parties and \$50,000 for independent members.

## Overview

### Introduction to administrative funding

Administrative expenditure funding (formerly known as *special assistance funding*) supports registered political parties and independent members of parliament in covering the costs of maintaining their organisation outside of election periods. It is provided under Division 5 of the Act and paid as a half-yearly entitlement.

### Entitlement under the Act

Under Division 5 of the Act and the Regulations, administrative funding is available to:

- registered political parties with at least one member in the South Australian Parliament (House of Assembly or Legislative Council).
- independent members of parliament.

Eligibility also depends on the party's registration status during the relevant funding period. Full eligibility requirements are set out in the **Eligibility** section of this guide.

**Note:** Policy development funding is separately provided under Division 5A of the Act.

### Types of funding available

There are 2 forms of administrative funding:

- **Half-yearly entitlement** – ongoing payments to assist with administrative expenditure, indexed annually in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- **One-off payment** – available between 1 July 2025 and 3 August 2026 to reimburse additional costs associated with meeting funding and disclosure obligations.

### Important note:

- Administrative funding must not be paid into a state campaign account.
- Administrative funding must not be used for political or electoral expenditure.
- Two or more registered political parties cannot rely on the same person for entitlement to, or payment of, administrative funding.
  - If a person is relied on by 2 or more registered political parties, they may nominate the party entitled to rely on the person.
  - If the person does not make a nomination after being given the opportunity by the Electoral Commissioner, then none of those parties can rely on that person.
- The Electoral Commissioner may require repayment of unspent funds in certain circumstances (e.g. party ceases to operate, seat becomes vacant, or status changes).

## Eligibility

### Registered political parties

To be eligible for administrative funding, a registered political party must:

- Have at least one member in the South Australian Parliament (House of Assembly or Legislative Council) during the period.
- Be registered on the polling day of the most recent general election.
- Remain registered for the entire funding period.

### Special rule for 2025

Despite section 130 U(1)(b)(ii) of the Act, a registered political party will still be considered eligible for the July—December 2025 half-year period if:

- it was registered on or before 1 August 2025, and
- It stayed registered until 31 December 2025.

### Independent members of parliament

Independent members of parliament are also eligible for administrative funding.

#### *Who is not eligible*

- Parties with no members in either the House of Assembly or Legislative Council.

## Use of funds

- Must not be paid into the state campaign account.
- Must not be used for political or electoral expenditure.
- May be used for administrative expenditure as defined in the Act, including:
  - staff remuneration, training, and office accommodation
  - compliance costs such as audits and reporting
  - equipment and vehicles used for administrative purposes
  - conferences, seminars, and meetings on party policies
  - interest payments on loans.
- May not be used for:
  - political expenditure
  - local government election activities
  - allowances or benefits under the Parliamentary Remuneration Act
  - expenditure primarily for elections outside South Australia.



*For full details of what counts as administrative expenditure, refer to Part 13A, Division 1, section 130A of the Act. This guide provides examples only.*

## How to apply

1. Complete the administrative expenditure funding application form within 30 days of the end of the period. Application forms are available by contacting the Compliance Branch.
2. Return the completed form by email to [ecsa.fad@sa.gov.au](mailto:ecsa.fad@sa.gov.au).

## Funding entitlement

Payments are made twice a year (half-yearly) and are indexed annually in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

### Payment structure (half-yearly)

| Recipient type                    | Elected members                   | Funding amount    |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Registered political party        | 1 member                          | \$85,000          |
| Registered political party        | 2 members                         | \$245,000         |
| Registered political party        | Each additional member (beyond 2) | \$55,000 (capped) |
| <b>Registered political party</b> | <b>Maximum funding</b>            | <b>\$800,000</b>  |
| Independent member of parliament  | 1 member                          | \$20,000          |

## One-off payment

### Purpose

Administrative funding recipients may be eligible for a one-off payment to reimburse specific costs, including those related to meeting funding and disclosure obligations. This entitlement recognises that recent reforms may create additional administrative burden for registered political parties and independent members of parliament.

### Availability

The one-off payment is available between **1 July 2025 and 3 August 2026**.

### How to claim

- Complete and lodge a one-off administrative funding claim form.
- Payment is made on receipt of a valid claim form.

### Funding limit

- Registered political parties: up to a maximum of **\$200,000**.
- Independent members of parliament: up to a maximum of **\$50,000**.

### Important note:

Expenses already claimed under the half-yearly administrative funding entitlement cannot be claimed again as part of this one-off payment.

## Repayment of funds

The Electoral Commissioner may require repayment of unspent administrative funding in the following circumstances:

- Did not contest the election.
- Ceases to operate, becomes unregistered, or a seat becomes vacant.
- Changes status, such as:
  - A non-party member joining a registered political party.
  - Standing in an election for a registered political party.

Recipients must retain records of expenditure to demonstrate compliance and may be audited.

## Glossary of key terms

| Term                                      | Definition  |
|---|---|
| <b>Act</b>                                | The <i>Electoral Act 1985</i> , which governs public funding, expenditure caps, and disclosure obligations.   |
| <b>Administrative expenditure funding</b> | Funding provided under Division 5 of the Act to assist registered political parties and independent members with operational and compliance costs.            |
| <b>Agent</b>                              | A person appointed to manage financial matters and lodge disclosure returns on behalf of a party, candidate, group, third party, or associated entity.        |
| <b>Consumer Price Index (CPI)</b>         | The measure used to index funding entitlements annually to reflect inflation.   |
| <b>Disclosure return</b>                  | A financial report lodged with the Electoral Commissioner detailing amounts received, debts incurred, and compliance declarations.                            |
| <b>Electoral Commissioner</b>             | The official responsible for administering funding entitlements, assessing claims, and requiring repayment where necessary.                                   |
| <b>Independent member of parliament</b>   | A member of the South Australian Parliament not endorsed by a registered political party.   |
| <b>One-off payment</b>                    | A temporary entitlement available between 1 July 2025 and 3 August 2026 to reimburse additional administrative costs associated with reforms.                 |
| <b>Registered political party</b>         | A party registered under the Act and eligible for public funding, administrative support, and policy development funding.                                     |
| <b>Repayment of funds</b>                 | The requirement to return unspent or ineligible funding in circumstances such as ceasing operation, seat vacancy, or change of status (e.g. joining a party). |
| <b>State campaign account</b>             | A dedicated bank account used to manage donations and electoral expenditure. Administrative funding must not be paid into this account.                       |

## Related guides

Separate guides are available for the following funding streams:

- **Administrative Funding Guide – entitlement for operational and compliance costs.**
- Advance Funding Guide – entitlement to receive funding prior to election expenditure.
- Policy Development Funding Guide – entitlement to support the formulation of party policies.
- Public Funding Guide – entitlement based on vote share and campaign expenditure.



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