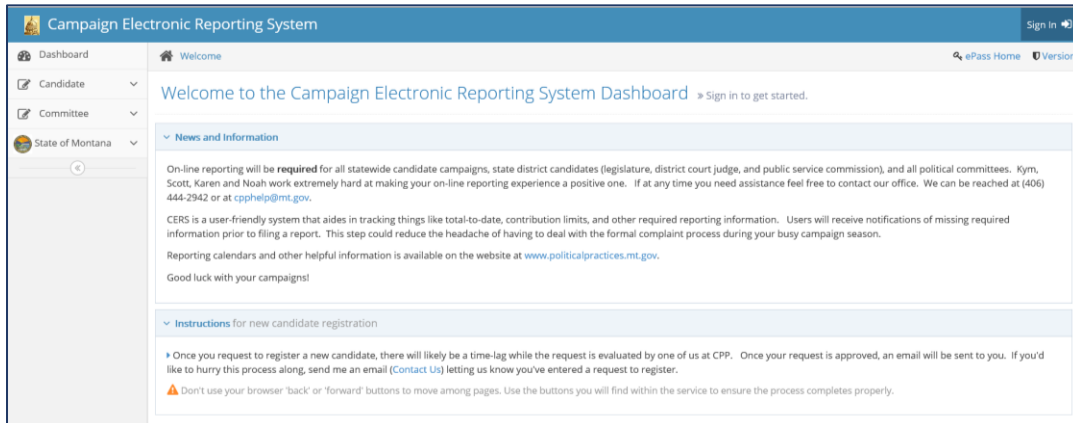


# How to File a C-1 or C-1A Statement of Candidate Form in the CERS Database



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## Part 1: Introduction to the Campaign Electronic Reporting System

### What is the Campaign Electronic Reporting System (CERS)?

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CERS is a user-friendly system that helps candidates and committees disclose and report the money they receive and spend support or oppose candidates and ballot issues.

Montana's campaign finance laws ensure that the public can engage with a transparent reporting of money in elections. CERS makes campaign finance reports publicly available. Candidates and committees ensure transparency in Montana's democratic processes by periodically filing legally-required campaign finance information as campaign finance reports.

The COPP is mandated to review all candidate and committee financial reports ([13-37-121\[1\]](#)), Montana Code Annotated). Once a campaign finance report is filed, the COPP inspects each report and sends the candidate or committee an Inspection Report (read more about the inspection and exam process [here](#)). The COPP has full-time staff available to support all candidates and committees with campaign finance reporting.

### Who must use CERS to register and for campaign finance reporting?

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Reporting through CERS is required for:

- Statewide candidate campaigns,
- State district candidates (legislature, district court judge, and public service commission),
- and all political committees.

When you file a Statement of Candidate in CERS, you create an account in the CERS database. This same account will be used to enter campaign finance reports.

Contact the COPP with any questions. We can be reached at (406) 444-2942 or at [cpphelp@mt.gov](mailto:cpphelp@mt.gov). [Reporting calendars](#) and other helpful campaign information is available on the website at [www.politicalpractices.mt.gov](http://www.politicalpractices.mt.gov).

## Part 2: Filing a Statement of Candidate in CERS

### Step 1: Access ePass and Create a User Login

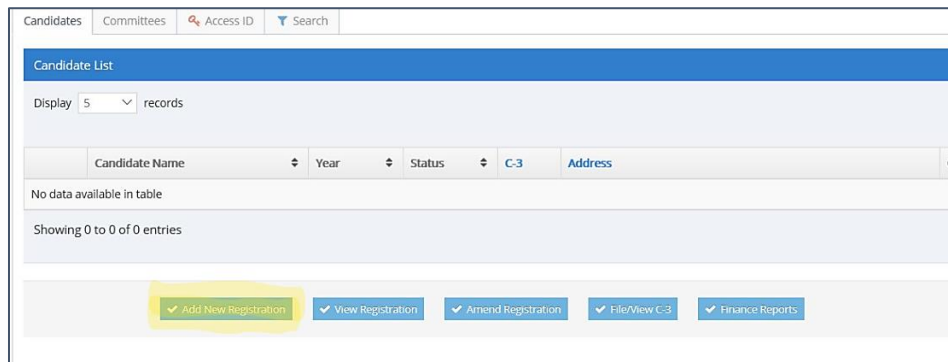
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- To register a candidate or a candidate's campaign using the CERS system, you will first need to log into the CERS system. Access the CERS database through <https://camptrackext.mt.gov/CampaignTracker/dashboard>. This link is also available at the COPP's [Online Services](#) page, through the Access the Campaign Electronic Reporting System (CERS) link. From the CERS dashboard, select the **Access my Accounts** icon. This will take you to the ePass Montana login page.
- If you already have an active ePass Montana account, you may log in using that username and password. If you do not already have an active ePass account or cannot remember your login information, ePass gives you the option to create a new account (See the text: *If you do not have an account, you can create one [here](#)*).
- After you successfully login via ePass, you will automatically be redirected back to CERS. If you have successfully logged in, you will see your username in the upper right corner.

After logging in, you will see the below image. To register a new candidate or campaign, make sure you have selected the **Candidates** tab.



Once you've selected the **Candidates** tab, click **Add new registration**.



### Step 2: Determine if Your Candidate Name Already Exists in CERS; If Needed, Register Name

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Before you are allowed to add a new registration, the CERS system requires you to search for the candidate's name:

1. Fill out the **Candidate** name and the election year.
2. Then, click the **Search Candidate** button.
  - *If the candidate has already registered* in the CERS system but not for the current election year, select that candidate by clicking the box to the left of a prior registration for that candidate, and select the **Add New Registration** icon.
  - *If the candidate's name does come up* for the current election year, that means that the candidate has already registered in the CERS system for that election year. Instead of creating a second profile for that candidate, please contact the COPP.
  - *If the candidate's name doesn't come up* from a search, click **Add New Registration**.

The screenshot displays the CERS system search interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Candidates', 'Committees', 'Access ID', and 'Search'. The 'Search' tab is active. On the left side, there is a sidebar with search options: 'Candidate Search', 'Committee Search', 'Contribution Search', and 'Expenditure Search'. The main search area contains four input fields: 'Last Name' (with placeholder text 'LastName'), 'First Name' (with placeholder text 'FirstName'), 'Middle Initial', and 'Election Year' (a dropdown menu). Below the search fields, there are three buttons: 'Add New Registration' (highlighted in yellow), 'Search Candidate', and 'Reset'.

### Step 3: Enter in Your Campaign/Committee Information

1. Click the upper dropdown option and select your **Campaign Type**.
2. Fill out all information in the **Candidate Information** section.
  - a. In the section for **Affidavit of Reporting Status** (City, School, and County candidates only), select the proper designation. Choose the B box for campaigns that will spend and receive under \$500 combined, or the C box for campaigns that will spend and receive over \$500 combined.
  - b. Please note that A box is no longer an option, as the candidate's filing fee is required to be reported by the campaign.
3. Fill out information in the **Campaign Treasurer Information** section. **FYI:**
  - a. A treasurer must be appointed and certified on the Statement of Candidate form. Candidates can appoint themselves to be their own treasurers. If there are changes, an amended hard copy candidate statement (C-1 or C-1A form) must be submitted within 5 days.
  - b. Treasurers are responsible for depositing and disbursing funds and keeping accurate accounts. The treasurer and deputy treasurer are the only people authorized to make deposits or draw checks on the campaign account.

- c. Often candidates appoint themselves as either treasurer or deputy treasurer so they have access to their campaign accounts.
4. If relevant to your campaign, fill out the **Deputy Treasurer Information** section. Not all campaigns will have a Deputy Treasurer. You will need to select the purple **Add** button, enter in the deputy treasurer's information, and click **Submit**.
5. When all candidate information is entered, select **Save** at the bottom of the page.
6. Verify all candidate information is correct. If you need to make edits, click the **Edit Information** button, update info, and then click **Save**.
7. Certify all information is true by clicking the **CERTIFICATION** box at the bottom of the page.
8. Select **Submit and File**.
9. You will now receive an email verifying your successful filing to the email address you provided.
10. You have the option to file a C-3 (Code of Fair Campaign Practices). This is optional.
11. You will now be able to navigate back to your [CERS homepage](#). From this page, you can:
  - a. Add a new registration,
  - b. View your registration,
  - c. Amend your registration,
  - d. File/View C-3, and
  - e. Begin a finance report (Finance Reports).

## Questions?

Contact the COPP at (406) 444-2942, via email at [cpphelp@mt.gov](mailto:cpphelp@mt.gov), or stop in at the Helena office at 1209 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.