

CERTIFICATION

A candidate cannot appear on either ballot or take office until the COPP has certified that we have received all required forms.

Report Examinations and Orders of Non-compliance

It is the candidate/committee responsibility to report correctly and completely. The COPP will provide guidance with cursory inspection reports.

After each report is filed, a compliance staff with the Commissioner's office will send an inspection report. If the inspection report shows discrepancies with your finance report, you will need to go into the CERS system and amend the report with the requested information.

You will have 10 (ten) days from receiving the inspection report to correct any discrepancies. If you do not address discrepancies, you may be issued an order of non-compliance or face potential violations through a campaign finance complaint.



MONTANA COMMISSIONER OF POLITICAL PRACTICES



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MONTANA COMMISSIONER OF POLITICAL PRACTICES

PROPERLY REPORTING THE BASICS: CONTRIBUTIONS & EXPENDITURES

CAMPAIGN REPORTING 101

Using the online
reporting CERS system will
assist in accurate reporting.

MONTANA COMMISSIONER OF POLITICAL PRACTICES
WWW.POLITICALPRACTICES.MT.GOV

COMMON FAQ'S

Statement of Candidate

Anytime you have changes within your campaign, i.e. new treasurer, you need to file an amended C1 or C1A within 5 days. You can update/amend any form at any time through the online CERS system.

Attribution/Disclaimer Required

All Campaign materials must have a Paid for By Attribution, including paid social media posts. See our attribution brochure.

Anonymous Contributions are Illegal

You must know where all contributions have come from. This includes mass contributions, i.e. pass the hat or other fundraising. While you can report contributions under \$35 as a lump sum, you must know the source of all money received. If you do get an anonymous contribution, you can donate it to a non-profit.

Contribution Limits

Contribution limits apply to all contributions including in-kind contributions. The only exception to limits are contribution(s) from the candidate themselves. Please see summary on our website for limits.

Contribution Reporting - Individual

All contributions from individuals, including in-kind, over \$35 must be reported under the "Individual" tab and include Full Name, Complete Mailing Address, Occupation (specific), Employer.

DON'T WAIT UNTIL FILING DAY TO FILE REPORTS

You can periodically enter campaign activity into the system using the update and save function. Only FILE after the end of the current reporting period and prior to the filing deadline. Only when filed is the report available to the public through CERS.

Enter contributions & expenditures as they occur – update & save it in CERS as you go. The system will keep track of contribution limits and all totals-to-dates for you.

Enter contributions under \$35 as an individual and the system will lump them for you and put them in the proper place on the report.

Once the campaign receives \$35 from an individual, then they must have the individuals name, address, occupation, employer, amount received and total-to-date for that individual.

Fundraisers/Mass Collections

If you have a fundraiser or other mass collection events, you must keep track of all monies received and goods donated for the event.

If you receive monies through a pass the hat type of event you should have some type of envelope that the individual can at least note their name and contact information.

Goods given to the campaign for events or raffles are to be reported as an in-kind contribution from the individual to the campaign. In-kind contributions count toward individual contribution limits.

SEPARATE ACCOUNT FOR PRIMARY & GENERAL ELECTIONS

If a campaign has a contested primary and they receive contributions for the general election, they must have a separate account for the general contributions. Do not spend those separate funds until after the primary election. This can be done by having a checking and savings account, for example.

Detail all Expenditures

Report all campaign expenses in detail. Describe the expenditure in detail in the 'Purpose' field, you have a 150 character limit.

- Campaigns R Us (with address)
- Printed 150 yard signs with stakes, "vote for Jon Doe, HD 22"
- 7/10/18
- \$1,250

Paid social media must also be detailed

- Facebook (with address)
- Facebook boost, video of the family asking for vote, ran 2/1/18 – 2/28/18
- \$65.23

Debt/s

Waiting for an invoice is a common reporting error. If invoiced rather than paid at the time of purchase, report as a debt within the reporting period at time it was acquired.

Report expenses when you incur them, not when you receive invoice. If you do not know the amount, estimate the expense and amend when necessary.