

Candidate Campaign Finance Training


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Office of Political Practices

Jeff Mangan

1

Training outline

1. Candidate's Legal Requirements
2. Candidate Forms & Reporting Dates
3. Campaign Finance (Contributions, Expenditures, & Debts)
4. Campaign Finance Review Process
5. Tips
6. Resources
7. Questions



cpphelp@mt.gov

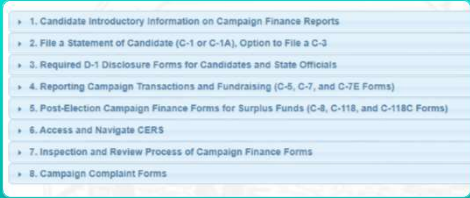
2

Legal Requirements of Candidates

It is the candidate's responsibility and obligation to understand and comply with all Montana campaign finance laws. While COPP staff is available to provide information and support to all candidates and treasurers, it is the candidate who is ultimately responsible for ensuring the campaign complies with all campaign finance laws.

Candidates should familiarize themselves with Montana's campaign finance reporting laws, specifically Montana Code Annotated (MCA) Title 13, Chapter 37 (available [here](#)), as well as the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Rule Chapter 44.11 (available [here](#)). In addition to this training, [the COPP's website](#) contains several educational resources that candidates should know and reference.

3



> 1. Candidate Introductory Information on Campaign Finance Reports
 > 2. File a Statement of Candidate (C-1 or C-1A), Option to File a C-3
 > 3. Required D-1 Disclosure Forms for Candidates and State Officials
 > 4. Reporting Campaign Transactions and Fundraising (C-5, C-7, and C-7E Forms)
 > 5. Post-Election Campaign Finance Forms for Surplus Funds (C-8, C-118, and C-118C Forms)
 > 6. Access and Navigate CERS
 > 7. Inspection and Review Process of Campaign Finance Forms
 > 8. Campaign Complaint Forms

<http://politicalpractices.mt.gov/forms>

Candidate Forms

4

Statement of Candidate C1/C1A

- File a statement of candidate form with the COPP within 5 days of:
 - Soliciting or receiving a contribution
 - Making an expenditure
 - Filing as a candidate for elected office
- Local (City/County/School) select 'B' or 'C' box
 - B box candidates do not expect to raise or spend over \$500, exempt from Finance reporting
 - Must file finance reports if exceed \$500 AND amend C1A form to C box
 - C box candidates plan to exceed \$500
 - Must still designate a campaign treasurer and bank
 - Please always include an email address

5

Candidate Reporting Dates




1. Reporting Dates for Odd Year candidates (Municipal)
2. Reporting Dates for Even Year Candidates
3. Off election Year reporting dates from a previous election
4. Off election Year reporting dates for a future election

6

Campaign Finance

All candidates have a role in promoting confidence, transparency, and accountability in Montana's elections. This occurs, in part, through campaign finance reporting of:


1. Contributions,
2. Expenditures, and
3. Debts.



7


Campaign Finance: Contributions

- By law (13-1-101(9), MCA), a contribution is defined as a "...distribution of money or anything of value to support or oppose a candidate or ballot issue."
- If an individual (including the candidate or candidate's family), committee, or other entity provides a campaign with money or goods or services of value for free or at a reduced rate in an effort to support your candidacy, that is a contribution.



8

Contribution Limits



1. Campaign finance limits apply to EACH election (primary and general) **if** you have a primary opponent.
2. Fundraising for the primary and general election must be completely separate. This means that contributions must be designated as either a primary or general election contribution.
3. Aggregate contribution limits apply for political party committees.

9

Contribution Limits: Know Your Limits

<http://politicalpractices.mt.gov/contributionlimits>

10

Contributions: Types of Contributions

1. Candidate's contributions to self
2. Contributions from individuals
 - Contributions less than \$35
3. Fundraisers
4. Contributions from committees
5. Refunds, rebates
6. Loans

11


Candidate Self Contributions

- There is no limit on the amount a candidate may contribute to his or her own campaign.
- A contribution means that the candidate will not be reimbursed.

12

Contributions: Individual

- Amount of contribution (\$35 threshold)
- Identifying contributor information:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Employer and occupation
 - Monetary or in-kind (All in-kind contributions must include a description of the specific items or services received by the campaign)
- Monetary or in-kind
- ****Anonymous contributions are illegal****



13

Contributions: Fundraisers

- **Each individual fundraising event held by the campaign must be reported separately as its own event.**
- Details to include:
 - Event description (Raffle, pass-the-hat, banquet, silent auction, etc.)
 - Approximate number of attendees
 - Number of tickets sold (if applicable)
 - Total amount raised



14


Contributions: Fundraisers (continued)

- Contributions of less than \$35 from a fundraiser can be reported as a lump sum.
- Any individual contribution of \$35 or more must be reported under the "Contributions" tab's "Individual" option).
- **** Anonymous contributions are illegal.** The source of contributions from a fundraiser must always be recorded, even if an individual's fundraising-related contribution does not meet the \$35 reporting threshold. This also ensures that if an individual contributes \$35 in the aggregate or more, their contributions can be correctly reported.**

15

Contributions: Committee


- Details to disclose:
 - Date
 - Committee type (Political party, independent, incidental, etc.)
 - Monetary or in-kind (All in-kind contributions must include a description of the specific items or services received by the campaign)
- Contribution limits apply



16


Campaign Finance: Expenditures

- Remember: all money spent by a campaign must be able to be known in an audit.
- Expense details to disclose:
 - Whether the expense went to support the primary or general campaign
 - Date the payment was made
 - Description of expense – Ad agency, contractor, etc. must be itemized



17

Expenditures: Attribution for Paid Communications




- Any paid communication in support or opposition to a candidate must include "Paid for by" information on the material.
- The attribution must clearly identify the name and mailing address of the entity that paid for the communication.
 - For example: Paid for by Potter for City Council, 12 Cupboard Lane, Helena, MT 59601
- Material too small? File the material with the COPPI!

18

Campaign Finance: Debts

- Debts and loans must be recorded with the same level of disclosure as expenditures.
- The debt must occur within the campaign finance report reporting period. If the exact amount is unknown, the estimated amount must be reported
- Payments to campaign debt must also be reported.



19

First, candidate files a campaign finance report

- COPP reviews this campaign finance report and sends the candidate an Inspection Report identifying any issues that require additional attention or detail
- Candidate files other reports
- COPP follows up with Inspection Reports
- Candidate closes their campaign
- COPP follows up with an Exam
- Candidate addresses all outstanding issues.

Campaign Finance Review Process

20

Candidate's responsibility

It is the candidate's responsibility and obligation to understand and comply with all Montana campaign finance laws. While COPP staff is available to provide information and support to all candidates and treasurers, again, it is the candidate who is responsible for ensuring the campaign complies with all campaign finance requirements.

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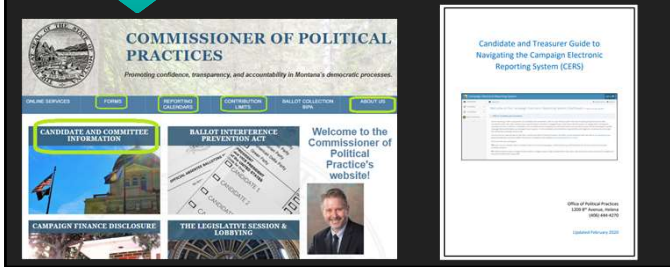
21

Tips

1. Add campaign finance reporting periods and date/s to your calendar with reminders (Google calendar, cell phone, kitchen calendar, whatever helps remind you)
2. Need more space in CERS? Add as an attachment within CERS
3. Don't wait until the last minute to complete your campaign finance reports! Update reports regularly throughout the reporting period
4. Read your inspection reports and make corrections as directed
5. For tips and report reminders, follow the COPP on Facebook and Twitter!
6. Contact the COPP for support and with questions!

22

RESOURCES




23

Questions? Contact the COPP!



1209 8th Avenue (Helena)
 (406) 444-2942
 cppcompliance@mf.gov

 @MontanaCOPP
 @MontanaCOPP

24
