COMMITTEE FINANCE REPORTING
ACCESSING CERS

- ALL REPORTS MUST BE FILED ELECTRONICALLY, USING THE CAMPAIGN ELECTRONIC REPORTING SYSTEM (CERS)
- ACCESS CERS FROM THE COPP’S WEBSITE, HTTPS://POLITICALPRACTICES.MT.GOV/
  - CLICK THE ‘ACCESS CERS’ ICON
ACCESSING CERS- FROM THE DASHBOARD

1. ACCESS MY ACCOUNTS
2. LOGIN USING EPASS
3. SELECT COMMITTEE
UPDATE THE C2 WITHIN 5 DAYS OF CHANGE

TREASURER REVISION, ADDRESS, EMAIL OR PHONE NUMBER CHANGE, ETC.
C-2: IMPORTANT ELEMENTS!
- EMAIL
- PHONE
- SUPPORT & OPPOSITION INFO
REPORTING DATES

• FINANCE REPORTS DUE MARCH 30, APRIL 30, MAY 30, JUNE 30, AUGUST 30, SEPTEMBER 30, OCTOBER 30, AND NOVEMBER 30, 2022

• FULL REPORTING CALENDAR AVAILABLE ON THE REPORTING CALENDARS SECTION OF COPP WEBSITE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filing Deadline</th>
<th>Reporting Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 5*</td>
<td>Quarterly- Date of first contribution/expenditure through March 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 5*</td>
<td>Quarterly- April 1 through June 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 5*</td>
<td>Quarterly- July 1 through Sept. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 5*</td>
<td>Quarterly- Oct. 1 through December 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>Monthly- January 1 through March 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>Monthly- March 26 through April 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 25 through Primary election date (C-7 and C-7E Reporting Period)</td>
<td>File form C-7 within 2 business days if a contribution of $500 or more is received from a single source between May 25 and the day before the primary election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 30</td>
<td>Monthly- April 26 through May 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30</td>
<td>Post-Primary- May 25 through June 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 30</td>
<td>Monthly- June 26 through August 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 30</td>
<td>Monthly- August 26 through September 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 25 through General election date (C-7 and C-7E Reporting Period)</td>
<td>File form C-7 within 2 business days if a contribution of $500 or more is received from a single source between October 25 and the day before the general election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>Monthly- September 26 through October 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 30</td>
<td>Monthly- October 25 through November 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION LIMITS

- COMMITTEES NOT LIMITED IN HOW MUCH THEY CAN ACCEPT FROM CONTRIBUTORS
- CANDIDATES HAVE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION LIMITS
- IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS COUNT TOWARDS THE CONTRIBUTION LIMITS!
- AGGREGATE LIMITS FOR POLITICAL PARTY COMMITTEES

HTTP://POLITICALPRACTICES.MT.GOV/CONTRIBUTIONLIMITS
FILING A CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORT

- STEP 1. ACCESS THE FINANCE REPORT
  - C-4 (INCIDENTAL COMMITTEES ONLY) OR C-6
- 2. REPORT CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED, EXPENDITURES MADE, DEBTS OWED, AND PAYMENTS
- 3. CERTIFY AND FILE THE REPORT
STEP 1: ACCESS THE REPORT
STEP 1- ACCESS THE REPORT

• NAVIGATE TO THE COMMITTEE REPORT LIST
• SELECT THE ‘ADD NEW’ ICON TO BEGIN A NEW FINANCE REPORT; SELECT THE ‘UPDATE OR AMEND REPORT’ ICON TO UPDATE A PREVIOUSLY CREATED REPORT
• BEST PRACTICE! UPDATE REGULARLY AS YOU RECEIVE CONTRIBUTIONS AND MAKE EXPENDITURES- THE SAVE FUNCTION ALLOWS YOU TO UPDATE THE CURRENT REPORT UNTIL YOU ARE READY TO FILE
  • DATA IS NOT PUBLIC UNTIL A REPORT IS FILED
  • DO NOT FILE UNTIL AFTER REPORTING PERIOD ENDS
ACCESS THE REPORT

**TIP!**

- **CHECK THE DATE RANGE ON YOUR REPORT.**
  - **FROM** = END OF PREVIOUS REPORT
  - **TO** = END DATE FOR REPORT. SHOULD BE 5 DAYS BEFORE REPORTING DAY, **13-37-228(2)**, MCA
STEP 2: REPORT CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED, EXPENDITURES MADE, DEBTS OWED, AND PAYMENTS
REPORTING CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED

• REPORT ALL CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED USING THE ‘CONTRIBUTIONS’ TAB

• COMMITTEE MUST KNOW NAME OF ALL CONTRIBUTORS—ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS NOT ALLOWED, 13-37-217 MCA

• FIVE TYPES OF CONTRIBUTIONS:
  • INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS
  • COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTIONS
  • FUNDRAISER CONTRIBUTIONS
  • REFUNDS, ETC.
  • LOANS
ADDING INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- **INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION = CONTRIBUTION RECEIVED FROM AN INDIVIDUAL**
- INCLUDES CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM A CANDIDATE/CANDIDATE’S CAMPAIGN
- UNDER CONTRIBUTIONS TAB, NAVIGATE TO THE ‘INDIVIDUALS’ SUBTAB
- CLICK ‘ADD’ TO ADD A NEW CONTRIBUTION
ADDING INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- USE ‘ROW DETAILS’ TO MANUALLY ENTER
- ‘ENTITY SEARCH’ ALLOWS YOU TO SEARCH FOR CONTRIBUTOR
- WHEN ALL INFORMATION HAS BEEN ENTERED, HIT ‘SUBMIT’
- SAVE AFTER EVERY ENTRY!
ADDING INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

• ALL CONTRIBUTIONS OVER $50 ARE REQUIRED TO BE REPORTED WITH THE CONTRIBUTOR’S FULL NAME, ADDRESS, OCCUPATION, AND EMPLOYER

• OCCUPATION- BE SPECIFIC!
  • FOR EXAMPLE: ‘FINANCIAL CONSULTANT’ OR ‘IT CONSULTANT’ INSTEAD OF CONSULTANT

• EMPLOYER- INCLUDE THE FULL NAME OF THE BUSINESS/ENTITY THAT EMPLOYS THE CONTRIBUTOR
ADDING INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- For contributions received via an online platform (ActBlue, Win Red, PayPal, etc.), report the FULL amount of the contribution provided by contributor!
  - Report using the name of the original contributor
  - Report the amount deducted by the platform as an expenditure under the expenditures tab
• COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTION = CONTRIBUTION RECEIVED FROM A POLITICAL COMMITTEE
• UNDER CONTRIBUTIONS TAB, NAVIGATE TO THE ‘COMMITTEE’ SUBTAB
• CLICK ‘ADD’ TO ADD A NEW CONTRIBUTION
ADDING COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTIONS

- Use ‘Row Details’ to manually enter
- ‘Entity Search’ allows you to search for contributor
- When all information has been entered, hit ‘Submit’
- Save after every entry!
ADDING COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTIONS

• COMMITTEE TYPES: BALLOT ISSUE, INCIDENTAL, INDEPENDENT (PAC), POLITICAL PARTY

• CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM ANOTHER CANDIDATE’S CAMPAIGN DO NOT QUALIFY AS COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTIONS!
  • REPORT USING THE ‘INDIVIDUALS’ TAB
ADDING FUNDRAISER CONTRIBUTIONS

- **Fundraiser Contribution** = aggregate contributions under $50 received at a mass collection event
- Under Contributions tab, navigate to the ‘Fundraiser’ subtab
- Click ‘Add’ to add a new contribution
ADDING FUNDRAISER CONTRIBUTIONS

- Use ‘Row Details’ to manually enter.
- ‘Entity Search’ allows you to search for contributor.
- When all information has been entered, hit ‘Submit’.
  - Date of event, name of event, location, # of attendees/# of tickets sold.
- Save after every entry!
ADDING FUNDRAISER CONTRIBUTIONS

• Can report all <$50 contributions received at a single mass collection event (pass the hat, campaign raffle, silent auction, etc.) using the ‘fundraiser’ tab

• Report all >$50 donations, including those from mass collection events, using the ‘individuals’ tab

• Report each individual mass collection event separately

• Campaign must know name of any contributor–anonymous contributions not allowed, 13-37-217 MCA
REFUNDS, ETC.

- **REFUNDS, ETC.=** REFUNDS, REBATES, SIMILAR ACTIVITY RECEIVED BY THE COMMITTEE
- **UNDER CONTRIBUTIONS TAB, NAVIGATE TO THE ‘REFUNDS, ETC.’ SUBTAB**
- **CLICK ‘ADD’ TO ADD A NEW REFUND, ETC.**
- **SAVE AFTER EVERY ENTRY!**
REFUNDS, ETC.

- Use ‘Row Details’ to manually enter
- ‘Entity Search’ allows you to search for contributor
- When all information has been entered, hit ‘Submit’
- Save after every entry!
REFUNDS, ETC.

• The “REFUNDS, ETC.” tab is where refunds, rebates, or other indirect contributions received by the campaign are reported. Examples include:
  • Interest earned from the campaign bank account
  • Rebates given to a campaign by a vendor for previous purchases
  • Refunds provided to a campaign from a vendor for services the campaign has previously reported paying for (service not provided)
ADDING A LOAN

- **Loan** = Contribution the Committee is obligated to pay back
- Under Contributions Tab, navigate to the ‘Loans’ Subtab
- Click ‘Add’ to add a new loan
ADDING A LOAN

- Use ‘ROW DETAILS’ to manually enter
- ‘ENTITY SEARCH’ allows you to search for contributor
- When all information has been entered, hit ‘SUBMIT’
- Save after every entry!
REVIEW

LET'S NAVIGATE ON CERS - REAL TIME EXAMPLE
QUESTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS
REPORTING EXPENDITURES

• AN EXPENDITURE IS A PURCHASE OR PAYMENT MADE BY A COMMITTEE USING COMMITTEE FUNDS

• EXAMPLE EXPENDITURES: FLIERS SUPPORTING BALLOT ISSUE A; RADIO ADVERTISEMENTS OPPOSING CANDIDATE B; TELEVISION COMMERCIALS ENDORSING ALL COFFEE PARTY CANDIDATES

• REPORT EACH EXPENDITURE USING THE “EXPENDITURES” TAB
EXPENDITURE VS. INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE

• **EXPENDITURE** = AN EXPENDITURE COORDINATED WITH THE CANDIDATE/BALLOT ISSUE IT IS MEANT TO BENEFIT

• EXAMPLES: CONTRIBUTION MADE DIRECTLY TO A CANDIDATE; CAMPAIGN MAILER FINANCED BY A COMMITTEE IN COLLABORATION WITH A SEPARATE BALLOT ISSUE COMMITTEE

• REPORT USING THE ‘EXPENDITURES’ SUBTAB

• **INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE** = AN EXPENDITURE MEANT TO SUPPORT OR OPPOSE A CANDIDATE/BALLOT ISSUE THAT IS NOT COORDINATED WITH A CANDIDATE OR BALLOT ISSUE

• REPORT USING THE ‘INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES’ SUBTAB
ADDING AN EXPENDITURE

- UNDER EXPENDITURES TAB, NAVIGATE TO THE 'EXPENDITURES' SUBTAB
- CLICK 'ADD' TO ADD A NEW EXPENDITURE
ADDING AN EXPENDITURE

- USE ‘ROW DETAILS’ TO MANUALLY ENTER
- ‘ENTITY SEARCH’ ALLOWS YOU TO SEARCH FOR ENTITY
- WHEN ALL REQUIRED INFORMATION HAS BEEN ENTERED, HIT ‘SUBMIT’
  - NAME OF VENDOR, DATE OF EXPENDITURE, AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE, PURPOSE OF EXPENDITURE
- SAVE AFTER EVERY ENTRY!
ADDING AN INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE

- UNDER EXPENDITURES TAB, NAVIGATE TO THE ‘INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES’ SUBTAB
- CLICK ‘ADD’ TO ADD A NEW INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE
ADDING AN INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE

- Use ‘ROW DETAILS’ to manually enter
- ‘ENTITY SEARCH’ allows you to search for entity
- When all required information has been entered, hit ‘SUBMIT’
  - Name of vendor, date of expenditure, amount of expenditure, purpose of expenditure, and name of the candidate/s or issue/s the expenditure was intended to benefit
- Save after every entry!
REPORTING EXPENDITURES

• For contributions received via an online platform (ActBlue, Win Red, PayPal etc.), report processing fee/s charged by the platform as an expenditure of the campaign

• The online donor platform would be listed as the entity
REPORTING EXPENDITURES

- EXPENDITURES MUST BE REPORTED ON THE FINANCE REPORT COVERING THE PERIOD WHERE THE EXPENDITURE WAS MADE
- EXPENDITURES MUST BE SUPPORTED BY A “WRITTEN AGREEMENT, INVOICE, BILLING STATEMENT, OR SIMILAR DOCUMENTATION APPROPRIATE TO THE TRANSACTION”, 44.11.502, ARM
REPORTING EXPENDITURES

- All expenditures must be reported with the full name and address of the vendor, date of the expenditure, purpose of the expenditure, and full amount of the expenditure.
- Independent expenditures must also name the candidate(s) or issue(s) the expenditure was intended to benefit.
REPORTING EXPENDITURES

• “REPORTS OF EXPENDITURES MADE TO A CONSULTANT, ADVERTISING AGENCY, POLLING FIRM, OR OTHER PERSON THAT PERFORMS SERVICES FOR OR ON BEHALF OF A CANDIDATE, POLITICAL COMMITTEE, OR JOINT FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE MUST BE ITEMIZED AND DESCRIBED IN SUFFICIENT DETAIL TO DISCLOSE THE SPECIFIC SERVICES PERFORMED BY THE ENTITY TO WHICH PAYMENT OR REIMBURSEMENT WAS MADE”, 13-37-229(2)(B), MCA
AS WITH ANY OTHER EXPENDITURE, REPORT ALL PAID SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES

IF CONTRACTED OUT OR PART OF AN AD AGENCY SERVICE, MUST BE ITEMIZED
DISCLOSE EXPENDITURE DETAILS USING AN ATTACHMENT

ALLOWS YOU TO ATTACH RECEIPT, INVOICE, ETC. TO THE FINANCE REPORT

BEST PRACTICE!
SUBMIT AN ATTACHMENT.

PROCESS

BEST PRACTICE!

ADD YOUR RECEIPT, STATEMENT, OR INVOICE AS AN ATTACHMENT
REVIEW

LET'S NAVIGATE ON CERS - REAL TIME EXAMPLES

QUESTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS
REPORTING – DEBTS AND PAYMENTS
ADDING A DEBT

• DEBT = OBLIGATION OWED BUT NOT YET PAID BY COMMITTEE

• UNDER DEBTS TAB, NAVIGATE TO THE ‘DEBT/LOAN PAYMENTS’ SUBTAB

• CLICK ‘ADD’ TO ADD A NEW DEBT
ADDING A DEBT

- USE ‘ROW DETAILS’ TO MANUALLY ENTER
- ‘ENTITY SEARCH’ ALLOWS YOU TO SEARCH FOR ENTITY
- WHEN ALL REQUIRED INFORMATION HAS BEEN ENTERED, HIT ‘SUBMIT’
  - NAME OF VENDOR, DATE DEBT INCURRED, AMOUNT OF DEBT, PURPOSE OF DEBT
- SAVE AFTER EVERY ENTRY!
DEBTS

- REPORT DEBTS WITH SAME LEVEL OF DETAIL AS EXPENDITURES
- DEBTS OWED BY THE COMMITTEE MUST BE REPORTED AT THE TIME THE OBLIGATION IS INCURRED
  - COMMON REPORTING ERROR – WAITING FOR INVOICE TO REPORT
  - IF YOU DO NOT KNOW AMOUNT, ESTIMATE (YOU CAN AMEND IF NECESSARY)
ADDING A PAYMENT

- PAYMENT = PAYMENT PROVIDED ON A PREVIOUSLY REPORTED DEBT OR LOAN
- UNDER PAYMENTS TAB, NAVIGATE TO THE ‘PAYMENTS’ SUBTAB
- SELECT A DEBT OR LOAN TO MAKE A PAYMENT ON, THEN CLICK ‘ADD PAYMENT’ TO ADD A NEW PAYMENT
ADDING A PAYMENT

- ENTER THE DATE OF THE PAYMENT IN THE ‘DATE FIELD’
- ENTER THE AMOUNT OF THE PAYMENT IN THE ‘PAID AMOUNT’ FIELD
- WHEN DATE AND PAYMENT AMOUNT INFORMATION HAS BEEN ENTERED, HIT ‘SUBMIT’
- SAVE AFTER EVERY ENTRY!
PAYMENTS

• Payments on outstanding debts or loans owed by the campaign are reported using the ‘Payments’ tab.

• Obligations do not have to be paid off in full all at once – can pay off incrementally.
LET'S NAVIGATE ON CERS - REAL TIME EXAMPLES
QUESTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS
STEP 3 - CERTIFY AND FILE THE REPORT
CERTIFY AND FILE THE REPORT

- FROM THE ‘FILE’ TAB, NAVIGATE TO THE ‘CERTIFY AND FILE’ SUBTAB
- CERTIFY THE REPORT, THEN CLICK ‘CERTIFY AND FILE’
- A REPORT IS NOT FILED UNTIL IT HAS BEEN CERTIFIED AND FILED!
ADDITIONAL ITEMS AND INFORMATION

- ATTRIBUTION
- COMMITTEE TO KEEP RECORDS
- INSPECTION REPORTS AND EXAMS
- ORDERS OF NONCOMPLIANCE AND FORMAL CAMPAIGN COMPLAINTS
ATTRIBUTION

• ALL PAID CAMPAIGN MATERIALS REQUIRE A 'PAID FOR BY' ATTRIBUTION MESSAGE, 13-35-225, MCA.
  • INCLUDES ANY PAID SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY!

• MUST INCLUDE THE STATEMENT ‘PAID FOR BY’ WITH THE NAME OF THE COMMITTEE, COMMITTEE ADDRESS, AND NAME OF COMMITTEE TREASURER/OTHER LISTED OFFICER

• EXAMPLE: PAID FOR BY MONTANANS FOR COFFEE, PO BOX 1, HELENA, MT 59601. J COFFEE, TREASURER
COMMITTEE TO KEEP RECORDS

- For each committee, the treasurer “shall keep detailed accounts of all contributions received and all expenditures made by or on behalf of the candidate”, 13-37-208, MCA
- Records must be kept for 4 years!
INSPECTION REPORTS & EXAMS

- **AFTER A REPORT IS FILED, COPP WILL PROVIDE GUIDANCE WITH CURSORY INSPECTION REPORTS**
- **MAKE REVISIONS AS REQUESTED**
- **EXAM AT END OF CAMPAIGN**
- **IT IS THE COMMITTEE’S ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT CORRECTLY AND COMPLETELY!**
ORDER OF NONCOMPLIANCE AND FORMAL COMPLAINTS

• THE COMMISSIONER MAY FILE AN ORDER OF NONCOMPLIANCE COMPPELLING COMPLIANCE WITH ALL REPORTING LAWS/RULES

• FAILURE TO FILE REPORTS AS REQUIRED OR FULLY/ACCURATELY DISCLOSE CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED AND/OR EXPENDITURES MADE MAY LEAD TO A FORMAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE COMPLAINT BEING FILED AGAINST A COMMITTEE

• COMPLAINT PROCESS IS PUBLIC- ANYONE CAN FILE A COMPLAINT
QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

- **HTTPS://POLITICALPRACTICES.MT.GOV/**
- **EMAIL:** CPPHELP@MT.GOV AND CPPCOMPLIANCE@MT.GOV
- **PHONE:** (406) 444-2942
- **FACEBOOK/TWITTER:** @MONTANACOOPP
- **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**
  - THE COMMITTEE AND TREASURER GUIDE TO NAVIGATING CERS
  - ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING MANUAL FOR POLITICAL COMMITTEES (PINK BOOK)

- **PHOTO CREDIT:**
  - SCOTT COOK (SLIDES 23, 26, AND 36)
  - VISIT MONTANA (VISITMT.COM AND FACEBOOK.COM/VISITMONTANA) FOR ALL OTHERS

VISIT MONTANA (VISITMT.COM AND FACEBOOK.COM/VISITMONTANA) FOR ALL OTHERS