

Candidate Campaign Finance Responsibilities

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Office of Political Practices

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COMMISSIONER

Training outline

1. Candidate's Requirements-
Overview
2. Candidate Forms & Reporting
Dates
3. Campaign Finance Reporting
(Contributions, Expenditures, &
Debts)
4. Campaign Finance Review
Process
5. Tips and Resources



cpphelp@mt.gov

1. Candidate's Requirements- Overview



Candidate's Requirements- Overview

- **It is the responsibility and obligation of the candidate to understand and comply with all Montana campaign finance laws!** While COPP staff is available to provide information to candidates and treasurers, the candidate/candidate's campaign is ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with all campaign finance and reporting requirements
- Candidates should familiarize themselves with Montana's campaign finance reporting laws, specifically Montana Code Annotated (MCA) Title 13, Chapter 37 (available [here](#)). Candidates should also review Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Chapter 44.11 (available [here](#))

2. Candidate Forms and Reporting Dates



Statement of Candidate (Form C-1/C-1A)

- File the Statement of Candidate with the COPP within 5 days of:
 - Soliciting or receiving a contribution;
 - Making an expenditure; or
 - Filing as a candidate for elected office
- Statement of Candidate must be filed electronically, utilizing the Campaign Electronic Reporting System (CERS)

Statement of Candidate (Form C-1/C-1A)

- The Statement of Candidate must include:
 - The candidate's name and contact information (phone AND email);
 - The campaign Treasurer's name and contact information (phone AND email); and
 - The name and address of the campaign depository

Statement of Candidate (Form C-1/C-1A)

- City/County/School candidates must designate 'B' or 'C' box
 - 'B' box candidates do not expect to raise or spend over \$500, exempt from campaign finance reporting
 - Must file finance reports if exceed \$500 AND amend C1A form to C box
 - 'C' box candidates plan to exceed \$500, are required to file campaign finance reports

Candidate Reporting Dates



1. Reporting Dates for Odd Year Election (Municipal)
 2. Reporting Dates for Even Year Election
 3. Reporting Dates for Special Elections (including school elections)
- Full Reporting Calendar for the 2022 primary and general elections available online at <https://politicalpractices.mt.gov/docs/2022-Calendar/Even-year-election-calendar--candidates.pdf>

3. Campaign Finance Reporting



Campaign Finance Reporting

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 received;
2. Expenditures made; and
3. Debts & Loans owed



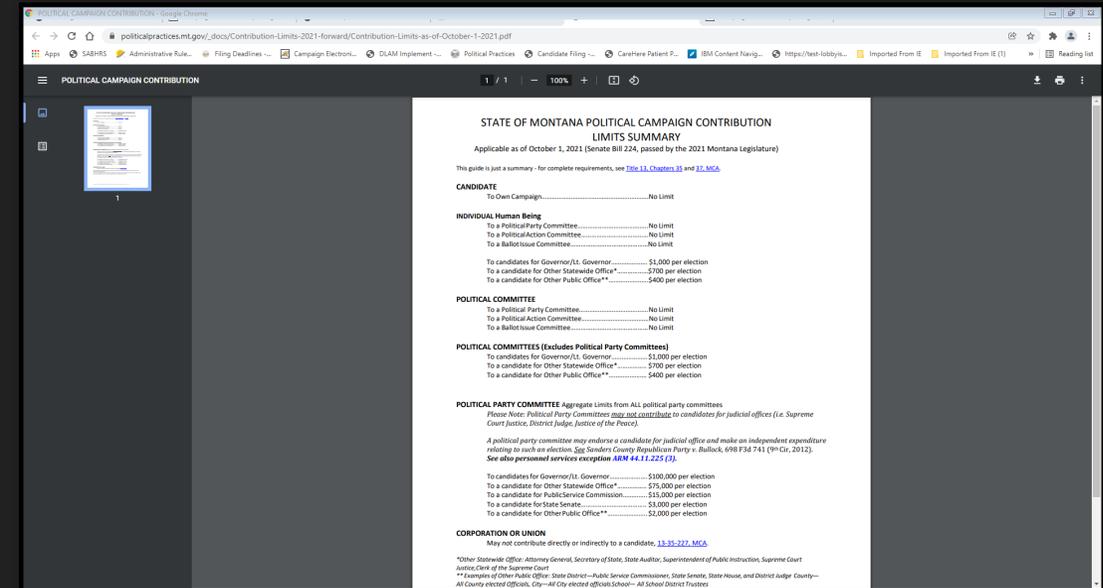
Contributions

- 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 a member of the candidate’s family!), committee, or other entity provides a campaign with money or goods/services of value for free or at a reduced rate in an effort to support that campaign, it is a contribution



Contribution Limits

- Campaign finance limits apply to EACH election (primary and general) *if* you have a primary opponent
- Aggregate contribution limits apply for political party committees
- Current limits available at <https://politicalpractices.mt.gov/Home/Contribution-Limits>



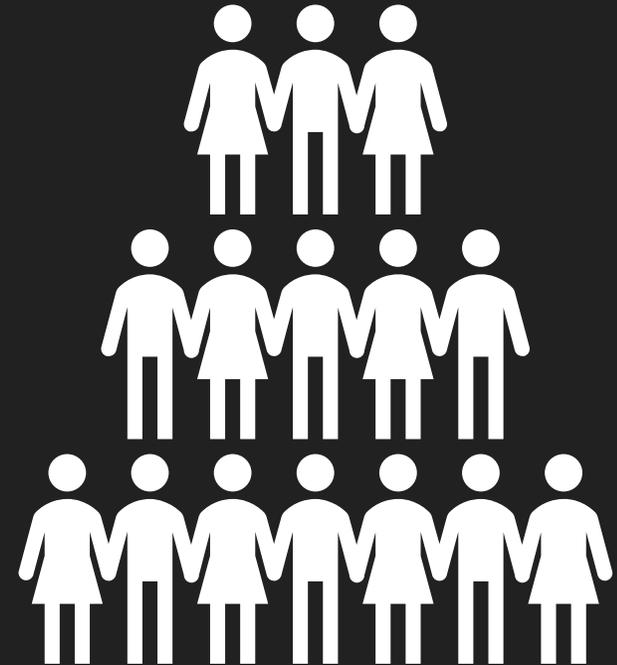
Contributions: Types of Contributions

1. Contributions from individuals
2. Contributions from committees
3. Fundraisers
4. Refunds, rebates, etc.
5. Loans
6. Candidate contributions



Contributions: Individual

- Amount of contribution (\$50 threshold)
- Identifying contributor information:
 - Election (Primary or General)
 - Name
 - Address
 - Occupation/Employer
 - Monetary or in-kind (All in-kind contributions must include a description of the specific items or services received by the campaign)
- ****Anonymous contributions are illegal****



Contributions: Committee

- Amount of contribution
- Details to disclose:
 - Date
 - Election (Primary or General)
 - Committee name
 - 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)



Contributions: Fundraisers

- **Each individual fundraising event held by the campaign must be reported separately!**
- Details to include:
 - Date and location of fundraiser event
 - Event description (Raffle, pass-the-hat, banquet, silent auction, etc.)
 - Number of attendees/tickets sold
 - Total amount raised (<\$50 contributions only)

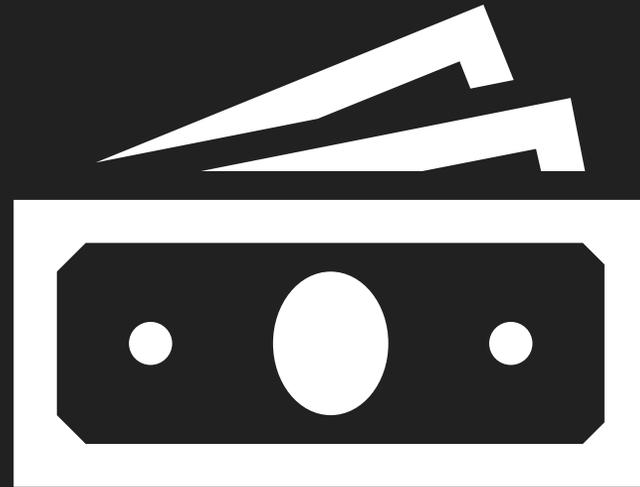


Contributions: Fundraisers

- Contributions of less than \$50 from a fundraiser can be reported as a lump sum.
- Any individual contribution of \$50 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 \$50 reporting threshold. This also ensures that if an individual contributes \$50 in the aggregate or more, their contributions can be correctly reported.

Candidate 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



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 of the expenditure
 - Description of expense – Ad agency, contractor, etc. must be itemized



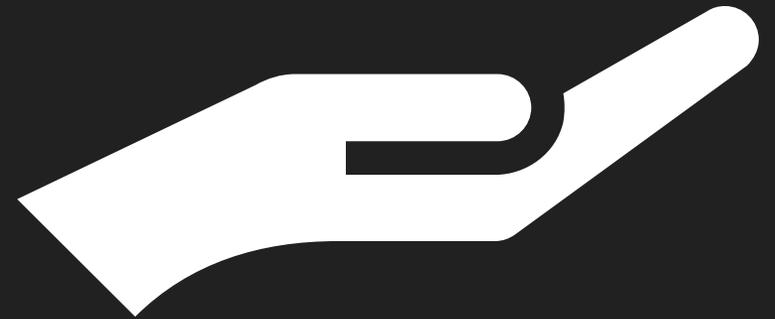
Expenditures: Attribution for Paid Communications - Candidate

- 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. Party affiliation is also required for candidates in a partisan race.
 - For example: Paid for by Potter for City Council, 12 Cupboard Lane, Helena, MT 59601. Boy wizard party.
- <https://politicalpractices.mt.gov/Education-and-Resources/Attribution-Information>

PAID FOR BY

Campaign Finance: Debts and Loans

- Loan= Money loaned to the campaign to be paid back
 - All loans are contributions, subject to campaign contribution limits
- Debt= Obligation owed by the campaign for provision of goods/services
 - Debts 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



4. Campaign Finance Review Process



Campaign Finance Review Process

- **First, the candidate files a campaign finance report**
 - COPP Compliance Specialists review the report and send the candidate an Inspection Report identifying any issues that require additional attention or detail;
 - Candidate to make requested changes
- **Same process for all subsequent finance reports filed by candidate**

5. Tips and Resources



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. Don't wait until the last minute to complete your campaign finance reports! Update reports regularly throughout the reporting period;
3. Read your inspection reports and make corrections as suggested
4. Contact the COPP for support and with questions!

RESOURCES

COMMISSIONER OF POLITICAL PRACTICES
Promoting confidence, transparency, and accountability in Montana's democratic processes.

ONLINE SERVICES | **FORMS** | **REPORTING CALENDARS** | **CONTRIBUTION LIMITS** | BALLOT COLLECTION BIPA | **ABOUT US**

CANDIDATE AND COMMITTEE INFORMATION

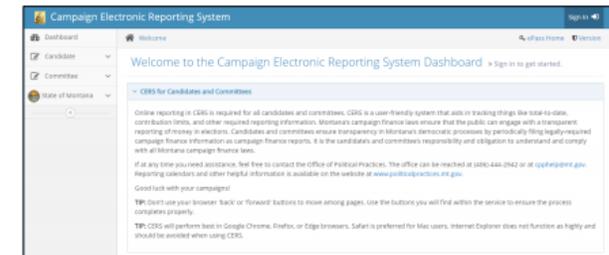
BALLLOT INTERFERENCE PREVENTION ACT

CAMPAIGN FINANCE DISCLOSURE

THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION & LOBBYING

Welcome to the Commissioner of Political Practice's website!

Candidate and Treasurer Guide to Navigating the Campaign Electronic Reporting System (CERS)



Office of Political Practices
1209 8th Avenue, Helena
(406) 444-4270

Updated February 2020

2022 Training

Specialized training will be announced throughout the year



Save the Date - COPP 2022 Campaign Finance Reporting Training

February 22 - ZOOM - School District Candidates Only

March 1 - ZOOM only - Candidates 10AM-Noon / PM Committees 1PM-3PM

March 9 - In Billings + Zoom 1PM-3PM (Candidates)

March 10 - In Bozeman + Zoom 2PM - 4PM (Candidates)

March 22 - In Helena + Zoom 10AM-Noon Candidates / 1PM-3PM Committees

April 12 - In Missoula + Zoom 1PM - 3PM (Candidates)

April 13 - In Great Falls + Zoom 1PM - 3PM (Candidates)

Stay tuned for in-person locations and further info
politicalpractices.mt.gov

Questions? Contact the COPP!



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