

• What Starts the Whole Process?

Becoming a candidate. According to the disclosure law, you become a candidate when you do one of these things: raise or spend money for your campaign; reserve space or purchase advertising to promote your candidacy; authorize someone else to do any of these activities for you; state publicly that you're seeking office; or file a declaration of candidacy.

• Once I Become a Candidate, Then What?

Within two weeks of the date you become a candidate, you must file a Personal Financial Affairs Statement* (Form F-1) and a Candidate Registration form (Form C-1) with the PDC, if required. A copy of the C-1 must be filed with your county auditor or elections officer.

*An incumbent officeholder who has filed an F-1 earlier in the year does not need to file a second F-1 in the same year after becoming a candidate.

• Which Candidates Must File Disclosure Reports?

One of two things determines what a candidate discloses. For most candidates, it's the number of registered voters in the jurisdiction where the candidate runs for office. If you are a candidate running for office in a very small jurisdiction, the total amount of contributions you receive or expect to receive will determine whether you report contributions & expenditures.

You must file a Personal Financial Affairs Statement and campaign disclosure reports if you are:

- a state office candidate
- a county office candidate
- a local or judicial office candidate in a jurisdiction with 5,000 or more registered voters
- a candidate who receives or expects to receive contributions of \$5,000 or more in the aggregate regardless of the number of registered voters

File just a Personal Financial Affairs Statement if you are:

- a candidate for local or judicial office in a jurisdiction with 1,000 or more but less than 5,000 registered voters and you do not expect to receive contributions totaling \$5,000 or more

A candidate seeking election to an office in a jurisdiction with less than 1,000 registered voters who does not receive or expect to receive contributions totaling \$5,000 or more does not file any reports with the Public Disclosure Commission.

Registered voter counts are available from the PDC or your county elections office.

• Where Do I Get Blank Forms and Instructions?

Form templates, brochures, manuals, and training videos are available online at www.pdc.wa.gov under Filer Resources. Contact the PDC at 360-753-1111 or toll-free at 1-877-601-2828 if you do not have Internet access. The PDC offers free compliance training; the schedule is at www.pdc.wa.gov/filers.

• Electronic Filing

A candidate that expects to spend \$10,000 or more is required to file campaign finance reports electronically. The PDC's free software, ORCA, can be used to electronically file the required campaign disclosure reports. The PDC staff offers free ORCA training – the schedule is available at www.pdc.wa.gov/filers.

To work properly, campaign data from the start of the campaign must be entered into the system.

For assistance with electronic filing of campaign finance reports, go to the PDC web page at www.pdc.wa.gov/filers or call toll free at 1-877-601-2828.

• I Suspect There's More to Reporting . . . Right?

Probably. It depends on how much you're going to raise and spend on your campaign.

If you choose Mini Reporting (limiting what you raise or spend to \$5,000 and limiting contributions from one source other than yourself to \$500), the C-1 and the F-1 are the only PDC reports you have to file. Be sure to access and carefully review the Mini Reporting manual found at www.pdc.wa.gov/filers.

If you're going to raise and spend over \$5,000 to get elected (or less than that, but you want to accept more than \$500 from one or more donors), you must select the Full Reporting option. You'll be required to file frequent and detailed contribution and expenditure reports (Forms C-3 and C-4, respectively).

The PDC realizes that candidates are not always able to forecast campaign costs accurately, and may need to switch reporting options. Changing from mini to full reporting must be done at least 30 business days before the election and approved by the PDC staff. A candidate who wishes to change from mini to full reporting must notify all opponents in writing, amend the registration, file contribution & expenditure reports from the start of the campaign, and send a letter to the PDC confirming that these steps have been completed before exceeding the mini reporting limits. The change in reporting options will be approved only if all of these steps are completed at least 30 business days before the election.

The approval to change reporting options from mini to full reporting within 30 business days of the election is not automatic and will only be granted under circumstances outlined in WAC 390-16-125.

- **When are Contribution and Expenditure Reports Due?**

C-3 Contribution Reports: Before June 1 of the election year, candidates fill out a C-3 report for each bank deposit and file these reports with their C-4 reports. Beginning June 1, each time you make a deposit you must file a C-3 no later than the following Monday. Since contributions must be deposited within 5 business days of receipt, active campaigns will make at least one weekly deposit.

C-4 Summary Reports: This report, along with its attached schedules, summarizes the campaign's financial activity and shows itemized expenditures for a specific period. C-4s are due:

From the beginning of the campaign through May of the election year, if a campaign has over \$200 in contributions or expenditures during a month, a C-4 report is filed by the 10th of the following month. Beginning with June of the election year and continuing through the primary and general elections, C-4 reports are due 21 and 7 days *before* each election and on the 10th of the month *after* the month the election was held with the candidate's name on the ballot, even if there was little or no activity to report.

Specific filing dates are listed in the 2010 Key Reporting Dates for Candidates found under Filer Resources at www.pdc.wa.gov. All PDC reports are considered filed as of the postmark date or, if filed electronically, on the file transfer date.

- **Where Do I File PDC Reports?**

Send the original of all campaign reports (the "C" series) to the PDC; provide a copy of these campaign reports to your county elections officer. The personal financial affairs statement (F-1) is, in most cases, filed only with PDC in Olympia. By local ordinance, city office candidates may also have to file copies of "C" reports and the F-1 with their city clerk.

NOTE: Electronically filed reports are not required to be filed with the county auditor.

- **Must I Have a Separate Campaign Account?**

Candidates must open a separate campaign account in a bank, credit union or savings and loan institution if they accept monetary contributions. A candidate who personally funds his/her entire campaign and accepts no contributions does not have to open a bank account. These candidates are required to make all campaign records, which may include the personal checkbook register and bank statements, available for public inspection during the eight days before the election.

- **From Whom May I Accept Contributions?**

Generally, contributions from individuals, corporations, unions and other organizations are permitted. Candidates for legislative, state executive office, judicial, and some county offices have special contributor restrictions. By federal law, no foreign corporations or citizens (unless they have green cards), national banks and corporations organized by authority of Congress and federal government contractors may contribute to or spend funds on behalf of U.S. candidates.

A candidate may personally finance his/her entire campaign. Local restrictions may apply to candidates seeking some county and city offices. Check with your county elections office or your city clerk.

- **May I Serve as My Own Treasurer?**

Yes. However, candidates who select Full Reporting are strongly encouraged to enlist the aid of a treasurer who has the time and energy necessary to keep detailed, accurate records and file frequent reports. Your treasurer does not need to be a professional accountant.

- **Is There a Contribution Limit?**

State law sets contribution limits on donations to legislative, state executive, and judicial office candidates, as well as county office and port commissioner candidates in jurisdictions with more than 200,000 registered voters as of the last General Election [Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Spokane Counties and the Ports of Tacoma and Seattle in 2010] as well as bona fide political party and caucus political committees. See instruction manuals for details. **Beginning June 10, limits are extended to county office candidates in all counties, all mayoral candidates, and all city council candidates.**

During the 21 days before the general election, no contributor, except the state committee of a bona fide political party, may give more than a total of \$50,000 to a statewide office candidate or \$5,000 to any other candidate or political committee. This restriction also applies to a candidate's personal funds.

Candidates must not accept contributions that exceed their respective limits. Additional local restrictions may apply to candidates seeking local office.

- **Is There an Expenditure Limit?**

Candidates who choose Mini Reporting self-impose an expenditure limit of \$5,000. There are no expenditure limits for candidates who choose Full Reporting.

- **Must I Identify All Contributors?**

Anyone who donates monetary and in-kind contributions totaling more than \$25 over the course of your campaign must be identified by name and full address. Plus, if an individual gives you more than \$100 in the aggregate, you must show this person's occupation and the name, city and state of his or her employer.

- **May I Be Reimbursed for the Personal Funds I Spend on My Campaign?**

A candidate's contributions to his or her own campaign must first be reported as loans in order to be eligible for repayment. A candidate can be repaid up to \$4,700 for primary election loans and \$4,700 for general election loans. Reimbursements for the candidate's out-of-pocket campaign expenses must be made within three weeks or the reimbursement will count against the loan repayment limit.

- **Are There Laws Governing Political Ads?**

Yes. Details are in the PDC's Political Advertising brochure or the Political Advertising section in the instruction manual.

For more information, contact PDC at (360) 753-1111, toll-free 1-877-601-2828, pdc@pdc.wa.gov (e-mail), or visit PDC's Website (<http://www.pdc.wa.gov>).