

MAINE REVISED STATUTES
TITLE 21-A, CHAPTER 14: THE MAINE CLEAN ELECTION ACT

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21-A § 1122. Definitions

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

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7. Qualifying contribution. “Qualifying contribution” means a donation:

- A. Of \$5 or more in the form of cash, a check or a money order payable to the fund and signed by the contributor in support of a candidate or a payment made over the Internet in support of a candidate according to the procedure established by the commission;
- B. Made by a registered voter within the electoral division for the office a candidate is seeking and whose voter registration has been verified according to procedures established by the commission;
- C. Made during the designated qualifying period; and
- D. That the contributor acknowledges was made with the contributor’s personal funds and in support of the candidate and was not given in exchange for anything of value and that the candidate acknowledges was obtained with the candidate’s knowledge and approval and that nothing of value was given in exchange for the contribution, on forms provided by the commission.

8. Qualifying period. “Qualifying period” means the following.

- A. For a gubernatorial participating candidate, the qualifying period begins October 15th immediately preceding the election year and ends at 5:00 p.m. on April 1st of the election year.
- B. For State Senate or State House of Representatives participating candidates, the qualifying period begins January 1st of the election year and ends at 5:00 p.m. on April 20th of that election year or the next business day following April 20th if the office of the commission is closed on April 20th.

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21-A § 1125. Terms of participation

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3. Qualifying contributions. The collection of qualifying contributions is governed by this subsection.

- A. (REPEALED)
- B. (REPEALED)

C. (REPEALED)

D. To be eligible to receive funding from the fund, participating candidates must obtain qualifying contributions during the qualifying period as follows:

- (1) For a gubernatorial candidate, at least 3,200 verified registered voters of this State must support the candidacy by providing a qualifying contribution to that candidate;
- (2) For a candidate for the State Senate, at least 175 verified registered voters from the candidate's electoral division must support the candidacy by providing a qualifying contribution to that candidate; or
- (3) For a candidate for the State House of Representatives, at least 60 verified registered voters from the candidate's electoral division must support the candidacy by providing a qualifying contribution to that candidate.

E. A contributor making a qualifying contribution by check or money order shall sign the check or money order. If the contributor has made a check or money order payable to a participating candidate in error, the candidate may remedy the error by endorsing the check or money order to the fund.

F. A contributor may make a qualifying contribution to a participating candidate in the form of cash, as long as the contributor signs a form prepared by the commission affirming that the contributor made the contribution with personal funds. A candidate receiving qualifying contributions in cash shall submit the contributions to the commission in the aggregate in the form of a cashier's check or money order payable to the fund. The candidate may not deposit qualifying contributions received in cash into the candidate's campaign account.

G. As an alternative to making a qualifying contribution under paragraph F, a contributor may make a qualifying contribution to a participating candidate in the form of cash, as long as the candidate submits a money order in the same amount to the commission. The money order must be signed by the contributor to be a valid qualifying contribution. The cash received from the contributor must be used to reimburse the person who provided the money order.

H. Any fees for a cashier's check or a money order paid with seed money must be reported as an expenditure in campaign finance reports submitted to the commission. If a participating candidate uses personal funds to pay fees for the purchase of a cashier's check or money order, those fees are not a contribution to the candidate and are not required to be disclosed in campaign finance reports. The candidate shall report any cashier's check or money order fees paid by anyone other than the candidate as an in-kind contribution subject to seed money limitations.

I. The commission may establish by routine technical rule, adopted in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A, a procedure for a qualifying contribution to be made by a credit or debit transaction and by electronic funds transfer over the Internet. Records containing information provided by individuals who have made qualifying contributions over the Internet are confidential, except for the name of the individual making the contribution, the date of the contribution, the individual's residential address and the name and office sought of the candidate in whose support the contribution was made.

J. A payment, gift or anything of value may not be given in exchange for a qualifying contribution. It is a violation of this chapter for a participating candidate or an agent of the

participating candidate to misrepresent the purpose of soliciting qualifying contributions and obtaining the contributor's signed acknowledgment.

3-A. Additional qualifying contributions. Participating or certified candidates may collect and submit to the commission additional qualifying contributions at the times specified in subsection 8-E. The commission shall credit a candidate with either one qualifying contribution or one additional qualifying contribution, but not both, from any one contributor during the same election cycle. If any candidate collects and submits to the commission qualifying contributions or additional qualifying contributions that cannot be credited pursuant to this subsection, those qualifying contributions or additional qualifying contributions may be refunded to the contributor or deposited into the Maine Clean Election Fund at the discretion of the candidate. The procedures and restrictions set out in subsection 3, paragraphs E to J apply to additional qualifying contributions.

⇒ **3-B. Receipt and acknowledgment forms.** The commission shall prepare forms for persons making qualifying contributions to acknowledge the contribution as provided in section 1122, subsection 7, paragraph D. A qualifying contribution is not valid if anyone other than the contributor signed the contributor's name to the form, except that a qualifying contribution is valid if it is signed by the contributor's immediate family member or live-in caregiver when the contributor is unable to sign due to a physical impairment or disability.

⇒ **4. Filing with commission.** A participating candidate must submit qualifying contributions, receipts and acknowledgment forms, proof of verification of voter registration and a seed money report to the commission during the qualifying period according to procedures developed by the commission, except as provided under subsection 11.

⇒ **5. Certification of Maine Clean Election Act candidates.** Upon receipt of a final submittal of qualifying contributions by a participating candidate, the executive director of the commission shall determine whether the candidate has:

- A. Signed and filed a declaration of intent to participate in this Act;
- B. Submitted the appropriate number of valid qualifying contributions;
- C. Qualified as a candidate by petition or other means no later than 5 business days after the end of the qualifying period;
- C-1. **(REPEALED)**
- D. Not accepted contributions, except for seed money contributions, and otherwise complied with seed money restrictions;
 - D-1. Not run for the same office as a nonparticipating candidate in a primary election in the same election year;
 - D-2. Not been found to have made a material false statement in a report or other document submitted to the commission;
 - D-3. Not otherwise substantially violated the provisions of this chapter or chapter 13;
 - D-4. Not failed to pay any civil penalty assessed by the commission under this Title, except that a candidate has 3 business days from the date of the request for certification to pay the outstanding penalty and remain eligible for certification;

D-5. Not submitted any fraudulent qualifying contributions or any falsified acknowledgement forms for qualifying contributions or seed money contributions; and

E. Otherwise met the requirements for participation in this Act.

The executive director shall certify a candidate complying with the requirements of this section as a Maine Clean Election Act candidate as soon as possible after final submittal of qualifying contributions and other supporting documents required under subsection 4 but no later than 3 business days for legislative candidates and 5 business days for gubernatorial candidates. The executive director may take additional time if further investigation is necessary to verify compliance with this Act as long as the commission notifies the candidate regarding the anticipated schedule for conclusion of the investigation. A candidate or other interested person may appeal the decision of the executive director to the members of the commission in accordance with subsection 14.

A certified candidate must comply with all requirements of this Act after certification and throughout the primary and general election periods. Failure to do so is a violation of this chapter.

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14. Appeals. A candidate who has been denied certification as a Maine Clean Election Act candidate by the commission's executive director, the opponent of a candidate who has been granted certification as a Maine Clean Election Act candidate or other interested persons may challenge a certification decision by the executive director as follows.

A. A challenger may appeal to the commission within 7 days of the certification decision. The appeal must be in writing and must set forth the reasons for the appeal.

B. Within 5 days after an appeal is properly made and after notice is given to the challenger and any opponent, the commission shall hold a hearing, except that the commission may extend this period upon agreement of the challenger and the candidate whose certification is the subject of the appeal, or in response to the request of either party upon a showing of good cause. The appellant has the burden of proving that the certification decision was in error as a matter of law or was based on factual error. The commission must rule on the appeal within 5 business days after the completion of the hearing.

C. A challenger may appeal the decision of the commission in paragraph B by commencing an action in Superior Court within 5 days of the date of the commission's decision. The action must be conducted in accordance with Rule 80C of the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, except that the court shall issue its written decision within 20 days of the date of the commission's decision. Any aggrieved party may appeal the decision of the Superior Court by filing a notice of appeal within 3 days of that decision. The record on appeal must be transmitted to the Law Court within 3 days after the notice of appeal is filed. After filing the notice of appeal, the parties have 4 days to file briefs and appendices with the clerk of the court. The court shall consider the case as soon as possible after the record and briefs have been filed and shall issue its decision within 14 days of the decision of the Superior Court.

D. A candidate whose certification as a Maine Clean Election Act candidate is reversed on appeal must return to the commission any unspent revenues distributed from the fund. If the commission or court finds that an appeal was made frivolously or to cause delay or hardship, the commission or court may require the moving party to pay costs of the commission, court and opposing parties, if any.

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SECTION 2. PROCEDURES FOR PARTICIPATION

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4. Qualifying Contributions


- A. **General.** A candidate may collect qualifying contributions only during the relevant qualifying period for certification and the relevant period for additional qualifying contributions [§§ 1122(8) and 1125(8-E)]. Qualifying contributions collected more than five days before filing a Declaration of Intent with the Commission will not be counted for any purpose. Qualifying contributions must be acknowledged by the person making the contribution and reported on forms provided by the Commission.

The forms must include:

- (1) the name, residential address and signature of the contributor;
- (2) an affirmation by the contributor that the contribution was made with his or her personal funds, in support of the candidate and that the contributor did not receive anything of value in exchange for his or her signature and contribution;
- (3) a clear and conspicuous statement that the candidate is collecting signatures and qualifying contributions in order to obtain public funding to finance the candidate's campaign;
- (4) a confirmation that the contributor is a registered voter indicated by the signature of the municipal registrar or his or her designee or by the Commission's online qualifying contribution service; and
-  (5) an affirmation by the person who circulated the form that the circulator collected the contribution, that to the best of the circulator's knowledge and belief the contribution came from the personal funds of the contributor, that nothing was provided to the contributor in exchange for the contribution, and any additional information required by the Commission in order to protect the reliability of the qualification process. Contributions made through the Commission's online qualifying contribution service do not require a circulator's affirmation.

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F. Verification of Registered Voters


- (1) A candidate must obtain verification that contributors who made qualifying contributions to that candidate are registered voters, in accordance with written procedures established by the Commission.
-  (2) For qualifying contributions made by check or by money order, a candidate must obtain written verification from the Registrar(s) of Voters, or verify the contributor's voter registration using the Commission's online qualifying contribution service, as specified in the Commission's written procedures.
- (3) For qualifying contributions made by credit or debit card using the Commission's online service, if the service is unable to verify the voter registration of the contributor, the candidate must obtain written verification from the Registrar.
- (4) Upon request of a candidate, and within 10 business days after the date of the request, the Registrar must verify the names of contributors of qualifying contributions who are registered voters within the electoral division for the office the candidate is seeking.

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SECTION 3. CERTIFICATION OF PARTICIPATING CANDIDATES

1. **Request for Certification.** A participating candidate may submit a completed request for certification to the Commission at any time during the qualifying period but not later than 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the relevant qualifying period. The Commission may develop written procedures consistent with this section for candidates to submit qualifying contributions and related materials to facilitate the efficient payment of initial public campaign funding. The request will be deemed complete and considered for certification only when the candidate has submitted to the Commission:
 - A. the qualifying contributions attached to the corresponding original receipt and acknowledgement forms with confirmation of the contributors' voter registration and the receipt and acknowledgement forms for any qualifying contributions collected on the Commission's online qualifying contribution service;
 - B. a list of all individuals making qualifying contributions and their town or city of residence, in a format specified by the Commission sorted alphabetically by the contributor's last name;
 - C. *[Repealed.]*
 - D. a seed money report of contributions, expenditures, and obligations made or incurred after becoming a candidate, including a report of any unspent seed money; and
 - E. a signed request for certification on a form provided by the Commission which contains an affirmation by the candidate that he or she has complied with all seed

money and qualifying contribution requirements, has established a separate federally-insured bank account for campaign purposes and, if applicable, that any person who circulated receipt and acknowledgement forms and collected qualifying contributions acted with the candidate's knowledge and consent, and any other information relevant to the certification process.

-  F. A candidate may request an extension of time to comply with paragraph D. The Commission staff shall grant all reasonable requests or state in writing the reasons for denying the request. The Commission and the Commission staff may not grant an extension of time to comply with paragraphs A, B and E.
2. **Order of Review.** The Commission will review candidate requests for certification in the order in which they are received, except that it will give priority to those candidates who are in a contested primary election.
 3. **Unspent Seed Money.** In order to distribute funds expeditiously, the Commission will deduct from the initial distribution from the Fund to a certified candidate an amount equal to the amount of unspent seed money reported by that candidate.
 4. **Certification.** The Commission will certify a candidate as a *Maine Clean Election Act* candidate upon the participating candidate's satisfaction of the requirements of the Act and this chapter.
 5. **Appeals.** Any appeals challenging a certification decision by the Commission must be in accordance with the Act [§1125(14)].