

COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS & ELECTION PRACTICES
135 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

2018 Beginning Guide Candidates for Governor (Traditionally Financed)





Tips for a Successful Start

- ◇ Register with the Commission before accepting any contributions or making expenditures. A candidate may wish to name a campaign committee when registering, but it is not required.
- ◇ If a candidate raised or spent any funds while exploring whether to run, she or he will have to report all financial activity during the exploratory phase in the candidate's first report.
- ◇ The campaign must set up a separate bank account for the campaign and must not commingle any personal or business funds with campaign funds. All payments should be made directly from the campaign account, using a debit card or checks. The campaign should avoid using cash to pay for campaign goods and services; checks and debits cards are better for record-keeping.
- ◇ Appoint a competent treasurer who will actively manage the campaign's finances and reporting responsibilities. A candidate may also appoint a deputy treasurer.
- ◇ If a candidate raises or spends more than \$1,000 in 2017, she or he will have to file a campaign finance report on July 17, 2017 or January 16, 2018.
- ◇ A candidate must keep a detailed and exact account of all contributions and expenditures over \$50, as well as a receipt or invoice for expenditures made or authorized by the candidate. The same requirements exist for purchases made by others on behalf of the candidate and later reimbursed with campaign funds.



Documents usually kept by campaigns include: campaign bank account statements and canceled checks; signed and dated contracts for services provided to the campaign; and labor records and tax forms for campaign staff.

- ◇ All printed campaign material, including fundraising letters, palm cards, and online publications (such as a website) must include a disclosure statement indicating that the material has been authorized and paid for by the candidate or campaign.
- ◇ It is highly recommended that the candidate and campaign staff read materials published by the Commission, and call or email the candidate's assigned Candidate Registrar with any questions or concerns throughout the campaign.



Contributions: The Basics

- ◇ Contributions are limited to \$1,600 per source for each election; *i.e.*, an individual may donate \$1,600 for the primary and another \$1,600 for the general, totaling \$3,200. Unenrolled (“independent”) candidates do not have primaries and may only accept \$1,600 for the general election from a single source. A candidate and her or his spouse/domestic partner are not subject to contribution limits to her or his own campaign.
- ◇ Contributions for the general election may be collected before the primary, provided they are segregated from primary funds and not used for the primary election. A party candidate who wins the primary may carry forward unspent primary funds to use for the general election.
- ◇ A campaign is required to keep an exact account of the name and address of every contributor giving more than \$10, as well as the date and amount of the contribution. For contributors giving more than \$50 in aggregate, the campaign must request employer and occupation information. Fundraising websites and contribution forms used by a campaign should include fields for all required information.
- ◇ No one may make a contribution in the name of another. If a candidate is uncertain of the source of a contribution, she or he is expected to take reasonable steps to identify the source of the funds and report the actual contributor.
- ◇ If a campaign receives a contribution with the names of two individuals printed on the check, the contribution should be reported as being from the individual who signed the check, unless the campaign has received different instructions from the contributor(s).
- ◇ Goods and services provided to a campaign at reduced or no cost are considered in-kind contributions and are subject to contribution limits. Volunteer labor is not an in-kind contribution. Donated office space and equipment are not in-kind contributions, provided the owner incurs no additional cost.
- ◇ Other entities making expenditures to support the candidate, or oppose the candidate’s opponent, must do so completely independently of the campaign. Otherwise the expenditures are in-kind contributions to the campaign.

Notes on the 2018 Traditionally Financed Gubernatorial Beginning Guide

This guide is intended to serve as an introduction to campaign finance reporting for gubernatorial candidates. This guide does not cover all aspects of those requirements, nor does it supplant the Commission's Candidate Quick Guide or Guidebook. The Commission's publications are not a substitute for the Commission's statutes and rules. Please do not hesitate to contact the Commission staff with any questions or concerns. We are here to help in any way we can.

The goal of this guide is to explain some important points about starting out as a gubernatorial candidate. Thus, this guide covers registration, early reporting requirements, and contribution guidelines. It does not cover many of the other responsibilities candidates will have, such as filing reports or the details of disclosure statements. Again, please do not hesitate to contact the Commission staff with any questions.

Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics & Election Practices

Location: 45 Memorial Circle, Augusta, Maine 04330

Mailing: 135 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0135

Phone: (207) 287-4179

Fax: (207) 287-6775

Email: ethics@maine.gov