



KEY FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICES ACT REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATES

1. Becoming a Candidate

- You become a candidate when you publicly announce your intention to run and receive a contribution or make an expenditure.
- Within 10 days of becoming a candidate, file a Candidate Affidavit through the Secretary of State's online campaign finance disclosure website, TRACER.

2. Candidate Type and Filing:

- You may choose whether to self-fund your campaign (standalone candidate) or accept contributions (candidate committee). If you accept contributions, you must register a candidate committee.
 - **Standalone Candidate:** Self-funded; files reports only when expenditures occur.
 - **Candidate Committee:** Accepts contributions; must register before accepting contributions and file reports to show contributions and expenditures regardless of activity level.

3. Reporting Deadlines:

- Refer to the [official filing calendar](#) on the Secretary of State's website for specific dates for 2025. Election years have frequent reporting deadlines, deadlines are quarterly otherwise.
- Reports are filed electronically through TRACER and must be filed before midnight on the due date.

4. Penalties, Waivers, and Complaints:

- Late filing penalties are \$50 per day. Waivers may be possible with good cause.
- Complaints about violations must be filed within 180 days of discovering the alleged violation. Anonymous complaints are not accepted.

5. Disclosure Requirements:

- **Contributions:** Report all contributions, itemizing those \$20 or more. Itemizing includes the contributor's name, address, occupation, and



employer (if the contribution is \$100 or more from a natural person). No cash contributions over \$100. Anonymous contributions are prohibited.

- **Expenditures:** Report all expenditures, itemizing those \$20 or more. Itemizing includes the recipient's name and address, and purpose of expenditure. No cash expenditures over \$100. An expenditure is considered "made" when the spending occurs or a contract is signed (whichever comes first). Funds cannot be used for personal purposes except for child care expenses as permitted by C.R.S. 1-45-103.7(6.5).
- **Contribution Limits:** Individual contribution limits are \$2,500 per election cycle. Small donor committee contribution limits are \$25,000 per election cycle. There is no limit on how much a candidate can contribute to their own committee.
- **LLC Contributions:** Allowed if all members are permissible contributors, shares aren't publicly traded, and taxes aren't filed like a corporation. Require an affirmation form.
- **Prohibited Contributors:** Corporations (profit and non-profit), unions, foreign entities, other candidate committees, etc.

6. "Paid For By" Statements:

- **"Paid-for-by" statements:** Required on certain political communications to disclose the funding source.
- **Covered Communications:** Best practice is to include disclaimers on all paid communications. However, they are only **required** if spending meets a threshold, depending on the type of communication (electioneering communication, independent expenditure, general communication).
- **Format:** Must be clear, conspicuous, and readable, and state who paid for the communication, whether it was authorized by a candidate, and any additional disclosure requirements.
- If the communication is covered, statement must be provided on **print materials, electronic communications, TV and radio ads, telephone calls, and other public-facing political communications. Exceptions** include unpaid social media posts, small printed materials where it's impractical, and certain individual communications.
- Common area for mistakes, review the [Secretary of State's guidance](#) and law carefully.



7. Supplemental Reports:

- **24-Hour Major Contributor Report:** Required for contributions of \$1,000 or more received within 30 days of the election. Due within 24 hours of receipt.
- **60-Day Electioneering Communication Report:** Required for expenditures used for communications mentioning candidates within 60 days of the election. TRACER will prompt the report once it receives a qualifying expenditure.

8. Unexpended Funds and Account Termination:

- Unexpended funds can be used for specific purposes, such as retaining for a subsequent election, reimbursement, and certain donations.
- Candidate committees must be terminated within one year of leaving office (if elected) or one year after the election (if not elected).

9. Record Keeping:

- Campaign records must be kept for 180 days after the election (LLC affirmations for 1 year).

10. Resources

- [Secretary of State’s Campaign and Political Finance Manual \(PDF\)](#)
- [TRACER](#)
- [Training Courses](#)
- [Secretary of State’s Campaign Finance Presentation](#)
- [Guidance on Disclaimer \(Paid for By\) Statements](#)
- **TRACER questions:** cpfhelp@coloradosos.gov or call 303-894-2200 (dial 3 then 1).

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