

## Local Candidate Guide to Campaign Finance

For assistance with campaign finance reporting requirements, you may contact one of our helpful staff members:

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**For purposes of this document, a Local Candidate is defined as a candidate who is running for municipal office (mayor, council, attorney/law director, auditor, etc.), board of education member, or township trustee or fiscal officer. For detailed information, review Chapter 2 of the Secretary of State’s Campaign Finance Handbook. This document is for information purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice.**

### **What to do first:**

Before receiving any contribution or making any expenditure, a potential candidate must file a *Designation of Treasurer* (Form 30-D). This is considered a “registration” form. The candidate must either designate himself or another person as the campaign committee treasurer. The candidate must, and the treasurer should, sign the *Designation of Treasurer* form.  
[R.C. 3517.081, 3517.10(D)]

Candidates who spend only personal funds must still file a *Designation of Treasurer* form prior to making out-of-pocket expenditures related in any way to their campaign. Purchase of goods and services for which no reimbursement is expected would be considered In-Kind Contributions to the campaign committee.

**Exception: Filing Fee Only Candidate** - A candidate who receives **NO** contributions and who makes **NO** expenditures (including the candidate’s personal funds) except for the filing fee, is not required to file the *Designation of Treasurer* form, is not required to create a campaign committee, and is not subject to the reporting requirements. The payment of filing fees by the candidate shall not be considered an expenditure that requires the filing of a *Designation of Treasurer* form. [OAC 111-5-01]

**Naming the Committee:** A campaign committee name must include at least the last name of the candidate. When choosing a name for the campaign committee, it may be prudent to make it general in nature rather than office-specific. For example: Friends of John Doe rather than Doe for Council. If the candidate runs for a different office, all of the committee bank account information, checks, and assets with a disclaimer would need to be corrected.

## **Bank Account:**

Campaign contributions may not be placed in a candidate's personal or business account. A campaign committee must establish a bank account that is separate from a personal or business account of the candidate, or member of the candidate's campaign committee. All monetary campaign contributions received must be deposited into this account.

Exception: Candidates who will not accept monetary contributions (use only personal funds) need not establish a separate bank account for the committee.

A federal identification number may be required by the committee's chosen financial institution. This number is issued by the [Internal Revenue Service](https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online) upon request.

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>

## **Report filing requirements:**

A full, true, and itemized statement, made under penalty of election falsification, setting forth in detail the contributions and expenditures of the committee, must be filed with the Board of Elections not later than 4:00 p.m. of the following dates.

**Annual:** The last business day of January to disclose activity through December 31. The annual report is not required if the committee filed a post-general report.

**Pre-Primary:** The 12<sup>th</sup> day before the election to disclose activity through the 20<sup>th</sup> day before the election. Required if the committee has raised or spent more than \$1,000 during the pre-primary period.

**Post-Primary:** The 38<sup>th</sup> day after the election to disclose activity through the 31<sup>st</sup> day after the election.

**Semiannual:** The last business day of July to disclose activity through June, 30.

### Exceptions:

- The semiannual report is not required if the committee filed a post-primary report
- Committees of candidates for judicial office are not required to file a semiannual report.
- The committee of a local candidate is not required to file a semiannual report unless that committee **both:** Receives, during the semiannual reporting period, contributions exceeding ten thousand dollars, and did not file a post-primary election report.

**Pre-General:** The 12<sup>th</sup> day before the election to disclose activity through the 20<sup>th</sup> day before the election. Required if the committee has raised or spent more than \$1,000 during the pre-general period.

**Post-General:** The 38<sup>th</sup> day after the election to disclose activity through the 31<sup>st</sup> day after the election.

*All reports must be filed with a zero or positive balance. No finance report may be filed with a negative balance on hand. Additionally, some municipal charters may require additional campaign finance reporting.*

## **Local Candidate Waiver:**

A candidate's campaign committee may be exempt from the requirement to file campaign finance reports, except for the *Designation of Treasurer* form, if the candidate is running for:

- An elected municipal office that pays an annual amount of compensation of \$5,000 or less;
- A board of education office;
- Township trustee or fiscal officer.

In order to qualify for the *Local Candidate Waiver*, the campaign committee must file a certificate within 10 days of filing a candidacy petition. This certificate is prescribed as form No. 31-BB, *Local Candidate Waiver*, and requires that the committee **will not:**

- accept more than \$2,000 of aggregate contributions during an election period;
- accept more than \$100 from any one individual (excluding the candidate's personal funds);
- make expenditures that total more than \$2,000.

**Waiver continued:** If the campaign committee exceeds any of those limitations, the certificate is void and the campaign committee is thereafter responsible for filing all required reports including all activity occurring since the candidacy petition was filed.

Following the general election (or the primary election if the candidate is not nominated) *the campaign committee must terminate or be subject to all reporting requirements*. A letter of termination signed by the committee treasurer must be submitted by the last business day of January following the general election (or the last business day of July for an unsuccessful candidate at a primary election). The letter should state:

“Per the requirements of the Local Candidate Waiver, [committee name] did not raise or expend more than \$2,000, nor did it accept more than \$100 from any one individual. The committee has a balance on hand of \$0.00 and has settled all outstanding debts and loans. Please terminate [committee name] from the role of active committees.”

If the committee does not terminate, it must begin filing the required statements (the Semiannual report following the primary election if not nominated or the Annual report following the general election).

### **Short Form Report**

If a candidate has no activity before January 1 of the year in which he or she appears on the ballot, and spends \$500 or less and receives \$500 or less in the year he or she appears on the ballot, then only the cover page of a campaign finance report is required to be filed. If all of these criteria are met, the candidate may file a *Short Form Report composed of only an Ohio Campaign Finance Report Cover Page* (form 30-A) at either the post-primary or post-general filing deadline.

If the candidate lost the primary, then the committee must also terminate on the post-primary report. If a Short Form Report is filed for the post-general, then the committee must simultaneously terminate.

If the candidate does not qualify for the *Short Form Report*, then a full campaign finance report must instead be filed. [R.C. 3517.10(H)]

### **Terminating the Committee**

Following the campaign, you may wish to terminate your campaign committee to avoid having to file regular reports. In order to terminate, the committee must have a balance on hand of \$0.00 and no outstanding loans or debts. You may dispose of any remaining funds by making a contribution to another campaign committee or donating the money to a non-profit organization. Mark the termination box on the cover sheet (Form 30-A) of the final report, and we will remove the committee from our role of active committees.

### **Tips**

- The trend in banking practices is moving away from mailing a paper copy of statements and returning canceled checks. Treasurers should download and save bank statements and copies (images) of canceled checks each month in case the financial institutions only provides online access to these items for a limited time.
- If a candidate or other individual pays for items for the campaign committee out of personal funds, such as when a candidate purchases a sign or stamps and does not expect reimbursement, then the contributions should be reported as in-kind contributions from the candidate or individual. If reimbursement is expected, the individual should submit an itemized list of reimbursable items as well as receipts. A check should be written to that individual and the itemized list and receipts should be attached to the report. Items that are not reimbursed during the reporting period must be reported as outstanding debts.

**Additional Resources:**

Franklin County Board of Elections: <http://vote.franklincountyohio.gov>

Ohio Secretary of State: <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/>

*Campaign Finance Handbook*: <https://www.sos.state.oh.us/campaign-finance/campaign-finance-handbook/>

Ohio Revised Code Section 3517.10: <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc>

Ohio Administrative Code Section 111: <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac>

Ohio Elections Commission: <http://elc.ohio.gov/>

Ohio Ethics Commission: <http://www.ethics.ohio.gov/>

**Campaign Finance Report Forms:**

- 30-D Designation of Treasurer
- 30-A Ohio Campaign Finance Report (cover page)
- 31-A Statement of Contributions Received
- 31-A-2 Statement of Other Income
- 31-B Statement of Expenditures
- 31-BB Local Candidate Finance Report Waiver
- 31-C Statement of Loans Received
- 31-E Statement of Contributions Received at a Social or Fund-Raising Event
- 31-F Statement of Expenditures for Social or Fund-Raising Event
- 31-G Contributors in Officeholder's Employ
- 31-J-1 In-Kind Contributions Received
- 31-J-2 In-Kind Contributions Made
- 31-K Statement of Loans Made
- 31-N Statement of Outstanding Debts
- 31-P Contributions for Debt Retirement

Visit <https://www.sos.state.oh.us/campaign-finance/filing-forms/> for forms.

# Ohio Secretary of State's TREASURER'S CHECKLIST

## For Use in Completion of Ohio Campaign Finance Reports

### DESIGNATION OF TREASURER (Form 30-D To Be Filled Out Completely Each Time)

- Filed prior to contributions received or expenditures made
- Name and street address of entity provided
- Office, election year, party, subdivision and district indicated (Candidates only)
- Name and street address of treasurer provided
- Corporate or labor organization sponsorship indicated (PACs only)
- Reason for filing form indicated
- Candidate's original signature (campaign committee) or officer (PAC/party)
- Last name of candidate included in committee name (candidate's only)
- Information on Designation of Treasurer updated if change occurs
- Committee, other than candidate's authorized committee, does not include candidate name
- Connected organization included in PAC name (PACs only)

### COVER PAGE (Form 30-A)

- Committee and street address provided
- Correct type of report and date of election indicated
- Amount brought forward matches ending balance of last report (Zero if new)
- Totals on all report lines equal corresponding form totals
- Total of independent expenditures made included in total expenditure line
- Math computations on lines 1 through 6 done correctly
- Positive number or zero balance on hand
- Termination marked only if zero balance, zero debts and zero loans
- Original signature of designated treasurer or deputy treasurer
- Total number and type of pages provided

### CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED (Forms 31-A, 31-E, 31-G, 31-P, etc)

- Complete contributor names provided (Initials allowed if that is how a person maintains their business or financial records)
- Individual contributions not reported under two names, i.e. "John & Jane Doe"
- Dates provided
- Dates are from appropriate reporting period
- Addresses provided (Political parties are exempt)
- Form provided, i.e. cash, check, etc.
- Amount provided
- Contributions received from statewide PACs have reported registration number
- Contributions on a partnership or unincorporated business account reported the name of the partner or owner making the contribution - **must be allocated among 1 or more.**
- Fund-raiser itemization exemption not based on ticket price
- No cash contributions totaling over \$100 from any source
- No corporate or non PCE labor organization contributions received (Except to ballot issues)
- Explanation of efforts to determine identity of anonymous contributions provided
- Contributions from Officeholder's Employees on Form 31-G when necessary.
- Fund-raiser contributions on proper form (31-E)
- Separate forms for each fund-raising event; no ongoing fund-raisers
- Page totals correct
- Correct total of Contributions transferred to correct cover page line

#### Statewide and General Assembly Committees Only

- No employee contributions
- Employer or occupation included for contributors over \$100. If contributor is self employed, the name of the business, if any, also included.
- No contributions retained in excess of limits; see chart
- Notice filed if personal funds threshold reached; see chart
- Excess funds disposed of in a timely and correct manner; see chart
- Unpaid debt properly reported; see chart
- Two day business statement filed if threshold reached within 19 days of general election; see chart (Statewide Candidates Only)

### OTHER INCOME (Form 31-A-2)

- Other Income form lists all refunds, interest, uncashed checks, own committee's insufficient funds checks and loan transfers
- Appropriate category indicated on Other Income form
- Correct total of Other Income transferred to correct cover page line

**EXPENDITURES (Forms 31-B, 31-F, 31-I, etc.)**

- Dates provided
- Dates are from appropriate reporting period
- Payee Names provided
- Street addresses provided with zip codes except for banks, post offices, utilities or gasoline companies
- Adequate purpose provided (*Expenses, Reimbursement, or Services* too vague)
- Only charitable or election-related expenses made (PACs only)
- No personal or business use of campaign funds by candidates
- Credit card payments itemized by underlying vendors/Proper documentation attached
- Page totals correct
- Total of all expenditures transferred to correct cover page line
- Total of independent expenditures made transferred to last line of cover page as well as being included in total expenditures made line
- Copies of canceled checks or paid receipts attached for each expense over \$25
- PAC checks include full name and address. PAC Number included if State PAC
- Establishment, Administrative form (Form 31-I) used by corporate or labor organization PACs when required

**IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (Forms 31-J-1 & 31-J-2)**

- Dates provided
- Complete names
- Addresses provided for in-kind received
- No corporate or labor organization contributions received (Except to ballot issues)
- Complete names provided for in-kind made
- Employer or occupation included for contributors over \$100 (When required)
- Street addresses provided for in-kind made
- Adequate description of item or service
- Amounts provided
- Totals not included in cover page monetary lines
- Correct totals transferred to appropriate lines on cover page

**LOANS (Forms 31-C & and 31-K)**

- Complete names provided
- Addresses provided
- Dates provided
- Balance equals amount outstanding from previous period plus amount incurred this period minus any payments made this period
- Page totals correct
- Total payments made transferred to Statement of Expenditures
- Total payments received from Loans Made transferred to Statement of Other Income
- Total of new loans transferred to Statement of Other Income
- Total still outstanding transferred to appropriate line on cover page

**DEBTS (Form 31-N)**

- Complete names provided
- Addresses provided
- Dates provided
- Outstanding balance equals amount outstanding from previous period plus amount incurred this period minus payments made this period
- Page totals correct
- Total payments made transferred to Statement of Expenditures
- Total forgiven included on in-kind received line of cover page
- No debts forgiven by corporations or labor organizations except to ballot issues

**OTHER**

- Pages of report numbered consecutively with the cover as page one
- Only one campaign committee per candidate
- Currently prescribed forms used or forms having the same format and all of the required information
- Report is legible
- Report filed electronically if required



**TYPE OF FILING:**  NEW  UPDATE

**COMMITTEE TYPE:**  Candidate  PAC  PCE  Political Party  Legislative Campaign Fund

**If update, please check the appropriate reason(s):**

Change of Committee Name. Prior Name was: \_\_\_\_\_

Change of Filing Location. Prior Location was: \_\_\_\_\_ New Location is: \_\_\_\_\_

Change of Office Sought. Previous Office Sought: \_\_\_\_\_ New Office Sought: \_\_\_\_\_

Change of Treasurer Info  Designation or Change of Deputy Treasurer Info

Change of address/phone/email for:  Committee  Treasurer  Deputy Treasurer  Candidate

Other Please Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**All Committees**

Full Name of Committee				PAC # (if Updated)	
Street Address		City		State	Zip
Telephone		Email			
Treasurer		Telephone		Email	
Street Address		City		State	Zip
Deputy Treasurer (if any)		Telephone		Email	
Street Address		City		State	Zip

**Candidate Committees Only**

Full Name of Candidate			Email		
Street Address		City		State	Zip
Office Sought & Subdivision/District			Party Affiliation/Independent/Non-Partisan		Election Year

**Political Action Committees Only**

PAC is sponsored by: <input type="radio"/> Labor Organization <input type="radio"/> Corporation <input type="radio"/> Not Sponsored	If Sponsored, Name the Sponsor	Acronym Used (if any)
	If Ballot Issue PAC, list issue	
Is this a Ballot Issue PAC <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<b>PACs and PCEs Only</b>	List any Affiliated PACs/PCEs

Signature of Treasurer or Deputy Treasurer	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Signature of Candidate if Candidate Committee	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
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## Instructions for Designation of Treasurer (DOT) Form 30-D

This form must be filed before a candidate campaign committee, political action committee (PAC), political contributing entity (PCE), legislative campaign fund or political party makes any expenditures or receives any contributions, pursuant to R.C. 3517.10(D), and acts as the official registration document for the committee. In addition, is also used to update any information related to the original designation, such as the address information, name of the committee, office sought, or to appoint a new treasurer or deputy treasurer.

For an original designation of treasurer, please select NEW. To update an existing committee's designation of treasurer, please select UPDATE, and choose which item(s) that is being updated. For all filings, please select the type of committee. **This form should be completed in its entirety each time it is submitted.**

### All Committees

On an original designation, complete this with the name of the committee. Pursuant to RC 3517.10(D), the name of a campaign committee shall include at least the last name of the campaign committee's candidate. If there are two or more beneficiaries of a single campaign committee, the name shall include the last name of each candidate beneficiary. Sponsored PACs shall include the name of the sponsoring organization, or a clearly recognized abbreviation or acronym by which the sponsoring organization is commonly known, pursuant to OAC 111:2-1-04. A political party should distinguish the type of account being registered by adding the account type after the political party name (e.g. *XYZ Party Restricted Fund*).

For an update that is changing the committee name, this field should be completed with the **updated** name of the committee. In addition, please indicate the prior committee name in the appropriate field above.

The PAC registration number field should only be completed for **updated** filings of statewide PACs, where a PAC registration has been assigned by the Secretary of State's office.

List the address of the campaign committee and any email address that should be associated with the committee. If the committee files reports electronically, the email address will be used to transmit electronic filing information from the examining authority.

Include the full name and address of the treasurer. RC 3517.081 allows the committee to appoint a deputy treasurer. Include the full name and address of the deputy treasurer, if applicable.

### Candidate Campaign Committee

This section should be completed by candidate campaign committees only. List the full name and address of the candidate. Also list the party affiliation, office sought and district/subdivision for that office.

### Political Action Committees

This section should be completed by PACs only. If this is a ballot issue PAC, please list the ballot issue. If this PAC is sponsored by a labor organization, corporation or other business entity, please list the sponsoring organization, and any acronym used.

### PACs and PCEs

This section should list any affiliated PACs and/or PCEs.

### Signature

This form should be signed by the treasurer or deputy treasurer when submitted.

If this form is being submitted by a candidate campaign committee, the candidate should sign in the designated space. If the form is being submitted by a PAC, PCE or political party, any authorized person may sign in the designated space.



<b>Candidate Campaign Committee Information</b>		
Committee Name		Year Appearing on Ballot
Candidate Name	Office Sought	Municipality/District

The campaign committee/candidate identified above states that the office sought is:

- A municipal office that pays an annual amount of compensation of five thousand dollars or less;
- A member of a board of education, except a member of the state board of education; or
- Township trustee or township clerk.

The undersigned attests that the campaign committee will **not** do any of the following during any election period:

- Accept total aggregate contributions that exceed two thousand dollars from all contributors;
- Accept contributions of more than one hundred dollars from any single individual contributors;
- Make total expenditures in excess of two thousand dollars.

If the committee meets these requirements, it is not required to file the campaign finance reports otherwise required by ORC 3517.10(A)

**THIS STATEMENT IS MADE UNDER PENALTY OF ELECTION FALSIFICATION.  
WHOEVER COMMITS ELECTION FALSIFICATION IS GUILTY OF A FELONY OF THE FIFTH DEGREE.**

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>Signature of Treasurer or Deputy Treasurer</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>Date (MM/DD/YYYY)</p>
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**Note:** If the committee exceeds these limits set forth above, the committee is responsible to report all contributions received and expenditures made from the time the candidate filed the candidacy petition on the next required campaign finance statement to be filed under ORC 3517.10(A).