

February 2021



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CHECKING IN

A MONTHLY CAMPAIGN FINANCE NEWSLETTER FOR LOCAL ELECTION OFFICIALS

2021: CITY AND TOWN ELECTIONS

RESOURCES FOR YOUR LOCAL ELECTIONS IN 2021

This edition of *Checking In* is designed for **municipal candidates who file campaign finance reports locally**, to assist them with complying with the state's campaign finance law.

Please forward this newsletter to your local candidates and committees.

TOP ISSUES FOR MUNICIPAL CANDIDATES

Receipts

- An individual may contribute up to \$1,000 for the calendar year.
- Collect the names and residential addresses for all donors (even small cash donors).
- Cash is permitted, up to \$50 for the calendar year per person.
- A donor's occupation and employer information is required for contributions of \$200 or more.
- Corporate, LLC, LLP and partnership contributions are prohibited.

Expenditures

- Expenditures may be made to enhance a candidate's political future, but may not be primarily personal.
- [CLICK HERE](#) for a tutorial on how to report out-of-pocket expenditures using a candidate's personal funds.
- Candidates must clearly describe the purpose of each expenditure. Example: Coffee and donuts for GOTV volunteers.

Municipal candidates* who appear on a ballot in 2021 must file campaign finance reports, even if they use their personal funds, or spend no money.

In towns, reports are due eight days before the election and 30 days afterward. The pre-election report covers activity from Jan. 1, 2021, until 18 days before the election. The post-election report covers activity from 17 days before the election until 20 days afterward. A year-end report is due by Jan. 20, 2022.

In *cities, reports are due eight days before the election (for candidates who file locally), and by Jan. 20, 2022. A pre-preliminary report is due eight days before a preliminary election, but only if a candidate's name appears on a preliminary ballot. The reporting period starts Jan. 1, 2021, and ends 18 days before the preliminary or general election, whichever is first. There are no post-election reports.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) for the M102 campaign finance report. This form can be used, even if no money was raised or spent.

Organization: Candidates* organize a campaign committee by filing a [M101 form](#) with the local election official. If a candidate does not have a committee, he or she is encouraged to file the M101 form with "candidate only" written at the top, and "N/A" as treasurer.

GUIDES AND TUTORIALS

- [CLICK HERE](#) for a PDF guide for candidates who file locally.
- [CLICK HERE](#) for a video tutorial for *candidates who file locally*.
- [CLICK HERE](#) for a video tutorial on how to report **out-of-pocket** expenditures.
- Local candidates can use Reporter 7 to file campaign finance reports locally. [CLICK HERE](#) for the tutorial.
- [CLICK HERE](#) for a video tutorial on "paid for by" disclaimers.
- Candidates who file locally can register for Zoom training. The dates are available [here](#), in February, March and April.

If you have questions about how or where to file campaign finance reports, contact OCPF at OCPF@cpf.state.ma.us

*Mayoral candidates, and city council candidates in cities with populations of 65,000 or more, e-file with OCPF, and do not file pre-preliminary or pre-election reports. All other municipal candidates file with their local election officials, such as selectmen, school committee members, and city council candidates in smaller cities.

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OCPF Campaign finance training for candidates who file locally

Each winter and spring, OCPF travels the state to conduct campaign finance training seminars for town candidates. This year, we're offering the training seminars on Zoom.

Candidates who choose to attend can e-mail Jason Tait at jtait@cpf.state.ma.us. Jason will reply with a Zoom invitation to the seminar of your choice.

- 1. Feb. 16, 5:30 p.m.***
- 2. Feb. 25, 5:30 p.m.***
- 3. March 1, 5:30 p.m.***
- 4. March 12, 9 a.m.***
- 5. March 25, 6:30 p.m.***
- 6. April 6, 5:30 p.m.***

The seminars will last about an hour, and will cover reporting requirements, the rules for fundraising and spending, and the state's campaign finance laws concerning public employees, public buildings and public resources.

OCPF will also schedule virtual seminars for city candidates mid-year, and will share those dates in a later edition of Checking In.

City candidates who file locally, such as school committee members, are also invited to attend the town seminars in February, March and April.