

MARCH 2020



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CHECKING IN

Monthly Informational Mailer for Local Election Officials

617-979-8300

FAQ: Can candidates and ballot question committees go the senior center and ask for votes? *(Answer below)*



EQUAL ACCESS

Public resources can't be used for political campaign purposes. That's the general rule.

So why do we sometimes see candidates and committees using public buildings and property for campaign events?

In Massachusetts it's because of the "equal access" rule. Generally, it goes like this: if one candidate or campaign can use public property for campaign activities, then all candidates and campaigns should have equal access to that property under the same terms and conditions.

EXAMPLE 1 (School Property)

A candidate attends the boy's high school football game on a Friday night in September, and during halftime, he distributes his campaign literature by the concession stand. This activity complies with OCPF's rules, so long as equal access is provided to all candidates.

EXAMPLE 2 (Senior Center)

A candidate brings coffee and doughnuts to the town-owned senior center and sets up a table, where seniors can ask her about issues and she can ask for votes. This activity is permitted, so long as equal access is provided to all candidates and funds are not solicited or received.

Candidates should also seek guidance from the state [Ethics Commission](#) concerning these issues.

YOU CAN HELP OCPF WITH THE 2020 STATE ELECTION

This is the first state election year during which House and Senate candidates must disclose their activity through the depository bank reporting system.

Because of this change, we ask that you **direct candidates to OCPF as they begin submitting nomination papers to your office.**

Because of the new law, a candidate, via his or her bank, now has monthly reporting requirements (rather than just the pre-primary and pre-election reports). We need candidates to organize with us ASAP for timely disclosure.

Please ask candidates to call us at 617-979-8300, and/or provide them with our depository candidate trifold, [available here](#).

Thank you for your continued and valuable assistance.