



About OCPF

A Guide to the Office of Campaign and Political Finance

Welcome to the Office of Campaign and Political Finance, an independent agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Created in 1973, OCPF is responsible for the administration of Massachusetts General Laws Chapters 55, the state's Campaign Finance Law, and 55A, which provides public financing for statewide candidates. The law calls for disclosure of campaign finance activity for state and local candidates and committees and also regulates political activity involving public employees, public buildings and other public resources.

This guide is intended to help visitors to the office use the many resources available to the public, from regular publications such as advisory opinions and interpretive bulletins to the thousands of campaign finance reports on file here.

If you would like to see a campaign finance report or any other document, or just have a question about campaign finance, feel free to ask. Our staff is glad to help.

Mike Sullivan, Director

Reports on File with OCPF

OCPF receives and maintains disclosure reports from a variety of state, county and municipal candidates and political committees. These reports, as well as other related documents and correspondence, are available for public inspection during regular business hours, which are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

To receive a file, please fill out a request card, which is available at the front desk. If you would like to make copies, three machines are available in the office lobby. The cost is 10 cents per page; the key needed for copying is available at the front desk.

Please do not remove staples or clips from documents that you receive. While it may make reproduction a little tougher, it is essential to keep documents in order and prevent loss.

Two types of reports are available:

■ **Depository** candidates and committees (statewide and county candidates, Governor's Council, state party committees and citywide mayoral and City Council candidates in Boston, Lowell, Springfield and Worcester) arrange for their financial institutions to file monthly reports listing receipts and expenditures with OCPF. The frequency increases to twice-monthly in the last six months of an election year. These candidates also file year-end summary reports.

■ **Non-depository** candidates and committees (candidates for the state legislature, political action committees, local party committees and ballot question committees) file directly with OCPF. Candidates, PACs and party committees file reports at least annually, with two extra reports due in election years: a pre-primary report and a pre-election report. Ballot question committees file on a slightly different schedule before and after the election. With the exception of the depository candidates noted above, municipal candidates and committees, including local ballot question committees, file locally based on the dates of their local elections. Those reports are available from local city or town clerks or election commissions.

Guides and Other Resources

In addition to receiving disclosure reports, OCPF issues brochures, guides and other publications to help candidates, public employees and other persons understand the campaign finance law. All are available to the public at no cost.

The Office publishes guides in booklet form to explain the disclosure requirements and filing process for various candidates and committees. There are individual guides for **depository and non-depository candidates; municipal candidates; statewide and municipal ballot question committees; political action committees (PACs); and local party committees** (also known as ward, town and city committees).

OCPF also publishes a *Guide to Political Activity For State, County and Municipal Employees*, intended to answer questions concerning political and fundraising activity by government workers. This guide is of interest to those who draw a public paycheck and are involved in campaigns, as well as their supervisors. Candidates and committees that enlist the campaign support of public employees and officials also should review this guide.

Other OCPF publications include:

■ **Campaign Finance Regulations (970 CMR)** are promulgated by OCPF, based on Massachusetts General Laws.

■ **Advisory opinions** are written in response to specific questions asked by candidates, committees, officials or the general public. The opinions date back to the early 1980s and are indexed by subject.

■ **Guidance letters** are similar to advisory opinions, but are generally shorter and less detailed because the question asked has previously been covered by OCPF.

■ **Interpretive bulletins and memoranda** cover various topics and changes in the law and are issued periodically by OCPF.

For Additional Information . . .

In addition to OCPF, several other state agencies administer laws affecting political candidates and committees and public officials. The other agencies and their responsibilities are:

■ **Elections Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth:** Oversees elections throughout the state, including ballot access, ballot printing and candidate qualifications. 17th Floor, McCormack Building. (617) 727-2828/(800) 462-VOTE.

■ **Public Records Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth:** Repository of disclosure reports filed by registered lobbyists listing their political contributions and clients. Also receives copies of campaign finance reports filed with the Federal Election Commission by U.S. Senate and Congressional candidates in Massachusetts. 17th Floor, McCormack Building. (617) 462-2832.

■ **State Ethics Commission:** Administers the state's Conflict of Interest law and regulations and oversees conduct of public employees and officials in Massachusetts. 6th Floor, McCormack Building. (617) 727-0060.

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