

Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board

Campaign Finance – Glossary of Terms

The following terms are excerpted from Minnesota Statutes Chapter 10A

www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/10A/ administrative rules www.cfboard.state.mn.us/law/rules.htm.

More specific information is available for those items with an asterisk (*) on the Board's website at: <http://www.cfboard.state.mn.us/>. Consult Board staff or the statute and rules if you have specific questions.

Term	Definition
24 Hour notice	The notice that must be sent upon receipt of a large contribution just before an election. See the calendar at http://www.cfboard.state.mn.us/campfin/Calendar/Disclosure_Calendar.pdf or amounts and dates.
Address	The complete mailing address, including zip code. Either a home or business address may be used.
Advance of credit	Money owed for goods provided or services rendered.
Affidavit of contributions	A notarized statement certifying that the candidate raised a specific amount of contributions during the calendar year from individuals eligible to vote in Minnesota counting only the first \$50 received from each contributor. Candidates who have not raised the minimum amount or who do not file the form will not receive public subsidy payments. See the calendar for the due date in the current election cycle at http://www.cfboard.state.mn.us/campfin/Calendar/Disclosure_Calendar.pdf .
Aggregate contributions	The total of all contributions from the same source. Also the total of all contributions from special sources and the total of all contributions from a political party.
Anonymous contribution	Contributions over \$20 for which the name and address of the donor cannot be determined. If you receive an anonymous contribution, you must send the entire contribution to the Board for deposit in the state elections campaign fund.
Anything of value	Includes all goods and services given or received without repayment at fair market value.

Term	Definition
Approved expenditure	<p>An expenditure made on behalf of a candidate by another entity that is authorized with the expressed or implied consent of, or in cooperation or in concert with, or at the request or suggestion of the candidate, the candidate's campaign committee, or the candidate's agent.</p> <p>An approved expenditure of more than \$20 must have prior authorization in writing by the candidate or treasurer stating the maximum amount to be spent and the purpose of the expenditure.</p>
Asset	<p>Items purchased with campaign funds such as computers, fax machines, cell phone. These items are owned by the committee and may not be converted to personal use. All assets must be disposed of at fair market value and the proceeds used for appropriate campaign disbursements prior to termination.</p>
Associated Business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An organized legal entity from which an individual receives compensation in excess of \$50 in any month as a director, officer, owner, member, partner, employer or employee. 2. An organized legal entity whose securities the individual holds worth \$2,500 or more.
Ballot question	<p>An issue on the ballot that may be voted on by all voters of the state. Under Chapter 10A, a ballot question is a 'constitutional amendment' or a recall of an official holding a statewide office.</p>
Board	<p>The Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board.</p>
Bundling	<p>Contributions delivered to a candidate's committee by an entity other than the original contributor. Bundled contributions apply to the contribution limit of both the original contributor and the entity that delivers the contribution.</p> <p>Exceptions: Contributions delivered by a member of the candidate's committee and contributions delivered by an individual on behalf of that individual's spouse are not subject to the bundling limit.</p>
Campaign expenditure	<p>A purchase or payment made for the purpose of influencing the nomination or election of a candidate or promoting or defeating a ballot question.</p> <p>Expenditure does not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noncampaign disbursements, • Volunteer services, or • News items or editorial comments by the new media.
Campaign finance reporter (CFR)*	<p>A software system to assist clients in tracking receipts and disbursements, filing reports, and avoiding violations.</p>

Term	Definition
Candidate	A person who seeks nomination or election to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Constitutional office (governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, and state auditor), 2. Minnesota senate, 3. Minnesota house of representatives, or 4. Elective judgeship.
Candidate committee	The principal campaign committee organized by the candidate. Often called a campaign or candidate committee. The committee must have a treasurer, chair, and bank account at all times.
Carryforward	The amount of candidate resources that may be transferred from one election cycle to the next election cycle. The amount is ½ the expenditure limit for the office sought.
Checkoff	Money designated by taxpayers to enable political parties and qualifying candidates to receive direct public subsidy payments.
Circumvention	Redirecting a contribution through, or making a contribution on behalf of, another individual or association. This activity is prohibited and a violation is a gross misdemeanor and subject to a civil penalty.
Commercial use	Information copied from documents filed with the Board may not be sold or used for any commercial purpose. Purposes related to elections, political activities, and law enforcement are not deemed to be commercial purposes.
Conciliation agreement	A formal document used to correct violations by entities that exceed the spending or contribution limits. The conciliation agreement signed by the Board chair and violator is a matter of public record and a bar to any civil proceeding.
Constituent services	Services performed or provided by an incumbent legislator or constitutional officer for the benefit of one or more residents of the official's district. Constituent services do not include gifts, congratulatory advertisements, or charitable contributions.
Contested primary	A primary election in which the winning candidate receives fewer than twice as many votes (a 2 to 1 margin) as any one of the candidate's opponent in the primary. The winning candidate's expenditure limit is increased by 20%.
Contribution	Money (including receipts at a fundraiser), a negotiable instrument (check or money order), approved expenditure, or a donation in kind. Also includes a loan or advance of credit if the loan or advance of credit is forgiven or repaid by an entity other than the entities to which the loan or advance of credit was made.

Term	Definition
Contribution/ Donation in kind	Anything of value given (other than money or negotiable instruments). Includes an approved expenditure. In-kind contributions must be reported at their fair market value and apply to the contribution limit of the entity providing the good or service.
Contribution recordkeeping	<p>You must record the name and address of each contributor who donates in excess of \$20. If an individual contributes over \$100 in aggregate during a calendar year, you must also record and report that individual's employer. If the donor is self employed, you must list the individual's occupation.</p> <p>If the contribution is from a political committee, fund, or party unit you should also record the donor's Board registration number.</p>
Contribution limits*	<p>The amount of money, in-kind contributions, and loans that may be given or received from any one entity.</p> <p>There are multiple contribution limits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From an individual, political committee or political fund, 2. From a political party in aggregate, 3. Aggregate limits from special sources, and 4. Contributions from the candidate. <p>Contribution limits vary by office sought and calendar year.</p> <p>Contribution limits are statutory and all candidates must abide by them whether or not they have a <i>Public Subsidy Agreement</i>. Exception: only candidates who have signed a <i>Public Subsidy Agreement</i> are limited in what they may contribute to their own campaign committee.</p>
Date of receipt	Record and report the date that a contribution is actually received. Do not use the date on the check or the date of deposit unless it is also the date of receipt.
Depository	A bank or financial institution organized under federal or state law.
Earmarking	<p>Soliciting or accepting a contribution with the express or implied condition that the contribution or any part of it be given to a particular candidate.</p> <p>Earmarking is prohibited and the violation is a gross misdemeanor and subject to a civil penalty.</p>
Economic Interest Statement	A personal financial statement that must be filed 14 days after filing an <i>Affidavit of Candidacy</i> . Office holders must file a supplemental statement annually on April 15 th if there are changes to report.
Election	A primary, general, special primary or special general election.

Term	Definition
Election cycle	<p>January 1 following a general election for an office to December 31 following the next general election.</p> <p>Special election cycle is the period from the date the special election writ is issued to 60 days after the special election is held.</p>
Electronic filing*	<p>Campaign finance reports may be filed electronically using <i>Campaign Finance Reporter</i>, a software program developed by Board staff. All reports may also be filed by fax or e-mail.</p>
Expenditure limit	<p>See 'Spending limit'.</p>
Federal elections commission (FEC)	<p>The FEC is the federal equivalent to the Board. Registrations and reports for federal candidates are filed with the FEC.</p>
Filing deadline	<p>To be timely filed the document must be in the Board office, postmarked, electronically filed, or faxed by 4:30 P.M. on the filing date. Electronically filed and faxed documents received after 4:30 P.M. are deemed to be received the following business day. Electronic and fax filers should get an electronic confirmation of the electronic or fax filing to ensure timely compliance.</p>
First-time candidate	<p>A candidate who is running for a particular office for the first time and who has not run previously for any other office whose territory now includes a population that is more than 1/3 the population in the territory of the new office. A first-time candidate's expenditure limit is increased by 10%.</p>
General account	<p>Money derived from taxpayer checkoffs and a direct state appropriation. Each qualifying candidate for a specific office receives the same amount of subsidy from the general account.</p>
Inactivity for candidate committees and political committees and funds	<p>Candidate committees are considered inactive 6 years after the last election for which they were a candidate or 6 years after the last day they served in office.</p> <p>Political committees and political funds are considered inactive if they have not made an expenditure or disbursement for 2 years.</p> <p>Inactive committees and funds must terminate their registration with the Board within 60 days after notification from Board staff.</p>
In-kind contribution	<p>See 'Contribution in kind'.</p>
In-kind expenditure	<p>An in-kind contribution becomes an in-kind expenditure during the same reporting period that the contribution was received. The amount reported for in-kind contributions must be the same as in-kind expenditures.</p>

Term	Definition
Independent expenditure	An expenditure expressly advocating the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate that is made without the express or implied consent, authorization, or cooperation of, and not in concert with or at the request or suggestion of any candidate, candidate's campaign committee or agent.
Loan	An advance of money or anything of value which must be reported until it has been repaid or forgiven. Individuals are limited to the contribution limit in the amount for which they may endorse a loan.
Money	Cash, checks, money orders, travelers checks, negotiable instruments and other paper commonly accepted by banks.
Noncampaign disbursement*	A purchase or payment for specific items listed at Minn. Stat. §10A.01, subd. 26. These items may be paid for by the candidate's committee but do not count toward the spending limit.
PAC	A commonly used term to describe a political committee or political fund – see definitions below.
Party account	Money derived from taxpayer checkoffs specified to a political party and its candidates and paid out as public subsidy. The amounts payable to candidates are district and party sensitive.
Political committee	An association whose major purpose is to influence elections or ballot questions. A political committee must have a chair, treasurer, and bank account at all times.
Political contribution refund (PCR)*	A form issued by candidates who have signed a <i>Public Subsidy Agreement</i> or by political party units to contributors. Contributors may have contributions of up to \$50 refunded. Contributors fill out an application form and send that with the receipt from the candidate or party to the Department of Revenue.
Political fund	<p>Funding for the political contribution refund program was unallotted for 2009 and 2010. Future funding of this program is uncertain at this time.</p> <p>An accumulation of dues or voluntary contributions used to influence elections or ballot questions. A labor union generally registers as a political fund. A political fund must have a treasurer and separate bank account at all times.</p> <p>If not prohibited by other law, dues or membership fees may be deposited into a political fund.</p>

Term	Definition
Political party	A major or minor political party and the aggregate of all its political party units in the state.
Political party unit	Each of the following committees is a political party unit: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State committee, 2. Legislative caucus committee, 3. Congressional district committee, 4. County committee, 5. Legislative district committee, 6. Municipality committee, or 7. Precinct committee.
Population	Population established by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The most recent federal census, 2. A special census taken the US Bureau of the Census, 3. An estimate made by the Metropolitan Council, or 4. An estimate made by the state demographer; <p>whichever has the latest stated date of count or estimate.</p>
Principal campaign committee	The committee organized by the candidate often called candidate committee or campaign committee. The committee must have a chair, treasurer, and bank account at all times. The candidate may have only one campaign committee for each office sought.
Promptly	Ten (10) business days after the event that gave rise to the requirement.
Public subsidy agreement*	A voluntary agreement for candidates to limit their campaign expenditures in exchange for eligibility to give political contribution refunds and to qualify to receive public subsidy payments.
Receipts	A treasurer must obtain a receipted bill that states the particulars for every expenditure over \$100.
Recordkeeping	Records, including vouchers, canceled checks, bills, invoices, worksheets, receipts, etc. must be kept for four years and are subject to audit, inspection, or examination.
Registration	Candidate committees, political committees, political funds, and party units must register within 14 days after raising or spending more than \$100.
Registration number	Assigned by the Board to every registered candidate, political committee, political fund, party unit, and lobbyist. A contributor in one of these categories must provide their registration number each time they make a contribution.

Term	Definition
Reporting form	The Board provides forms for all filers. If you choose to file in another format, you must get prior approval from Board staff as to the form of the information provided.
Special sources	Special sources include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Political committees, <li>2. Political Funds, <li>3. Lobbyists, and <li>4. Large givers (an individual that contributes more than ½ the candidate's contribution limit). Aggregate contributions from special sources are limited. The amounts vary by office sought and calendar years.*
Spending limits*	Voluntary limit on what a candidate who signs a <i>Public Subsidy Agreement</i> may spend on campaign expenditures per calendar year. Amounts vary by office and calendar year.
State committee	The organization that is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the political party at the state level.
Termination	A candidate, political committee, political fund, or party unit may terminate their registration when there are no outstanding debts, all assets have been liquidated, and the cash balance is \$100 or less. A termination report must be filed. See more information under 'Inactivity for candidate committees, and political committees and funds.'
Unregistered association	An association not registered with the Board and that, therefore, does not have a Board registration number. Unregistered associations may make contributions to no more than three (3) candidates, political committees, political funds, or party units in each year. With each contribution made the unregistered association must provide the recipient committee with a <i>Report of Receipts and Expenditures</i> . The Report must cover the period from January 1 st through the date the contribution is made. If the contribution is made prior to January 30 th , the Report must cover at least 30 days prior to the contribution. The Report must itemize all receipts and expenditures in excess of \$100. Providing a copy of an FEC report does not meet Minnesota's reporting requirements. Consult Board staff or the statute and rules if you have specific questions.
Volunteer time	Services provided without compensation by an individual volunteering their own personal time are not in-kind contributions to a candidate, political committee, political fund, or party unit.

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