



# STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION CITIZENS' ELECTION PROGRAM



## Basic Requirements for 2008 General Assembly Candidates

Chapter 157 of the Connecticut General Statutes establishes the Citizens' Election Program (the "Program"), a voluntary program which provides full public financing to qualified candidates for statewide offices and the General Assembly. The Program is financed by the Citizens' Election Fund, which receives funds from the proceeds of sales of abandoned property in the State of Connecticut's custody.

Candidates running for the office of State Senator or State Representative in 2008 and candidates running for statewide office in 2010 may join the Program. Additionally, candidates running for the office of State Senator or State Representative in any special election held in or after 2007 may join the Program.

Although participation in the Program is voluntary, certain requirements apply to *all* candidates for statewide offices and the General Assembly. For example, all candidates must file an affidavit of intent to abide by Program requirements *or* an affidavit of intent not to abide by Program requirements. Additionally, all candidates must be aware of additional disclosure requirements, including mandatory supplemental campaign finance disclosure reports.

The State Elections Enforcement Commission (the "Commission") is the filing repository for all campaign forms, registration and disclosure statements. The Commission is also responsible for administering the Program and monitoring compliance with Program requirements.

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## Program Goals

The voluntary public financing program was designed with various goals, including:

- (1) to allow candidates to compete without reliance on special interest money;
- (2) to curtail excessive spending and create a more level playing field among candidates;
- (3) to give candidates without access to sources of wealth a meaningful opportunity to seek elective office in the State of Connecticut; and
- (4) to provide the public with meaningful and timely disclosure of campaign finances.

To participate, candidates must agree to abide by certain requirements, including contribution and expenditure limits and mandatory disclosure.



## Qualifying Threshold

To qualify for public financing, candidates must demonstrate they have adequate support from the public. Candidates may accomplish this by meeting a two-part "threshold" that sets requirements for the aggregate amount of money which must be raised and the minimum number of individuals who must have contributed between five dollars to one hundred dollars to the candidate. Qualifying contributions are small monetary contributions from individuals, and do not include in-kind contributions, personal funds or loans. Qualifying contributions must be fully disclosed and adequately documented. Communicator lobbyists and their immediate family members, as well as principals of current and prospective state contractors, are prohibited from making qualifying contributions.

Office Sought	Aggregate Contribution Requirement - Individuals Only	Minimum Individual Resident Contributions Between \$5 - \$100
State Senator	\$15,000	300 residents of municipalities included, in whole or in part, in the district
State Representative	\$5,000	150 residents of municipalities included, in whole or in part, in the district

Expenditures during the qualifying period are limited to the required amount of qualifying contributions, plus any allowable personal funds the candidate provides to the candidate committee.

## Candidate's Use of Personal Funds

The Program permits candidates to provide a limited amount of personal funds to their candidate committees. Candidates may only provide such personal funds to their candidate committees before applying for initial grants. Any allowable personal funds reduce the grant by a corresponding amount. Personal funds do not constitute qualifying contributions. The maximum allowable amount of personal funds varies depending on the office being sought.

Office Sought	Maximum Allowable Personal Funds
State Senator	\$2,000
State Representative	\$1,000

## Loans to the Candidate Committee

The Program expressly limits the aggregate amount and permissible sources of any loans provided to the candidate committees of candidates intending to participate in the Program to an aggregate of one thousand dollars from financial institutions. The term "financial institution" includes "a bank, Connecticut credit union, federal credit union, an out-of-state bank that maintains a branch in this state and an out-of-state credit union that maintains an office in this state." CONN. GEN. STAT. § 36a-41. No person, PAC, or party committee can endorse or guarantee a loan or aggregate loans exceeding five hundred dollars, except the candidate, or, in a general election, a state central committee.

The one thousand dollar loan limit applies to candidate committees of candidates seeking any statewide or legislative office covered by the Program. Program requirements further provide that any such borrowed funds do not constitute qualifying contributions. A participating candidate must repay all outstanding loans before applying for a grant from the Citizens' Election Fund.



## Ballot Requirement

In addition to raising the required amount of qualifying contributions, candidates must also qualify for the ballot to be eligible to receive public funds. This ballot requirement applies in any primary, general or special election. The Office of the Secretary of the State administers the ballot qualification process. Further, if a candidate raises the required qualifying contributions and qualifies for the ballot as a minor party or petitioning candidate, such candidate must meet additional requirements to receive a grant, as discussed below.

## Primary Campaign Grants

### Primary Campaign Grants - Major Party Candidates

Eligible major party candidates who qualify for the ballot in a primary may qualify to receive a grant. The amount of the primary grant is reduced by the allowable amount of personal funds, if any, provided by the candidate during the qualifying period.

Nomination Sought	Primary Grant Amount - Major Party
State Senator	\$35,000
State Representative	\$10,000

### Primary Campaign Grants - Major Party Candidates in "Party-Dominant" Districts

- Candidates in "party-dominant" districts are eligible for larger grants in primary campaigns.
- A "party-dominant" district is one in which the percentage of active electors (registered voters) in the district who are enrolled in a major party exceeds the percentage of active electors in the district who are enrolled in the other major party by at least 20 percentage points.

Nomination Sought	Primary Grant Amount - Major Party Party-Dominant Districts
State Senator	\$75,000
State Representative	\$25,000

## General Election Campaign Grants

### General Election Campaign Grants - Major Party Candidates

- Reduced by the amount of unspent primary grant funds if the candidate received a primary grant;
- Reduced by any allowable personal funds if the candidate did not have a primary;
- Reduced to 30% of the full amount if the candidate is unopposed in the general election;
- Reduced to 60% of the full amount if the candidate faces only a minor or petitioning party opponent who has not raised an amount equal to the qualifying contribution threshold level for that office.



## General Election Campaign Grants - Major Party Candidates' Initial Grant Amounts

Office Sought	Candidate Eligible for Full Grant	Unopposed Candidate - Eligible for 30% Grant	Candidate Facing Limited Minor Party or Petitioning Party Opposition - Eligible for 60% Grant
State Senator	\$85,000	\$25,500	\$51,000
State Representative	\$25,000	\$7,500	\$15,000

## General Election Campaign Grants - Minor Party Candidates

- If a candidate for the same office representing the same minor party in the prior election received 20% or more of the votes cast for that office, the eligible minor party candidate in the current election may receive the full grant amount.
- If a candidate for the same office representing the same minor party in the prior election received at least 15% of the votes cast for that office, the eligible minor party candidate in the current election may receive 2/3 of the full grant.
- If a candidate for the same office representing the same minor party in the prior election received at least 10% of the votes cast for that office, the eligible minor party candidate in the current election may receive 1/3 of the full grant.
- Minor party candidates who receive less than the full grant amount may raise additional contributions that meet the criteria for qualifying contributions to make up the difference between the grant received and the amount of the full grant.
- Minor party candidates who receive a grant and report a deficit in post-election disclosure statements may be eligible to receive supplemental grant money depending on the percentage of votes received by such candidate.

## General Election Campaign Grants - Minor Party Candidates' Grant Amounts

Office Sought	Candidate Eligible for Full Grant - Prior Party Candidate Received At Least 20% of Votes Cast for Office in Prior General Election	Candidate Eligible for 2/3 Grant - Prior Party Candidate Received At Least 15% of Votes Cast for Office in Prior General Election	Candidate Eligible for 1/3 Grant - Prior Party Candidate Received At Least 10% of Votes Cast for Office in Prior General Election
State Senator	\$85,000	\$55,667	\$28,333
State Representative	\$25,000	\$16,667	\$8,333



## General Election Campaign Grants - Petitioning Candidates

- If a petitioning candidate's nominating petition is signed by electors equaling at least 20% of the votes cast for that office in the prior general election, the eligible petitioning party candidate in the current election may receive the full grant.
- If a petitioning candidate's nominating petition is signed by electors equaling at least 15% of the votes cast for that office in the prior general election, the eligible petitioning party candidate in the current election may receive 2/3 of the full grant.
- If a petitioning candidate's nominating petition is signed by electors equaling at least 10% of the votes cast for that office in the prior general election, the eligible petitioning party candidate in the current election may receive 1/3 of the full grant.
- Petitioning candidates who receive less than the full grant amount may raise additional contributions that meet the criteria for qualifying contributions to make up the difference between the grant amount received by such candidate and the full grant amount.
- Petitioning candidates who receive a grant and report a deficit in post-election disclosure statements may be eligible to receive supplemental grant money depending on the percentage of votes received by such candidate.

## General Election Campaign Grants – Petitioning Candidates' Grant Amounts

Office Sought	Candidate Eligible for Full Grant – Nominating Petition Signed by Electors Equaling At Least 20% of All Votes Cast for Office in Prior General Election	Candidate Eligible for 2/3 Grant –Nominating Petition Signed by Electors Equaling At Least 15% of All Votes Cast for Office in Prior General Election	Candidate Eligible for 1/3 Grant – Nominating Petition Signed by Electors Equaling At Least 10% of All Votes Cast for Office in Prior General Election
State Senator	\$85,000	\$55,667	\$28,333
State Representative	\$25,000	\$16,667	\$8,333



## Expenditure Limits

The Program establishes voluntary expenditure limits for three discrete periods of an election cycle: (1) the period before a primary campaign and general election campaign (the “qualifying period”); (2) the period of the primary campaign (if applicable); and (3) the period of the general election campaign. “Primary campaign” and “general election campaign” are defined terms under Chapter 157. CONN. GEN. STAT. §§ 9-700(7) & (11).

- The **qualifying period** allows candidates to raise qualifying contributions and demonstrate that they have the threshold of support necessary to qualify for public funds. Expenditures during the qualifying period are limited to the required amount of qualifying contributions, plus any allowable personal funds the candidate provides to the candidate committee.
- For candidates for statewide office or the district office of State Senator or State Representative, the **primary campaign period** begins the day after the close of the state or district convention held to endorse such candidate, pursuant to section 9-382. CONN. GEN. STAT. § 9-700(11)(A). For candidates for the municipal office of State Senator or State Representative, the primary campaign period begins the day after the close of the caucus, convention, or town committee meeting held to endorse such candidate, pursuant to section 9-390. CONN. GEN. STAT. § 9-700(11)(B). The primary campaign period ends on the day of the primary election. CONN. GEN. STAT. § 9-700(11).
- If a primary election is held, the **general election campaign period** for the candidate nominated at the primary begins the day after the primary election. CONN. GEN. STAT. § 9-700(7)(A). If there is no primary election, the general election campaign period begins the day after the candidate is nominated without a primary. CONN. GEN. STAT. § 9-700(7)(B). The general election campaign period ends the day the campaign treasurer files the final statement required pursuant to section 9-608. CONN. GEN. STAT. § 9-700(7).

### Qualifying Period Expenditure Limits

Expenditures during the qualifying period are limited to the required amount of qualifying contributions, plus any allowable personal funds the candidate provides to the candidate committee.

Office Sought	Aggregate Qualifying Contributions (QC)	Maximum Allowable Personal Funds (PF)	Spending Limit (QC + PF)
State Senator	\$15,000	\$2,000	\$15,000 - \$17,000
State Representative	\$5,000	\$1,000	\$5,000 - \$6,000



## Primary Campaign and General Election Campaign Expenditure Limits

### Primary Campaign Limit Calculated by Adding:

- Amount of primary grant, *and*
- Any unspent qualifying contributions or unspent personal funds provided by the candidate.

### General Election Campaign Limit Calculated by Adding:

- Amount of general election grant, *and*
- Any unspent qualifying contributions or unspent personal funds provided by the candidate.

Additionally, minor and petitioning party candidates who receive less than the full grant amount may raise and spend additional contributions that meet the criteria for qualifying contributions to make up the difference between the grant received and the amount of the full applicable grant.

## Reporting Requirements for All Candidates in Campaigns with any Participating Candidates - 90% Initial Threshold

- If *any* candidate in a primary or general election campaign with at least one participating candidate makes or incurs an expenditure exceeding 90% of the applicable grant for that campaign, the campaign treasurer must file a supplemental campaign finance statement within 48 hours;
- After the initial report, ALL candidates in the campaign for that office must file additional periodic supplemental campaign finance statements with the Commission regardless of the committee's level of expenditures; and
- The Commission may impose penalties of up to \$5000 for the failure to timely file supplemental campaign finance statements.

## Excess Expenditures

An excess expenditure is an expenditure made, or obligated to be made, by a candidate which exceeds the applicable expenditure limit for a participating candidate.

If a participating candidate is opposed by a candidate who makes excess expenditures, the participating candidate may be eligible to receive supplemental grant funds. The maximum supplemental payment the participating candidate may receive and spend cannot exceed the lesser amount of either (1) the highest amount of an opposing candidate's excess expenditures, or (2) the amount of the applicable grant authorized for the participating candidate. ***Participating candidates who receive supplemental grants funds may only spend an amount equal to the opponent's excess expenditure(s).***

Nonparticipating candidates are not required to follow the Program's expenditure limits; however, participating candidates are required to follow the Program's expenditure limits. Accordingly, participating candidates should not make excess expenditures. A participating candidate and campaign treasurer of a candidate committee which has received public funds are subject to various penalties if the participating candidate makes or incurs an obligation to make an excess





## Excess Expenditure Reporting within 24 to 48 Hours

- If a candidate committee makes or incurs an excess expenditure more than 20 days before a primary or election, the campaign treasurer must file a declaration of excess expenditure within 48 hours of making or incurring the expenditure;
- If a candidate committee makes or incurs an excess expenditure 20 days or less before a primary or election, the campaign treasurer must file a declaration of excess expenditure within 24 hours of making or incurring the expenditure.

## Supplemental Payments

Payment Trigger (Spending Level of Non-participating Opponent)	Supplemental Payment to Eligible Participating Candidate
Opponent spends in excess of 100% of applicable grant amount	25% of applicable grant amount
Opponent spends in excess of 125% of applicable grant amount	25% of applicable grant amount
Opponent spends in excess of 150% of applicable grant amount	25% of applicable grant amount
Opponent spends in excess of 175% of applicable grant amount	25% of applicable grant amount

## Independent Expenditures

- An independent expenditure is an expenditure that is made without the consent, knowing participation, or consultation of, a candidate or agent of a candidate committee, and is not a coordinated expenditure.
- Independent expenditures in excess of \$1000, in the aggregate, must be reported to the Commission by the person or entity who makes the independent expenditure.
- Independent expenditures made with the intent to promote the *defeat* of a participating candidate who has received a grant from the Program may trigger a supplemental payment or supplemental payments to the participating candidate.

## Independent Expenditure Reporting Requirements

- If any person or entity makes or incurs an independent expenditure more than 20 days before a primary or election, such person or entity must report such expenditure within 48 hours of making or incurring the expenditure;
- If any person or entity makes or incurs an independent expenditure 20 days or less before a primary or election, such person or entity must report such expenditure within 24 hours of making or incurring the expenditure.



## Supplemental Payments to Participating Candidates Targeted by Independent Expenditures



- A participating candidate is eligible for a supplemental payment only if the opposing non-participating candidate's campaign expenditures, plus the amount of the independent expenditure, exceeds the applicable initial grant amount.
- An eligible participating candidate can receive a supplemental grant matching the amount of the independent expenditure, up to the applicable primary or general election grant amount.

## Permissible Expenditures

- Public funds may be used only for campaign-related expenditures made to directly further the participating candidate's nomination for election or election.
- Campaigns must maintain detailed documentation indicating that campaign expenditures were made to directly further the participating candidate's campaign. Such documentation should be created at the time of the transaction.
- Campaign records are subject to comprehensive audits to ensure compliance with Program requirements.
- For additional guidance, please see the Commission's Citizens' Election Program regulations which can be found on the Commission's web site.

## Purpose of Overview Materials

The purpose of this overview is to provide general information about the various rules and requirements of the Program. This document however, is not a substitute for the law, which can be found on the Commission's web site.