

How do I report?

You may file your disclosure reports electronically or using paper (manual) reports. Manual reports are filed with the clerk and recorder.

Electronic Reports (preferred method):

Go to www.elections.colorado.gov. Click "Campaign Finance." Click "Search or File Campaign Finance Reports." Click "Login." Enter your name and password that you received by email when you registered.

Electronic filing instructions are available in the *Colorado Campaign and Political Finance Training Manual (County Version)*. The full manual is available at www.elections.colorado.gov under "Campaign Finance."

Paper Reports:

The reporting form is available at www.elections.colorado.gov under Campaign Finance or in the office of the clerk and recorder. As long as the state-provided cover sheet is used, you may submit printed spreadsheets (for example, MS Excel or Quickbooks) to report line items.

What happens after the election?

Following the election, your committee may terminate at any time or it may remain active, whether or not you were elected to office.

To terminate, you must achieve a zero balance of campaign funds, including paying off any loans. Colorado's campaign finance laws limit how unexpended contributions may be dispersed. Once you have a zero balance, simply file a Report of Contributions and Expenditures, indicating the zero balance and checking the box that indicates the report is a termination report.

Until you file a termination report, your committee remains active. You are required to file an annual report every year until you terminate.

Questions:

If you need assistance, contact Mike in the Larimer County Elections Department at (970) 498-7925 or msusek@larimer.org. Also remember to review the full *Manual* available at www.elections.colorado.gov under Campaign Finance.



Elections
Department
Scott Doyle
Clerk and Recorder

Overview of Colorado's Campaign Finance Laws

An Abridged Guide for School Board Director Candidates

November 3, 2009 Coordinated Election

IMPORTANT: This reference is an overview of Colorado's campaign finance laws. The Larimer County Clerk and Recorder recommends reading the *Colorado Campaign and Political Finance Training Manual (County Version)*. The *Manual* has filing instructions and the full text of applicable laws. The *Manual* is available at www.elections.colorado.gov under Campaign Finance. Our office is here to assist you. However, assistance from our office or this reference guide is not a substitute for legal advice.

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Do campaign finance laws impact me?

Are you a candidate for school board? Are you receiving or spending money to promote your own candidacy or a candidate for school board? If you answered “yes” to either of these questions, you need to be aware of Colorado’s campaign finance laws.

The laws set forth contribution limits, disclosure requirements and penalties for violations. Ignoring campaign finance laws may be costly to your campaign. For example, the fine for missing a disclosure reporting deadline is **\$50 per day** according to Colorado law!

How do I get started?

File your candidate affidavit and, if necessary, register a candidate committee.

Candidate Affidavits

All candidates are **required** to file a candidate affidavit with the clerk and recorder within 10 days of becoming a candidate. The affidavit declares that you are familiar with the state’s campaign finance laws. Failure to file the affidavit may disqualify you as a candidate.

Candidate affidavits are available at www.elections.colorado.gov under Campaign Finance or in the office of the clerk and recorder.

Candidate Committee Registration

Will you receive contributions for your campaign, including loans and non-monetary contributions? If so, you are required to register a candidate committee with the clerk and recorder before you receive your first contribution.

If you are a candidate and will **only** be spending your own money to promote your candidacy, then you do not need to register a committee. However, you still have to file disclosure reports of your expenditures.

Committee registration may be done online at www.elections.colorado.gov under Campaign Finance or in the office of the county clerk and recorder. If you register online, you will receive a username and password so you can later enter your disclosure reports online or update your committee information.

What do I need to report?

All contributions and expenditures under \$20 may be reported as one lump sum. Everything else must be itemized. Contributions of \$20 or more require the name and address of the contributor. Contributions of \$100 or more also require the employer and occupation of the contributor. Contributions of \$1,000 or more may require additional disclosure to the Secretary of State.

Contributions include cash, loans, non-monetary (in-kind) donations, etc.

Candidates who only spend their own money and do not receive contributions must file the Statement of Personal Expenditures by a Candidate.

If a candidate neither receives any contributions nor makes any expenditures, he/she may voluntarily file a Candidate Statement of Non-Receipt of Contributions or Non-Expenditure of Funds.

Forms are available at www.elections.colorado.gov under Campaign Finance or in the office of the clerk and recorder.

When are the reporting deadlines?

Financial disclosure reports are due three times during the election.

Deadline	Dates Covered in Report
10/13/09 (Tues.)	Everything through 10/8/09
10/30/09 (Fri.)	10/9/09 through 10/25/09
12/3/09 (Thur.)	10/26/09 through 11/28/09

Reports are on-time if **received** by the clerk and recorder by the close of business on the due date (postmarks do not count as received). Faxed reports are on-time if received by the close of business on the due date and the originals are received within 7 days.

Colorado law requires that committees are fined \$50 per day for every day a report is late. A limited appeal process is available under certain circumstances.