

CINCINNATI ELECTIONS COMMISSION

SUMMARY OF THE CITY OF CINCINNATI CHARTER REGARDING PROCEDURES FOR CANDIDATES IN THE 2025 MAYORAL AND COUNCIL ELECTION

NOTICE: THIS DOCUMENT IS INTENDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. EACH CANDIDATE AND/OR INDIVIDUAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN COMPLIANCE WITH ALL STATE AND LOCAL ELECTION LAWS.

I. Nomination Deadlines

In accordance with Article IX, Section 4, of the Charter of the City of Cincinnati, the nominating petition for a Council or Mayoral candidate shall be assembled and filed with the election authorities as one instrument at least 75 days prior to any election at which candidates are to be determined or elected.

For Mayoral candidates, the nominating petition is due **February 20, 2025**, 75 days prior to the non-partisan primary to be held on **May 6, 2025**.

For Council candidates, nominating petitions are due **August 21, 2025**, 75 days before the general election to be held on **November 4, 2025**.

Petition forms are only available from the Hamilton County Board of Elections. Petitioners for either Mayor or Council must obtain at least 500 (but no more than 1,000) signatures from current registered City voters to be included on the ballot. The Hamilton County Board of Elections is responsible for the certification of petitions. Upon certification, candidates must submit a written acceptance of the nomination.

II. City-mandated Campaign Finance Reporting Requirements

Article XIII of the Charter of the City of Cincinnati imposes reporting requirements on every candidate, political action committee, legislative campaign fund, or political party that made or received a contribution or expenditure for Cincinnati City Council or Mayoral races (all referred to as “Candidates” in this summary). The Cincinnati Elections Commission (the “Commission”) receives and processes these reports on behalf of the City. To file reports with the Commission, Candidates must use the Commission’s online templates, which are available at: <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/law/cincinnati-elections-commission/campaign-filing-templates/>, or other forms adopted and promulgated by the Ohio Secretary of State. No other forms will be accepted.

Candidates should report each contribution or expenditure only once in the period when the contribution was received or the expense was incurred. Items included in a Candidate’s initial report for an election cycle should not be repeated in subsequent reports, and new contributions or expenditures should appear exclusively in the report for the period when they occurred, avoiding duplication in future filings. This ensures accurate and one-time reporting of each transaction.

Each list of contributions, whether cash or in-kind, must include the contributor’s name, residential address, contribution amount, and contribution date. In addition, the City Charter

requires the name of the employer or, if self-employed, the occupation of a person contributing more than \$100 in the reporting period. Any contributions provided by a married couple should include at least the full name of the contributor who signed the check or initiated the contribution. For example, it is insufficient to list “Mr. and Mrs. Davis.”

Each list of expenditures must include the person or company name that funds were paid to, their residential or business address, the expenditure amount, and the expenditure date.

The Commission prefers to receive all reports electronically, and Candidates may email their reports to ElectionCommission@cincinnati-oh.gov. Candidates may also submit reports by mail to the Cincinnati Elections Commission, c/o City of Cincinnati Law Department, 801 Plum Street, Rm. 214, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202; or in person to City of Cincinnati Law Department at the aforementioned address from 9am to 4pm on regular business days.

Alternatively, Candidates themselves may input contributions and expenditures directly into the Commission’s database. Candidates must first email ElectionCommission@cincinnati-oh.gov to set up a username and password.

III. City Reporting Deadlines

The deadlines for filing City-mandated reports are described in Article XIII, Section 2 of the City’s Charter, and are further outlined below:

A. Council Candidates

- A pre-election report must be filed by all Council candidates no later than 4:00 p.m. on **July 31, 2025**. The report must identify contributions and expenditures that occur from the close of business on the last day reflected in the candidate’s last previously filed City-mandated statement, if any, to the close of business on June 30, 2025.
- A post-election report must be filed by all Council candidates (whether successful or not) no later than 4:00 p.m. on **December 12, 2025**. The report must identify contributions and expenditures that occur from the close of business on July 1, 2025 to the close of business on December 5, 2013.

B. Mayoral Candidates

1. If there is a mayoral primary:

- The two successful mayoral primary candidates shall file a post-primary report of contributions and expenditures by no later than 4:00 p.m. on **May 13, 2025**. This report must identify the contributions received and expenditures made from the close of business on the last day reflected in the last previously filed City-mandated statement, if any, to the close of business on May 6, 2025.
- All mayoral candidates (whether successful in the primary or not) must file a pre-election report no later than 4:00 p.m. on **July 31, 2025**. The report must identify contributions received and expenditures made from the close of business on May 7, 2025 to the close of business on June 30, 2025.

- A post-election report must be filed by all candidates (whether successful or not) no later than 4:00 p.m. on **December 12, 2025**. The report must identify contributions and expenditures that occur from July 1, 2025 to the close of business on December 5, 2025.
2. If there is **not** a mayoral primary:
- A pre-election report must be filed by all mayoral candidates no later than 4:00 p.m. on **July 31, 2025**. The report must identify contributions received and expenditures made from the close of business on the last day reflected in the last previously filed City-mandated statement, if any, to the close of business on June 30, 2025.
 - A post-election report must be filed by all mayoral candidates (whether successful or not) no later than 4:00 p.m. on **December 12, 2025**. The report must identify contributions and expenditures that occur from the close of business on July 1, 2025 to the close of business on December 5, 2025.

IV. State-mandated Campaign Finance Reporting Requirements

The City Reporting Requirements described above are in addition to filing requirements imposed under State law. **Pursuant to the City's Charter, Candidates must also file all State-mandated reports with the Commission.** Each report required by the State, when submitted to the Commission, shall include each contributor's name, residential address, contribution amount, contribution date, and if the person is contributing more than \$100 in the reporting period, the name of the person's employer or, if self-employed, the occupation of the person.

The filing requirements under State law are contained in Ohio Revised Code § 3517.10 and are further explained in the Ohio Campaign Finance Reporting Handbook issued by the Ohio Secretary of State. Questions and requests for additional information regarding state law requirements should be addressed to the Hamilton County Board of Elections, (513) 632-7000, or the Secretary of State, Campaign Finance Section, (614) 466-3111.

V. Contribution Limits

Article XIII of the Charter of the City of Cincinnati establishes campaign contribution limits for both mayoral and council candidates. Pursuant to Section 4.f.2 of Article XIII, these limits are adjusted every four years, if required. No adjustment is required for the 2025 election. The contribution limits for candidates for the 2025 election are as follows:

- Total individual contribution: \$1,100;
- Political action committee: \$2,700;
- Political party or legislative campaign fund: \$10,500.

After a mayoral primary campaign concludes with a primary election, the contribution limits start over for mayoral candidates only.

VI. 2025 Election Timelines

The following timelines summarize the City- and State-required reporting deadlines and other key dates for Council and Mayoral Candidates. All reports submitted to the Hamilton County Board of Elections to satisfy State requirements must also be submitted to the Commission, along with any additional information described in Section IV above.

2025 Council Election Timeline		
Date	Action	Must report through:
January 31, 2025	2024 Annual Report due to the Board of Elections	December 31, 2024
July 31, 2025	Semiannual Report due to the Board of Elections <i>and</i> Pre-Election Report due to the Commission	June 30, 2025
August 21, 2025	Council candidate nominating petitions due	
October 23, 2025	Pre-General Election Report due to the Board of Elections	October 15, 2025
November 4, 2025	General Election	
December 12, 2025	Post-Election Report due to the Commission <i>and</i> the Board of Elections	December 5, 2025
January 30, 2026	2025 Annual Report due to the Board of Elections	December 31, 2025

2025 Mayoral Election Timeline		
Date	Action	Must report through:
January 31, 2025	2024 Annual Report due to the Board of Elections	December 31, 2024
February 20, 2025	Mayoral candidate nominating petitions due	
April 24, 2025*	Pre-Primary Report due to the Board of Elections	April 16, 2025
May 6, 2025	Primary Election	
May 13, 2025*	Post-Primary Report due to the Commission	May 6, 2025
June 13, 2025*	Post-Primary Report due to the Board of Elections	May 6, 2025
July 31, 2025	Semiannual Report due to the Board of Elections <i>and</i> Pre-Election Report due to the Commission	June 30, 2025
October 23, 2025	Pre-General Election Report due to the Board of Elections	October 15, 2025
November 4, 2025	General Election	
December 12, 2025	Post-Election Report due to the Commission <i>and</i> the Board of Elections	December 5, 2025
January 30, 2026	2025 Annual Report due to the Board of Elections	December 31, 2025

*These deadlines apply only if a Mayoral primary election is held.

VII. Additional Information

Additional information for Candidates is located at <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/law/cincinnati-elections-commission/information-for-candidates/>, which may also be accessed by scanning the QR code below:



Questions and requests for additional information regarding the Cincinnati Elections Commission or the contribution and filing requirements in the Cincinnati Charter should be submitted via to ElectionCommission@cincinnati-oh.gov or by phone at (513) 352-3334.