

CINCINNATI ELECTIONS COMMISSION

SUMMARY OF THE CITY OF CINCINNATI CHARTER REGARDING PROCEDURES FOR CANDIDATES IN THE 2023 COUNCIL ELECTION

NOTICE: THIS DOCUMENT IS INTENDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. THE INDIVIDUAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE IS ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLYING WITH ALL STATE AND LOCAL ELECTION LAWS.

I. Nomination Deadlines

For Council candidates, the nominating petitions are due on **August 24, 2023**. This deadline is prescribed by the City Charter to be 75 days before the general election to be held on **November 7, 2023**.

Circulators of these petitions must be qualified electors (current registered voters) of the City of Cincinnati. Petition forms are only available at the Hamilton County Board of Elections office. The signature requirement is 500 current registered City voters. However, candidates can submit up to 1000 signatures for review. 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. Contribution Limits

The City Charter establishes campaign contribution limits for council candidates. The contribution limits for candidates for the 2023 election are as follows:

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

In this context, the City Charter prohibits campaign contributions made solely in the name of a partnership or unincorporated business. Any such contributions must be allocated to the person, owner, member, and/or partner making the contribution (and is subject to the \$1,100 limit).

III. Reporting Requirements

State law imposes certain financial reporting requirements on campaign committees for candidates in City elections. Those financial reports must be filed with the Hamilton County Board of Elections.

The City Charter imposes additional financial reporting requirements. Notably, these separate financial reports cover different time periods and require additional information

about the contributors. These financial reports must be filed with the Cincinnati Elections Commission. Failure to do so may result in a civil fine.

CEC Deadlines

- The pre-election financial report must be filed by **July 31, 2023**. The report must identify contributions and expenditures made on or before June 30, 2023.
 - If the candidate has previously run for City Council, this report must identify all contributions and expenditures made from the candidate's previous post-election financial report.
 - If the candidate has previously run for non-City Council elected office, this report must document the conversion of previous campaign funds consistent with the City Charter, the Cincinnati Municipal Code, and the CEC Rules.
- A post-election report must be filed by **December 15, 2023**. The report must identify contributions and expenditures that occur from June 30, 2023 to December 3, 2023.

Please note: These reports are not cumulative and should not include contributions previously reported.

Please note: Candidates who are NOT elected to City Council are still required to file the post-election report.

CEC Required Content

- Each financial report should be organized into three parts—contributions, in-kind contributions, and expenditures.
- The lists of contributions and in-kind contributions must include each 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.**
- The 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.
- 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."

Please note: The City provides Excel templates with labelled columns that should not be altered.

IV. Method of Filing Reports

The filings due to be submitted to the Cincinnati Elections Commission may be delivered in any of the following methods:

1. Campaigns can input contributions and expenditures themselves at the CEC website (<https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/campaignfinance>). Please email electioncommission@cincinnati-oh.gov for a username and password.
2. Campaigns can email reports to electioncommission@cincinnati-oh.gov. Please attach .csv or .xlsx spreadsheets to your email.
3. Campaigns can mail reports to Cincinnati Elections Commission, care of City of Cincinnati Law Department, 805 Central Avenue, Suite 110, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.
4. Campaigns can submit reports in-person to City of Cincinnati Law Department, 805 Central Avenue, Suite 110, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 from 9am to 2pm on regular work days.

Submissions may be made on the reporting templates provided by the Cincinnati Elections Commission, or on the forms submitted to the Hamilton County Board of Elections. The Cincinnati Elections Commission's reporting templates are available on the Cincinnati Elections Commission website.

These filing requirements are in addition to filing requirements imposed under state law. 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, 513-632-7013 or 513-632-7014, or the Secretary of State, Campaign Finance Section, 614-466-3111.

Questions and requests for additional information regarding the Cincinnati Elections Commission or the contribution and filing requirements in the Cincinnati Charter should be addressed to the Cincinnati Elections Commission by contacting the City of Cincinnati Law Department at electioncommission@cincinnati-oh.gov or 513-352-4519.

V. Documents & Templates

Visit: www.cincinnati-oh.gov/law/cincinnati-elections-commission/information-for-candidates/

