

# Campaign Finance Guide

City of Saint Paul Candidates

Saint Paul School Board Candidates

This information is intended to provide general guidance only. It is not intended as legal advice nor is it comprehensive. For complete information on the laws governing campaign finance, please refer to the **Saint Paul Legislative Code, Chapter 28** and **Minnesota Election Statutes, Chapters 211A & 211B**.



**Reporting information** is available at [ramseycounty.us/elections](https://ramseycounty.us/elections)



**Forms** are available at [ramseycounty.us/elections](https://ramseycounty.us/elections)



**Completed reports & forms** can be scanned and emailed to [elections@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:elections@co.ramsey.mn.us)

## What forms must be submitted by ALL candidates for municipal office?

All candidates must submit the following two forms even if campaign funds are not received or spent:

### 1. **Statement of Economic Interest**

- Due within 14 days of filing an affidavit of candidacy
- Submit form to Ramsey County Elections

### 2. **Certification of Filing**

- Due 7 days after the general election
- Submit form to Ramsey County Elections

## What form must be submitted by ALL candidates for school board?

All candidates must submit the following form even if campaign funds are not received or spent:

### 1. **Certification of Filing**

- Due 7 days after the general election
- Submit form to Ramsey County Elections

## I am a first-time candidate for office.

### Do I need to file campaign finance reports?

All candidates and candidate committees who are not currently filing with Ramsey County Elections must register and begin filing campaign finance reports when they reach \$100 in campaign contributions and/or expenditures in a calendar year. This includes candidates who are self-funding and candidates who have not yet filed an affidavit of candidacy.

All information required by campaign finance forms is public and the forms will be posted on the Ramsey County Elections website.

### Does my committee need a bank account?

A separate bank account is needed for any candidate or committee who receives contributions from outside sources. A candidate who is entirely self-funding does NOT need a separate account.

To set up an account, ask the bank for a personal account. The account must be named "Campaign Fund of (name of committee or fund)." Ramsey County Elections does not issue account or identification numbers, but if requested, we will issue a letter to the bank noting a committee's registration with the Elections office.

# How do I register with Ramsey County Elections?

Within 14 days of reaching the \$100 filing threshold, you must file the following two forms:

## 1. Registration & Statement of Organization

This form lists candidate/committee contact information and officers. A committee must have a chair and a treasurer. The candidate may serve in both roles. Updated statements must be filed within 10 days any time there is a change in committee information (except liquid assets).

## 2. Initial report

This form details financial activity of the committee, including cash and in-kind contributions and expenditures. This report is a one-time report that opens a committee account with Ramsey County Elections.

Once you are registered as a candidate or candidate committee, you **must file all remaining required reports in the calendar year and each year thereafter** until you submit a final report to close your registration and committee account with Ramsey County Elections.

**RAMSEY COUNTY Elections Office**

**REGISTRATION AND STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION**  
(All data on this form is public information)

This report is a(n) (check one):  New registration  Amendment to registration

The organization is for a (check one):  Candidate Committee  Political Committee  Political Fund

Committee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate Name (first and last) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address of Committee (include city, state, and zipcode) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose or Office sought \_\_\_\_\_

Geographic Area \_\_\_\_\_

**Officers of the Committee**

	Name	Address	Phone
Chair (required)			
Treasurer/Secretary (required)			
Other Principal Officers (if any)			
Other Principal Officers (if any)			

Depository(ies)/Bank Location of Committee Funds \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**RAMSEY COUNTY Elections Office**

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORT FORM**  
(All data on this form is public information)

Committee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Type of organization:  Candidate Committee  Political Committee  Political Fund

Office sought/Purpose of committee \_\_\_\_\_

Type of report:  Initial report  Final report (closes committee account - see MS Ch 211A.03 for requirements)

2 week pre-primary  8 week pre-election  2 week pre-election  January report

One-time report from political committee registered with Campaign Finance Board  
Registration # \_\_\_\_\_  
This report serves as both the initial and final report.

Reporting period: From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(Day following end date of last report) (5 days prior to due date OR December 31 if January report)

**Summary Statement to Date**  
(In column 5, enter totals from column C from previous report.)

	A. Totals for this report	B. Cumulative Totals to Date from previous report	C. Cumulative Totals to Date
1. Total contributions under \$50	\$ _____ +	\$ _____ =	\$ _____
2. Total contributions equal to/greater than \$50	\$ _____ +	\$ _____ =	\$ _____
3. Expenditures	\$ _____ +	\$ _____ =	\$ _____

Account Balance \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(as of report end date)  
(Column C: 1+2-3 = balance)

**Itemization of Contributions**  
Itemize all contributions made by an individual or committee that are equal to or greater than \$50 in the aggregate. Itemization must include: date, name, address, employer or occupation if self-employed, and amount. **Attach separate sheet or Excel spreadsheet.**

**Itemization of Expenditures**  
Itemize all expenditures. Itemization must include: date, purpose, and amount. **Attach separate sheet or Excel spreadsheet.**

Depository(ies)/Bank Location of Committee Funds \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of candidate, secretary, or treasurer \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 3/2015

I am registered and currently filing with Ramsey County Elections. My office is on the ballot. What reports are due for the 2019 election year?

1. **8-week pre-election report** - due 56 days prior to general election - September 10, 2019
2. **2-week pre-election report** - due 14 days prior to general election - October 22, 2019
3. **Certification of filing** - due 7 days after general election - November 12, 2019
4. **January report** - due at noon on the last Tuesday in January - January 28, 2020

### What is the reporting period for each report?

The reporting period for each report (except the January) is the day following the end date on the last report up to and including the fifth day before the due date of the report.

The reporting period for the January report is the day following the end date on the last report up to and including December 31st.

The initial report reporting period begins with the first date of financial activity.

### What information must be included on each report?

1. Total amount of all contributions received, including cash and in-kind, during the reporting period
2. Total amount of all expenditures made during the reporting period
3. Account balance as of reporting period end date
4. Itemization of contributions of \$50 or more in the aggregate during the calendar year which must include the following information:
  - name of individual
  - address of individual
  - employer or, if self-employed, occupation
  - date of contribution
  - amount of contribution
5. Itemization of all expenditures made during the reporting period which must include the following information:
  - date
  - purpose
  - amount
6. Signature

## How do I complete the Summary Statement to Date section of the report?

The summary section is intended to show the cumulative dollar amount of contributions and expenditures over the life of the committee.

### *Column A. Totals for this report*

On line 1, enter the total dollar amount of contributions under \$50 that occurred in the reporting period. On line 2, enter the total dollar amount of contributions \$50 and over that occurred in the reporting period. On line 3, enter the total dollar amount of expenditures that occurred in the reporting period. \*Note: ALL contributions \$50 and over and ALL expenditures must also be itemized and the information must be attached to the report form.

### *Column B. Cumulative Totals to Date from previous report*

Refer to the previous report submitted, and transfer the numbers from Column C onto the appropriate lines in Column B. If you are completing your first report, record \$0 on each line.

### *Column C. Cumulative Totals to Date*

On line 1, enter the sum of the line one totals from the first and second column. On line 2, enter the sum of the line two totals from the first and second column. On line 3, enter the sum of the line three totals from the first and second column. Once the numbers are entered onto the lines, add the first and second line together and subtract the third line. The resulting number is your Account Balance as of the report end date. The account balance may not be reflective of the actual cash in your account due to outstanding checks and deposits.

## What are the contribution limits?

Candidate and candidate committees may not accept cash or in-kind contributions from individuals or committees that in the aggregate exceed the following amounts:

### **Saint Paul Mayor**

- In a year when the office is on the ballot: \$1000
- In a non-election year: \$250

### **Saint Paul City Council**

- In a year when the office is on the ballot: \$600
- In a non-election year: \$250

### **Saint Paul School Board**

- In a year when the office is on the ballot: \$1000
- In a non-election year: \$250

Candidates for city and school board offices may not accept contributions from principal campaign committees (such as a committee established for a candidate for a state office under MN Stat. Ch. 10A) and must not make contributions to a principal campaign committee, unless the contribution is made from the personal funds of the candidate.

## How do I close my committee registration and end filing requirements?

A candidate/committee may dissolve a committee and file a final report at any time once all debts have been paid and all assets in excess of \$100 in the aggregate have been disposed of. Filing a final report closes the candidate/committee account with Ramsey County Elections and ends all reporting requirements.

- Use the City of Saint Paul Campaign Finance Report Form and mark “Final report.”
- For laws governing disposal of assets, see MN Stat. Ch. 211A.13 and Ch. 211B.12 subd 6 and 7.

## What reports are due in non-election years?

### *New committees*

If you begin receiving contributions or making expenditures in a non-election year (a year when the office is not on the ballot), you will owe the following:

#### **1. Registration & Statement of Organization**

Due date: within 14 days of reaching the \$100 threshold in contributions and/or expenditures, but can be submitted at any time

#### **2. Initial report**

Due date: within 14 days of reaching the \$100 threshold in contributions and/or expenditures

Reporting period: date of first transaction up to and including fifth day before report is submitted

#### **3. January report**

Due date: last Tuesday in January of each calendar year

Reporting period: day following the end date on the last report up to and including December 31st

### *Currently registered/reporting committees*

If you are registered with Ramsey County Elections and have been filing campaign finance reports, you will owe the following:

#### **1. January report**

Due date: last Tuesday in January of each calendar year

Reporting period: day following the end date on the last report up to and including December 31st

## How do I submit reports to Ramsey County Elections?

All reports can be submitted by one of the following methods. It is not necessary to submit an original.

- Online at [ramseycounty.us/elections](http://ramseycounty.us/elections)
- Scan and email
- Mail
- In-person
- Fax

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How do I account for in-kind contributions on a report?**

Determine the fair market value of an in-kind donation and list it in the contributions section of the report. It must also be recorded as an expenditure in the same period.

### **Can I loan money to my campaign and use contributions to pay myself back?**

Yes, but you must have a separate campaign bank account established. A loan should be reported as a contribution when made and the repayments as expenditures when paid back.

### **Individuals have donated items, other than food, for a fundraising auction. How do I account for this on the finance report?**

Assign the fair market value to the item and list it as an in-kind contribution and as an expenditure in the same period. Any money received for the item is listed as a cash contribution in the appropriate reporting period.

### **How do I account for contributions of food for meetings/fundraisers, etc?**

As long as the food brought by each individual falls under the itemization threshold it can be reported in the lump sum non-itemized contribution section of the report. However, it is important to keep track of the monetary value of each food item brought and the individual who brought it as it does figure into the aggregate contribution limitation in election/non-election years. Be sure to also list it as an expenditure on the same report.

### **How do I account for food consumed by attendees at meetings/fundraisers, etc?**

Attendees of an event at which food is provided must not consume more than \$5.00 worth to fall within the non-reporting requirements of 211B.13. If items/meal is worth more than \$5.00, an attendee must be charged fair market value for the food and pay anything over the \$5.00 allowed by statute. Payment is then recorded as a contribution.

### **I discovered an error in a report already submitted to the Elections office. How do I proceed?**

Corrections must be reported in writing within 14 days of becoming aware of the error. Submit a City of Saint Paul Campaign Finance Report Form, checking the applicable report and writing "amendment" next to it. Complete the Summary Statement to Date section with the corrected amounts and list the individual contributions and/or expenditures that are corrections along with the other required itemization information. Also note that it is a "correction to original itemization on (original date)." Record the new account balance.



If you have any questions, please contact Ramsey County Elections.

651-266-2171



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