

# Campaign Committees General Information

## **Organizing the Committee:**

In order to run for office, you will need to organize a campaign committee. Organizing a committee consists of filing paperwork with the Board of Elections office. This paperwork needs to be filled out at the BOE office or either postmarked to the BOE within 10 days of either:

- a. the date of the committee's first contribution, or
- b. the date of the committee's first expense, or
- c. the date of the committee's first loan, or
- d. the date of filing a Notice of Candidacy, or
- e. the date of filing a Statement of Organization, WHICHEVER COMES FIRST.

The Organization forms include:

- Statement of Organization (CRO-2100A)
- Certification of Financial Account Number Information (CRO-3500)
- Certification of Threshold form (CRO-3600) (for committees under the \$1,000 threshold limit)
- Certification of Treasurer (CRO-3100)
- Candidate Designation of Committee Funds (CRO-3900)

All of these forms are available at the County BOE office or on the State Board of Elections website at [www.ncsbe.gov](http://www.ncsbe.gov) under CAMPAIGN FINANCE / REPORTING FORMS/ Registered Political Committee Disclosure Reporting Forms

## **Bank Accounts:**

- N.C.G.S 163.278.8(h) now requires that all committees use a SEPARATE bank account for their campaign. **If you are going to receive contributions from other individuals, you need to open a separate bank account.**
- If a candidate does not accept campaign contributions, (and they only use their personal money) they do not have to open a separate account. This certification must be made on the form CRO-3500.
- If your bank requires you to have a Tax ID# to open your campaign account, you can apply for a Tax ID number using the IRS website at this link:  
<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/political-organizations/employer-identification-number-political-organizations>

## **Campaign Finance Manuals:**

Copies of the Campaign Finance Manual are available from the NC State Board of Elections website at [www.ncsbe.gov](http://www.ncsbe.gov).

## **Websites:**

Iredell County Board of Elections: [www.co.iredell.nc.us](http://www.co.iredell.nc.us) Government/Elections  
NC State Board of Elections: [www.ncsbe.gov](http://www.ncsbe.gov)

### **Appointment of Treasurer:**

A candidate may appoint himself or any individual, ***with the exception of the candidate's spouse***, to serve as treasurer.

- **Every treasurer must receive mandatory treasurer's training regardless of whether or not you file under or over the \$1,000 threshold limit.** Training can be completed on-line or by attending a training seminar. This training **must be completed within 3 months of appointment and again once every 4 years.** This training requirement can be accomplished by completing online training available through the NC State Board of Elections.

### **To register for Training:**

Log onto [www.ncsbe.gov](http://www.ncsbe.gov) – go to Campaign Finance / Treasurer Training / Mandatory Compliance Training and follow the instructions listed there to register for Compliance Training. You will have to set up an account.

- Treasurers who do not complete the mandatory training requirement in a timely manner are NOT eligible to sign required disclosure reports. Only candidates, treasurers, or assistant treasurers that have been trained are eligible to sign disclosure reports. Reports that are submitted by a treasurer that has not received training are subject to penalties.
- In addition to taking the Treasurer's training, the treasurer should review the NC Campaign Finance Manual. This manual can be found on the NC State Board of Elections website at [www.ncsbe.gov](http://www.ncsbe.gov) under CAMPAIGN FINANCE/ CANDIDATE COMMITTEES / DOWNLOAD THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE MANUAL
- All money – coming in and going out – must go through the treasurer.
- The treasurer must maintain all financial records of the Committee.
- The treasurer is responsible for filing reports (if over the \$1,000 threshold) in a timely manner. Failure to file reports in a timely manner can result in financial penalties.
- The treasurer is responsible for the accuracy of the reports and for compliance with the campaign finance laws.
- In the event a candidate needs to change their treasurer, a new *Certification of Treasurer* form must be completed within 10 days of the change in addition to amending the *Statement of Organization*. Failure to complete these forms in a timely manner could result in penalties.

### **Campaign Finance Remote Software:**

- Is free to any committee that is filing reports
- The software can be downloaded from the State Board website
- County candidates who have a cumulative total of more than \$10,000 in contributions, in expenditures, or in loans are **REQUIRED** to file electronically to the State Board of Elections.

## **Campaign Reports:**

- **Effective 1/01/17, electronic filing of campaign reports became mandatory for all committees that raise or spend \$10,000 or more in an election cycle.**
- When you organize your committee you are asked whether or not you intend to receive or spend more than \$1,000. Campaigns that file **over** the \$1,000 limit for contributions and expenditures are required to file reports.
- Any committee that initially files **under** the \$1,000 threshold limit for contributions or expenditures but reaches the \$1,000 limit during the election cycle is required to immediately notify the BOE office to amend their forms and file the required reports within 10 days.
- Candidates for County and Municipal offices and Local PACs file reports at their County Board of Elections office. Political parties, state and federal PACs, and candidates for statewide, legislative and judicial offices file reports at the State Board of Elections.

## **Campaign Finance Forms:**

- Go to the NC Board of Elections website at [www.ncsbe.gov](http://www.ncsbe.gov)
- Click on Campaign Finance
- Click on Reporting Forms
- Scroll down to “Registered Political Committee Disclosure Reporting Forms (all forms)”
- All forms have instructions and a sample for you to preview

### **ALL campaign finance reports need the following two forms:**

CRO-1000	Disclosure Report Cover
CRO-1100	Detailed Summary (For each line item entry on this form, you will need to submit the corresponding disclosure form.)

**COMMONLY USED FORMS:** Based on the activity your committee has had during the reporting period, you may need the following forms:

- CRO-1205 Aggregated Contributions from Individuals (for those giving you less than \$50.00)
- CRO-1210 Contributions from Individuals
- CRO-1310 Disbursements
- CRO-1315 Aggregated Non-Media Expenditures (less than \$50)
- CRO-1510 In-Kind Contributions
- CRO-1250 Other Receipt Sources – Used for reporting interest income
- Loan Forms (see below)

This list does NOT include all the forms listed on the website. You will need to look at your individual campaign, and see if you need to fill out additional reports. For example, if you take money from a political party, you would need to complete form CRO-1220.

**LOANS** – If you receive a loan, (from yourself or someone else), you should fill out the loan forms listed below that are applicable to your reporting period:

- CRO-1410 Loan Proceeds
- CRO-6100 Loan Proceeds Statement (must accompany the CRO-1410)
- CRO-1430 Outstanding Loans
- CRO-1420 Loan Repayments
- CRO-1440 Forgiven Loans
- CRO-6200 Forgiven Loan Statement (must accompany the CRO-1440)

If you have any questions about what forms you need to use, please be sure to contact the Board of Elections.

## **Campaign Finance Guidelines:**

The Campaign Finance manual and the Treasurer's training will provide you with specific details concerning contributions and disbursements. Listed below, however, are a few guidelines that apply to most campaign committees.

1. **Any contribution over \$50** has to be made in the form of a check, draft, money order, credit card charge, debit, or other noncash method that can be subject to written verification. -- No CASH contributions over \$50.00 per day can be accepted.
2. **All contributions need to be documented.** Once a contributor gives you a cumulative total over \$50.00 during an election cycle, you will have to report the contributor's name, complete mailing address, occupation and employer information, date of receipt, form of payment, amount, and election sum to date for that contributor. This information does not have to be disclosed for people who give you \$50 or less per election.
3. Contributions received at a fundraiser from the sale of items such as dinner tickets, t-shirts, buttons or hotdogs require disclosure and count toward an individual's \$50.00 threshold for identity reporting. **(You have to be able to tell how much money you collected from each individual person at the fundraiser)**
4. You cannot accept anonymous or joint contributions (ex. Mr. & Mrs. Joe Smith). You have to designate which spouse gave you the money. A check on a joint checking account is acceptable, you just have to designate which person is making the contribution.
5. A candidate may not accept more than \$5,600 from any one individual per election. (A primary, a second primary, and a general election are considered separate elections). The candidate's spouse is exempt from this limitation; they may contribute unlimited amounts. There is no limit on what a candidate can contribute to his/her own campaign.
6. It is unlawful for any corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company to directly or indirectly contribute to a candidate. A registered political committee may contribute \$5,600 per election to candidate committees. Registered referendum committees that receive any contribution from a corporation, labor union, insurance company, business entity or professional association may not contribute to a candidate committee.
7. All Prohibited contributions (total amount) must be turned over to the State Board of Elections for deposit in the NC Civil Penalty Forfeiture Fund.
8. In Kind contributions also have to be reported and are included in the \$1,000 threshold amount. The contributor of the In-Kind contribution should provide the committee with a statement detailing the fair market value of the contribution. (In-Kind Contributions are contributions that are not monetary in nature and may be either a good or service. For example, an individual may contribute food for a fundraiser or cups and napkins to be used for an event. The "fair market value" of the food or the cups and napkins would be the amount of the contribution and would count toward the giver's maximum contribution limits.)
9. All expenditures have to be listed by the payee's name, complete mailing address, purpose, form of payment, amount & date, and election sum to date for that payee.
10. **All** expenditures for media expenses must be made with a check.
11. All expenditures for non-media expenses of more than \$50 should be made with a check or other verifiable form of payment.
12. If you loan your campaign money, you will need to fill out the appropriate forms to show these transactions.

13. Every advertisement appearing in the print media, on television or on radio that constitutes a contribution or expenditure under the Campaign Reporting Act must state who paid for the ad. TV ads require a visual legend.
14. A Legend (the information stating who paid for and authorized the advertisement – ex. Paid for by Smith for Mayor Campaign) is required on the following: newspaper ads, newspaper inserts, fliers, business cards, post cards, mass mailings (over 500 pieces), portable signs, periodicals, TV ads, Radio ads, magazines, billboards (6' x 6' and larger), pamphlets, magnetic car signs. There are different types of legends so check the campaign finance manual to make sure you are using the correct one.
15. Legends are not required on: buttons and bumper stickers, websites, yard signs and window posters (approximately 14 x 22 inches and posters used in stores, on stakes in yards, etc.), and campaign paraphernalia such as balloons, nail files, etc. imprinted with a campaign message.
16. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ON LEGEND REQUIREMENTS, **ASK BEFORE YOU HAVE ITEMS PRINTED!**
17. Please check the Campaign Finance Manual for other regulations on Print, Radio & TV advertising.
18. Rules on SAMPLE BALLOTS “re-creating” or “duplicating” ballots:
  - If you choose to provide sample ballots to voters, you MUST include a disclosure on the sample ballot that the document was not produced by a board of elections and is not an official ballot. It must also contain a legend.

*§ 163-165.2(b) Document Resembling an Official Ballot to Contain Disclaimer - No person other than a board of elections shall produce or disseminate a document substantially resembling an official ballot unless the document contains on its face a prominent statement that the document was not produced by a board of elections and is not an official ballot.*

19. **Using Credit Cards:**
  - a. If you use your personal credit card to make campaign purchases, then these charges will need to be reported as an “In-Kind” contribution to the campaign. “In-Kind” Contributions have to be reported on two separate forms; the CRO-1210 (Contributions from Individuals) as well as CRO-1510 (In-Kind Contributions). This shows the money coming into your campaign via the credit card and then going out as expenditures.
  - b. Should you decided to reimburse yourself for campaign purchases made using your personal credit card, you are required to file form CRO 1320 (Refunds/Reimbursements from the Committee).
  - c. If you have opened a credit card for the sole use of the campaign committee, then any charges made on this card that are still outstanding when your reports are filed will need to be reported as a campaign debt on CRO-1610 (Debts and Obligations Owed by the Committee). When payments are made to the credit card company, these payments would be listed as an expenditure on the form CRO-1310 (Operating Expenditures).

### **Closing the Campaign Committee**

After the election, you will be mailed a letter asking you to determine the future status of your campaign committee. If you are going to continue raising funds and spending money, then you will need to keep your committee open and file the necessary campaign finance reports. If you still have money in your account and you want to leave it there, but you are not planning on making any expenditures or accepting contributions; then you can make your account inactive. If you have disbursed all the money in your account and you are finished with this year’s campaign; then you can elect to close your account. Any campaign account that remains open will be required to file reports.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Iredell County Board of Elections office at 704-878-3140.

### **Sign Ordinances:**

- Can be placed on private property at any time
- Can be placed in the right-of-way of state highways beginning on the 30<sup>th</sup> day before One-Stop
- Cannot obscure visibility at an intersection
- Check with Municipalities on their respective sign ordinances
- No more than 2 signs at the Non-Restrictive polling places and One-Stop Sites
- Signs should be removed within two (2) days after the election
- Legends are not required on normal size yard signs, but are required on all other larger signs.

### **Same Day Registration:**

- Permits individuals who are not registered to register and vote at the same time during the One-Stop voting period
- Individuals who are already registered in the county may update their name and address information -- but **not PARTY** affiliation -- during the One-Stop early voting period.
- Same Day registrants must provide proof of residence (NC Driver's license, government issued photo id, current utility bill, bank statement, or other government document showing the voter's name and **current** address)
- Same Day Registration **is NOT** allowed on Election Day

### **Absentee Guidance for Candidates:**

- The Absentee Ballot Request form can be found on the website
- Absentee Request forms must be returned to the Elections office by 5 pm on the Tuesday before the Election
- Candidates may make copies of the State Absentee Ballot Request Form
- It is a violation of law for a candidate to witness a voter's absentee ballot unless the candidate is a near relative of the voter.
- It is a violation of law for a candidate to take possession of a voter's absentee ballot regardless of whether the ballot is blank or sealed within the return envelope, unless the voter is a near relative of the candidate.

### **Election Results:**

- Election results will be posted on our website on Election Night
- One-Stop and Absentee by mail numbers are released at 7:30 pm on Election Night.