

NM School District Campaign Reporting

October 8, 2025

Bureau of Elections

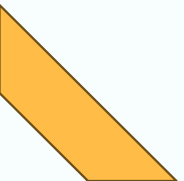
New Mexico Secretary of State



Disclaimer

This training is intended to give an overview of the School District Campaign Reporting Act, the Campaign Finance Rule, and use of the Campaign Finance Information System.

The information provided in this training is not legal advice and is not a substitute for legal research or the advice of an attorney.



Who is this Training Intended For?

During the 2023 Regular Local Election, only select School Board candidates were required to file campaign finance reports, however for the 2025 RLE, this has expanded to include all school board candidates.

If you are a candidate as defined by the following slides, you are **required** to register for the Campaign Finance Information System (CFIS) and file reports by the statutorily required deadlines. You *maybe* required to open a bank account for your campaign if intending to collect or spend money for campaign purposes.



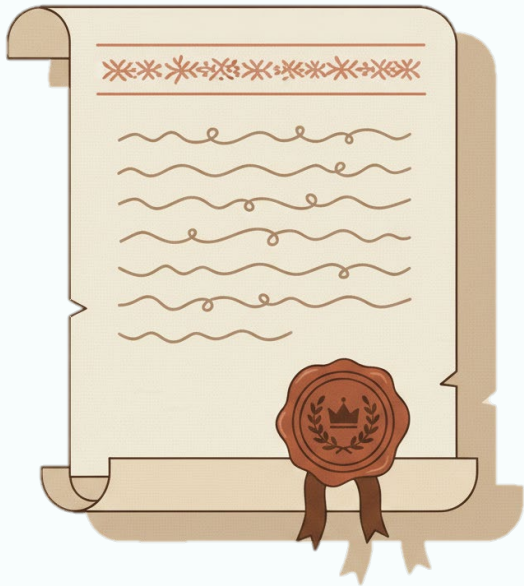
Review of Terms

- + “*CFIS*” is the Campaign Finance Information System, the electronic database used to file your campaign finance reports.
- + “*Reporting individual*” a candidate or treasurer of a campaign committee.
- + “SOS” is the Secretary of State’s Office.



Who is a Candidate

A candidate is an individual who is seeking office as a School Board member, who has:



Filed a Declaration of
Candidacy

OR



Raised or spent at
least \$500



What do I need to report?

CONTRIBUTIONS

- Money (including the candidate's own funds)
- Things of value (in-kind contributions)
- Loans
- Gifts, subscriptions, and advances

EXPENDITURES

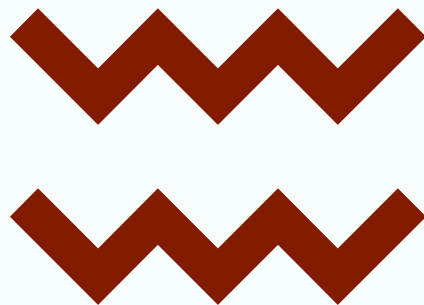
- Money spent on campaign expenses

NO ACTIVITY

- If NO contributions or expenditures, file "statement of no activity"



CONTRIBUTIONS





What are NOT contributions?

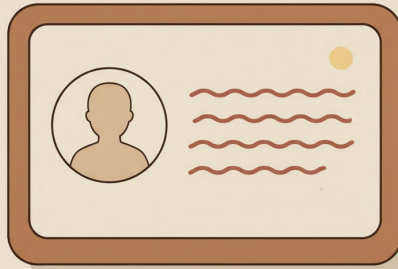
- + Services provided without compensation
- + Volunteer time
- + Unreimbursed travel
- + Volunteers' personal expenses
- + PAC sponsoring organization's administrative expenses
- + Incidental use of candidate's personal property

What Must be Disclosed?



Date Received

The date your campaign took control of the contribution



Donor's Full Name

If more than \$250, the donor's occupation / business type must be included



Amount of Contribution

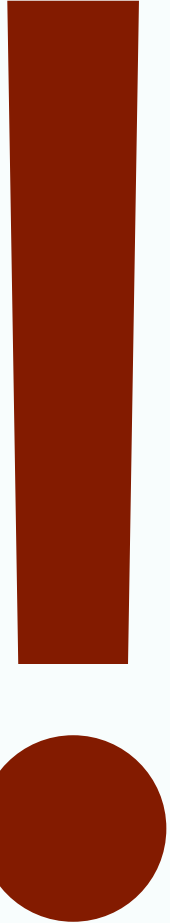
This also includes the *estimated* value of in-kind contributions

Credit Card Contributions

- + Credit card contributions may be accepted in person or online (YOU are responsible for collecting all required information)
- + Card must be physically present for contribution *unless* card security code and billing address are provided at the time of contribution N.M.S.A. §1-19-34(E)(2021)



Earmarking is Prohibited!

- 
- + “Earmarking” occurs when a donor uses a third party to make a contribution anonymously.
 - + It is unlawful to accept a donation in the name of another or to make a donation in the name of another when there is an intention to disguise the real source.



Holding a Special Event



- + Tickets costing \$25 or less.
- + No single special event can raise more than \$1,000 after expenses.
- + Must describe event (barbecue, coffee, reception, other).
- + Must disclose sponsor, date, place, total amount received, expenses incurred, and estimated number of persons in attendance.
- + Excess contributions go to the general fund or to charity.



How to Hold Raffles: DON'T!

- + Political campaigns or committees are NOT organizations eligible to hold raffles (according to The Raffle & Bingo Act).
- + Raffles are overseen by the Gaming Control Board (there is NO SOS control or jurisdiction).
- + Criminal penalties incurred for violating the Raffle & Bingo Act.

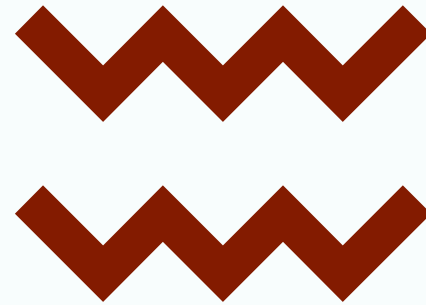


Limits on Anonymous Contributions

- + \$100 per donation.
- + \$500 limit per cycle for candidates.
- + Excess anonymous contributions go to the general fund or to charity.



EXPENDITURES



Reporting Use of Candidate Funds

+ CONTRIBUTIONS

- Candidate gives money to campaign by depositing in campaign bank account
- Candidate does not intend be repaid for contribution

+ LOANS

- Candidate loans money to campaign by depositing in campaign bank account
- Candidate intends to be repaid all or part of the loan from campaign funds
- Loans can be forgiven



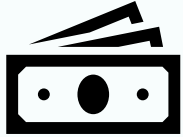
Reporting Use of Candidate Funds

+ REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENDITURES

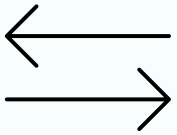
- Candidate uses personal credit or debit card to pay for an expense
- Candidate can be reimbursed for the expense, but must itemize the expenditures reimbursed



What ARE expenditures?



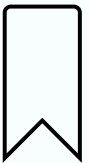
Payments



Transfers or distributions



Obligations or promises to pay, transfer or distribute any money or thing of value for a political purpose



Repayment of debts incurred in an election campaign or pre-primary convention



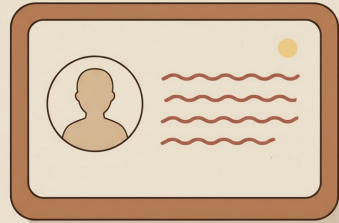


Disclosures for expenditures



Date Received

The date your campaign incurred the expense



Recipient

Who was the expenditure sent to?
Include full name and address



Amount

The full amount of the expenditure



Purpose

For what reason was the expenditure made? (I.e. Supplies, campaign materials, etc.)

Allowable expenditures

- + Expenses related to campaign
 - Includes legal expenses such as filing fees and attorney fees
- + Expenses of legislators reasonably related to performing the duties of their office (excluding personal and legislative session living expenses)
- + Expenditures to eliminate campaign debt
- + Donations to the state general fund



Allowable expenditures cont'd.

- + Donations to charity.
- + Donations to a political committee or to another candidate.
- + Disbursements to return unused funds to contributors if no campaign debt exists.



PROHIBITED expenditures

- + Personal expenses: Any use of funds “to fulfill a commitment, obligation, or expense of any candidate or legislator that would exist regardless of the candidate’s campaign or responsibilities as a legislator.”
 - Clothes, hair, massages.
 - Mortgage or rent for home or office.
 - Utility payments for home or office.
- + Memberships to clubs or non-political organizations.



PROHIBITED expenditures cont'd.

- + If the expense would exist *without* the campaign, then it is **not** an acceptable campaign expenditure.

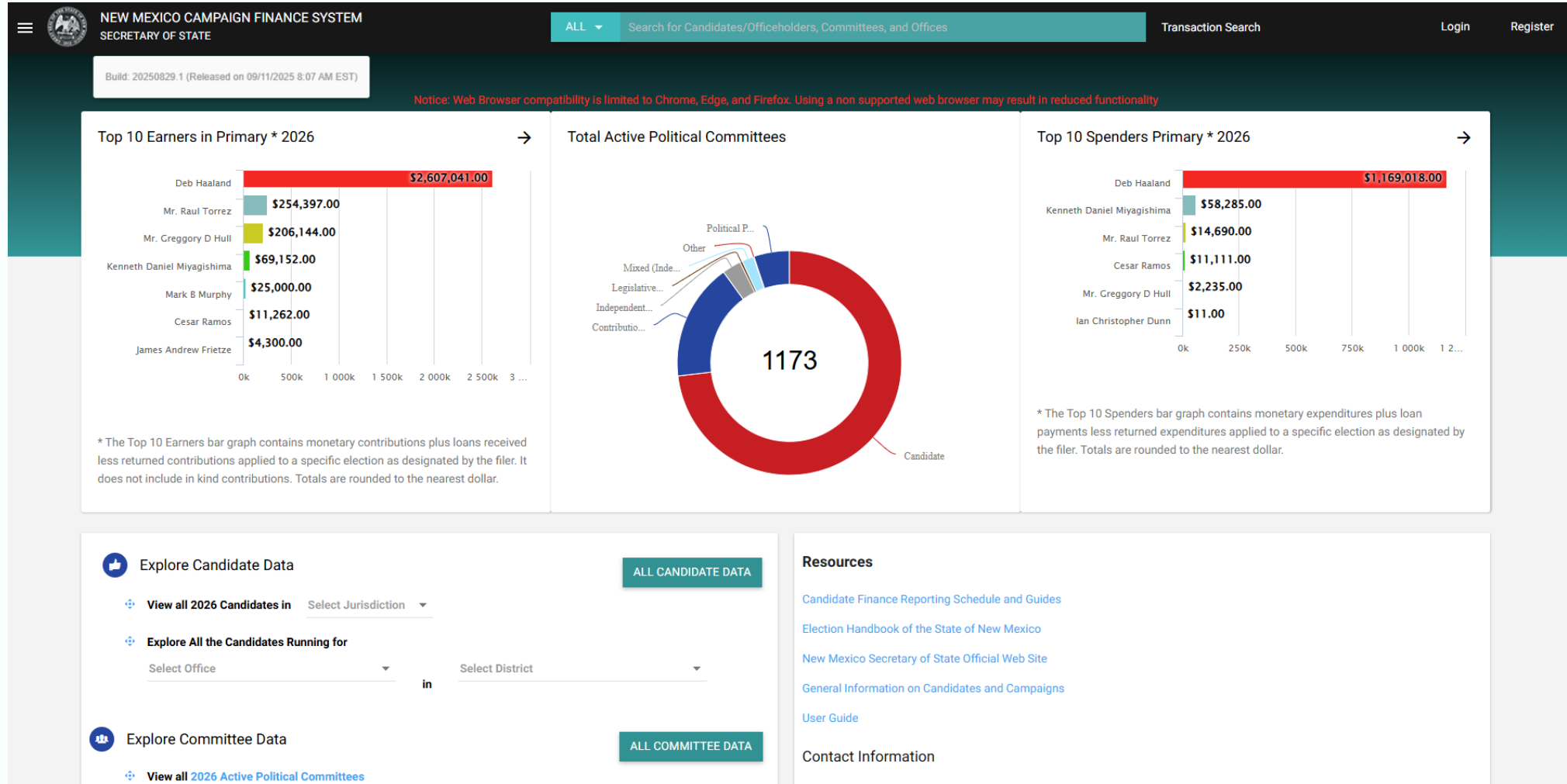


What is CFIS?

- + Campaign Finance Information System
- + Secure, web-based reporting system.
- + Contains information on candidates, Political Committees, lobbyists, lobbyist employers, lobbying advertising campaigns, and Financial Disclosure Statement Filers
- + Public and internal administrative site.
 - Most information is available to the public, *however...*
 - Certain information can only be accessed by authorized SOS users
- + Support is available during SOS business hours.



CFIS Live Demo



Getting started in CFIS

1. Open a separate bank account for the campaign or PAC
2. Appoint a treasurer - Candidates can serve as their own treasurer
3. Register with the Ethics Division to receive your CFIS login

NOTE!

It is unlawful to spend or receive campaign money without the authorization of the candidate or treasurer.

You must have a treasurer AND a separate bank account for your campaign and/or PAC before the SOS can open your CFIS account.

You cannot remove a treasurer from your SOS records, or CFIS account until you have a successor.



Managing your CFIS account

Best Practices

- + Make sure contact information is current
- + Remove non-participating persons from the account
- + Usernames can be retrieved, and Passwords can be reset on your own using **“Forgot your Username or Password”** feature
- + Must click on **“File”** once all information is entered



Closing a CFIS account

Candidates may close their CFIS account when:

- + The campaign has no outstanding debts
- + All money has been spent **AND**
- + The bank account(s) has been closed

CFIS accounts do not expire; however, if yours remains open, you **MUST continue to file timely reports*



When reports are filed:

2025 RLE School Board Filing Dates

- Tuesday, October 14, 2025
- Tuesday, December 5, 2025



What if I file a late report?

- + You will receive notice from SOS with opportunity to cure within ten (10) business days.
- + Statutory fines will apply to late reports (fines can be waived or reduced for good cause).
- + Fines will accrue each day until the report is filed.
- + Failure to respond to first notice within ten days results in second notice with updated second fine and opportunity to file the report and waive or reduce the fine.
- + Failure to respond to second notice will result in Notice of Final Action with an *assessed* fine, which continues to accrue daily until report is filed.
- + Maximum fine = \$5,000



Penalties for non-compliance with Act

Administrative:

- + Fines
- + Exclusion from placement on ballot
- + Refused certificate of nomination or election
- + Disallowed from filing a declaration of candidacy for any future election



Penalties for non-compliance with Act

Civil:

- + Injunctions
- + Restraining orders
- + Fines
- + Order to return contributions

Criminal:

- + Prosecution by AG or DA for willful violations





[← 2020 First Primary Report: 10/05/2019 - 04/06/2020](#)

REVIEWPREVIEWFILE

72 Days Late (Due Date: 04/13/2020)

Inactivation?

☐ Check here if you are inactivating and this is your final report.

In order to inactivate, you cannot have any outstanding fees or fines, and after this report is filed, you cannot have any unfilled transactions or a positive cash balance.

☐

I hereby declare that I did not have any contributions or expenditure or other reportable financial activity since my last report was filed.

Please provide a written explanation for the late report

0 / 500

Beginning Cash Balance

\$0.00

I can file a late report.

Questions?

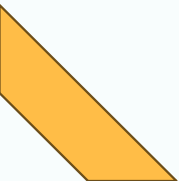


Campaign Finance Information System (CFIS)-System Training Resources

<https://www.sos.nm.gov/candidate-and-campaigns/how-to-become-a-candidate/cfis-system-resources-for-candidates-campaigns-and-pacs/>

Telephone: (800) 477-3632 or (505) 827-3600

Email: sos.elections@sos.nm.gov



Questions



Thank you!

