

SPOKANE WASHINGTON

SPOKANE FAIR ELECTIONS GUIDE



Spokane City Clerk's Office
808 West Spokane Falls Boulevard
5th Floor
Spokane, Washington 99201
elections@spokanecity.org

**SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL**

808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

Spokane, WA 99201-3335

(509) 625-6255

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for stepping up to run for office in the City of Spokane.

We hope this guide will provide the information you need to get started on your campaign. Included in this guide is basic campaign finance information, links to the state and local regulations that govern campaign finance, important election dates, maps, and tips on how to comply efficiently with the rules that govern elections in Spokane.

This candidate guide was designed to assist you and your campaign team; however, it is extremely important that you take the time to become familiar with the elections laws that govern the state of Washington, Spokane County, and the City of Spokane.

The City Clerk's Office is the City of Spokane's designated election resources center. The City of Spokane's Department of Grants Management and Financial Assistance is the enforcement agency for the Spokane Fair Elections Code. Spokane County oversees the candidate filing process and the Spokane Auditor is charged with the administration of elections. The Washington PDC enforces Washington state campaign finance laws. You will find contact information for each of these agencies in this guide. If you have questions not addressed by this guide, please email us at elections@spokanecity.org or visit the City Clerk's Office at 808 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard, 5th Floor. Electoral information provided to the City Clerk or Department of Grants Management and Financial Assistance is considered public information and upon a public records request, may be made public.

Learn more about the Spokane Fair Elections Code and find important election updates at the City of Spokane's election website: <https://my.spokanecity.org/elections/>

Thanks again for stepping up to run! Best wishes for a great campaign.

Sincerely,



Ben Stuckart
President, Spokane City Council



Breean Beggs
Spokane City Council, District 2

Thank you for doing your part to make democracy thrive in Spokane! This guide is developed for all citizens to learn about the City of Spokane's electoral process including compliance with the [Spokane Fair Elections Code](#) which was adopted in 2017 and became effective on February 7, 2018. The goals of the Spokane Fair Elections Code are to institute regulations for the fair conduct of elections for City of Spokane public offices, and to ensure a high degree of transparency in the conduct of our local electoral process. The Spokane Fair Elections Code compliments Washington State's campaign finance regulations ([RCW 42.17A](#)). It also coincides with the rules and procedures established by the Spokane County Auditor, which is administered and enforced by the [Washington Public Disclosure Commission \(PDC\)](#). **Candidates and committees should always contact the PDC to ensure that they comply with Washington State law!**

The Spokane Fair Elections Code is administered by the City of Spokane Contract and Business Standards Compliance Office, within the City's Department of Grants Management and Financial Assistance, and which can be reached via email at: elections@spokanecity.org

Disclaimer: The information contained in this candidate guide may change due to new legislation, judicial decisions, or rule changes!

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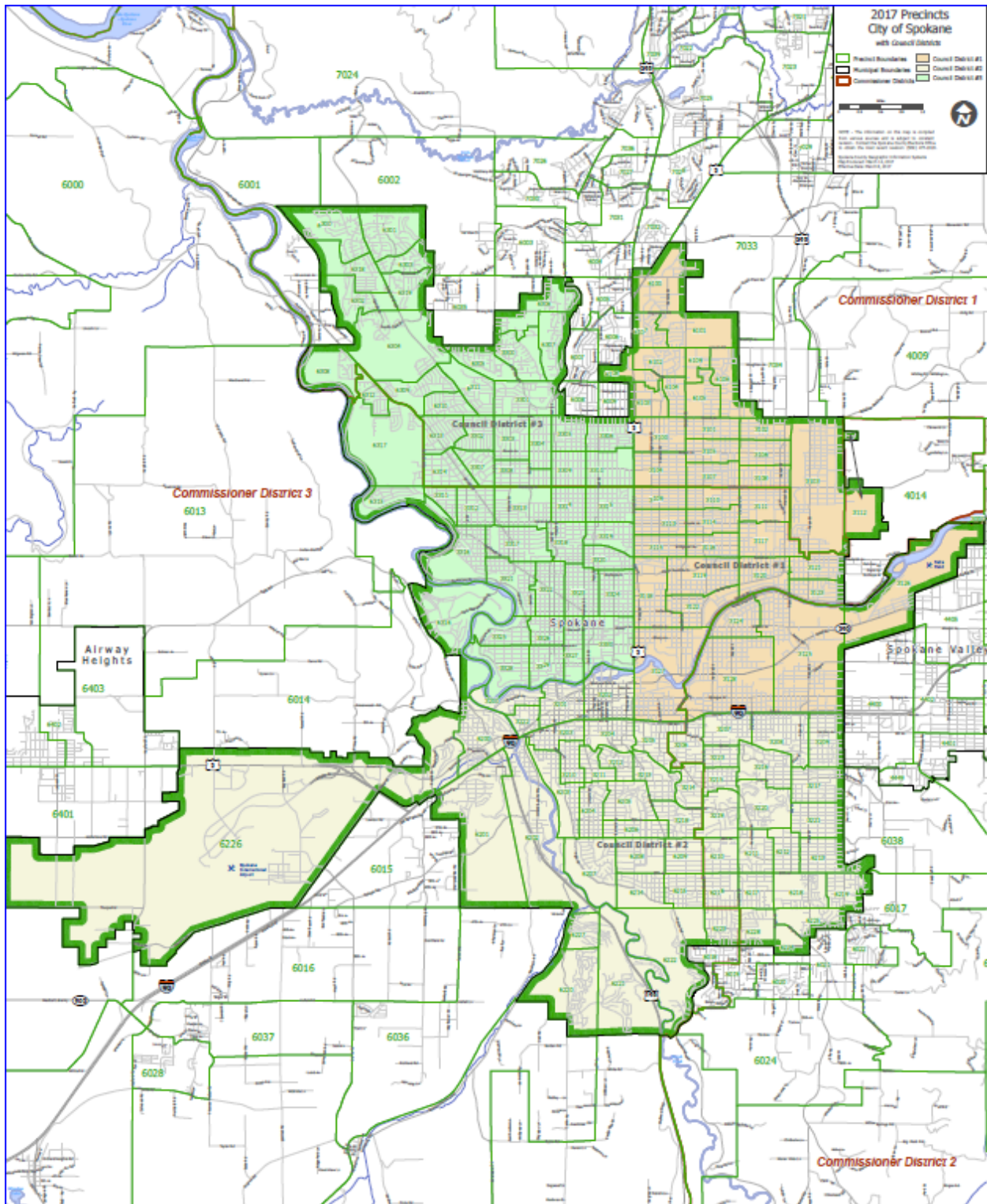
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Spokane City Council Members Elected by District

The city of Spokane is apportioned into three City Council Districts, of generally equal population, that are numbered one through three. Each District has two City Council positions that are numbered one and two for a total of six [Spokane City Council Members and one at-large Spokane City Council President](#).

Candidates for Spokane City Council are [elected](#) by the electors within each candidate's District. Candidates for Mayor and Council President are elected by the electors of the entire city of Spokane.

Spokane voters can learn which Council District they live in by calling *MySpokane 311* or by visiting this [link](#) and putting their addresses in the 'Search' field.

Primary Election Dates

August 6, 2019

August 3, 2021

August 1, 2023

August 5, 2025

August 3, 2027

General Election Dates

November 5, 2019

November 2, 2021

November 7, 2023

November 4, 2025

November 2, 2027

For other important dates, visit:
www.spokanecounty.org/elections



WASHINGTON STATE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION (PDC)

www.pdc.wa.gov

pdc@pdc.wa.gov

P.O. Box 40908

[711 Capitol Way](#), Room 206,
Olympia, Washington 98504-0908

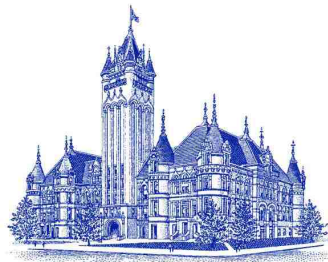
(360) 753-1111

(877) 601-2828

All candidates and committees must file campaign disclosure reports with the PDC. The PDC can answer questions on [state campaign finance law compliance](#) and the [ORCA software](#).

For Washington State Campaign Finance Law, click [here](#).

For information on the Washington PDC, click [here](#).



SPOKANE COUNTY

SPOKANE COUNTY ELECTIONS OFFICE

www.spokanecounty.org/177/Elections

elections@spokanecounty.org

[1033 West Gardner Avenue](#)

Spokane, Washington 99260

(509) 477-2320

8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Monday-Friday)

Spokane County elections staff can assist candidates and committees with election questions such as [how to get on the ballot](#), and how to obtain access to [voter matchbacks](#), [statistics](#) and maps. Other information available includes [drop box locations](#), [voter registration forms](#), and [election archives](#).



CITY OF SPOKANE CONTRACT AND BUSINESS STANDARDS OFFICE

my.spokanecity.org/elections

elections@spokanecity.org

[808 West Spokane Falls Boulevard](#)

6th Floor

Spokane, Washington 99201

509-625-6032

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Monday-Friday)

The City of Spokane Contract and Business Standards Office staff members can help candidates and committees comply with the Spokane Fair Elections Code. They can also help direct questions to the appropriate state or county agency.



SPOKANE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

elections@spokanecity.org

[808 West Spokane Falls Boulevard](#)

5th Floor

Spokane, Washington 99201

(509) 625-6350

Spokane City Clerk

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Monday-Friday)

The City Clerk's Office maintains the statement of organizations for incidental committees complying with the Spokane Fair Elections Code. The Office also serves as the first stop for filing an [initiative or referendum](#) in the City of Spokane.

Mayor and City Council Qualification Checklist

1. Are you a U.S. Citizen?
2. Are you at least 18 years old at the time of the next municipal election?
3. Are you a [qualified voter](#) in the city of Spokane?
4. Have you been a resident of the city of Spokane for at least one year?
5. Are you a [qualified voter](#) in the district you plan to run in? (City Council only)
6. Have you been a resident of the district you plan to run in for at least one year? (City Council only)

You must check all boxes to be eligible to serve as Mayor, Spokane City Council President, or Spokane City Council Member.

SOURCE: [City of Spokane Charter](#);

[RCW 42.04.020](#)

Municipal Court Judge Qualification Checklist

1. Are you a U.S. Citizen?
2. Are you a Washington Citizen?
3. Are you a [qualified voter](#) in Spokane County?
4. Have you been a resident of Spokane County for at least one year?
5. Are you an attorney admitted to practice law before the courts of record of the [state of Washington](#)?

You must check all boxes to be eligible to serve as Spokane Municipal Court Judge.

SOURCE: [City of Spokane Charter](#); [RCW 3.50.040](#); [RCW 3.50.057](#)

Do You Need to File as a Candidate with the Washington PDC?

Yes No

		Have you solicited, received, or spent any money on your campaign, or to explore the possibility of becoming a candidate for City of Spokane Elective Office (Mayor, Spokane City Council President, Spokane City Council Member, or Municipal Court Judge)?
		Have you made any reservations of space or facilities with the intention of promoting your candidacy for office?
		Have you announced publicly that you are running for City of Spokane Elective office, including a write-in candidacy? (I.E., via social media, press release, etc.)
		Have you filed to run for City of Spokane Elective Office with the Spokane County Elections Office?
		Have you purchased advertising space or broadcast time to announce or promote your candidacy?
		Have you given consent to another person or political committee to solicit, receive, or spend any money on your campaign, in support of your campaign, or to explore the possibility of becoming a candidate?

If you have checked ‘yes’ on any of these questions, you are a candidate per Spokane Municipal Code 01.07.005(D) and should file your candidate registration form with the [Washington Public Disclosure Commission](#).

WARNING: CANDIDATES ARE PROHIBITED FROM SOLICITING OR RECEIVING CONTRIBUTIONS OUTSIDE OF THEIR ELECTION CYCLE¹.

¹ SMC 01.07.030(B)

CITY OF SPOKANE REQUIREMENTS FOR INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES

[RCW 42.17A.320](#) requires the statement “No candidate authorized this ad. It is paid for by (name, address, city, state)” in addition to the “paid for by” or “sponsored by.”

If the sponsor is a political committee, the requirement also includes: “Top Five Contributors,” followed by a listing of the names of the five persons or entities making the largest contributions in excess of \$700 reportable under this Chapter during the twelve-month period before the date of the advertisement or communication. (Sponsor ID is not required to be spoken on broadcast advertising that includes the image.)

In addition to the state requirements, the Spokane Fair Elections Code requires that the top three individuals or entities making the largest contributions in excess of \$700 during the twelve-month period before the date of the advertisement or communication be listed immediately below the Top 5 contributor state requirement.

Example:

No Candidate Authorized this Ad. Paid for by:
Spokane For Honest Government, PO Box 18302, Spokane, WA 99228
Top 5 contributors: Safest City Spokane 29 PAC, SEIU 1199NW PAC,
WA State Council of County and City Employees PAC, Local 29 PAC,
Inland Northwest Leadership PAC

Top 3 Individual Contributors: SEIU Healthcare 1199 NW, AFSCME, Spokane Firefighters Union

GETTING OFF TO A WINNING START!

1. Read this candidate guide.
2. Contact the appropriate agency with any questions remaining. (See contacts on pages 9-12)
3. Verify your voter registration and that you live in the district in which you plan to run.
4. Appoint a treasurer. Learn more about this important role below.
5. Washington State law requires candidates to file a C-1 and ballot issue committees to file a C-1(pc). Forms and the State's free campaign reporting software, ORCA, can be found on the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission [website](#).
6. Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) with the IRS².
7. Open a bank account. (Campaign funds cannot be commingled with funds from another organization or individual)
8. File your Personal Financial Affairs Statement (F-1). Learn more about the F-1 [here](#).
9. File with your Declaration of Candidacy Spokane County Elections Office³ and pay the filing fee (1% of the annual salary) or submit a Filing Fee Petition⁴.
10. Find volunteers! (You'll need them!)

Helpful Hint: Use the sample form or remit envelope in this guide to assist your treasurer in collecting the appropriate information.

² This process usually takes 1-2 days.

³ See RCW 29A.24.050 – The filing period begins on Monday, two weeks before Memorial Day and ends the following Friday.

⁴ A candidate who lacks sufficient assets or income at the time of filing may submit a Filing Fee Petition with the Declaration of Candidacy in lieu of the filing fee. The signatures must be from voters registered within the jurisdiction of the office for which the candidate is filing. For example: If are running for Spokane City Council District 1, the valid signatures must come from District 1 voters. Candidates for Mayor, City Council President, and Municipal Court Judge can collect signatures from registered voter in the City of Spokane (RCW 29A.24.091). The petition must contain a number of valid signatures at least equal to the number of dollars of the filing fee. You cannot combine signatures with a monetary payment to cover the cost of the filing fee.

USING SURPLUS FUNDS FROM A PREVIOUS CAMPAIGN

The Spokane Fair Elections Code allows for a candidate's surplus funds from a previous campaign be rolled over into his or her current campaign only to the extent that the contributions would have been allowable within the limits of this chapter. The source of a candidate's surplus campaign funds is determined by the most recent contributions to the candidate, which in total equal the amount of the surplus campaign funds.

EXAMPLE 1: Candidate John Smith ran for Spokane City Council District 3 in 2015. He has \$1,500 in his campaign committee that he did not use in 2015. He is seeking re-election in 2021 and creates his re-election committee. Candidate Smith would like to transfer his 2015 surplus of \$1,500 to his new committee. Candidate Smith will review his last contributions that reach an aggregate of \$1,500 to determine if they are eligible to be transferred under the Spokane Fair Elections code, and to calculate how much of each contribution up \$1,500 can be transferred under the current Spokane Fair Elections Contribution Limits. Candidate Smith identifies his last five contributors which totals \$1650⁵. He reviews each contributor to ensure that the contributions are not from a City of Spokane contractor with at least \$50,000 in City contracts within the last two years, a public sector union with open bargaining unit negotiations, or from a company that will not certify that they are not 50% owned by foreign-nationals.

Candidate Smith's contributors are :

1. Private-Sector Union A - \$200 (11/30/2015)
2. Stephen Smith - \$25 (11/1/2015)
3. Jane Smith - \$25 (11/1/2015)
4. Private-Sector Union B - \$900 (10/27/2015)
5. Bea Cranberry - \$500 (10/23/2015)

In this scenario, Candidate Smith may transfer all \$1,500 and will file their C-3 on January 1st (or when he creates his committee) and list the following contributions:

1. Private-Sector Union A - \$200 (1/1/2019)
2. Stephen Smith - \$25 (1/1/2019)
3. Jane Smith - \$25 (1/1/2019)
4. Private-Sector Union B - \$900 (1/1/2019)
5. Bea Cranberry - \$350 (1/1/2019)

⁵ Note that Candidate John Smith's last 4 donors only total \$1,150. When the 5th donor is added, the total goes to \$1,650.

Candidate Smith can transfer the \$900 from Private-Sector Union B to his new campaign because it does not surpass the Spokane Fair Elections contribution limit of the primary and general election of 2019 (\$500 per election; \$1,000 total). Thus, Private-Section Union B can make an additional \$100 donation to max out their contributions to Candidate Smith. Only \$350 of Bea Cranberry's \$500 may be transferred as the total amount transferred from surplus is \$1,500. Of course, Bea Cranberry can make contributions up to \$650 to max out Candidate John Smith.

Example 2: Candidate Violet Williams is a state legislator and is running for Mayor. She has \$12,082 in her State legislative campaign committee that she did not use in 2016. She has created her committee with the PDC. Candidate Williams would like to transfer her entire \$12,082 she has in surplus from 2016 to her new committee. Candidate Williams will review her last contributions that reach an aggregate of \$12,082 to determine if they are eligible to be transferred under the Spokane Fair Elections code, and to calculate how much of each contribution up \$12,082 can be transferred under the current Spokane Fair Elections Contribution Limits. Candidate Williams identifies her latest 9 contributors for a total of \$12,100. She reviews each contributor to ensure that the contributions are not from a City of Spokane contractor with at least \$50,000 in City contracts within the last two years, a public sector union with open bargaining unit negotiations, or from a company that will not certify that they are not 50% owned by foreign-nationals.

Candidate Williams's contributors are:

1. Publicly Traded Company A/Foreign-owned - \$950 (12/12/2016)
2. Political Action Committee A - \$950 (12/12/2016)
3. Jane Smith - \$950 (12/12/2016)
4. Private-Sector Union A - \$950 (12/12/2016)
5. Bea Cranberry - \$500 (12/12/2016)
6. Publicly Traded Company B/City of Spokane Contractor - \$700 (12/12/2016)
7. City of Spokane Public Sector Union A - \$950 (12/12/2016)
8. State Political Party - \$6,000 (11/19/2016)
9. Howard Danielson - \$150 (11/19/2016)

In this scenario, Candidate Williams may transfer only \$5,450 and will file their C-3 on January 1st (or when she decides to file her committee with the PDC) and list the following contributions:

1. Political Action Committee A - \$950 (1/1/2019)
2. Jane Smith - \$950 (1/1/2019)
3. Private-Sector Union A - \$950 (1/1/2019)

4. Bea Cranberry - \$500(1/1/2019)
5. City of Spokane Public Sector Union A - \$950 (1/1/2019)
6. State Political Party - \$1,000 (1/1/2019)
7. Howard Danielson - \$150 (11/19/2016)

Candidate Williams cannot transfer the \$950 contribution from Publicly Traded Company A because they refuse to certify that they are not more than 50% foreign-owned. Candidate Williams also cannot transfer the \$700 from Publicly Traded Company B because they are a City contractor with a \$250,000 contract with the City in 2018. The \$950 contribution from City of Spokane Public Sector Union A is eligible to be transferred to the new committee because that particular bargaining unit is not currently in negotiations with the City of Spokane. Finally, only \$1000 of the State Political Party's \$1,000 can be transferred due to contribution limits. Political parties and legislative committees fall under the Spokane Fair Elections contribution limits.

CONTRIBUTIONS

A “contribution” in the Spokane Fair Elections code is defined as: *a loan, gift, deposit, subscription, forgiveness or indebtedness, donation, advance, pledge, payment, transfer of funds between political committees, sums paid for tickets to fundraising events, the financing by a person of the dissemination, distribution, or republication, in whole or in part, of broadcast, written, graphic, or other form of political advertising or electioneering communication prepared by a candidate, a political committee, or its authorized agent, or anything of value, including personal and professional services for less than full consideration.*

“Contribution” also includes an expenditure made by a person in cooperation, consultation, or concert with, or at the request of suggestion of, a candidate, a political committee, the person or persons named on the candidate’s or committee’s registration form who direct expenditures on behalf of the candidate or committee, or their agents.

“Contribution” does not include:

1. Interest on moneys deposited in a political committee’s account;
2. Ordinary home hospitality;
3. The rendering of legal or accounting services on behalf of a candidate or an authorized political committee but only to the extent that the services are for the purpose of ensuring compliance with city of state election or public disclosure laws;
4. The rendering of personal services of the sort commonly performed by volunteer campaign workers;
5. Incidental expenses personally incurred by campaign workers not in excess of \$25, in the aggregate, during the applicable period, personally paid for by a volunteer campaign worker; or
6. An internal political communication primarily limited to the members of a political party organization or political committee, or to the officers, management staff, or stockholders of a corporation or similar enterprise, or to the members of a labor organization or other membership organization.

Helpful Hint: Obtain occupation and employer information when a contributor makes a contribution – even if it is below the threshold for reporting this information.

The contribution limit for all candidates for City of Spokane elective offices is \$500 per election. For example: If the candidate is on the primary and general election ballot, you may solicit and receive a total of \$1000 in an election cycle.

There is no limit on the candidate's contributions of his or her own personal funds to his or her campaign. However, if the candidate makes more than \$11,500 in contributions to his or her campaign, the Washington PDC contribution limits are triggered for all candidates in the race.

Contributors who make less than \$25 in total contributions are not required to be listed on contribution reports however must be kept on a private list by the campaign.

Learn more about contributions on the PDC [here](#).

State law allows for anonymous contributions to be received up to \$300 or one percent of the total contributions received in a calendar year – whichever is greater. If a candidate receives excess anonymous dollars, the candidate is required to return the contribution or make a payment to the PDC which will go to the State of Washington's General Fund.

It is a violation of state law to conceal the source of contributions⁶.

A candidate cannot use the anonymous contribution provision to avoid identifying donors.

Example: If you know the name of the person or entity that made a contribution to your campaign – THEY ARE NOT ANONYMOUS!

Learn more about prohibited contributions [here](#).

⁶ RCW 42.17A.435

In-Kind Contributions

In-Kind Contributions are subject to the Spokane Fair Elections Code contribution limits.

- In-Kind Contributions that are less than \$25 total for the campaign do not have to be disclosed.
- Volunteers spending less than \$50 out-of-pocket does not have to be disclosed. If the volunteer spends more than \$50 out-of-pocket, all the volunteer's In-Kind Contributions must be reported.
- Campaign volunteers who perform common volunteer functions do not have to be reported. See information on volunteer services here:
<https://www.pdc.wa.gov/learn/publications/candidate-instructions/contributions>

In-kind donations that are not incidental must be fully reported in Part 1 of Schedule B to the C-4 after receiving, or becoming aware of the in-kind contribution, whichever occurs first.

When reporting In-Kind Contributions, you must report the following:

- the date the contribution was received;
- the name and full address of the contributor;
- a brief description of the contribution;
- its fair market value;
- the cumulative total this contributor has given for the primary or general election, whichever applies;
- a designation whether this contribution is for the primary or general election; and
- if the contributor is an individual who has cumulatively given more than \$100 to the campaign, including both primary and general contributions, identify the individual's employer (by name, city and state) and occupation.

In-Kind Contribution Example:

<u>Service/Good</u>	<u>Reportable In-Kind Contribution</u>	<u>Non-Reportable In-Kind Contribution</u>
Volunteer who Doorbells or Literature Drops		X
Volunteer phone banks for candidate		X
Real estate company providing rental space	X	
Professional campaign consultant develops campaign plan	X	

Advice: Contact campaign workers, volunteers, and the candidate at least a week before a filing report is due to ensure they have no reimbursements outstanding. Verify any in-kind contributions!

Expenditures

The Spokane Fair Elections Code defines “expenditures” as: *a payment, contribution, subscription, distribution, loan, advance, deposit, or gift of money or anything of value, and includes a contract, promise, or agreement, whether or not legally enforceable, to make an expenditure.*

“Expenditure” also includes a promise to pay, a payment, or a transfer of anything of value in exchange for goods, services, property, facilities, or anything of value for the purpose of assisting, benefitting, or honoring any public official or candidate, or assisting in furthering or opposing any election campaign.

“Expenditure” does not include:

- the partial or complete repayment by a candidate, political committee, or
- the incidental committee of the principal of a loan, the receipt of which loan has been properly reported.

Committees must report all expenditures made directly or indirectly must be reported on Schedule A of the C-4. Committees must report:

- Any reimbursement more than \$50 to any vendor including campaign workers.
- Obligations regardless of whether or not you have received an invoice or paid all or part of the bill. (Outstanding debts and obligations (other than loans) are reported on the Schedule B or as Vendor Debt in the ORCA software.

Committees must list the following information for monetary and in-kind expenditures:

- Date of expenditure
- Name and address of recipient
- Amount expended
- Purpose of expenditure

When detailing expenditures, always refer to [WAC 390-16-037](#).

Advice: Campaigns should never withdraw cash from the campaign account. Let the Treasurer control the checkbook! If multiple campaign team members have the ability to make expenditures, create a process to ensure it gets documented immediately. Remember that the persons making expenditures [must be listed on the C1](#).

Treasurer

All campaigns in the City of Spokane are required to appoint a Treasurer. The Treasurer is responsible for filing accurate and timely reports with the Washington PDC. Failure to timely report can lead to violations and penalties. The Treasurer is also responsible for receiving contributions, making expenditures, and keeping accurate and detailed reports. S/he is required to account for money being spent, to note when obligations are incurred, and enter contributions as they are received. The Treasurer will deposit all contributions and pay all campaign expenses from the same bank account.

Treasurers should have strong bookkeeping, cataloging, and computer skills.

Candidates are discouraged from serving as their own Treasurers.

Contributions by Foreign Nationals and Corporations

Federal law prohibits candidates from accepting campaign contributions from foreign nationals and from foreign corporations.

The Spokane Fair Elections Code requires that entities certify that they are not owned by more than 50% foreign nationals when contributing to a campaign. Candidates who fail to receive certification from each entity that they are not owned by foreign nationals must decline or return the contribution.

An individual holding a valid green card may contribute to City of Spokane campaigns. Individuals, with or without a green card, may volunteer their personal services to a City of Spokane campaign as long as they are not compensated for this work.

If you have questions about foreign nationals participating in elections, contact the Federal Elections Commission at info@fec.gov or 1-800-424-9530, menu option 6

How Do I Dispose of Campaign Funds after the Election?

After Election Day, candidates and ballot issue committees must dispose of surplus campaign funds by doing one or more of the following according to state law:

1. Return all or a portion of the contribution to the contributor
2. Donate funds to charity
3. Donate funds to a political party
4. Donate funds to a legislative caucus committee
5. Transfer funds to the State of Washington
6. (If elected), transfer surplus to an Office Fund

Pro & Con Committees – City Ballot Measures

Each committee shall have no more than three members; however, a committee may seek the advice of any other person.

The Committee shall elect from its members a chairperson, who shall notify the City Council Office of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the persons on the Committee.

All statements placed in the Voters' Guide shall contain the name, address and telephone number of the chairperson of the committee submitting the statement, as well as the names of other committee members.

Arguments for and against measures shall not exceed 250 words not counting a maximum of four headings used to summarize and identify major arguments or portions of the statements for the convenience of the readers.

Rebuttals to arguments for and against measures shall not exceed 75 words and must address issues raised in the opposing argument without injecting issues not previously discussed by either the argument for or against the measure. Headings are not permitted in connection with rebuttal statements.

Statements shall not contain obscene, libelous, or defamatory language.

The Voters' Guide shall contain the text of the ballot propositions and an explanatory statement prepared by the City Attorney's Office, in addition to the pro/con statements and the respective rebuttal statements prepared by the committees. The City Attorney's Office may make formatting changes and corrections to the statements related to spelling, grammar, and punctuation to ensure the Voters' Guide is accurate as to form and syntax. Corrections may not alter the meaning and substance of the statements.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Campaign Contributions

1. *How much can I contribute to a candidate for Mayor, Spokane City Council, or Municipal Court Judge?*

Answer: You may contribute up to 50% of the [Washington PDC's limits](#) for the applicable race per election. For example, in 2018 you may contribute \$500 for the primary election and \$500 for the general election, for a total of \$1000 total to a Council or Mayoral candidate. You could give up to \$1000 for Municipal Court Judge candidates.

2. *Are political parties held to the same contribution limits as other political committees and individuals?*

Answer: Yes! Under the Spokane Fair Elections Code, contributions by political parties are treated as any other political committee, union, corporation, or business contribution to candidates. The limits for each elective office in the City of Spokane are 50% of the limits set by the [Washington PDC](#).

3. *I received a contribution over the Spokane Fair Elections contribution limit. What do I do?*

Answer: If the source of the contribution is anonymous, you must send it to the PDC to be sent to the State Treasurer. Contact the PDC for more information on sending anonymous contributions to the State Treasurer. If you know the source of the contribution, you can simply deposit the check and issue a refund from the campaign account or return the check directly to the contributor. This must be done within five business days of receipt.

4. *I received a campaign service that was donated In-Kind. It exceeds the Spokane Fair Elections contribution limit. What do I do?*

Answer: You must either decline to accept the service or must pay the fair market value for the service that is in excess of the contribution limit.

5. *How do I find out if a contractor has received more than \$50,000 in City contracts over the last two years?*

Answer: All City contracts are filed in the City Clerk's office after they are executed. The easiest method for obtaining this information is through the Public Records website: <http://publicdocs.spokanecity.org/cityclerkrecords/>

6. *Can I accept campaign contributions from City of Spokane employees or City Board and Commission Members?*

Answer: Yes! The Spokane Fair Elections Code does not prohibit candidates from accepting contributions from City of Spokane Employees or Board and Commission Members.

7. *Do contribution requirements apply to write-in candidates?*

Answer: Yes! All provisions of the Spokane Fair Elections Code applies to write-in candidates.

8. *Are contribution limits different between the Mayor and Council Members?*

Answer: No! The Mayor, Council President, and Council Member contribution limits are the same. Municipal Court Judge candidates are judicial candidates under the [Washington PDC contribution limits](#).

Campaign Cycle

9. *When can candidates begin raising money for election?*

Answer: The Spokane Fair Elections Code limits political campaign fundraising one year before the candidate seeking office will be on the ballot. A candidate may begin soliciting and accepting contributions on January 1st of the year before they will appear on the ballot. Example: If you are running for Mayor or City Council in 2019, you could begin fundraising on January 1st of 2018.

10. *Can I raise money after the election?*

Answer: Yes! A candidate can raise funds until December 31st of the year following the election in which they appeared. Contributions should be solicited to retire campaign debt.

Use of Personal Funds/Personal Contributions

11. *Do the Spokane Fair Elections contribution limits apply to a candidate's own personal funds?*

Answer: No! A candidate may contribute any dollar amount to his or her campaign. However, his or her opponent will be allowed to solicit and accept contributions up to the limits allowed by the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission if you contribute \$11,500 or more of your personal funds to your campaign. The rest of the Spokane Fair Elections Code provisions apply to each candidate.

Enforcement and Penalties

12. *Who administers and enforces the Spokane Fair Elections Code?*

Answer: City of Spokane Contract and Business Standards Compliance Office within the City's Department of Grants Management and Financial Assistance or its designee. This agency may also forward complaints to the City of Spokane for prosecution.

13. *How much is the fine for a violation of the Spokane Fair Elections Code?*

Answer: For a violation of the Spokane Fair Elections Code, a candidate or political committee can receive a Class 1 (\$261) or a Class 1A (\$783) Civil Infraction.

Yard Signs

14. *Where can I find requirements on yard signs?*

Answer: The Spokane Fair Elections Code does not regulate yard signs. Yard sign sponsor requirements are governed by state law. Yard sign size and place is governed by [Spokane Municipal Code 17C.240.240\(G\)\(6\)](#).

15. *Are yard signs allowed in the public right-of-way?*

Answer: Yes. Yard signs are allowed in the public right-of-way if permission has been granted by the abutting property owner, resident, or respective agent. [See Spokane Municipal Code 17C.240.240\(G\)\(6\)\(c\)](#).

16. *Are yard signs allowed on park or City property?*

Answer: No! Political yard signs are prohibited on all City of Spokane and Spokane Parks properties. [See Spokane Municipal Code 17C.240.240\(G\)\(6\)\(e\)](#).

Electioneering Communications

17. *Does the Spokane Fair Elections Code regulate the timing of electioneering communications?*

Answer: No! The timing of electioneering communications is governed by [RCW 42.17A](#).

False Information in Campaign Ads

18. *Does the Spokane Fair Elections Code regulate information in political advertisements?*

Answer: No. The Spokane Fair Elections Ordinance does not regulate any content of political advertisements. Content is governed by the PDC at [RCW 42.17A.335](#).

Public Inspection of Records

19. *Does the Spokane Fair Elections Code create requirements for public inspection of records?*

Answer: No. Public inspection of records is governed by [RCW 42.17A.235](#), which requires records to be available by appointment for two consecutive hours during each of the 8 days before the election (excluding weekends and holidays).

Special Reporting Instructions

20. *Does the Spokane Fair Elections Code require any special reporting instructions?*

Answer: No, however the PDC requires candidates to file Special Reports for contribution of \$1,000 or more received 7 days before the Primary election or 21 days before the General election within 48 hours or first business day thereafter. See [RCW 42.17A.265](#).



Complaint of Noncompliance with Spokane Fair Elections Code

Full Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Name of individual or entity alleged to have committed, or about to commit, a violation of the Spokane Fair Elections Code:

Statement of the facts that constitute a violation of the Spokane Fair Elections Act--if additional space is needed, you may attach pages to this form:

[Attach any documentation supporting the above alleged facts.]

**I DECLARE UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
THAT ALL INFORMATION SUBMITTED HERE AND WITHIN THE ATTACHMENTS
IS TRUE AND CORRECT.**

Signature

Date