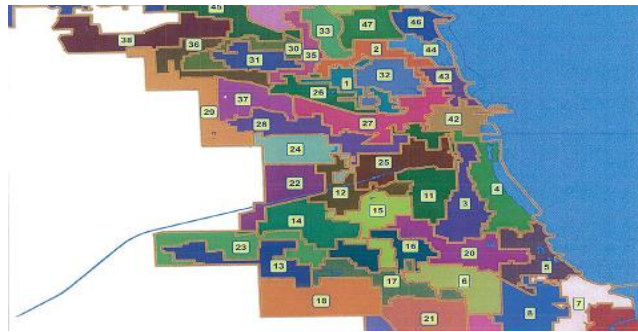


BOARD OF ETHICS ADVISORY REGARDING 2020 ELECTIONS, INCLUDING WARD COMMITTEEPeOPLE

In March and November 2020, voters in the City of Chicago will elect nominees and candidates for federal office (including President and U.S. Congress), as well as for some state offices, including the General Assembly, and for Cook County offices, such as State's Attorney and Circuit Court Clerk. Chicago voters will also elect Ward Committeepeople for established political parties in all 50 City wards. Some Chicago City Council members and some City of Chicago employees will stand for election or re-election for Ward Committeepeople on March 17, 2020.

The City's Governmental Ethics Ordinance restricts the times, places, and resources that City employees and officials may engage in or use for political activity, including working for candidates in **any** of these upcoming elections. And, the Ordinance's limitations on campaign contributions also apply to contributions made to incumbent City elected officials who are running to be Ward Committeepeople, or to City employees running for that office.



RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND WORKING ON ANY POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

For a summary of the restrictions imposed by City law on City personnel who wish to work in connection with these upcoming elections, see the Board's Plain English Guide to Political Activity and Election Work, here:

<https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/ethics/general/Publications/Pol-ACT-2015.pdf>

RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CANDIDATES FOR WARD COMMITTEEPERSON

The office of Ward Committeepeople is not a City elected office. It is, rather, a party office, established under the Illinois Election Code. Nonetheless, the City's Governmental Ethics Ordinance applies to campaign contributions made to City elected officials or employees who are *also* candidates for Ward committeepeople. The Ordinance subjects certain persons or entities to a \$1,500 annual cap on political contributions made to "any official or employee of the city who is seeking election *to any other [that is, non-City] office.*" See §2-156-445(a).

In Case No. 09058.Q, the Board determined that if, for example, Alderman May Jones of the 52nd Ward is also a candidate for Democratic Ward committeeperson of her Ward, then, under state law, she must establish two separate committees—one for each elected office, that is, one for her aldermanic office and a second for her Ward Committeeperson candidacy. ***So, persons or business entities who are subject to the annual \$1,500 cap on political contributions* may contribute up to the \$1,500 limit to each of his official committees in a single calendar year—that is, \$1,500 to “Jones for 52nd Ward Alderman,” and another \$1,500 to “Jones for Ward Committeeperson,” for a total of \$3,000 in a single calendar year.***

(Note: in Case No. 09058.Q, the non-City office in question involved both primary and general elections. Primary and general elections are distinct candidacies, subject to a separate \$1,500 contribution limit from persons subject to that limit [in addition to being subject to a separate \$1,500 per calendar year limit in contributions to the candidate’s committee for elected *City* office]. Say, Alderman Jones decides to run for Cook County State’s Attorney. A contributor subject to the limits could contribute, in a single calendar year, \$3,000 to “Jones for State’s Attorney” (\$1,500 for the primary and another \$1,500 for general in November 2020) and *another* \$1,500 to the “Jones for the 52nd Ward” – but not one penny more to either candidacy.

http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/ethics/general/AO_CampFinanacinq/09058Q.pdf

However, the office of Ward committeeperson is decided in a single election, called the General Primary. See

file:///U:/amendments/2020CanGuide_637109778056092297.pdf

Therefore, in a single calendar year, persons subject to the Ordinance’s contribution limits* may contribute up to \$1,500 to a sitting City elected official’s authorized political committee for his or her City office, and up to an additional \$1,500 to his or her political committee for Ward Committeeperson, but not more to either committee. If the candidate for Ward Committeeperson is a City employee, they may contribute up to \$1,500 to his or her Ward Committeeperson committee in a single calendar year.



*Persons subject to this limit are: (1) persons who have done business with the City, or with the Chicago Transit Authority, the Board of Education, the Chicago Park District, the Chicago City Colleges, or the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority within the preceding four calendar years; (2) persons seeking to do business [as defined in §§2-156-445(a) and 2-156-010(x)]; and (3) lobbyists registered with the Board of Ethics.

QUESTIONS? If you are a candidate for Ward Committee person, or represent or work for one, and have questions about these provisions, please consult with the Board of Ethics for confidential advice.

BOARD OF ETHICS
740 NORTH SEDGWICK, SUITE 500
CHICAGO, IL 60654
312.744.9660
www.cityofchicago.org/Ethics

Lori Lightfoot, Mayor
William Conlon, Chair

Steve Berlin, Executive Director
Twitter: @ChicagoEthicsBd

