**A GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO**

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Chicago’s Governmental Ethics Ordinance, Chapter 2-156 of the Municipal Code, imposes restrictions on candidates for elected City office, including incumbents running for re-election. It also limits and prohibits certain political contributions. This pamphlet highlights the key restrictions. To the extent this summary differs from the language of the Ordinance, the language of the Ordinance is controlling. A complete copy of the law is available at this link: <https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/ethics.html>

or by contacting the Chicago Board of Ethics.

**FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS**

The Ordinance requires every candidate seeking election to City office to file a Statement of Financial Interests with the Board of Ethics within 5 days of qualifying as a candidate for elected City office. Forms are available at this link (forms must be filed in person or by mail):

[**https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/ethics/provdrs/statements\_of\_financialinterests/svcs/sfi.html**](https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/ethics/provdrs/statements_of_financialinterests/svcs/sfi.html)

There is no fee for filing this form. This filing requirement is **in addition** to any requirement that candidates file a Statement of Economic Interests with the Cook County Clerk. But it is the only form that must be filed with the City’s Board of Ethics. Persons need to file this form only once per year. So, incumbents and certain other City officials or employees who are candidates may already have filed the form. By law, no elected official will be allowed to take the oath of office, continue in office, or receive compensation from the City unless he or she has filed a Statement of Financial Interests. Persons who violate this requirement are also subject to a finding that they are in violation of the Ordinance, and to fines of $250 per day.

**CAMPAIGN/POLITICAL CONTRIBUTION LIMITS**

Under City law, certain persons or entities may not contribute more than $1,500 to a candidate for City elected office or to a City elected official in a calendar year. These persons or entities are:

✓ Lobbyists registered with the City;

✓ Persons doing business\* within the preceding four reporting years with, and persons seeking to do business\* with the:

City of Chicago; or

Chicago Transit Authority; or

Board of Education; or

Chicago Park District; or

Chicago City Colleges; or

Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority.

\* These terms have specific meanings in the Ordinance.

**Note:** an entity and its subsidiaries, parent company or otherwise affiliated companies, and any of their employees, officers, directors and partners who make a political contribution for which they are reimbursed by the entity or its affiliates are considered a single person for purposes of these contribution limitations.

**Further note:** any contribution made to a candidate’s or official’s political fundraising committee for City elected office is considered a contribution to the candidate or official.



**PROHIBITED CONTRIBUTIONS AND GIFTS**

Candidates and their committees may not solicit or accept any anonymous contributions, or contributions given in any name other than that of the true donor.

Candidates, their spouses, domestic partners and minor children may not accept any anonymous gift.

Candidates, their spouses, domestic partners and minor children may not accept contributions based on an understanding, either implicit or explicit, that the candidate’s votes, official actions, decisions, or judgments as an elected official of the City government would be influenced thereby.

No person shall make any cash contribution to any candidate in an amount over $250 (cash includes currency, money orders and cashiers’ checks–personal checks and credit card payments are not cash).

**WHAT IS A "CANDIDATE?"**

By City law, a person qualifies as a candidate by:

► taking the action necessary under the Illinois Election Code to attempt to qualify for nomination for election, election to, or retention in a City office; or

► receiving contributions or making expenditures, or giving consent for any other person to receive contributions or make expenditures, with a view to bringing about his or her nomination for election, election to, or retention in a City office.

**ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY STATE LAW**

The Illinois Election Code (10 ILCS 5/1-1 et seq.) imposes additional reporting obligations on candidates’ committees, and limits the amount of political contributions that natural persons, corporations, labor organizations and Political Action Committees may make. For guidance, please consult with a qualified attorney or contact the Illinois State Board of Elections: **http://elections.illinois.gov/**

**FUNDRAISING RESTRICTIONS ON CITY EMPLOYEES AND OFFICIALS**

City employees may not intentionally perform any prohibited political activity during any compensated time, not use or permit the use of City property, time or resources for political activity.

City employees and officials may not compel, coerce or intimidate any other City officials or employees to make, refrain from making or solicit a political contribution.

Non-elected City employees or officials may not knowingly solicit or accept any political contribution from a person doing business or seeking to do business with the City, except on behalf of their own candidacy for public office.

City employees and officials with contract management authority may not serve on any political fundraising committee.

***FOR MORE INFORMATION***

**www.cityofchicago.org/ethics**

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