

STATE ELECTION ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION



CITIZENS' ELECTION PROGRAM OVERVIEW **2024 General Assembly Primary and General Elections**



Citizens' Elections Program



CITIZENS' ELECTION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

2024 General Assembly Primary and General Elections

Chapter 157 of the Connecticut General Statutes establishes the Citizens' Election Program (the "Program"), a voluntary program which provides clean elections financing to qualified candidates for statewide offices and the General Assembly. The Program is financed by the Citizens' Election Fund, which receives funds primarily from the proceeds of the sale of abandoned property in the State of Connecticut's custody, as well as voluntary donations.

Candidates running for the office of state senator or state representative in 2024 may join the Program.

Although participation in the Program is voluntary, certain requirements apply to *all* candidate committees of General Assembly candidates. For example, candidate committees are required to file forms indicating whether they will participate and will likely need to file mandatory supplemental campaign finance disclosure reports.

The State Elections Enforcement Commission (the "Commission") is the filing repository for all campaign forms and disclosure statements filed for General Assembly candidates. The Commission is also responsible for administering the Program and monitoring compliance with Program requirements.

Program Goals

The voluntary public financing Program is designed to improve the electoral process in the following ways:

1. Allowing candidates to compete without reliance on special interest money;
2. Allowing legislators the ability to make decisions free of the influence of, or the appearance that they have been influenced by, donations from special interests;
3. Restoring public confidence in the electoral and legislative processes;
4. Increasing meaningful citizen participation; and
5. Providing the public with useful and timely disclosure of campaign finances.

To participate, candidates must agree to abide by certain requirements, including strict contribution and expenditure limits and mandatory financial disclosures.



Affidavit of Intent to Abide or Affidavit of Intent Not to Abide

All General Assembly candidates are required to file an affidavit with the Commission, with the exception of candidates who have filed a 1B exemption from forming a candidate committee – they are presumed to be nonparticipating and are not required to file either form. Candidates who elect to participate in the Program ("participating candidates") must complete the Affidavit of Intent to Abide by Expenditure Limits and Other Program Requirements (SEEC Form CEP 10). Candidates who elect not to participate in the Program ("nonparticipating candidates") must complete the Affidavit of Intent Not to Abide by Expenditure Limits (SEEC Form CEP 11).

Important Note: A candidate who changes their party status after filing an Affidavit of Intent to Abide by Expenditure Limits and Other Program Requirements (SEEC Form CEP 10) because they achieve ballot access by becoming a candidate for a different party than that listed on the original SEEC Form CEP 10 or by petitioning onto the general election ballot will not be eligible to apply for a Program grant. It is therefore strongly recommended that candidates file the SEEC Form CEP 10 after they have achieved ballot status.

The deadline to opt in or out of the Program depends on whether a candidate is in a primary. A candidate in a primary who does not join the Program by the primary deadline cannot later join the Program for the general election.

Election Cycle	Filing Deadline for Affidavit
Primary	July 19, 2024 4:00 PM
General Election	September 26, 2024 4:00 PM

Qualifying Threshold – Demonstrating Public Support

To qualify for clean elections financing, candidates must demonstrate they have adequate support from the public. Candidates accomplish this by meeting a three-part "threshold":

1. Candidates must raise an aggregate amount of small-dollar monetary contributions from individuals ("qualifying contributions") between \$5 and \$320. The threshold amount varies based on the office sought, as set forth in the next chart;
2. Candidates must receive such contributions from a certain number of individuals residing in the district ("in-district contributions"). The threshold number of such individual contributors varies based on the office sought, as set forth in the next chart; **and**

3. Candidates must obtain access to the ballot, as discussed below. The method of ballot access is part of the process to measure public support and therefore determines the grant amount of a qualified candidate committee.

Qualifying contributions are small-dollar monetary contributions from individuals. In-kind contributions, personal funds, and loans do not count as qualifying contributions. All qualifying contributions must be fully disclosed and adequately documented. Principals of current and prospective state contractors, as well as minors under the age of 12, may not make qualifying contributions. Coordinating expenditures with committees or people who are not permissible donors may disqualify a committee from participation in the Program or cause a grant to need to be returned.

For the 2024 election only, Public Act 23-205, section 189, freezes the aggregate qualifying contribution amounts that legislative candidates must raise at their 2022 amounts, i.e., \$17,300 for state senator and \$5,800 for state representative. Please note that the CPI adjustment for an individual's contribution limit for the 2024 election is not affected by this freeze.

Qualification Thresholds for General Assembly Offices

Office Sought	Aggregate Contribution Requirement— Individuals Only	Minimum Individual Resident Contributions	Contribution Limits
State Senator	\$17,300	300 residents of municipalities included, in whole or in part, in the district	\$5 to \$320
State Representative	\$5,800	150 residents of municipalities included, in whole or in part, in the district	\$5 to \$320

Important Note: The thresholds listed above are the bare minimum with which committees may apply. All committees are strongly urged to apply only with an adequate buffer amount to ensure that they are not subject to multiple continuances before grant monies can be released.



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Candidate's Personal Funds

The Program permits participating candidates to provide a limited amount of personal funds to their campaigns. Candidates may only provide such personal funds to their campaigns before applying for an initial grant. The grant will be reduced by the amount of any allowable personal funds provided. Personal funds do not constitute qualifying contributions.

Office Sought	Maximum Allowable Personal Funds
State Senator	\$2,000
State Representative	\$1,000

Loans to the Candidate Committee

The Program expressly limits the aggregate amount and permissible sources of any loans provided to the candidate committees of candidates intending to participate in the Program. Only financial institutions may provide loans, valued up to an aggregate of \$1,000. The \$1,000 loan limit applies to candidate committees of candidates seeking any office covered by the Program. Program requirements further provide that any such borrowed funds do not constitute qualifying contributions. The candidate committee of a participating candidate must repay all outstanding loans before applying for a grant from the Citizens' Election Fund.

No person, political committee, or party committee can endorse or guarantee a loan or aggregate loans exceeding \$500, except the candidate. In a general election, a state central committee may endorse or guarantee a loan or aggregate loans from financial institutions up to \$1,000.

Ballot Requirement

As noted earlier, in addition to raising the required amount of qualifying contributions, candidates must also qualify for the ballot to be eligible to receive public funds. This ballot requirement applies in any primary, election, or special election. The Office of the Secretary of the State administers the ballot qualification process. For more information, contact the Secretary of the State, Legislative and Election Administration Division at 860.509.6100 (or toll-free at 800.540.3764).



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Grant Application Package

The grant application package contains at least five parts:

1. A completed and signed grant application form (SEEC Form CEP 15);
2. A completed and electronically submitted campaign finance disclosure statement (SEEC Form 30) that itemizes all financial activity since the last filed disclosure statement, completed no more than three days before the date of submission;

Important Note: All monies included in a grant application must be collected by midnight of the day before the SEEC Form 30 is submitted.

3. Copies of documentation of qualifying contributions provided to the candidate committee (Qualifying Contribution Certification Forms and other required documentation);
4. If online contributions were collected, merchant account processor (MAP) letters, transactional receipts and excel spreadsheets, and any other documentation pertaining to the contributions; and
5. A committee check made out to "Citizens' Election Fund" or "CEF" for the amount of any excess qualifying contributions (i.e., the "buffer").

If not already provided, SEEC Forms 1 & 1A, CEP 10, and CEP 12 must also be submitted, as well as proof of ballot access. The 2024 Grant Application Calendar of weekly deadlines will be published on the Commission's website, portal.ct.gov/seec.

A grant application checklist will be provided to committees and must be filled out and placed on top of the application package. Committees should make an appointment with their Elections Officer when they are ready to submit their application.

Candidates are encouraged to apply for a grant as soon as they have obtained ballot access and raised qualifying contributions to the qualifying thresholds plus an adequate buffer. Candidates may apply as early as the third week in May.

The final application deadline for a primary grant is by 5:00 p.m. on July 19, 2024.

The final application deadline for a general election grant is by 5:00 p.m. on October 11, 2024. Pursuant to Public Act 2017-02 (June special session), grant amounts will now be reduced if an application is made after August 26, 2024.



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Grant Amounts

A candidate's eligibility for a public grant hinges on demonstrating significant public support. Grant amounts are based on the level of support as demonstrated by how each candidate qualifies for the ballot, and, in some instances, by a show of support based on the number of nominating petition signatures a candidate obtains (as set forth below). Certain candidates may utilize the nominating petition process to qualify for a grant, or, if already eligible for a partial grant, to increase the amount of the grant if the candidate receives enough nominating petition signatures to meet required thresholds demonstrating significant public support. In addition, and as further explained below, the general election grant amount may also be impacted by the date of the campaign's grant submission.

Primary Grants

Eligible candidates who qualify for the ballot in a primary may apply for a primary grant. After the party conventions, caucuses, or town committee meetings are held to endorse a party candidate, the Secretary of the State certifies which candidates will face primary contests. In order to be eligible for a primary grant, the candidate must qualify for a place on the primary ballot pursuant to state election laws and the primary must be scheduled.

The following chart sets forth the primary grant amounts for eligible candidate committees. The amount of the primary grant is reduced by the allowable amount of personal funds, if any, provided by the candidate during the qualifying period.

Nomination Sought	Primary Grant Amount
State Senator	\$51,100.00
State Representative	\$14,600.00



General Assembly Candidates in "Party-Dominant" Districts

General Assembly candidates in "party-dominant" districts are eligible for larger grants in primary campaigns.

A "party-dominant" district is one in which the percentage of active electors (registered voters) in the district who are enrolled in a major party exceeds the percentage of active electors in the district who are enrolled in the other major party by at least twenty percentage points. A list of the party-dominant districts will be provided on the Commission's website, portal.ct.gov/seec.

"Party-Dominant" Districts	"Party-Dominant" Grant Amount
State Senator	\$109,500.00
State Representative	\$36,500.00

Important Note: The qualified committee of a candidate who receives a primary grant, and then wins the party nomination through a primary election, does not have to reapply for a grant for the general election. However, any unspent primary grant funds that remain in the candidate's account will be subtracted from the general election grant. Any such candidate who wins the primary is required to submit a campaign finance disclosure statement after the primary in order to determine the amount of the general election grant.

General Election Grants

Grant Reduction Schedule

In 2017, the legislature implemented a grant reduction schedule so the later a campaign applies for a general election grant, the smaller the grant it may be eligible to receive. The specific dates in 2024 and the corresponding grant amounts will be outlined in the next sections.



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Major Party Candidates

A major party is defined as a political party or organization whose candidate for Governor in the most recent gubernatorial election received at least 20% of the whole number of votes cast for all candidates for Governor while running as a member of that party, or a political party having a number of enrolled members on the active registry list equal to at least 20% of the total number of enrolled members of all political parties on the active registry list in the state at the time of the last gubernatorial election.

A candidate who has obtained the nomination of a major party is eligible for a full general election grant base amount. However, if the candidate faces only a minor party or petitioning opponent who has not raised an amount equal to the qualifying threshold level for that office ("limited opposition"), the grant would be reduced to 60%, and if the candidate is unopposed in the general election, the grant would be reduced to 30%. In addition, the grant may now be reduced depending on when the campaign applies. The specific grant amounts, based on application date and opposition, are below:

2024 Senate General Election – Major Party Candidates

Date of Grant Application	Full Opposition (full grant)	Limited Opposition (60% grant)	Unopposed (30% grant)
If you apply on or before 5:00 p.m. on Monday, August 26, 2024 (full grant)	\$124,100.00	\$74,460.00	\$37,230.00
If you apply between Tues., August 27, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Sept. 9, 2024 (75%)	\$93,075.00	\$55,845.00	\$27,922.50
If you apply between Tues., Sept 10, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Sept. 23, 2024 (65%)	\$80,665.00	\$48,399.00	\$24,199.50
If you apply between Tues., Sept. 24, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Oct. 7, 2024 (55%)	\$68,255.00	\$40,953.00	\$20,476.50
If you apply between Tues., Oct. 8, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Fri., Oct. 11, 2024 (40%)	\$49,640.00	\$29,784.00	\$14,892.00

**2024 State Representative General Election – Major Party Candidates**

Date of Grant Application	Full Opposition (full grant)	Limited Opposition (60% grant)	Unopposed (30% grant)
If you apply on or before 5:00 p.m. on Monday, August 26, 2024 (full grant)	\$36,500.00	\$21,900.00	\$10,950.00
If you apply between Tues., August 27, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Sept. 9, 2024 (75%)	\$27,375.00	\$16,425.00	\$8,212.50
If you apply between Tues., Sept 10, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Sept. 23, 2024 (65%)	\$23,725.00	\$14,235.00	\$7,117.50
If you apply between Tues., Sept. 24, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Oct. 7, 2024 (55%)	\$20,075.00	\$12,045.00	\$6,022.50
If you apply between Tues., Oct. 8, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Fri., Oct. 11, 2024 (40%)	\$14,600.00	\$8,760.00	\$4,380.00

Grant amounts are also reduced by any personal funds provided by the candidate, certain amounts of lawn signs provided to the committee, and any grant monies left over from a primary.

Minor Party and Petitioning Candidates

A minor party is defined as a political party that is not a major party and whose candidate for the office in question received at the last-preceding regular election for such office, under the designation of that political party or organization, at least 1% of the whole number of votes cast for all candidates for such office at such election.

A petitioning candidate is one who utilizes the nominating petition procedure to obtain ballot access.

A minor party candidate is eligible for a full general election grant if they have obtained the nomination of a minor party whose candidate seeking election for the same office in the same district at the last-preceding regular election received at least 20% of the votes cast for that office. A petitioning candidate is eligible for a full general election grant if they have obtained ballot access and petition signatures by electors equaling at least 20% of the votes cast for that office in the prior general election.

A minor party candidate is eligible for two thirds of a full general election grant if they have obtained the nomination of a minor party whose candidate seeking election for the same office in the same district at the last-preceding regular election received at



least 15% of the votes cast for that office. A petitioning candidate is eligible for two thirds of a full general election grant if they have obtained ballot access and petition signatures by electors equaling at least 15% of the votes cast for that office in the prior general election.

A minor party candidate is eligible for **one third** of a full general election grant if they have obtained the nomination of a minor party whose candidate seeking election for the same office in the same district at the last-preceding regular election received at least 10% of the votes cast for that office. A petitioning candidate is eligible for one third of a full general election grant if they have obtained ballot access and petition signatures by electors equaling at least 10% of the votes cast for that office in the prior general election.

In addition, the grant amount may be reduced depending on when the candidate applies during the election cycle, as previously discussed. The specific grant amounts, based on application date and percentage of signatures / vote obtained by the minor party in previous regular election cycle, are summarized in the charts below:

Committees of Candidates Who Receive One-Third or Two-Thirds of the Full Grant

Amount May Raise "Differential Contributions"

Minor party or petitioning candidates who receive less than the full grant amount may continue to raise and spend additional contributions, known as "differential contributions," which must meet the criteria for qualifying contributions, up to the amount of the full applicable grant for the general election for that office.

Committees of Candidates Who Receive One-Third or Two-Thirds of the Full Grant

Amount May Be Eligible For Post-Election Grant

Minor party or petitioning candidates who receive a one-third or two-thirds grant amount and report a deficit in post-election disclosure statements may also be eligible to receive supplemental grant money.

2024 Senate General Election – Minor Party & Petitioning

Date of Grant Application	20% last vote / signatures (full grant)	15% last vote / signatures (2/3 grant)	10% last vote / signatures (1/3 grant)
If you apply on or before 5:00 p.m. on Monday, August 26, 2024 (full grant)	\$124,100.00	\$82,733.33	\$41,366.67
If you apply between Tues., August 27, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Sept. 9, 2024 (75%)	\$93,075.00	\$62,050.00	\$31,025.00
If you apply between Tues., Sept 10, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Sept. 23, 2024 (65%)	\$80,665.00	\$53,776.67	\$26,888.33



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If you apply between Tues., Sept. 24, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Oct. 7, 2024 (55%)	\$68,255.00	\$45,503.33	\$22,751.67
If you apply between Tues., Oct. 8, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Fri., Oct. 11, 2024 (40%)	\$49,640.00	\$33,093.33	\$16,546.67

2024 State Representative General Election – Minor Party & Petitioning

Date of Grant Application	20% last vote/ signatures (full grant)	15% last vote/ signatures (2/3 grant)	10% last vote / signatures (1/3grant)
If you apply on or before 5:00 p.m. on Monday, August 26, 2024 (full grant)	\$36,500.00	\$24,333.33	\$12,166.67
If you apply between Tues., August 27, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Sept. 9, 2024 , (75%)	\$27,375.00	\$18,250.00	\$9,125.00
If you apply between Tues., Sept 10, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Sept. 23, 2024 (65%)	\$23,725.00	\$15,816.67	\$7,908.33
If you apply between Tues., Sept. 24, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Oct. 7, 2024 (55%)	\$20,075.00	\$13,383.33	\$6,691.67
If you apply between Tues., Oct. 8, 2024, through 5:00 p.m. on Fri., Oct. 11, 2024 (40%)	\$14,600.00	\$9,733.33	\$4,866.67

Grant amounts may also be reduced by the amount of any unspent primary funds (if the candidate's committee received a primary grant), certain amounts of lawn signs provided to the committee, and by any personal funds provided by the candidate.

Expenditure Limits

- Expenditures made or incurred during the period before a primary campaign or general election campaign (the "pre-primary/pre-general election period") are limited to the required amount of qualifying contributions, plus any allowable personal funds the candidate provides to the candidate committee. This period ends with the commencement of the primary campaign period or the general election campaign period, as discussed below.
- For candidates for the district office of State Senator or State Representative, the primary campaign period begins the day after the close of the state or district convention held to endorse such candidate. For candidates for the municipal office of State Senator or State Representative, the primary campaign period begins the day after the close of the caucus, convention, or town committee meeting held to endorse such candidate. The primary campaign period ends on the day of the primary election.



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- The **primary campaign period** limit is calculated by adding the amount of the primary grant, and any unspent qualifying contributions or unspent personal funds provided by the candidate.
- If a primary is held, the **general election campaign period** for the candidate nominated at the primary begins the day after the primary. If there is no primary, the general election campaign period begins the day after the candidate is nominated. The general election campaign period ends the day the campaign treasurer files the final required campaign finance disclosure statement.
- The **general election campaign period** limit is calculated by adding the amount of the general election grant, and any unspent qualifying contributions or unspent personal funds provided by the candidate.

Expenditure Limits During "Pre-Primary/Pre-General Election Period"			
Office Sought	Qualifying Amount	Maximum Allowable Amount of Candidate's Personal Funds	Maximum Expenditures During Period
State Senator	\$17,300	\$2,000	\$17,300 - \$19,300
State Representative	\$5,800	\$1,000	\$5,800 - \$6,800

Permissible Expenditures

- Clean elections funds may be used only for campaign-related expenditures made to advance the participating candidate's campaign.
- Campaigns must maintain detailed documentation indicating that campaign expenditures were made to directly further the participating candidate's race. Such documentation should be created at the time of the transaction.
- Campaign records are subject to comprehensive examinations to ensure compliance with Program requirements.
- Expenditures without adequate supporting documentation are considered impermissible under the Program regulations.



Permissible Expenditures for participating candidates include, but are not limited, to:

- **Political campaign advertising expenses**, such as adequately documented advertisements in any communication medium; production or postage costs related to customary campaign items, such as flyers, signs, stickers, t-shirts, hats, and buttons;
- **Campaign promotional events**, including expenditures for food, space rental, staff and entertainment at such events;
- **Polling or get-out-the-vote activities** in furtherance of the participating candidate's campaign;
- **Food and beverages for campaign workers** not to exceed \$20 per person for breakfast, \$25 per person for lunch, or \$35 per person for dinner;
- **Salaries for campaign staff or consultants**, provided a written agreement is signed **before** the performance of any work or services, and contemporaneous detailed records are kept documenting the work performed or services rendered (for example, timesheets, work logs, invoices, etc.);
- **Campaign office expenses**, including office rent (with a written lease) and office supplies, equipment, and furniture;
- **Limited post-election expenses**, such as costs of photocopies associated with compliance with the Commission's post-election review of the participating candidate's campaign.

Examples of Impermissible Expenditures include:

- Spending for the personal use of any candidate or individual;
- Payments to the candidate or candidate's family members or the businesses of the participating candidate or any of the candidate's family members;
- Contributions, loans or expenditures to other candidates or committees;
- Payments above fair market value for goods or services received; and
- Expenditures lacking sufficient contemporaneous documentation.

For additional guidance, please see the Commission's Citizens' Election Program Regulations, which can be found on the Commission's website (portal.ct.gov/seec).



Supplemental Reporting

Candidates in Campaigns with any Participating Candidates

- Every candidate committee in a primary or general election campaign in which there is at least one participating candidate must file weekly supplemental campaign finance statements with the Commission according to schedules available on the Commission's website (portal.ct.gov/seec).
- If you are in a **primary race** with at least one participating candidate, you are required to file an initial supplemental statement on the second Thursday following the July 10th statement and a subsequent supplemental statement is due every Thursday until the date of the primary.
- If you are in a **general election** race with at least one participating candidate, you are required to file an initial supplemental statement on the second Thursday following the October 10th statement and a subsequent supplemental statement is due every Thursday until the date of the general election. If you are participating and unopposed in the general election, you need only file the final supplemental statement.

For more information on the deadlines for these filings, please visit the Commission's website at (portal.ct.gov/seec).

Excess Expenditure Reporting within 24 to 48 Hours

Candidates in Campaigns with any Participating Candidates

- Excess expenditures are expenditures made, or obligated to be made, by a participating candidate that in the aggregate exceed the applicable expenditure limit for a participating candidate. For the purposes of triggering a supplemental reporting requirement, a participating candidate's applicable expenditure limit is the sum of the amount of required qualifying contributions plus the amount of the full grant for the applicable primary or general election period.
- Nonparticipating candidates are not required to follow the Program's expenditure limits; however, participating candidates are required to follow the Program's expenditure limits. Accordingly, participating candidates should not make excess expenditures. A participating candidate and treasurer of a candidate committee which has received public funds are subject to various penalties if the committee receives excess funds or makes or incurs an obligation to make an excess expenditure.



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- If a participating candidate's committee makes or incurs an expenditure exceeding the participating candidate's applicable expenditure limit **more than 20 days before a primary or election**, the treasurer must file a declaration of excess expenditures **within 48 hours** of making or incurring the expenditure.
- If a participating candidate committee makes or incurs an expenditure exceeding the participating candidate's applicable expenditure limit **20 days or less before a primary or election**, the treasurer must file a declaration of excess expenditures **within 24 hours** of making or incurring the expenditure.

Purpose of Overview Materials

The purpose of this overview is to provide general information about the various rules and requirements of the Program. This document, however, is not a substitute for the law, which can be found on the Commission's website, portal.ct.gov/seec. If you have specific questions, you may contact the Commission's Candidate Services Unit at 860.256.2985.