



COUNTY OF MANITOWOC

COUNTY CLERK

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Manitowoc, WI 54220

Lois M. Kiel
Manitowoc County Clerk

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To: Candidates for count office
From: Lois Kiel, County Clerk
Re: Guidelines for complying with campaign finance law

The following information is provided as a guide for complying with campaign finance laws. A candidate should file a ETHCF-1 with the County Clerk's office, "as soon as the candidate forms the intent to run for office." And certainly before spending any money and before circulating nomination papers.

1) Campaign Finance Forms

a) ETHCF-1 Campaign Registration Statement: At minimum, every candidate running for county office must fill out and file a ETHCF-1 Campaign Registration Statement with the County Clerk's office, even if no expenditures are made or expected to be made. If the ETHCF-1 is not filed on or before the filing deadline, ballot access will be denied.

- i. Required Blocks: 1, 3, 5, Certification, and Exemption from Filing Campaign Finance Reports.
- ii. Because it crops up throughout the form, exemption from filing campaign finance reports is defined as: Registrant will not accept contributions, make disbursements or incur obligations in an aggregate amount of more than \$2,000 in a calendar year.

(1) Block 1:

- (a) Fill out all contact information.
- (b) Party Affiliation: If running for County Executive or County Board, write, "Nonpartisan". If running for a County Constitutional office (Clerk, Circuit Court, Coroner, Treasurer, etc.) indicate political party or principle.
- (c) Committee information is optional if the candidate qualifies for exemption from filing campaign finance reports.

(2) Block 3:

- (a) If the candidate is their own treasurer, write "Self" for the Treasurer's Name – no further information is required. If someone other than the candidate is the treasurer, fill in all information.

(3) Block 5:

- (a) Bank account information is **REQUIRED FOR ALL CANDIDATES**.
- (b) If the candidate qualifies for exemption from filing campaign finance reports, they may use their personal depository account. If the candidate is not exempt, they must establish a separate depository account, and list that account in the block.

- (4) Certification:
 - (a) If the candidate is their own treasurer, sign and date the candidate block.
 - (b) If someone other than the candidate is treasurer, both the candidate and the treasurer should sign and date the form.
- (5) Exemption from filing campaign finance reports:
 - (a) Read definition of exemption, check appropriate box, sign and date.
- b) ETHCF-2L Campaign Finance Report for Local Committees:
 - i. A candidate is not subject to this requirement if they are eligible for exemption from filing campaign finance reports as defined above.
 - ii. This report is filed if a candidate or committee has either not claimed exemption for filing campaign finance reports.
 - (1) Disqualification from exemption: If and when a candidate has claimed exemption, but then exceed the limits for exemption, they must:
 - (a) Resubmit their ETHCF-1 as an amended form with the County Clerk as soon as practical.
 - (b) Reconstruct their next campaign finance report so that it includes contributions and expenditures for the entire calendar year.
 - (2) Filling out the ETHCF-2L:
 - (a) Form must be filled out completely. If a blank or sheet doesn't apply, still fill in 'o', print, and submit the sheet (except for Termination Page).
 - (b) Cover Page: summarizes activity on subsequent pages and provides year-to-date totals (YTD). **Numbers must add up.** Original signature must be on file in the County Clerk's office.
 - (c) Schedules 1a, 1b, and 1c: These are contributions from individuals (including self), other committees, and other income and commercial loans, respectively.
 - (d) Schedules 2a and 2b: These are expenditures. 2b will usually not be used because county candidate committees usually will not make disbursements to other committees.
 - (e) Schedule 3a and 3b: Incurred Obligations and Loans. It is highly encouraged that if a candidate spends their own money on their campaign, that they count their contributions as a loan in Schedule 3b. items that are listed in Schedule 3b are recoverable at the end of the campaign, items listed solely in Schedule 1a are not, and any residual funds at the end of the campaign must be disposed of according to WI campaign finance law (e.g. charity or common school fund).
 - (f) Notes on the ETHCF-2L:
 - (i) In-Kind Contributions/Expenditures: These are items that are donated to the campaign. They can be buttons, food for a fundraiser, loaned office equipment, etc. They must be counted both in Schedules 1a and 2a and noted as being in-kind.
 - (ii) Conduit: you will know if you receive a conduit contribution because a conduit notification will accompany the contribution.

c) ETHCF-2a Campaign Finance Report (short form):

- i. This is filed with the County Clerk only if the candidate or committee is required to file campaign finance reports, but the committee or candidate did not receive contributions or other income, make disbursements, or incur obligations during the campaign finance reporting period, and the cash balance remains the same as previously reported.

d) All reports must be filed according to the reporting periods and deadlines listed on the Campaign Finance Report schedule.

2) Campaign Contribution Limits:

a) Candidate contributions to own campaign

- i. Unlimited.

b) Countywide Offices

- i. Individuals: .02 times the district population of Manitowoc County (ask County Clerk for most recent figure)
- ii. Political Action Committees (PACs) or other candidate committees: .02 times the district population of Manitowoc County (ask County Clerk for most recent figures)

c) Limitations on PAC, Political Committees, and Other Candidate Committees

- i. 45% Limit – Total Contributions a Candidate May Receive from All Committees Excluding Political Party Committees – 11.26(9)(b), Stats. This is the maximum amount of contributions a candidate may receive from all PACs and candidate personal campaign committees per campaign period.
- ii. 65% Limit – Total Contributions a Candidate May Receive from All Committees Including Political Party Committees – 11.26(9)(b), Stats. This is the maximum amount of contributions a candidate may receive from all political committees including political party and legislative campaign committees per campaign period.

d) Anonymous Contributions

- i. May not exceed \$10 and must appear on campaign finance report (if applicable).