

CATAWBA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Candidate Campaign Committees – Frequently Asked Questions

All candidates are required to open a campaign committee

How is a Candidate Campaign Committee different from filing a Notice of Candidacy?

An individual files a Notice of Candidacy only during the official filing period to get their name on the ballot for the upcoming election. A campaign committee must be created if an individual publically announces intent to run for public office in a particular election, has received or transferred funds (or anything of value) for the purpose of running, or consented for anyone else to do so for the purpose of bringing about nomination or election to a public office.

When should I organize my political committee?

Organization paperwork must be filed with the Board of Election office within 10 days of any of the following events:

- Receiving or spending any money in support of your candidacy
- Filing a Notice of Candidacy (during the filing period)
- Making a public announcement of a definite intent to run for public office in a particular election.

What forms must be filed to open a Committee?

The following completed forms must be submitted to the Board of Elections office:

1. Statement of Organization - Candidate Committee[CRO 2100A](#)
2. Certification of Financial Account Information[CRO 3500](#)
3. Certification of Threshold (File only if staying under the Threshold)[CRO 3600](#)
4. Candidate Designation of Committee Funds [CRO 3900](#)

Forms are available on the State Board of Elections website:
www.ncsbe.gov/Campaign-Finance/reporting-forms

Forms are available on the State’s website: www.ncsbe.gov. Navigate to Campaign Finance > Reporting Forms [[Link](#)]

More forms may be needed but these five forms must be completed to open a committee.

Note: if the office for which you are running spans more than one county, you must submit the information to the State Board of Elections.

The forms are asking for a Committee Name. What do I use?

You should create a name for the committee. This is the name used for printed, radio and TV political ads. Keep in mind you’ll have to use “Paid for by *my committee name*” on printed advertisements and certain other media. Examples of committee names are: “John Smith for Mayor,” “Committee to Elect Jane Doe,” etc.

The form also asks for an ID Number and Candidate ID Number: this number is not available until you file. Leave blank if outside the filing window.

I’m not going to spend or receive any money at all on a campaign. Do I still have to do this paperwork?

Yes. The five documents listed above are mandatory even if the filing fee is your only expense. If you plan on using only your own money for the campaign (and will not accept any contributions) you may waive the requirement of opening a separate checking account—however, you still must submit the form [[CRO 3500](#)] certifying thus.

What happens to these forms after I submit them to the Board of Elections?

The forms are public record*. Original documents are placed in a public file in the office and, additionally, the pages are scanned and published on the Catawba County Board of Elections website: www.catawbacountync.gov/elections [current year] Elections> Information for Candidates and Committees [[Link](#)]

*The Certification of Financial Account Information document is protected. Your bank account number will not be divulged to the public. Note that you must create an “Account Code” (on the Statement of Organization) which will be used on financial reports to specify which bank account is being used. Most candidates use their initials or some other short description (ex. “CHK1”) for this code.

Where do I find the rules and regulations regarding campaign finance?

The most recent Campaign Finance Manual is available on the state website under the “Campaign Finance” tab.

When you file for office with the local Board of Elections office, you should be given a condensed version of the manual.

NC State Board of Elections website: www.ncsbe.gov. Navigate to Campaign Finance [[Link](#)]

Can I keep the money I raise for the campaign in my regular personal bank account?

No. It is required that campaign funds be maintained in a bank account that is used exclusively by the political committee. Banks may require an EIN number if you open an account in the committee's name. However, the state only requires that you have an account separate from personal funds; thus, you may use a personal checking account in your name only if it is used exclusively for campaign funds.

Who can I appoint as my treasurer and what is required of that person?

The candidate may appoint themselves or any individual that is a resident of North Carolina, with the exception of a spouse. Treasurers are responsible for maintaining all financial records of the committee. All treasurers must be trained regardless of the amount of money raised or spent during the election cycle. Training is offered in person or online. NC State Board of Elections website: www.ncsbe.gov. Navigate to Campaign Finance>Training [[Link](#)]

I do not plan to receive any contributions and want to fund my campaign entirely with my own money. Do I still need to open a committee?

Yes. All candidates are required to open a committee. Personal funds are considered in-kind contributions from you as an individual to your campaign. When deciding whether to file over or under the \$1,000 threshold, keep in mind that anything you purchase with personal funds for the campaign will count toward the \$1,000.

If I file under the \$1,000 threshold and remain under that limit, do I need to keep track of the money I receive and spend?

Yes. All committees should keep accurate records of contributions and expenditures regardless of whether the committee filed over or under the threshold. In the event you go over the threshold, full disclosure of activity will be required at that time.

A local restaurant has offered to donate food for a fundraiser. Is this allowed?

No. You cannot receive any contribution (monetary or in-kind) from a business. This includes donating items for fundraisers and free use of space normally rented. Even a discount or reduced rate on rental (above what is given to the public) would be considered an in-kind contribution—and is not allowed by businesses.

I am planning a fundraiser and will sell plates of food. Do I need to track how much each person buys?

Yes. Anonymous contributions are prohibited. Example, if you sell hotdogs at \$1, you must obtain the name, address, phone number and occupation of each person buying and keep track of the amount of money given.

A friend of mine put a \$100 bill in my hand and told me to "put it toward the campaign." Is this allowed?

No. Any contribution in excess of \$50 must be made with a verifiable form of payment (i.e. check or money order).

I am going to buy some small office supplies. Can I make the purchase using cash?

That depends. If you are using campaign funds and the purchase is over \$50, it must be made with a verifiable form of payment (check, campaign debit/credit card, etc.). If you are using your personal money and will donate the item to the committee as an in-kind contribution, the purchase can be made with any form of payment.

A hat was passed at an event that I was attending and people put in small bills and change. Is this allowed?

No. All cash contributions must be tracked. No more than \$50 in cash may be collected per individual per day. A suggestion to the "pass the hat" would be to provide envelopes for people to put their contribution in and provide the needed information on the envelope.

What's the maximum amount an individual may contribute to my campaign?

There is an important update regarding the maximum contribution limitation. The State Board of Elections is required to evaluate the maximum contribution limitation every two years pursuant to 163-278.13. [[Link](#)].

The maximum contribution limitation as of January 1, 2019 is \$5,400 and remains in effect through Dec 31, 2020.

Who can I contact if I have a specific question about Campaign Finance?

Contact the State Board of Elections campaign.reporting@ncsbe.gov by email or call (866) 522-4723.