



# ELECtronic

## NEWSLETTER

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An Election Law Enforcement Commission Newsletter  
*"Furthering the interest of an informed Citizenry"*

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## ELEC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ATTENDS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Amanda S. Haines, ELEC's Executive Director, attended the 46<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Council of Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL) in Los Angeles between December 8 and 11, 2024.

She found the conference informative and a valuable chance for networking with officials from agencies like ELEC throughout North America. ELEC is a COGEL member.

"The experience was wonderful, providing us with the opportunity to interact with similar organizations throughout the United States and Canada," said Haines during ELEC's regular meeting on December 17.

"...I was able to work closely with ethics and campaign finance enforcers from Philadelphia, New York City, Florida, Illinois, Oklahoma and Connecticut," she added.

One session attended by Haines indicated that artificial intelligence can be used to assist government officials in disclosing information to the public in addition to creating possible problems in elections.

During another session, she learned that Arkansas candidates who improperly use more than \$2,500 of their campaign funds may face felony charges.

New Jersey candidates can face steep fines for such abuses but ELEC has no criminal enforcement power.



ELEC Executive Director Amanda S. Haines



46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Council of Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL) in Los Angeles



## FAQ - GUBERNATORIAL PUBLIC FINANCING PROGRAM

**Q.** Is it true that New Jersey provides public funds for candidates for governor?

**A.** Yes. New Jersey was the first state in the nation to provide public funds to candidates for governor. The Gubernatorial Public Financing Program was enacted in 1974 as an amendment to the New Jersey Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Reporting Act. It has provided public matching funds to qualifying general election candidates starting with the 1977 election. In 1980, the program was extended to gubernatorial primary elections.

**Q.** What is the purpose of the program?

**A.** One purpose is to limit the overall amount of funds spent on gubernatorial elections while still providing enough money to run a competitive campaign.

Another intent is to make candidates less dependent on contributions from private sources that may want favors after the election. The program limits the amount private donors can give each election.

“By providing public financing of gubernatorial election campaigns, we will remove from the office of the Governor the evil of the large, private contributions,” said Governor Brendan Byrne on May 6, 1974, the day he signed the bill into law.

**Q.** What does it take to qualify?

**A.** In the 2025 election, candidates must raise at least \$580,000 from private contributors to receive public dollars. Donors can give up to \$5,800 to both the primary and general elections.

Candidates are eligible for up to \$2 for every \$1 they raise from private sources. This ensures that most of their funds will come from the public, not special interests. Qualifying candidates in the 2025 primary election will be eligible for up to \$5.5 million in public funds. Eligible candidates in the 2025 general election can receive up to \$12.5 million in public funds.

**Q.** Isn't that a lot of money?

**A.** Viewed in isolation, perhaps. But when measured against the state's \$54.3 billion budget, the cost seems more reasonable.

In the most recent election in 2021, the \$29.7 million in public funds allotted for the gubernatorial election worked out to about \$8.90 per taxpayer. Since its inception, 80 candidates have received \$166 million in public matching funds. That amounts to \$5.73 per vote cast in those elections.

**Q.** How have political parties fared under the program?

**A.** Since it began, three Republicans participating in the program have won the office of Governor six times. Four Democratic beneficiaries have captured the office five times. In the 2005 election, a Democratic candidate who self-financed his campaign won the post.

Thirty-eight Republican candidates have received \$92 million, 38 Democrats have obtained \$72.3 million and three independents have been awarded \$2.1 million through the program.

**Q.** Is there anything I can do to directly support this program?

**A.** Yes. Taxpayers each year can designate \$1 of their state income taxes toward it. As you prepare to file your state income tax returns, check “Yes” on the Gubernatorial Elections Fund checkoff box. Earmarking \$1 does not increase a person's tax payment or reduce their refund.

**Q.** Where can I find out more about the program?

**A.** [www.elec.nj.gov/publicinformation/gub\\_man.htm](http://www.elec.nj.gov/publicinformation/gub_man.htm)

## OVERVIEW OF GUBERNATORIAL PUBLIC FINANCING PROGRAM 2025

- Qualification Threshold: \$580,000 deposited and spent/committed to be spent
  - Candidates will receive two dollars in public matching funds for every one dollar raised
  - \$185,000 of the first submission is not matched
  - In-kind contributions and loans are not matched
- 2025 Contribution limit: \$5,800 per contributor
- Max of candidate's own funds: \$25,000
- Aggregate bank loan total: \$50,000
- Public Funds Cap:
  - Primary: \$5.5 million
  - General: \$12.5 million
- Expenditure Limit:
  - Primary: \$8.7 million
  - General: \$18.5 million
- Expenditures not subject to the Expenditure Limit:
  - Reasonable and necessary compliance with the reporting and certification requirements imposed by the Public Financing laws;
  - Candidate travel expenses (transportation, food, lodging) and travel expenses of campaign staff members incurred while accompanying the candidate;
  - Reasonable cost of food and beverage to persons who attend a testimonial affair on behalf of or in aid of a candidate; and
  - Election night celebration or event expenses
- Use of Public matching funds:

Public matching funds may be used exclusively for purchasing TV, radio, and print advertising; billboard and outdoor signs rentals; campaign literature production and mailing; and compliance with public financing law related to legal and accounting fees. They can also cover communication costs such as website content, email campaigns (excluding fundraising), telephone charges, and address list acquisitions.
- Subsequent submission minimum: \$12,500
  - Can include new and resubmitted contributions

**KEY DATES - 2025 GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY ELECTION**

EVENT	DATE
First Date Candidates Can Seek Public Matching Funds (Twice Monthly Until March 31)	January 7, 2025
Quarterly Candidate Filings	January 15, 2025
Due Date for Debate Sponsor Applications	March 17, 2025
Deadline for Form G-1A Candidate Certification for Public Financing Debate Participation. Also, Due Date for Forms P-1 And/or P-2	March 24, 2025
Candidates Can Seek Public Matching Funds Every Tuesday Until Election	April 1, 2025
Due Date for Candidate Personal Financial Disclosure Forms	April 3, 2025
Earliest Date Debates Can Be Held	April 3, 2025
Deadline for Commission to Select Debate Sponsor.	April 14, 2025
Quarterly Candidate Filings	April 15, 2025
29-Day Preelection Reports	May 12, 2025
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts	May 28, 2025
Latest Date Debate Can Be Held	May 30, 2025
11-Day Preelection Reports	May 30, 2025
24-Hour Notice Reporting Starts	June 3, 2025
2025 Primary Election	June 10, 2025
20-Day Postelection Reports	June 30, 2025
Quarterly Candidate Filings	July 15, 2025
Final Date Candidates Can Seek Public Matching Funds for Primary	November 5, 2025
Final Date Candidates Can Seek Public Matching Funds for Primary	November 5, 2025

**2025 Contribution Limits for Non-Gubernatorial Candidates and Committees**

ENTITIES MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS	CANDIDATE COMMITTEE	POLITICAL COMMITTEE	CONTINUING POLITICAL COMMITTEE	LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE	STATE POLITICAL PARTY COMMITTEE	COUNTY POLITICAL PARTY COMMITTEE	MUNICIPAL POLITICAL PARTY COMMITTEE
Individual	\$5,500 per election	\$15,200 per election	\$15,200 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$15,200 per year
Corporation or Union	\$5,500 per election	\$15,200 per election	\$15,200 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$15,200 per year
Association or Group to:	\$5,500 per election	\$15,200 per election	\$15,200 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$15,200 per year
Candidate Committee	\$17,300 per election	\$15,200 per election	\$15,200 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$15,200 per year
Political Committee	\$17,300 per election	\$15,200 per election	\$15,200 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$15,200 per year
Continuing Political Committee	\$17,300 per election	\$15,200 per election	\$15,200 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$15,200 per year
Legislative Leadership Committee				No Limits			
State Political Party Committee				No Limits			
County Political Party	No limits, except those set forth in N.J.A.C. 19:25-11.7 for a County Political party Committee						
Municipal Political Party				No Limits			
National Political Party	\$17,300 per election	\$15,200 per election	\$15,200 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$152,000 per year	\$79,000 per year	\$15,200 per year
Housekeeping Accounts <sup>5</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$39,500 per year	\$39,500 per year	N/A

<sup>5</sup>Housekeeping account limits are equal to half the amount implemented for state or county political party committees. See N.J.S.A. 19:44A-10.2.



## 2025 REPORTING DATES

	INCLUSION DATES	REPORT DUE DATE
<b>Fire Commissioner - February 15, 2025</b>		
29-day Preelection Reporting Date	Inception of campaign* - 01/14/2025	01/17/2025
11-day Preelection Reporting Date	01/15/2025 - 02/01/2025	02/04/2025
20-day Postelection Reporting Date	02/02/2025 - 03/04/2025	03/07/2025
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 02/02/2025 through 02/07/2025		
24-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 02/08/2025 through 02/15/2025		
<b>April School Board - April 15, 2025</b>		
29-day Preelection Reporting Date	Inception of campaign* - 03/14/2025	03/17/2025
11-day Preelection Reporting Date	03/15/2025 - 04/01/2025	04/04/2025
20-day Postelection Reporting Date	04/02/2025 - 05/02/2025	05/05/2025
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 04/02/2025 through 04/07/2025		
24-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 04/08/2025 through 04/15/2025		
<b>May Municipal - May 13, 2025</b>		
29-day Preelection Reporting Date	Inception of campaign* - 04/11/2025	04/14/2025
11-day Preelection Reporting Date	04/12/2025 - 04/29/2025	05/02/2025
20-day Postelection Reporting Date	04/30/2025 - 05/30/2025	06/02/2025
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 04/30/2025 through 05/05/2025		
24-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 05/06/2025 through 05/13/2025		
<b>Runoff (June) ** - June 10, 2025</b>		
29-day Preelection Reporting Date	No Report Required for this Period	
11-day Preelection Reporting Date	04/30/2025 - 05/27/2025	05/30/2025
20-day Postelection Reporting Date	05/28/2025 - 06/27/2025	06/30/2025
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 05/28/2025 through 06/02/2025		
24-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 06/03/2025 through 06/10/2025		
<b>Primary (90-day start date: March 12, 2025)*** - June 10, 2025</b>		
29-day Preelection Reporting Date	Inception of campaign* - 05/09/2025	05/12/2025
11-day Preelection Reporting Date	05/10/2025 - 05/27/2025	05/30/2025
20-day Postelection Reporting Date	05/28/2025 - 06/27/2025	06/30/2025
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 05/28/2025 through 06/02/2025		
24-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 06/03/2025 through 06/10/2025		
<b>General (90-day start date: August 06, 2025)*** - November 04, 2025</b>		
29-day Preelection Reporting Date	06/28/2025 - 10/03/2025	10/06/2025
11-day Preelection Reporting Date	10/04/2025 - 10/21/2025	10/24/2025
20-day Postelection Reporting Date	10/22/2025 - 11/21/2025	11/24/2025
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 10/22/2025 through 10/27/2025		
24-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 10/28/2025 through 11/04/2025		

	INCLUSION DATES	REPORT DUE DATE
<b>Runoff (December)** - December 02, 2025</b>		
29-day Preelection Reporting Date	No Report Required for this Period	
11-day Preelection Reporting Date	10/22/2025 - 11/18/2025	11/21/2025
20-day Postelection Reporting Date	11/19/2025 - 12/19/2025	12/22/2025
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 11/19/2025 through 11/24/2025		
24-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 11/25/2025 through 12/02/2025		
<b>PACs, PCFRs &amp; Campaign Quarterly Filers</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	01/01/2025 - 03/31/2025	04/15/2025
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	04/01/2025 - 6/30/2025	07/15/2025
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	07/01/2025 - 09/30/2025	10/15/2025
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	10/01/2025 - 12/31/2025	01/15/2026
<b>Governmental Affairs Agents (Q-4)</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	01/01/2025 - 03/31/2025	04/10/2025
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	04/01/2025 - 06/30/2025	07/10/2025
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	07/01/2025 - 9/30/2025	10/10/2025
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	10/01/2025 - 12/31/2025	01/12/2026

\*Inception Date of Campaign (first time filers) or from January 01, 2025 (Quarterly filers).

\*\*A candidate committee or joint candidates committee that is filing in a 2025 Runoff election is not required to file a 20-day postelection report for the corresponding prior election (May Municipal or General).

\*\*\*Form PFD-1 is due on April 03, 2025 for Primary Election Candidates and June 13, 2025 for Independent General Election Candidates.

Note: A fourth quarter 2024 filing is needed for Primary 2025 candidates if they started their campaign prior to December 12, 2024. A second quarter 2025 filing is needed by Independent/Non-Partisan General Election candidates if they started their campaign prior to May 06, 2025.