



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:

January 5, 2006

PRESS RELEASE

The New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC) today published Local Campaign Financing: An Analysis of Trends in Communities Large and Small, according to Jeffrey M. Brindle, Deputy Director.

“This study approaches the analysis of municipal campaign financial activity differently than in the past,” said Brindle. “In addition to summarizing fundraising and expenditure activity throughout all 566 communities, the study contains a detailed comparison of financial activity found in municipalities of varying sizes.”

Also, the study compares activity between municipal and legislative candidates, and traces fundraising and spending by municipal candidates over the ten-year span 1994-2004.

A total of 50 communities were selected from five population categories for the detailed analysis: over 75,000, between 50,000 and 75,000, between 25,000 and 50,000, and up to 25,000.

“Candidates in General and May non-partisan elections raised \$162 million and spent \$144 million from 1994 through 2004,” said Brindle.

The report noted that general election municipal candidates increased fundraising by 98 percent and spending by 120 percent. Total receipts and expenditures declined for May municipal candidates between 1994 and 2004.

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“Regarding May municipal elections there are significant differences from year-to-year in terms of the number and size of communities holding these elections,” said Brindle. “Therefore, the most accurate depiction of trends in non-partisan financial activity derives from comparing like election years. For example, between like years 1994 and 2002, fundraising increased by 161 percent and spending by 198 percent.”

Among candidates running in the 50 selected municipalities, 34 percent of contributions were from political parties, 30 percent from individuals, and 17 percent from businesses, and 14 percent from other candidates.

“The percent of contributions from each source varied between population classes,” said Brindle. “In communities of more than 75,000 people, for example, 42 percent of contributions derived from individuals, 25 percent from businesses, 18 percent from parties, and five percent from candidates. In municipalities of between 50,000 and 75,000 people, 72 percent of contributions stemmed from political parties, 17 percent from businesses, nine percent from individuals, and none from other candidates.”

Mass communication comprises 60 percent of expenditures compared with 40 percent for non-mass communication purposes. Within the mass communication category, 82 percent of spending went for print advertising, mostly in the form of direct mail. Direct mail constituted 62 percent of mass media spending.

“Interestingly, consultants and polling are being increasingly used by municipal candidates,” said Brindle. “It can be anticipated that funds will be used for these purposes more and more as fundraising increases and municipal campaigns increase in sophistication.”

The 59 page study, the 18th in a series, is available at ELEC offices and on-line at <http://www.elec.state.nj.us/>

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