



Temporary Increase in Campaign Contribution Limits and Increase in Officeholder Account Yearly Contribution Cap

On June 17, the City Council amended the Oakland Campaign Reform Act (OCRA) to temporarily increase campaign contribution limits for candidates who accept voluntary spending limits. **The new contribution limits are effective June 17, 2025.**

The OCRA amendments also permanently increase the annual cap on total contributions to an elected official's officeholder account. **The new officeholder account yearly contribution cap is effective beginning in 2025.**

New Contribution Limits for Candidates (O.M.C. 3.12.045)

Effective June 17, 2025, contribution limits for candidate-controlled committees are as follows:

CANDIDATES WHO DO NOT ACCEPT VOLUNTARY SPENDING LIMITS:

Individual, Business, or Other Organization	\$650
Broad-Based Political Committee	\$1,300

CANDIDATES WHO ACCEPT VOLUNTARY SPENDING LIMITS:

Individual, Business, or Other Organization	\$900
Broad-Based Political Committee	\$1,800

Please note, the new higher limits are **only** applicable for candidates who accept the voluntary spending limits by **first** filing [OCRA Form 301](#) with the Public Ethics Commission.

New Officeholder Account Yearly Contribution Cap (O.M.C. 3.12.150)

Oakland law allows each elected City Official to maintain an officeholder committee for non-campaign expenses associated with the office currently held by the elected City Official.

Contributions to an officeholder committee are subject to the same contribution limits that apply to candidate committees who does **not** accept voluntary expenditure limits. However, the contribution limits for officeholder committees are annual rather than by election cycle. **The per-contributor contribution limits were not changed by the recent amendments to OCRA.** This means elected City

Officials may receive contributions to their designated officeholder account up to **\$650 annually** from an individual or business and up to **\$1,300 annually** from a broad-based political committee.

However, the recent amendments to OCRA increased the total *annual* amount that an officeholder committee may receive in contributions as follows [OMC 3.12.150(A)]:

School Board Directors*	\$25,000
District City Councilmember	\$75,000
Citywide Elected Official	\$100,000

These increases to the annual total contribution limits to officeholder accounts went into effect for the 2025 calendar year and are permanent.

*The annual limit for School Board Directors did not change.

Additional Guidance for Candidates: How Do the New Campaign Contribution Limits Affect My Campaign?

Q. Which offices do the new contribution limits apply to?

The change in campaign contribution limits applies to all candidates running for a City of Oakland or Oakland Unified School District office, including candidates for Mayor, City Attorney, City Auditor, Councilmember At-Large, District City Councilmember, and Oakland School Board Director.

Q. I've set up a committee to raise funds for the 2026 election. Do the new contribution limits apply?

Yes, but **before** you can accept contributions at the higher amount for the 2026 election you must first accept the voluntary spending limits for your race by filing [OCRA Form 301](#).

For candidates that do **not** accept spending limits, the old contribution limits of \$650 for individuals, businesses, and other organizations, and \$1,300 for broad-based political committees, continue to apply.

Q. Am I allowed to accept more contributions from individuals and broad-based committees that have already reached the previous maximum limit for my 2026 campaign?

Yes. The total contribution limit for the 2026 election cycle is now capped at \$900 for individuals and \$1,800 for broad-based committees. Therefore, if an individual contributed \$650 before June 17, 2025, they can now give an additional \$250 during this election cycle.

Q. How long will the new contribution limits be in effect?

The temporary increase in contribution limits sunsets on **June 30, 2029**, following the 2028 election cycle, regardless of whether Democracy Dollars is implemented. However, the temporary increase in campaign contribution limits may end earlier for candidates running for a specific office if the Public

Ethics Commission determines that Democracy Dollars public financing will be available for candidates running for that office.

Q. How will the implementation of Democracy Dollars impact the new contribution limits?

The temporary increase in campaign contribution limits will remain in effect until sunset in 2029, unless the Public Ethics Commission determines that it may implement the Democracy Dollars Program, which is the City's new voucher-based campaign public finance program enacted by Measure W (2022). For the pre-2029 election contests that receive sufficient Democracy Dollars funding, contribution limits will revert back to the lower amounts established by Measure W (\$650/\$1,300, as adjusted for inflation). The effective dates of such reversions will be set by the Commission.

The FY 2025-27 Budget does not include funding for Democracy Dollars vouchers, so the Program is unlikely to be implemented in the 2026 election unless the Budget is amended. By January 1, 2026, the PEC will publicly announce which races, if any, will receive Democracy Dollars funding for the 2026 election.

Q. Are the new contribution limits retroactive?

No. The temporary contribution limit increase is only effective as of June 17, 2025. Contributions made prior to June 17 that exceeded the prior contribution limits (\$650/\$1,300) may be enforced as a violation of OCRA.

Q. Do the new campaign contribution limits apply to officeholder committees?

No. Regardless of whether an elected official accepts the voluntary expenditure limits, the official may only accept contributions to their designated officeholder account up to \$650 annually from an individual or business and up to \$1,300 annually from a broad-based political committee.

To stay up to date on Oakland campaign finance rules, visit our webpage: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/recent-campaign-rules> and subscribe for updates.

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