



Temporary Increase in Contribution Limits to Officeholder Accounts & New Restrictions for Officeholder Expenditures

On January 6, 2026, City Council amended the Oakland Campaign Reform Act (OCRA) to temporarily increase contribution limits to officeholder funds to match the temporarily increased limits to candidates and candidate-controlled committees. The amendment also extends the sunset date for the temporary contribution limit increase to December 31, 2029. **The new contribution limits are effective January 6, 2026.**

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. The OCRA amendments also clarify that officeholder expenditures may not be used for mailings within three months of any election for which the elected official is running for City office.

New Contribution Limits for Officeholder Committees (O.M.C. 3.12.045)

Under OCRA, an elected City official is permitted to establish an officeholder expense fund (OMC 3.12.150(A)). Elected officials may use officeholder funds “for any political, governmental or other lawful purpose,” including for office equipment, part-time staff, research, travel, donations to charities, educational materials, and mailing to constituents (OMC 3.12.150(A)). Effective January 6, 2026, contribution limits for officeholder committees will match the contribution limits for candidate-controlled committees as follows:

OFFICEHOLDERS WHO DO NOT ACCEPT VOLUNTARY SPENDING LIMITS:

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

OFFICEHOLDERS WHO ACCEPT VOLUNTARY SPENDING LIMITS:

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

The higher contribution limits are **only** applicable for candidates who accepted the voluntary spending limits by **first** filing [OCRA Form 301](#) with the Public Ethics Commission.

The contribution limits for officeholder committees are annual rather than by election cycle. This means elected City Officials may receive contributions to their designated officeholder account up to **\$650/\$900 annually** from an individual or business and up to **\$1,300/\$1,800 annually** from a broad-based political committee.

Reminder: The recent amendments to OCRA in June 2025 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 June 17, 2025 and are permanent.

New Restriction on Officeholder Expenditures (O.M.C. 3.12.150)

As previously mentioned, expenditures from an officeholder fund may be made for any political, governmental or other lawful purpose including expenditures for office rent, expenditures for donations to tax-exempt educational institutions or tax exempt charitable, civic or service organizations, and expenditures for conferences, meetings, receptions, and events attended in the performance of government duties. Funds may not be used for an elected official's campaign expenses, nor may officeholder funds be transferred into a candidate's campaign committee.

Effective January 6, 2026, officeholders are prohibited from making expenditures for mailings to people within the City that provide information related to City-sponsored events, school district-sponsored events, an official's governmental duties or an official's position on a particular matter pending before the Council, Mayor, or School Board within three months of any election in which the elected City official is running for a City office. [OMC 3.12.150(B)(13)]

See [Oakland Municipal Code \(3.12.150\)](#) for full list of acceptable expenditures and prohibited expenditures.

Additional Guidance for Officeholders:

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

The temporary increase in contribution limits for candidates and candidate-controlled committees as well as officeholder committees now sunsets on **December 31, 2029**, 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. Are the new contribution limits retroactive?

No. The temporary contribution limit increase is only effective as of January 6, 2026. Contributions made prior to January 6, 2026, that exceeded the prior contribution limit (\$650) may be enforced as a violation of OCRA.

To stay up to date on Oakland campaign finance rules, visit our webpage: [What's New | City of Oakland, CA](#) and subscribe for updates.

Please contact Jelani Killings at (510) 484-1292 or jkillings@oaklandca.gov if you have any questions.