

Officeholder Committees FACT SHEET

CA Political Reform Act/FPPC Rules for Officeholder Committees

State law allows local candidates who win the election to continue to maintain their campaign committee after the election to receive contributions and to use campaign funds to offset officeholder expenses. During non-election years, the Form 460 is filed on a semi-annual basis if the committee remains open. State law further requires that the committee name include the candidate's last name, office sought, and year of the election, and that this name remain intact until and unless the candidate decides to run for re-election, in which case the candidate may re-designate the committee or create a new committee for the future office sought.

See FPPC *Disclosure Manual 2 – Information for Local Candidates, Superior Court Judges, Their Controlled Committees, and Primarily Formed Committees for Local Candidates*, available on the FPPC's website at www.fppc.ca.gov.

Oakland Campaign Reform Act (OCRA) Rules for Officeholder Committees

Oakland law allows each elected City Official to maintain an officeholder committee for expenses associated with holding office. Contributions to the officeholder committee must be made by separate check or other separate written instrument, and single contributions may not be divided between the officeholder committee and any other candidate committee.

The Oakland Campaign Reform Act (OCRA) imposes a limit on the total amount the officeholder committee may receive in contributions per year in office (OMC 3.12.150A). On June 17, 2025, the Oakland City Council made changes to the city's campaign finance rules that increased the amount of money elected officials can collect each year for their officeholder committees. The current annual limits are as follows:

School Board Directors	\$25,000
District City Councilmembers	\$75,000
Citywide Elected Officials	\$100,000

In addition, annual contributions received by or made to the officeholder committee shall be subject to the contribution limits under OCRA. No funds may be transferred from the officeholder committee of an elected City Official to any other candidate committee [OMC 3.12.150(D)].

A contributor may contribute up to the contribution limit to the officeholder committee each year it is in existence, in addition to making contributions at the applicable limit to the elected City Official's campaign committee for a future election.

Transitioning a Campaign Committee into an Officeholder Committee

A candidate may decide to maintain the campaign committee in lieu of creating an officeholder committee; however, the candidate would be limited to the contribution limits that applied to their contributors during the election. In other words, an individual who contributed to the candidate's campaign at the maximum amount would not be able to contribute again to the campaign committee, until and unless the campaign committee is re-designated as a campaign committee for the candidate's re-election. Even then, the contributor would be limited to the maximum contribution limit for the next election.

By establishing an officeholder committee, an elected City Official can receive a new set of contribution limits as outlined above and subject to OCRA's officeholder expenditure rules listed below. The new limits are in addition to the limits allowable for campaign contributions and are applied annually rather than per-election. To trigger the ability to accept officeholder contributions, a candidate must establish an "officeholder" committee by re-designating the campaign committee as follows:

1. After the election, pay all campaign expenses and debts. Do not terminate the campaign committee.
2. After the elected official is sworn into office, file an amended Form 410 pursuant to state rules to add "Officeholder" to the committee name (the name must still include the candidate's last name, the prior office sought, and the year of the election). There is no required deadline for transitioning the committee from a campaign committee to an officeholder committee, except that, once a committee is renamed with "Officeholder," it can no longer accept campaign contributions, pay campaign debts, or make other campaign expenditures. The new "Officeholder" committee can only receive officeholder contributions and make officeholder expenditures per OMC 3.12.150 and is subject to the new annual contribution limit for "Officeholder" committees.
3. Any funds that remain in the account as it becomes an officeholder committee may not exceed the total amount the officeholder committee may receive in contributions per year in office under OMC 3.12.150A.
4. A contributor may not give to the campaign committee for the prior election and to the officeholder committee in the same calendar year; however, if and once the candidate forms a new campaign committee for their re-election or election to another office, a contributor may contribute up to the maximum amount to the officeholder committee and the future campaign committee.

Creating an Officeholder Committee

Establishing and using an officeholder committee can be tricky. The reason is that state law permits an elected City Official to receive contributions into only one campaign account – whether for campaign or officeholder purposes.

To accept officeholder contributions under Oakland law, a candidate must establish an "officeholder" committee by re-designating their campaign committee after the election and after all campaign related expenses and debts have been paid.

Officeholder committee funds may NOT be used for an elected City Official's own campaign-related expenses, nor may they be transferred to another candidate committee (including one's own).

Note: In lieu of the above campaign committee re-designation process, an officeholder could instead create a new campaign committee for re-election while in office, designate it with the name “officeholder,” and use that committee for officeholder contributions and expenditures; however, the officeholder committee must have a zero balance before the candidate begins to accept campaign contributions and make campaign expenditures for the candidate’s future re-election, as OCRA prohibits any transfer of officeholder funds to another candidate committee.

Officeholder Expenditure Rules

Under OCRA section 3.12.150B, expenditures from an officeholder committee may be made for any political, governmental, or other lawful purpose such as the following:

1. Expenditures for fundraising (including solicitations by mail) for the officeholder per statute;
2. Expenditures for office equipment, furnishings, and office supplies;
3. Expenditures for office rent;
4. Expenditures for salaries of part-time or full-time staff employed by the officeholder for officeholder activities;
5. Expenditures for consulting, research, polling, photographic or similar services except for campaign expenditures for any city, county, regional, state, or federal elective office;
6. Expenditures for conferences, meetings, receptions, and events attended in the performance of government duties by (1) the elected City Official (2) a member of the elected City Official’s staff; or (3) such other person designated by the elected City Official who is authorized to perform such government duties;
7. Expenditures for travel, including lodging, meals and other related disbursements, incurred in the performance of governmental duties by (1) the elected City Official, (2) a member of the elected City Official’s staff, (3) such other person designated by the elected City Official who is authorized to perform such government duties, or a member of such person’s household accompanying the person on such travel;
8. Expenditures for meals and entertainment directly preceding, during or following a governmental or legislative activity;
9. Expenditures for donations to tax-exempt educational institutions or tax exempt charitable, civic or service organizations, including the purchase of tickets to charitable or civic events, where no substantial part of the proceeds will have a material financial effect on the elected City Official, any member of their immediate family, or their committee treasurer;
10. Expenditures for memberships to civic, service, or professional organizations, if such membership bears a reasonable relationship to a governmental, legislative, or political purpose;
11. Expenditures for an educational course or educational seminar if the course or seminar maintains or improves skills which are employed by the elected City Official or a member of the elected City Official’s staff in the performance of their governmental responsibilities;

12. Expenditures for advertisements in programs, books, testimonials, souvenir books, or other publications if the advertisement does not support or oppose the nominations or election of a candidate for city, county, regional, state, or federal elective office;
13. Expenditures for mailing to persons within the city which provide information related to city-sponsored events, school district-sponsored events, an official's governmental duties or an official's position on a matter pending before the Council, Mayor, or School Board;
14. Expenditures for expressions of congratulations, appreciation or condolences sent to constituents, employees, governmental officials, or other persons with whom the elected City Official communicates in their official capacity;
15. Expenditures for payment of tax liabilities incurred because of authorized officeholder expense fund transactions;
16. Expenditures for accounting, professional and administrative services provided to the officeholder fund;
17. Expenditures for ballot measures.

OCRA section 3.12.150C specifically prohibits the following expenditures from officeholder committees:

1. Expenditures in connection with a future election for any city, county, regional, state, or federal elective office;
2. Expenditures for campaign consulting, research, polling, photographic or similar services for election to city, county, regional, state, or federal elective office;
3. Membership in any athletic, social, fraternal, veteran, or religious organization;
4. Supplemental compensation for employees for performance of an act which would be required or expected of the person in the regular course or hours of their duties as a city official or employee;
5. Any expenditure that would violate the provisions the California State Political Reform Act, including Government Code Sections 89506 and 89512 through 89519.

Termination of the Officeholder Committee

The officeholder committee shall be terminated at the time the elected City Official's term of office ends or they leave that office, whichever is earlier. An officeholder committee may not transfer funds to a campaign committee for a future election or to any other campaign committee. If the elected City Official runs for re-election, the new campaign committee is a separate committee for a separate election and does not impact the existing officeholder committee. If the elected City Official wins re-election, it is advised that the campaign committee for the candidate's re-election become the candidate's new officeholder committee according to the above procedures.