

Campaign Contributions Limits Under Chicago Governmental Ethics Ordinance, certain persons or entities may not contribute more than \$1,500 in a calendar year to any single candidate, or their political committee, for City elected office (or to a City elected official), or to a City official or employee who is seeking election to any other non-City office.

Persons or entities subject to this \$1,500 per candidate per calendar year contribution limitation are: 1) Lobbyists registered with the Board of Ethics; and 2) Persons doing over \$10,000 in business with the City of Chicago or other local government entities, within the preceding four calendar years.

An entity and its subsidiaries, parent company or otherwise "affiliated" companies are considered the same person for purposes of the \$1,500 per candidate/per year limitation. Employees, officers, directors and partners of firms or entities subject to the Ordinance's \$1,500 per candidate/per calendar year contribution limitation are not considered the same "person" as the firm or entity unless they are reimbursed by the firm or entity for the contribution.

Resources

<http://www.elections.il.gov>

www.ilcampaign.org

<https://movetoamend.org/Illinois>

Corruption of Democracy Video Curriculum at uujec.com/videoCurriculum

The 30-minute film *Legalize Democracy* (2014) from Top Documentary Films

Money and Politics - Illinois

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Illinois Sunshine

Illinois Sunshine is a program of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform (ICPR). It is a tool for browsing political contributions in the state of Illinois. The data comes from the Illinois State Board of Elections (<http://www.elections.il.gov>). ICPR built *Illinois Sunshine* to give journalists, activists and citizens better access to the data.

Who has to report campaign finance? Any political committee that exceeds \$5,000 in either receipts or expenditures over the period of a year has to file reports. Once a committee exceeds the filing threshold, they are covered by the Illinois Campaign Disclosure Act.

What gets reported? Contributions of under \$150 per candidate are not itemized, but just show up in summary totals of funds raised. There is itemized disclosure of contributions of \$150 or more, with additional details provided for contributions of \$1,000 or more.

Campaign Disclosure Forms The *Illinois Sunshine* web site lists the various Campaign Disclosure Forms along with a description of each.

Contribution Limits

Contribution limits vary, depending on the type of political committee receiving the contribution. Limits are per election cycle – there is one cycle leading up to the primary elections and another cycle from the day after the primary until the end of the calendar year.

An individual candidate's political committee can, per cycle, receive contributions of up to \$5,600 from

individuals, \$11,100 from corporations, labor unions, and/or associations, and \$55,400 from PACs, plus unlimited contributions from their political party's general committee during the general election cycle. Political Party Committees can also make contributions to an individual candidate's political committee during the primary election cycles, but there are limits to those contributions which vary depending on the office being sought.

Self-funding Candidates – A candidate/public official or their immediate family members can make unlimited contributions to that official or candidate's political committee. Once such contributions total over \$250,000 during the 12 months before an election such a candidate is considered self-funding and all contribution limits are off for other candidates for that same office.

Political Action Committees (PACs) and Political Party Committees can, per cycle, receive contributions of up to \$11,100 from individuals and \$22,200 from corporations, labor unions, and/or associations. Political Party Committees can, per cycle, receive contributions of up to \$55,400 from PACs, and unlimited amounts from Candidate Political Committees* and other Political Party Committees, such as those at the national level.

*Candidates not up for re-election may use their Political Committee to raise funds that they can contribute directly or in-directly to other candidates from their party.

Independent Expenditure Committees can receive unlimited contributions from any source at any time. The same rule applies to Ballot Initiative Committees. The United States Supreme Court held, in *Citizens United*, that the First Amendment prohibited the government from restricting independent political expenditures by a nonprofit corporation. The principles articulated by the Supreme Court in the case have also been extended to for-profit corporations, labor unions and other associations. Independent expenditure committees are

allowed to raise and spend unlimited funds, with certain reporting requirements. However independent expenditure committees are not allowed to give directly to other candidate committees, party committees or PACs.

Other

The use of real or personal property to hold a campaign event, and the provision of up to \$150 in food and beverages at such an event does not count as a campaign contribution.

Communications by a corporation, labor union, or association to its personnel, their families, members or stockholders does not count as contributions. Nor does communications by an organization operating and remaining in good standing under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code.

Chicago's Political Contributions Restrictions

Prohibited Contributions Under Chicago's Governmental Ethics Ordinance (Chapter 2-156 of the Municipal Code), the following are illegal:

→ Anonymous contributions, or contributions given in any name other than that of the true donor.

→ Contributions based on an understanding, either implicit or explicit, that the candidate's votes, official actions, decisions, or judgments if elected would be influenced thereby. This applies to candidates, their spouses, domestic partners, and immediate family or relatives residing in the same residence.

→ Cash contributions in an amount over \$250. The Board has determined that cash means currency, money orders and cashiers' checks. Personal checks or credit card payments are not cash.

→ Intentionally offering, making, soliciting, or accepting political contributions on City property.