

FACT SHEET FOR THE FAIR ELECTIONS PROGRAM DURING THE 2026 ELECTION CYCLE

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Background

The Fair Elections Program (FEP) is a voluntary public financing program for local political campaigns in the District of Columbia through the combination of matching funds and lump sum base amounts.

The Program will

- ▶ Provide an incentive for more candidates to compete in the electoral process;
- ▶ Encourage residents to have greater civic participation in the electoral process;
- ▶ Amplify the voices of residents by matching qualified small dollar contributions;

Highlights of the Program

- ▶ The Fair Elections Program is voluntary and is available to candidates running for the covered office of Mayor, Attorney General, Chairman and Member of the Council and At-Large and Ward Member of the State Board of Education.
- ▶ Candidates must pledge to accept contributions only from individuals, and not to accept contributions from business entities or contributions from traditional Political Action Committees; and to accept lower contribution limits.
- ▶ To be certified by the Office of Campaign Finance (OCF) as a "Participating Candidate" in the Fair Elections Program, the candidate must obtain the following during the qualifying period:
 - For a candidate for Mayor, qualified small dollar contributions from at least 1000 small dollar contributors, which in the aggregate, total \$40,000 or more
 - For a candidate for Attorney General, qualified small dollar contributions from at least 500 small dollar contributors, which in the aggregate, total \$20,000 or more
 - For a candidate for Council Chairman, qualified small dollar contributions from at least 300 small dollar contributors, which in the aggregate, total \$15,000 or more
 - For a candidate for an At-Large Council seat, qualified small dollar contributions from at least 250 small dollar contributors, which in the aggregate, total \$12,000
 - For a candidate for a Ward Council seat and the At-Large State Board of Education seat, qualified small dollar contributions from at least 150 small dollar contributors, which in the aggregate, total \$5,000 or more
 - For a candidate for a Ward State Board of Education seat, qualified small dollar contributions from at least 50 small dollar contributors, which in the aggregate, total \$1,000 or more

Once certified as a "Participating Candidate," the OCF will within five (5) business days of certification direct the Chief Financial Officer to distribute within five (5) business days of receiving notice from the OCF, one half of the base amount dependent upon the covered office sought; and the OCF will within five (5) business days after a Participating Candidate qualifies for ballot access, direct the Chief Financial Officer to pay the remaining one half of the base amount, within five (5) business days of receiving notice from OCF.

The Base Amounts are only payable in contested elections, as follows:

- \$160,000 for the Office of the Mayor;
- \$40,000 for the Office of the Attorney General;
- \$40,000 for the Office of Council Chairman; \$40,000 for the Office of Councilmember elected At-Large and from a Ward; and
- \$10,000 for the Office of State Board of Education elected At-Large and from a Ward

Small dollar contributions from individual District residents and individual non-residents are limited to:

- \$200 for the Office of Mayor;
 - \$200 for the Office of Chairman of the Council or Attorney General;
 - \$100 for the Office of Member of the Council elected At-Large;
 - \$50 for the Office of Member of the Council elected from a Ward or for Member of the State Board of Education elected At-Large;
 - \$20 for the Office of Member of the State Board of Education elected from a Ward.
- ▶ Contributions or loans from the Candidate or immediate family members, in the aggregate, are limited to \$2500.00.
 - ▶ Participating Candidates are entitled to matching payments for each qualified small dollar contribution with a value of \$5 or more from an individual District resident at a rate of 5:1.

Matching Payments:

The maximum amount Participating Candidates may receive for the 2026 Election Cycle in matching payments at the 5:1 rate for qualified small dollar contributions from individual District residents is as follows:

- Mayor - \$ 3,443,855
- Attorney General - \$ 995,242
- Chairman of the Council - \$ 593,166
- At Large Council Member - \$ 468,314
- Ward Council Member - \$ 263,680
- Ward State Board of Education Member - \$ 26,679

The cap is determined by a formula of 110% of the average expenditures of all winning candidates; for the prior four (4) elections for the office of Mayor, Attorney General, and City Council Chairman; and for the prior two (2) elections for the office of City Council At-Large, City Council Ward, State Board of Education, At-Large and State Board of Education, Ward.

Training Requirement:

- ▶ A candidate for public office and the treasurer of a principal campaign committee in the District of Columbia must attend a training program in person or online before the Office of Campaign Finance concerning the reporting requirements within fifteen (15) calendar days of the date on which the Statement of Candidacy form or the Statement of Organization is filed, or as otherwise scheduled by the Agency.

** Dates subject to change*

Debate Requirement:

Program participants may be required to take part in a public debate for each contested city-wide Primary, Special or General Election in an election cycle for the covered offices.

Mandatory Filing Deadlines for Candidates Seeking Certification and Participating Candidates*

- ▶ July 31, 2025
- ▶ October 10, 2025
- ▶ December 10, 2025
- ▶ January 31, 2026
- ▶ March 10, 2026
- ▶ April 10, 2026
- ▶ May 10, 2026
- ▶ June 10, 2026
- ▶ August 10, 2026
- ▶ September 10, 2026
- ▶ October 10, 2026
- ▶ October 26, 2026 (8 Day Pre-General Election Report)
- ▶ December 10, 2026

Election Dates

- ▶ June 16, 2026 (Primary Election)
- ▶ November 3, 2026 (General Election)

Qualifying Period

- ▶ Primary Election: November 6, 2024, through March 18, 2026 (the last day to file nominating petitions as a candidate for a covered office sought in the Primary Election).
- ▶ General Election: November 6, 2024, through August 5, 2026 (the last day to file nominating petitions as a candidate for a covered office in the General Election).

Covered Contractors

No covered contractor, or its principals, who is seeking or holding a contract (valued at \$250,000 or more in the aggregate) with, or for which the procurement process would be overseen by a District agency subordinate to the Office of the Mayor shall make a contribution to any candidate for the office of Mayor; Attorney General; or City Councilmember.