



STATE OF MICHIGAN
RUTH JOHNSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 29, 2014
TO: Candidate Committees Registered on the State Level
FROM: Michigan Department of State, Bureau of Elections
SUBJECT: 2015 Campaign Statement Filing Deadlines

KEEP AND REFERENCE THROUGH 2015

Carefully read this memo to determine if the described filings are required of your committee during 2015. This memo provides filing information for 2015. Please keep this in a handy place for easy and quick reference.

Covered in this memo:

[Filing Reminder Communications](#)

[Electronic Filing Requirement](#)

[Tips for MERTS users](#)

[Webinar Training Schedule](#)

[Campaign Statement Filing Deadlines for 2015 Calendar Year](#)

- ✓ Annual Campaign Statement due February 2, 2015
- ✓ July Quarterly Campaign Statement due July 27, 2015
- ✓ October Quarterly Campaign Statements due October 26, 2015

[Annual Campaign Statement Exemptions](#)

[Coverage Dates of Statements](#)

[Forms; Number of Copies Required](#)

[Ensure Timely Filing](#)

[Avoid Late Filing Fees!](#)

[Accurate Campaign Statements Required](#)

[Reporting Waiver Provisions](#)

[Statement of Organization Amendments Required with Campaign Statement](#)

[Dissolution Information](#)

[Questions?](#)

Filing Reminder Communications

This memorandum or memo will be the main correspondence you will receive from the Bureau of Elections regarding your filing requirements for the 2015 calendar year. It is also available on the Bureau's website: www.Michigan.gov/elections.

The following reminders will be sent by the Bureau of Elections. (All reminders are sent as a courtesy. Failure to receive a reminder does not exempt the committee from filing statements timely.)

- This memo serves as the sole regular mail reminder to file the 2015 Annual Campaign Statement due on February 2, 2015. No post card reminder will be sent by regular mail for the 2015 Annual Campaign Statement.
- The Bureau of Elections will send a postcard reminder before each required quarterly filing to the committee mailing address on record.
- The Bureau of Elections will send an email reminder before each filing deadline to committees that have provided at least one email address on the committee's Statement of Organization. All email addresses provided will be used to notify the committee.
- Finally, the Bureau of Elections will post filing reminders on Twitter @MichCFR.

Committees are encouraged to keep the committee's information up-to-date to ensure that reminders that are sent by the Bureau are received by the committee. Amending the [Statement of Organization](#) form is outlined later in this memo.

Electronic Filing Requirement

Committees that spent or received \$5,000.00 or more in the preceding calendar year or that expect to spend or receive \$5,000.00 or more in the current calendar year are required by law to file electronically. A committee may become subject to the electronic filing requirement mid-year if its contributions or expenditures equal or exceed \$5,000.00. In this case, a committee is required to **notify this office within 10 business days of reaching the threshold** and must file all subsequent statements electronically. Once the electronic filing requirement is met, a committee is required to continue filing electronically even if the committee's balance falls below \$5,000.00. Committees that are not required to file electronically are encouraged to voluntarily file electronically.

Electronic filing software for filing Campaign Statements is provided free of charge. For additional information on filing electronically, go to www.Michigan.gov/elections and select:

1. ["Campaign Finance Disclosure"](#)
2. ["E-Filing"](#)

Tips for MERTS users

Back up your MERTS file! Having an extra copy of your file on a separate removable media is essential to ensure the committee is able to file accurate statements in the event of a catastrophic loss of data. It happens more often than you think! The Bureau of Elections does not have a copy of the committee's .DCF or back-up file.

Only create one file for the committee. To ensure accurate filings, the committee must use and create only one file in MERTS. A new report is created in the **Reports Tab**, not by creating a new committee file. After your initial set up of the committee, always select **"Open an Existing Committee"** upon opening the software.

Check the Election cycle to ensure it is current. The MERTS software will calculate the election cycle once the next election year is added to a new record created in the **Elections Cycle** tab. Simply go to the Elections Cycle Tab and create a new record. For more information, see the [Election Cycle Chart](#) the Bureau's website.

Start entering data early and file early. Don't wait for the Close of Books to begin adding information. The data can be saved and changed as needed before the filing deadline. Don't forget to **back-up** the file after each session.

Webinar Training Schedule

The 2015 MERTS and Compliance Training Schedule has been posted to our website at www.michigan.gov/elections. Select "Campaign Finance Disclosure" on the left and find it in the "Spotlight" section.

Campaign Statement Filing Deadlines for 2015 Calendar Year

Statement	Close of Books	Due
Annual	December 31, 2014	February 2, 2015
July Statement*	July 20	July 27
October Statement*	October 20	October 26

Note: These statements are waived by the [Reporting Waiver](#). The Reporting Waiver is lost if the committee spends or receives more than \$1,000.00 during for any election.

***ATTENTION INCUMBENT JUSTICES, JUDGES AND STATEWIDE BOARD MEMBERS**

The additional campaign statements due in July and October ARE NOT exempted for incumbent justice, judge and statewide board member candidate committees. This is true even if the committee has had no activity during the coverage period. Therefore, if your committee does not maintain a Reporting Waiver, your committee will owe these campaign statements. Please see the section title: **Statement of Organization Amendments Required with Campaign Statement** below for information on obtaining a Reporting Waiver.

Annual Campaign Statement Exemptions

A Candidate Committee that does not fall into one of the following exemptions must file the 2015 Annual Campaign Statement:

- Files a Post-General Campaign Statement due in December 2014.
- Currently has a [Reporting Waiver](#) or qualifies for and obtains a Reporting Waiver on or before February 2, 2015. (The Reporting Waiver exemption is discussed in greater detail later in this memo.)

- An officeholder whose salary is less than \$100.00 a month. **PLEASE NOTE:** To be eligible for this exemption, the committee must not have received any contributions or made any expenditures during the period of time covered by the Annual Campaign Statement.
- An incumbent judge or justice.

Coverage Dates of Statements

A Campaign Statement's opening date is the day after the closing date of the last Campaign Statement filed by the committee. If the committee has never filed a Campaign Statement, the opening date of the first Campaign Statement filed is the earlier of the following two dates:

- the committee's formation date or
- the date the committee accepted its first contribution or made its first expenditure.

Forms; Number of Copies Required

A committee required to file electronically cannot file paper forms in lieu of filing electronically. See the *Electronic Filing Requirement* section above for more information. If the committee is eligible to file on paper, [forms](#) for filing Campaign Statements are available on our website at www.Michigan.gov/elections.

- When filing electronically, a paper submission is not required.
- When filing on paper, one original copy of the Campaign Statement is required. A duplicate copy is not required.

Ensure Timely Filing

An electronic filing sent via the Internet must be transmitted and received by the Bureau of Elections by 5:00 p.m. on the date the Campaign Statement is due.

A Campaign Statement that is hand-delivered or sent by first class mail must reach this office before 5:00 p.m. on the due date. Be sure to allow ample mailing time if sending first class.

An Annual Campaign Statement filed on paper or removable media that is mailed by registered mail, certified mail or an overnight delivery service and **postmarked on or before the filing deadline** will be viewed as a timely filing regardless of when it arrives.

A July or October Quarterly Campaign Statement filed on paper or removable media that is mailed by registered mail, certified mail or an overnight delivery service and **postmarked two or more calendar days prior to the due date** will be viewed as a timely filing regardless of when it arrives.

Avoid Late Filing Fees!

Campaign Statements are required to be filed timely. Committees that file Campaign Statements late are assessed late filing fees.

A Candidate Committee that fails to file a required Annual Campaign Statement is assessed a [late filing fee](#) as follows:

- If the committee raised **\$10,000.00 or less** during the previous 2 years, a \$25.00 late filing fee will be assessed each business day the Statement remains unfiled up to \$500.00
- If the committee raised **more than \$10,000.00** during the previous 2 years, a \$50.00 late filing fee will be assessed each business day the Statement remains unfiled up to \$1,000.00.

NOTE: A late filing fee for the Annual Campaign Statement must be paid by the candidate and cannot be paid with committee funds.

A Candidate Committee that fails to file a required Quarterly Campaign Statement is assessed a late filing fee as follows:

- If the committee raised **\$10,000.00 or less** during the previous 2 years, a \$25.00 late filing fee will be assessed each business day the Statement remains unfiled up to \$500.00.
- If the committee raised **more than \$10,000.00** during the previous 2 years, the maximum fee that can be assessed is increased to \$1,000.00.

Accurate Campaign Statements Required

Be sure to include complete and accurate information on the statement forms. Notices will be sent to the committee if forms contain errors or omissions, figures or cumulative totals are wrong, addresses are incorrect, etc. The committee is then required to file an amendment to correct the error. Note: For information on calculating cumulative contributions, see the [Election Cycles Chart](#) on our website.

- A Campaign Statement submitted on paper by a committee required to file electronically will not be accepted.
- A Campaign Statement that is filed by removable media will not be considered filed if it cannot be loaded due to circumstances that are not within the Department's control including missing files, incorrect file attachments or corrupt files.
- A Campaign Statement will not be accepted if it is illegible, does not bear the proper signature(s), is not the proper size, does not contain the Schedule(s) required to substantiate the information listed on the Summary Page or is presented in a computerized format that has not been pre-approved by the Bureau of Elections.

Reporting Waiver Provisions

A Candidate Committee is exempt from the Campaign Statement filing requirements if it currently has a [Reporting Waiver](#) or qualifies for and obtains a Reporting Waiver on or before the due date of a required Campaign Statement. A Candidate Committee that does not expect to spend or receive more than \$1,000.00 **for any election** is eligible for a Reporting Waiver.

To request the Reporting Waiver, the Candidate Committee must check the **YES** box in item 10 on its [Statement of Organization](#). This tells the filing official that the committee does not expect to spend or receive more than \$1,000.00 for any election. The committee can check YES on its original Statement of Organization or on an amendment to its Statement of Organization.

- A Candidate Committee cannot retroactively request a Reporting Waiver to exempt itself from filing requirements and to avoid paying late filing fees.
- A Candidate Committee that does not check YES on item 10 on its Statement of Organization is not eligible for a Reporting Waiver. This means that the committee must file Campaign Statements regardless of the amount received or spent during the reporting period.
- A Candidate Committee loses its Reporting Waiver if it spends or receives more than \$1,000.00 for an election. Funds held by the committee after the date of an election count toward the "amount received" for the next election. If the Reporting Waiver is lost, the committee must file the next required Campaign Statement.

Statement of Organization Amendments Required with Campaign Statement

We urge you to review your committee's [Statement of Organization](#) before you file a Campaign Statement. If any information on the Statement of Organization has changed, be sure to file an appropriate amendment to the form **no later than the due date of the Campaign Statement**. The committee is encouraged to file an amended Statement of Organization as soon as a change of information takes place. An amended Statement of Organization **cannot be filed electronically**.

If a committee has a Reporting Waiver and is not required to file Campaign Statements, amendments to the Statement of Organization should be filed any time information on the form changes.

To download a Statement of Organization form for Candidate Committees go to www.Michigan.gov/elections and select:

1. [“Campaign Finance Disclosure”](#)
2. [“Forms and Filing Materials”](#)
3. [“Candidate/Gubernatorial Committees”](#)

Committees are responsible for notifying the Bureau of Elections when the committee's mailing address or other contact information changes. Failure to receive correspondence from the Bureau of Elections is not a defense for failing to file a required statement timely.

Dissolution Information

Committees that no longer participate in Michigan elections are encouraged to dissolve. A dissolved committee has no further filing obligations. Please refer to [Appendix W](#) of the Candidate Committee Manual for additional details on dissolving the committee.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please phone us at (517) 373-2540 or write us at the address indicated below. The address below should also be used to mail your filing by first class mail, registered mail or certified mail.

Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections
Post Office Box 20126
Lansing, Michigan 48901-0726
Email: Disclosure@Michigan.gov
Follow us on Twitter @MichCFR

If you would like to visit our office or use an overnight delivery service, the address below is provided.

Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections
Richard H. Austin Building, 1st Floor
430 West Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan 48933