



OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION

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THE FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT PROCESS and COUNTY BOARDS OF ELECTIONS

Section 102.09 of the Revised Code requires the Secretary of State and the County Boards of Elections to perform a number of duties with respect to the personal financial disclosure filing requirements for candidates and elected office holders. Please direct any questions or comments to Sue McVey, FDS Coordinator, at (614) 466-7090.

A. Financial Disclosure Statement Filers: Section 102.02 of the Revised Code requires any individual who holds a state, county, or city elected office, or the position of school board member in a school district with more than 12,000 students average daily membership, as well as candidates for those offices, to file an annual financial disclosure statement with the appropriate ethics commission.

- Only one statement needs to be filed per calendar year.
- If one's filing status changes (for example, a person resigns one office and is elected or appointed to a different office), the appropriate ethics commission should be notified of the change.
- It is important that financial disclosure filers, particularly candidates and people who are appointed to fill vacancies in unexpired terms of elected office, are given the proper information about the financial disclosure form and filing deadlines. Otherwise, if any person fails to file his statement by the appropriate deadline date, the law requires that the Ethics Commission assess a late fee.

B. Financial Disclosure Statement Filing Deadlines and Penalties

- The annual filing deadline for incumbent public officials (who have not been certified as candidates) is **April 15**.
- The deadline for candidates (*including incumbent public officials who have been certified as candidates*) is **30 days prior to the earliest election in which their candidacy is to be voted upon**.
- The deadline for write-in candidates (*including incumbent public officials who have been certified as candidates*) is **20 days prior to the earliest election in which their candidacy is to be voted upon**.
- A **late filing fee** will be assessed upon any person who fails to file their financial disclosure statement by the relevant filing deadline. Fees are assessed for each day the statement is late, up to a maximum of \$250.

C. Duties of the Ohio Ethics Commission: The Ohio Ethics Commission will:

- Notify Boards of Elections in counties where school districts with more than 12,000 students are located, and ask them to distribute the forms to the candidates in elections for those school districts.
- Provide financial disclosure statements to County Boards of Elections. If you need additional forms at any time, please contact the Ethics Commission, and the staff will be happy to send additional materials. You may also download blank statements from the Commission Web site.

Duties of a County Board of Elections

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D. Duties of the Secretary of State and County Board of Elections:

Pursuant to R.C. 102.09, the Secretary of State and County Board of Elections are required to:

- Provide each candidate (including an incumbent who has been certified as a candidate) who is required to file a statement with a financial disclosure statement. The candidate is required to acknowledge receipt of the statement **in writing**.
- Notify the appropriate ethics commission, **within 15 days**, of the names of candidates who are certified to the *primary election, special election, or general election* ballot. [The board may provide notice to the Ethics Commission by sending a list of the state, county, city, and school board candidates (in school districts with more than 12,000 students) who are certified to the ballot. *Please note, the Commission no longer provides candidate information cards for this purpose.*]
- Notify the appropriate ethics commission of the withdrawal, disqualification, or death of a candidate who is required to file a financial disclosure statement.
- Furnish a financial disclosure statement to each person who is appointed to fill a vacancy for an unexpired term in an elected office for which financial disclosure is required. The person is required to acknowledge receipt of the statement **in writing**.
- Notify the appropriate ethics commission of the name and position of any person appointed to fill a vacancy for an unexpired term in an elected office for which disclosure is required, and the date of the appointment, **within 15 days** of being notified of the appointment.

E. Additional Information for Candidates and Office Holders:

- Each **candidate** (including an incumbent who has been certified as a candidate) **who is required to file a statement** must file his statement **30 days prior** to the first election at which his candidacy will be voted upon.
- Each **write-in candidate** (including an incumbent who has been certified as a candidate) **who is required to file a statement** must file the statement **20 days prior** to the first election at which his candidacy will be voted upon.
- Each incumbent office holder who is required to file a statement must file a statement for each year he holds public office, even if he serves only a portion of the year; and if **he is a certified candidate for re-election or for another elected office**, he must file 30 days prior to the first election at which his candidacy is to be voted upon, even if that filing date is prior to the annual filing deadline of April 15.
- All persons must file a statement **regardless** of whether he or she wins the election, and **regardless** of the amount spent on the campaign.

The Ethics Commission relies on the Secretary of State and the County Boards of Elections to distribute blank financial disclosure statements to candidates and advise the Commission of any changes that affect any elected office holders within each county. The Commission greatly appreciates the cooperation and efforts of the Boards and their staffs in the past. If you have any questions or comments regarding the financial disclosure requirement, or any other ethics matters, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Commission at (614) 466-7090.