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COOK COUNTY CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAW

Section 2.14 of the Cook County Ethics Ordinance limits political campaign contributions to candidates for any elected Cook County government office, as well as political campaign contributions to elected County officials. This guide provides an explanation of the provisions of the Ordinance that relate specifically to campaign finance.

Who is Covered by the Ordinance?

Candidates and Elected Officials:

1. Any person who has filed a declaration of candidacy for elected County office or a petition to appear on a ballot for County election;
1. Any person who has raised or expended money in pursuit of elected County office;
1. All elected Cook County officials regardless of any non-federal elected office they are seeking; and
2. All elected County officials during any non-election year of their term.

Contributors:

3. Any individual entity, corporation, partnership, firm, association, union, trust or estate that has done business with the County within the preceding four years, or is seeking to do business with the County.

“Done business” means any combination of sales, purchases, leases or contracts to, from or with the County worth more than \$10,000 in any twelve consecutive months.

“Seeking to do business” means taking action within the past six months to obtain a contract or business with the County when, if such action were successful, it would result in the person doing business with the County.

What are the Limitations on Contributions?

Non-election year:

1. \$1,500 per elected Cook County official;

Election year:

2. \$1,500 per candidate per candidacy (with the primary election and general election being separate candidacies);
3. Total contributions, per candidate, may not exceed \$3,000 in the course of a year in which a candidacy occurs; and
4. A year for the purposes of the Ordinance is a calendar year January 1 through December 31.

What Should I Do if I Make or Receive an Improper Campaign Contribution?

Any campaign contribution that exceeds the Ordinance contribution limits should be returned to the contributor immediately. If you do not know whether the contributor has done business with the County in the preceding for years or is seeking to do business with the County, contact the Board of Ethics.

What Are the Penalties for Violation of the Ordinance?

Any person found by the Board of Ethics to have knowingly violated the campaign finance provisions of the Ordinance, or to have knowingly furnished false or misleading information to the Board of Ethics regarding a violation of the campaign finance provisions of the Ordinance, is subject to a fine of up to \$500 for each separate offense. Persons doing business with the County who knowingly violate the campaign finance provisions of the Ordinance may have their contracts with the County voided.

Any questions regarding campaign contributions should be addressed to the Cook County Board of Ethics. Copies of the Cook County Ethics Ordinance are available online at www.cookcountygov.com (follow links to Board of Ethics page) or by request to the Board of Ethics, 69 West Washington Street, Suite 3040, Chicago, Illinois, 60602, (312) 603-4304.