



MEMORANDUM

TO: Candidates for the 2016 City Council Election

FROM: Jannette Goodall, City Clerk

DATE: May 6, 2016

SUBJECT: City of Austin Campaign Finance:
Electronic Filing Reporting Requirements

Pursuant to City Code, a candidate, officeholder, political committee, entity, or person required by City Code or state law to file a campaign finance report with the City Clerk shall, in addition to the required report, also provide to the City Clerk a structured data file containing the contents of the campaign finance report. The data file must comply with specifications and be on media determined by the City Clerk. The data file must be provided to the City Clerk no later than the date that the associated campaign finance report must be filed.

Ordinance 20150806-004 and 20160407-006 amended Section 2-2-26 of the City Code related to electronic filing of campaign finance information:

- (A) A candidate, officeholder, or political committee required by the City Code or state law to file a campaign finance report with the city clerk shall, in addition to the required report, also provide to the city clerk a structured data file containing the contents of the campaign finance report. The data file must comply with specifications and be on media determined by the city clerk. The data file must be provided to the city clerk no later than the date that the associated campaign finance report must be filed.
- (C) The clerk must upload a data file into the database exactly as the file is received, except that the city clerk may not upload a data file that does not comply with the clerk's technical specifications. A filer who provides a noncompliant data file to the clerk shall resubmit the data in the required format.

Ordinance 20160407-006 also amended Section 2-2-32 of the City Code related to reporting of direct campaign expenditures:

- (A) A person who makes one or more direct campaign expenditures in a City election that in the aggregate exceed \$500, shall report:
 - (1) the full name and address of the person to whom each expenditure is made;
 - (2) the date and amount of each expenditure;

- (3) the purpose and description of each expenditure;
 - (4) the name of each candidate, including the office held and office sought as applicable, whose election or defeat the expenditure advocates or each ballot measure the passage or defeat of which the expenditure advocates; and
 - (5) in the case of an expenditure for an electioneering communication, the name of each candidate, including the office held and office sought as applicable, to whom the communication referred or each ballot measure to which the communication referred.
- (E) A person making a report required by Subsection (A) shall, in addition to the required report, also provide to the city clerk a structured data file containing the contents of the report. The data file must be provided to the city clerk no later than the date that the associated report must be filed.
- (F) The data file must comply with specifications and be on media determined by the city clerk. A filer who provides a non-compliant data file to the clerk shall resubmit the data in the required format.

To assist filers, the City Clerk's Office has created a set of data templates in Microsoft Excel workbook format (.xlsx) containing multiple worksheets/tabs. Each tab is intended to collect a specific type of data as described in this document. Where possible, the design of the templates is based on the technical specifications established by the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC) for uploading data into their electronic filing system.

Filers must not remove or change the column headers from the template's worksheets/tabs, change the order of the columns, or otherwise make adjustments to the formatting of the template. Changes to the templates will result in rejection of the data file.

Filers who use a commercial software application to manage their campaign finances must submit a data file that complies with the design and technical specifications of the City of Austin templates as described in this document.

For campaign finance reports required by the City of Austin (ATX.1, ATX.7 and its attachments), the City Clerk's Office has created fillable PDF forms in which to record the required information. For these forms, submitting a correctly completed fillable PDF form to the City Clerk fulfills the requirement to provide a structured data file. Fillable PDF forms must be received by the City Clerk in the provided format. Printed and scanned, or otherwise modified, copies of the fillable PDFs will render the data unreadable and the City Clerk will be required to reject the submitted data.

After receipt, the data file is validated to ensure that the data file provided by the filer is properly formatted and meets the technical specifications established by the City Clerk and described in the guide. Data validation is not intended to verify or establish the accuracy of the data provided by the filer. The validation process produces a Validation Report itemizing any issues detected in a data file provided by the filer.

A candidate who files the “ATX.6 Exemption Statement,” stating they have not raised, and do not intend to raise, more than \$10,000 in contributions for the candidate’s campaign during the campaign period may be exempt from the electronic filing requirement. However, please note that:

- If contributions to a candidate who has signed the exemption statement exceed \$10,000, the candidate shall provide a data file for the first report that is due after the contributions to the candidate exceeds \$10,000 and the candidate shall provide a data file for each prior report that was due before the contributions to the candidate exceeded \$10,000.
- This exemption applies only to the filing of the structured data file and not the required report.
- A candidate who signs a campaign contract shall comply with the requirement to provide a data file associated with each report filed with the Clerk’s Office regardless of the amount of contributions the candidate has raised or intends to raise.

Additional information and forms required to submit the structured data file can be found at: <http://austintexas.gov/page/campaign-finance-forms>.