

# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of California's Political Reform Act (Act) is to ensure that disclosure of political payments is accurate, timely, and made in a transparent manner. Clear and accurate disclosure is essential for making voters aware of who is paying for political messages so they may evaluate the content and make informed decisions when voting.

In California, the true source of a contribution must be disclosed. This manual sets out the campaign reporting requirements for:

- Local candidates
- Superior and Appellate Court judges and candidates for Superior and Appellate Court
- Local candidate controlled committees
- Committees primarily formed to support or oppose a local candidate(s)

Since the Act was approved by California voters in 1974, there have been more than 200 amendments to the Act's campaign disclosure provisions. This manual has been prepared to assist local candidates and committees in complying with the Act's numerous and often detailed rules. The manual is written in a "user friendly" format so that candidates and committees have a resource guide. At the end of each chapter, a list of statutes and regulations that provide authority for the information in that chapter is provided. The statutes and regulations may be accessed on the FPPC website.

This manual describes the state campaign finance and disclosure laws under the Act that apply to local candidates and committees. Many cities and counties have adopted local campaign ordinances that contain additional restrictions and requirements. Local candidates and committees should check with their local elections office or ethics agency to determine if there are additional local requirements and restrictions, such as contribution limits. Effective January 1, 2021 a default state campaign contribution limit applies to city and

county candidates when the city or county has not already enacted a contribution limit on such candidates per AB 571 (2019). Special rules apply to AB 571 candidate committees. Please see the FPPC's AB 571 fact sheet available on the FPPC website for additional rules applicable only to AB 571 candidates.

In addition, federal and state tax laws and other rules may also apply. The Appendix contains telephone numbers and website addresses for the Federal Election Commission, the Internal Revenue Service, the California Franchise Tax Board, and the Federal Communications Commission.

State candidates and officeholders, their controlled committees, and committees primarily formed to support or oppose a state candidate(s) should refer to FPPC's Campaign Disclosure Manual 1.

## Controlling Law

This manual summarizes key campaign disclosure laws and regulations and draws from years of FPPC staff advice on complying with the Act's campaign disclosure laws. Each committee's activity is different, however, and may raise issues not discussed in this manual. If there are any discrepancies between the manual and the Act or its corresponding regulations, the Act and its regulations will control.

## Need Help?

If you need assistance, the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) provides advice by email and through a toll-free telephone advice line. The FPPC does not provide third party advice or advice on past conduct. The FPPC website ([www.fppc.ca.gov](http://www.fppc.ca.gov)) contains forms, manuals, and a wealth of other helpful information.

Email Advice	Telephone Advice
<a href="mailto:advice@fppc.ca.gov">advice@fppc.ca.gov</a>	1-866-ASK FPPC (1-866-275-3772)