

**City Of College Park  
Municipal Election  
Sunday, November 7, 2021**



**ELECTION HANDBOOK**

**CITY OF COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND  
NOVEMBER 7, 2021 ELECTION HANDBOOK**

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## 1. GENERAL ELECTION INFORMATION

A non-partisan City election for the offices of Mayor and eight district Councilmembers will be held on Sunday, November 7, 2021. The Mayor is elected at-large. Two District Councilmembers are elected from each of the four election districts in the City.

### POLLING DATE, LOCATION AND HOURS

The Election will be held on Sunday, November 7, 2021 at the College Park Community Center, 5051 Pierce Avenue, in Lakeland. Polls are open from 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. There is ample parking around the Community Center, and permit parking restrictions in the surrounding neighborhood will be relaxed.

### VOTER REGISTRATION

The last day to register to vote in the November 7, 2021 City election is October 10, 2021. Voter registration is handled by the County. Two of the ways that you can register to vote are:

- By using [Maryland's Online Voter Registration System](#) - Maryland Driver's License or ID Card required -- no later than 9:00 p.m. on October 10, 2021.
- By submitting a voter registration application to the Prince George's County Board of Elections -- no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, October 8, 2021.

To check your registration status with the County, call the Prince George's County Board of Elections at 301-341-7300, or visit <http://www.elections.state.md.us>. Voter Registration Forms are available at any City building, any Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration office, or from the state website.

### EARLY VOTING

The City will not offer Early Voting for the 2021 election due to the possible community risk remaining from the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, the City is encouraging the use of absentee ballots. Please see below.

### ABSENTEE VOTING

The City is encouraging qualified voters to vote by mail using an absentee ballot. In the 2020 General Election, due to restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of voters nationwide who cast their ballots from home

more than doubled (2016 = 21%, 2020 = 50%). The public became familiar with absentee voting and many enjoyed the convenience it provided.

To extend and facilitate this process for the City election, all registered voters will receive an application for an Absentee Ballot in the mail. Applications also may be downloaded from our website or picked up at any City building. Applications are reviewed by the College Park Board of Election Supervisors and, if approved, a ballot will be mailed to the voter beginning in early October. Your completed application for an absentee ballot must be received by the City no later than 4:00 p.m. on October 26.

#### LATE APPLICATION (IN-PERSON) ABSENTEE

Beginning October 27, requested ballots will no longer be mailed to voters because there may not be enough time for the ballot to reach the voter through the US Mail. Instead, a qualified voter may apply for a late absentee ballot in person at City Hall from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (**NOTE THE CURRENT TEMPORARY LOCATION:** 8400 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 375.) The voter may vote on-the-spot or may return the voted ballot in one of the ways listed below. The same receipt deadlines will apply.

#### RETURNING YOUR BALLOT

Absentee Ballots can be returned in one of three ways:

- By Mail, in the ballot envelope provided: Ballot must be postmarked on or before Election Day and received by noon on Wednesday, November 10.
- Deposited in a Ballot Drop Box: The City has installed three secure ballot drop boxes for this election. Ballots must be deposited by 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 7, 2021. For your convenience, drop boxes are available 24/7. Because of recent uncertainties about mail delivery, the City encourages the use of drop boxes.
  - Davis Hall, 9217 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue, College Park, MD
  - On the west side of Stamp Student Union on Union Lane, to the right of the first entrance and bicycle racks, next to the USPS and FedEx Drop Boxes.
  - Calvert Road School, 4601 Calvert Road, College Park, MD

- In person, at the Poll: College Park Community Center, 5051 Pierce Avenue, not later than Sunday, November 7, at 6:00 p.m.

### ELECTION DISTRICTS

- Council districts have not changed since the last City election.
- A detailed [election district map](#) is available on the City's website.
- Narrative descriptions of the district boundaries are in the City Code, [Chapter 30, Attachment 1](#).

### WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE POLL

When you arrive at the poll, the poll book judge will ask for your name, date of birth and street address, to verify that you are registered to vote. You will be given a Voter Authority Card to take to the ballot judge.

The ballot judge will hand you a paper ballot for your election district, and you will be directed to a voting booth to mark your ballot in private.

Follow the directions to mark your ballot for the candidates of your choice.

When you finish marking your ballot, you will be directed to a scanner to scan your ballot. You may insert your ballot in any direction. The display on the screen will indicate that your ballot has been counted.

## 2. FIRST-TIME CITY VOTERS

Are you a first-time voter in College Park? If so, please read on for these easy steps to voting in the City's fall election.

### **Step 1 – REGISTER to Vote.**

First, you must be registered to vote at your current City address. To register, you must be a U.S. Citizen, a City of College Park resident, and at least 16 years old. You will be eligible to vote if you will be at least 18 years old on Election Day, which is November 7, 2021. You must register no later than October 10, 2021 to vote in the City's election. Here's how:

- By using [Maryland's Online Voter Registration System](#) -- Maryland Driver's License or ID Card required.
- By submitting a voter registration application to the Prince George's County Board of Elections, 1100 Mercantile Lane, Suite 115A, Largo, MD 20774
- In-person at any Motor Vehicle Administration. The closest to College Park is 11760 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville. **Note: COVID restrictions may apply.**

### **Do I Have to Join a Political Party?**

At the time of registration, you may choose to join a political party, but it is not required. City elections are non-partisan, so whether you belong to a political party or not has no bearing on your ability to vote in a City election.

### **Do I Have to Register for Each Election?**

No, your registration is permanent as long you keep your address current with the Prince George's County Board of Elections. If you move or change your name, you will need to update your voter registration.

### **Step 2 – PLAN to Vote**

The City Election will be held on Sunday, November 7, 2021, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the College Park Community Center, 5051 Pierce Avenue in College Park. If you are not able to make it to the Poll on Election Day, you may vote by Absentee ballot. See Section 1 for more information on this option.

Information about the candidates who are running for office and sample ballots will be available in early October and will be posted on the City website.

***Note to our College Student Voters: You may have moved from one place to another within the City since you last voted and may have changed City Council Districts. For instance, if you moved from Ellicott Hall to South Campus Commons 1, you changed City Council Districts. Unless you update your address in the voter registration rolls by October 10, you will be unable to fully participate in the City election.***

To check your registration status with the County, call the Prince George's County Board of Elections at 301-341-7300, or visit <http://www.elections.state.md.us>. Voter Registration Forms are available at any City building, any Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration office, or from the state website.

### 3. RUNNING FOR OFFICE

#### 1. General Information and Qualifications

The College Park City Council consists of the Mayor, who is elected at-large, and eight district Councilmembers, two from each of the four Council districts in the City. All seats are up for election on November 7, 2021.

College Park uses a petition process to qualify candidates. Candidates for Mayor must collect signatures from 20 qualified voters in each Council district. Candidates for City Council must collect signatures from 25 qualified voters from their own Council district.

At the time of taking office, which will be December 14, 2021, the Mayor and each Councilmember must be 18 years old. To qualify as a candidate, the individual must be a citizen of the United States, must be a current registered voter in the City, and must have been domiciled in their respective district (for a Councilmember candidate), or in the City (for a Mayoral candidate) for at least one year immediately preceding the date of qualification.

The Mayor must continuously reside in the City for the full two-year term. Each Councilmember must continuously reside in their respective district for the full two-year term.

The City of College Park utilizes a Council-Manager form of government which is the system of local government that combines the political leadership of the elected body (the Mayor and City Council) with the managerial experience of a local government manager (the City Manager) to oversee daily operations and the delivery of public services.

The Maryland Municipal League publication ***So You Want To Be An Elected Municipal Official: What You Need To Know First*** includes helpful information about what it means to be elected to the City's legislative body. The publication is available from the [MML website](#).

The Mayor and City Council meet on Tuesday nights. Elected officials are compensated; the Mayor receives \$10,500 per year and each Councilmember receives \$7,000 per year.



## 2. Procedures

Candidacy packets with all pertinent election information will be posted on the election page of the City's website on August 1, 2021. Copies also may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office, 8400 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 375, College Park, MD, 20740 with advance notice. We suggest that candidates who obtain the candidacy packet from the City website notify the City Clerk's office of their contact information to ensure that we are able to advise all potential candidates of any changes in regulations or requirements pertaining to the election. Candidates should also check the election page of the City website frequently for updates and/or clarifications.

### A. Petitions:

- a. For Mayor: Any qualified person interested in running for Mayor shall file a petition containing the request of at least 80 persons, consisting of not less than 20 qualified voters from each of the four Council Districts.
- b. For Councilmember: Any qualified person interested in running for Councilmember from a district shall file a petition containing the request of at least 25 qualified voters from that district.

B. Other Required Forms: In addition to the Candidacy Petitions, a candidate must also file these forms:

- a. Authorization of Candidacy
- b. Appointment and Acceptance of Treasurer
- c. Financial Disclosure Statement Form #2 For Candidates.

***A note about your forms: Your name must be written the same way that you are registered with the Prince George's County Board of Elections on all of the forms that you submit.***

Deadline: Wednesday, September 15, 2021 @ 4:00 p.m.

All potential candidates must submit the four required forms listed above by the deadline.\* The signed originals must be submitted to the City Clerk's office, 8400 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 375, College Park, Maryland 20740.

Additional Forms, if applicable:

- If you have a Political Committee, you must file the "Appointment And Acceptance Of Officers For Political Committee" by this deadline.

- If you wish to authorize electronic filing of Campaign Finance Reports, you must file the “Authorization of Electronic Filing/Campaign Finance Reports” by this deadline.

***\*Note about the deadline: Petitions and other required forms turned in on the last day may not be reviewed in time for you to be notified of, and correct, any deficiencies. For this reason, we encourage you to submit your forms early.***

## ELECTION RULES AND REGULATIONS

### Board of Election Supervisors

Under Article IV of the City Charter, the Mayor and Council appoint a Board of Election Supervisors (BOES) to oversee the City elections. The goal of the BOES is to provide all registered voters accessible locations in which they may exercise their right to vote; ensure uniformity of election practices; promote fair and equitable elections; and maintain election records, Campaign Finance Reports, and other election-related data accurately and in a form that is accessible to the public. The BOES conducts the election, tallies the votes, and certifies the results. The BOES reviews and validates these forms:

- Candidacy petitions
- Authorization of Candidacy form
- Appointment of Treasurer form
- Campaign Finance Reports

For information about candidacy requirements, campaign finance, or for questions about how to complete any of the forms mentioned above, you may contact a member of the BOES:

John Payne, Chief Supervisor	District 3	<a href="mailto:ipaynecp@gmail.com">ipaynecp@gmail.com</a> OR 301-789-7682
Lisa Williams	District 1	<a href="mailto:lisa.a.williams@outlook.com">lisa.a.williams@outlook.com</a>
Lynea Cooper-Pitts	District 2	<a href="mailto:Lcooper10@verizon.net">Lcooper10@verizon.net</a>
Yousuf Jaleel	District 4	<a href="mailto:yousuf.jaleel@gmail.com">yousuf.jaleel@gmail.com</a>
Cameron Thurston	At-large	<a href="mailto:Camt7291@yahoo.com">Camt7291@yahoo.com</a>

The BOES is supported by the City Clerk's Office, and the City Clerk is authorized to receive all petitions, forms, notices, and reports that are required.

### Ethics Commission:

There is also a Council-appointed Ethics Commission that is authorized under Chapter 38 of the City Code to render opinions, investigate alleged violations of the Ethics and Election Chapters of the City Code, and receive and review the Financial Disclosure Statements. For questions about the Financial Disclosure Statement, please contact:

Joe Theis	Ethics Commission Chairman	<a href="mailto:ethicschair@collegeparkmd.gov">ethicschair@collegeparkmd.gov</a>
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The Ethics Commission is also supported by the City Clerk's Office, and the City Clerk is authorized to receive Financial Disclosure Statements.

Rules and regulations pertaining to City elections are found at various places in the City Code, City Charter and State Code.

Requirements placed on candidates are found in the following City and State laws:

[Charter of the City of College Park, Article III, Mayor and Council](#)  
[Charter of the City of College Park, Article IV, Voting and Elections](#)  
[Code of the City of College Park, Chapter 34, Elections](#)  
[Code of the City of College Park, Chapter 38, Code of Ethics](#)  
[Code of the City of College Park, Chapter 141-7, Signs or advertisements](#)

General laws, rules and regulations pertaining to elections can be found here:

[Code of the City of College Park, Chapter 30, Council Districts](#)  
[Code of the City of College Park, Chapter 110, Fees and Penalties](#)  
[Registration and Election Laws of Maryland 2013 \(published by the State Board of Elections\)](#)

Information Seminar for Prospective Candidates:

The Board of Election Supervisors and Ethics Commission co-host a candidates' seminar to review election and ethics regulations and answer questions pertaining to candidacy and elections. This seminar will be Tuesday, August 17 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Please check the City website for the Zoom meeting link.

## CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING FOR CANDIDATES

Rules pertaining to Campaign Finance Reports are found in [Section 34-15 of the City Code](#).

### 1. Campaign Finance Reports and Deadlines:

Candidates are required to file at least three Campaign Finance Reports, on the schedule below:

- A. Initial Campaign Finance Report: Due between Sunday, October 3, and Monday, October 18, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.
- B. Pre-Election Campaign Finance Report: Due on either Friday, October 29, or Saturday, October 30, 2021 by 4:00 p.m.
- C. Post-Election and/or Final Campaign Finance Report: Due between Monday, November 8 and Sunday, November 21, 2021. If your campaign account has a zero balance, this may be your final report.
- D. Subsequent Campaign Finance Report(s): If your Post-Election report shows a balance, you must file a Subsequent Campaign Finance Report the following July 1, and every July 1 thereafter, by 4:00 p.m. until the campaign has a zero balance.

### 2. Three formats to choose from:

For your convenience, Campaign Finance Reports are available in three formats from the Election page on the City's website:

- Paper
- Fillable PDF
- Excel Spreadsheet

### 3. How to File:

Suggested method: You may pre-arrange Electronic Filing of Campaign Finance Reports by completing and submitting the form "Authorization of Electronic Filing/Campaign Finance Reports" by the filing deadline. If this Electronic Filing has been pre-arranged, these reports must be submitted by email from the pre-authorized e-mail address to: [CampaignFinance@collegetparkmd.gov](mailto:CampaignFinance@collegetparkmd.gov)

If you have not made prior arrangements for electronic filing, your Campaign Finance Reports must be submitted to the City Clerk's office, 8400 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 375, College Park, during regular business hours.

***Note: We encourage electronic authorization and transmission of your Campaign Finance Reports.***

***Note: No other election forms may be submitted by email.***

If you have any questions, please call the City Clerk at 240-487-3501.

Instructions on how to complete Campaign Finance Reports are included on the form itself. If you have questions, please contact the Chief of the Board of Election Supervisors. Once submitted, forms will be reviewed by the BOES. If there are any questions or errors, you will be contacted.

***Note: Approved Campaign Finance Reports will be posted on the City's website.***

4. How to close out a Campaign Account if there are funds remaining:

Surplus funds may be disbursed as follows:

- Returned to the contributors on a pro rata basis
- Paid to the City treasury
- Donated to a qualified charitable organization

Your final Campaign Finance Report must properly reflect the disposition of funds.

5. Rules pertaining to campaign finance:

Campaign finance rules can be complicated. The following information addresses our most frequently asked questions. For clarification or additional questions, please contact the Chief Election Supervisor.

**Treasurer:**

You need to designate a treasurer only if you intend to accept cash or in-kind contributions. (Volunteer campaign help is not considered an in-kind contribution.) If you don't intend to accept cash or in-kind contributions, you may serve as your own treasurer.

**Partition date between election cycles for Campaign Finance reporting:**

For clarification on how to report ongoing Campaign Finance activity across consecutive election cycles, the Board of Election Supervisors has adopted the following policy:

*The day after the “Subsequent Campaign Finance Report” for any election is due, the next campaign finance reporting period for a subsequent election for a returning candidate shall begin.*

For example: For the November 7, 2019 election, Subsequent Campaign Finance Reports (“SCFRs”) are due on July 1, 2020 and thereafter until there is a zero balance in the campaign account. However, if the candidate is returning for the 2021 election, any campaign finance activity that occurs on or after July 2, 2020 should be reported on the Initial Campaign Finance Report due for the 2021 election, and a July 1, 2021 SCFR would not be due. Because the candidate is returning for the 2021 election, the July 1, 2020 SCFR closes out the 2019 election’s reporting requirement. Any balance remaining in the campaign on July 1, 2020 should be carried forward to the next election cycle and reported on the Initial Campaign Finance Report due for the 2021 election.

A person with a balance who does not intend to run for office in the next election is not a returning candidate and shall continue to file SCFRs until the campaign balance is zero.

For campaign finance reporting purposes, a “returning candidate” is defined as a person who, as of the due date of the initial SCFR, has a balance on that report, and may decide to run for elected City office during the next election. A public declaration of candidacy is not required.

**Meet and Greets:**

A "Meet and Greet" is a neighborhood event at which incidental refreshments such as coffee, tea and cookies may be served at no charge. Meet and greets may be hosted or sponsored by a candidate, a political committee or individuals.

Any person sponsoring a Meet and Greet shall report the cost of the Meet and Greet to the candidate for whom the event was held. It is the candidate’s responsibility to report this as an “in-kind” contribution.

Refreshments may be provided at a Meet and Greet for no charge if they are incidental to the event. Food or refreshments, at no charge, cannot be the featured attraction to induce people to attend a political event (e.g., an advertisement that announces “Join John Doe at a free spaghetti dinner”). If more food and drink is served than what would be conservatively defined as incidental to the event, there must be a charge for at least the actual cost of the food or refreshments if the food and refreshments are advertised. The host may either:

- A. Charge for the cost of the food and drink only: “Join John Doe for spaghetti dinner, cost \$3.50 per person.” (\$3.50 is the actual cost of the dinner.), or
- B. Charge a per plate/per person cost in excess of the value of the food and drink, with the amount collected in excess considered a cash campaign contribution: “Join John Doe for spaghetti dinner, cost \$25 per person,” (\$3.50 is the cost of the dinner. Report each person as contributing the difference of \$21.50.)

The candidate shall report the net cost of the Meet and Greet as an "in-kind" contribution on their campaign finance report. The in-kind contribution shall count toward the total candidate donation limit.

If the Meet and Greet is for more than one candidate, the expense shall be divided by the number of candidates attending and that portion reported to each candidate as a contribution.

As long as the Meet and Greet is held in the sponsor’s personal residence, no cost for the use of the property is considered a campaign contribution.

If two or more people together who are not spouses or domestic partners hold a Meet and Greet, these expenses shall be considered as made by a Political Committee and Political Committee limits apply. If two spouses or domestic partners together hold a Meet and Greet in their personal house this donation shall be considered a shared expense split between them.



If a Meet and Greet is held for more than one candidate, the total expense for the event shall be split among each candidate by equal portion and the same limits for a single candidate Meet and Greet will still apply.

Beer and wine can be served at a Meet and Greet so long as the beverages are not used as an inducement for attendance nor advertised. The cost of the beer or wine is incorporated into the total cost of the event and cost should be included into the total in-kind donation and the same limits apply.

**Giveaways:**

With some exceptions, election law prohibits giving away something of value with the intent to influence how a person votes (undue influence). Campaign buttons, bumper stickers, posters, brochures, doorknob hangers, and campaign literature have no use or value independent of a political campaign and may be given away. However, “things of value” may not be given away.

Three elements must be present when giving away something for it to be prohibited (to constitute undue influence):

1. The item must be an item of value (see lists below)
2. The item must be advertised or otherwise promoted as available as an inducement
3. The inducement must be to get a person to take an action restricted by statute (vote in a particular way, support a candidate, etc.).

Items of nominal value (very inexpensive types) of the following may always be given away:

balloons | bookmarks | bottled water | calendars (such as plastic or magnetic) | eye glass repair kits (of low value) | emery boards | fans (paper or plastic) | flags (novelty with campaign info) | ink pens | key chains | litterbags (paper or plastic) | matchbooks | pencils | refrigerator magnets or "mini-magnets" | rulers (small - wood or plastic) | shopping bags (paper or plastic) | small candy | soda can cozy.

The distribution of these types of items is not “undue influence,” inducing the recipient to take a certain political action in violation of election law, if the candidate or person(s) ensures:

- Only very small quantities of an item are given to any one person;

- The distribution of the item is incidental to the political activity that occurs during the distribution; and
- The item does not contain another connected offering for something of value (for example, the back of a fan should not contain a coupon for \$3.00 off a pizza)

It is sometimes allowable for a candidate or political group to give away a thing of value if there is no advertising or promotion of the giveaway, and if individuals will receive the item regardless of their support or opposition of the political issue. For example:

- It is allowable to provide door prizes at a fundraiser as long as the door prizes are not advertised as an inducement to attend the fundraiser.
- If a candidate or other person(s) advertises and gives away items of value, then the campaign must charge at least the cost of the item. The money spent to purchase the items and the money received in payment for the items must be reported on the appropriate campaign finance report. For example:
  - At a fundraising dinner where each guest is charged \$50 to enter, the campaign may include on the invitation a notice that all attendees will receive a free t-shirt.

Items that can never be given away:

calculators | flashlights | frisbees | hats | postage stamps | toys | t-shirts.

The lists above are not all-inclusive. If you have a question about any particular item not on either list, contact the BOES for guidance.

### **Separation of Campaign Funds from Personal Funds:**

The amount of money collected by candidates has increased in recent campaigns. As a result, some candidates are interested in segregating their personal funds from their campaign funds. Separation of funds is not a requirement in City elections. Some banks will not allow a customer to establish two accounts with the same Social Security Number but with different names on the accounts (e.g., “John Doe” and “John Doe Campaign”). If requested, the City will prepare a letter that you can present to your bank attesting that you are a qualified candidate in a City election in support of your request to establish a bank account in the name of the campaign, but be advised that your bank may not honor the request.

6. State Reporting Requirements:

In accordance with the requirements of the Annotated Code of Maryland, candidates for elected office are required to submit filed campaign finance reports to the State Board of Elections within 10 days of the date the report is due to the City. The state law reads:

**“If a municipality requires candidates in a municipal election to file campaign finance reports, within 10 days after the filing deadline, each candidate in the municipal election shall submit to the State Board of Elections a copy of the campaign finance report that was filed by the candidate.”**

Your report should be submitted to the State Board of Elections at:

Jared Demarinis  
Director of Candidacy and Campaign Finance  
151 West Street, Suite 200  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
410-269-2840 x 2853  
[Jared.demarinis@maryland.gov](mailto:Jared.demarinis@maryland.gov)

With a copy to:  
Erin Dennis [erin.dennis@maryland.gov](mailto:erin.dennis@maryland.gov)

## CRITICAL DATES AND FILING DEADLINES

<b>By this deadline:</b>	<b>You must:</b>	<b>Reference:</b>
Wednesday, September 15, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.	Submit signed originals of candidate forms: 1. Petition for Candidacy 2. Authorization of Candidacy 3. Appointment and Acceptance of Treasurer OR Appointment and Acceptance of Officers for Political Committee 4. Financial Disclosure Statement Form #2 For Candidates 5. Authorization of Electronic Filing/Campaign Finance Reports (if desired)	Charter C4-5  Code 34-11  Code 38-15  Code 34-15
Sunday, October 3, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.	Notify the City Clerk in writing if you want to withdraw your candidacy	Charter C4-5
Between Sunday, October 3, and Monday October 18, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.	File your Initial Campaign Finance Report (If not filed by Thursday, October 21, you will be considered to have withdrawn your candidacy)	Code: 34-15A(1) 34-16A
Friday, October 29, or Saturday, October 30, 2021 by 4:00 p.m.	File your Pre-Election Campaign Finance Report (If not filed by Tuesday, November 2, you will be considered to have withdrawn your candidacy)	Code: 34-15A(1) 34-16A
Between Monday, November 8 and Sunday, November 21, 2021	File your Post-Election Campaign Finance Report (If not filed by Wednesday, November 24, 2021, you forfeit your right to office)	Code: 34-15A(2) 34-16C
July 1, 2022 and every July 1 thereafter until the campaign has a zero balance	Subsequent Campaign Finance Report (If not filed by July 10, you will be subject to a late filing fee as prescribed in Chapter 110, Fees and Penalties)	Code: 34-15A (3) 110-2

## CAMPAIGN SIGNS AND OTHER POLITICAL MATTER

1. **Placement:** Campaign Signs are regulated according to where they are placed. Campaign signs may never be placed on City property, except in designated electioneering zones on Election Day.
  - A. On Private Property and Commercial Property: Campaign Signs may be placed on Private Property or on Commercial Property with the permission of the Property Owner at any time.
  - B. On City-owned Rights-Of-Way: Signs on City-owned rights-of-way are regulated by Section 141-7 of the City Code:

**“It shall be unlawful for any person to post or allow to be posted in any manner on any public street or thoroughfare within the City limits any form of advertisement for any type of event or campaign without notifying and obtaining permission from the City Public Services Department.”**

Political signs or other political matter on City-owned rights-of-way may not be posted more than 45 days prior to an election and must be removed within 48 hours after the election.

To contact the Public Services Department: Call 240-487-3570 or send an e-mail to [CampaignSigns@collegeparkmd.gov](mailto:CampaignSigns@collegeparkmd.gov). Your email should include the name of the candidate and your contact information.

- C. On County and State Roads:

Certain roads in the City are state or county roads which may have additional requirements and/or regulations regarding campaign signs. In addition to notifying the City’s Director of Public Services, you may want to contact the appropriate state or county agency before placing campaign signs on the following roads:

  - State Roads: Route 193 (Greenbelt Road), US Route 1 (Baltimore Avenue), Campus Drive, River Road
  - County Roads: Cherry Hill Road, Metzert Road, Campus Drive, Rhode Island Avenue (North of Greenbelt Road only)

2. Attribution Statements: All political matter, including signs, must have an attribution statement. Details may be found in §34-17 of the City Code.

A. What is Political Matter?

Simply stated "Political Matter" is advertising pertaining to one or more candidates or to an election issue. Among other things, it includes any written, printed, telephone or electronic communication. Section 34-17 of the City Code provides a full description, but the most common forms of political matter are flyers, brochures, yard signs, websites or other electronic communication or other matter intended to influence the outcome of the election. Normal newsletters published by elected officials that do not directly mention any persons' candidacy or ballot issue are not considered campaign matter.

B. How should the attribution read?

For Campaign Signs that clearly show the Candidate's name, a statement such as:

"Authorized by John Doe, Treasurer"

"Paid for by Candidate"

"Paid for by Citizens for Good Government"

For printed matter, more information is required, for example:

"Paid Political Advertisement, Authorized by John Doe, Treasurer"

"Paid Political Advertisement, Authorized by Jane Smith, Candidate"

C. What About Electronically Distributed Political Matter?

In the event Political Matter is distributed through an electronic media (such as email, social networks, electronic messaging, blogs, email subscription lists, and websites) and it is not feasible to comply with the attribution requirements due to size or other restrictions, then the communication must allow the voter to click on a link to access the campaign website that does display the information required in § 34-17 of the Code. Otherwise, the matter must comply with the attribution standards for printed material.

D. What about "Robocalls"?

Pre-recorded telephone messages that transmit political matter must, at the beginning of the message, clearly identify the individual, candidate, political

committee, business or other entity initiating the call, and shall state clearly during or after the message the telephone number or address of the call's authorizer.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **1. Where Do I Turn In My Petitions and other Candidacy Forms?**

Completed petitions and other forms for candidacy should be submitted to the City Clerk's Office, 8400 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 375, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (240-487-3501). The Board of Election Supervisors will review your submitted material (usually within one business day) and contact you.

Petitions and other required forms turned in on the due date may not be reviewed until after the close of business that day, so we encourage you to submit your forms in advance of the filing deadline so that you will have time to correct any deficiencies.

### **2. Where Do I Turn In My Financial Disclosure Statement?**

Your Financial Disclosure Statement should be submitted to the City Clerk with your petitions and other candidacy forms. Your Financial Disclosure Statement will be reviewed for document conformance by the Board of Election Supervisors, and then forwarded to the Ethics Commission for their compliance review. The Ethics Commission will contact you with any questions.

### **3. Can I Submit One Candidacy Petition for Councilmember and Another for Mayor?**

Yes, you may submit petitions for two offices. However, you must notify the Board of Election Supervisors, in writing, of the office for which you wish to stand for election, prior to 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 15. If both petitions are valid and you fail to select, you will be disqualified from running for either.

### **4. May I send in my forms by fax or email?**

- No. Originals of the Candidacy Petitions, Authorization of Candidacy, Appointment of Treasurer and Financial Disclosure Statement forms must be submitted to the City Clerk's office by the due date.
- Only if the "Authorization of Electronic Filing" form has been previously filed may Campaign Finance Reports be submitted by email, and they must be submitted only to [CampaignFinance@collegetparkmd.gov](mailto:CampaignFinance@collegetparkmd.gov)



- If “Electronic Filing” has not been authorized, you must submit original forms by the due date.

**5. Where Can I Get Voter Lists?**

Voter lists and labels can be purchased from the Prince George's County Board of Elections (301-341-7300).

**6. Where Can I Electioneer on Election Day?**

The BOES will designate an electioneering area at each polling location on Election Day. All candidates will be provided with a sketch showing the locations once the ballot has been finalized. Any other person desiring to electioneer should request a copy of the sketch from either the City Clerk or the Board.

**7. When are the Ballots Counted?**

Ballots cast on Election Day will be tabulated at Davis Hall after the polls close on Election Day. The official canvass, which includes the absentee (mail-in ballots) and validated provisional ballots, will be held on Wednesday, November 10, at Davis Hall. Due to COVID capacity restrictions, public access at Davis Hall may be limited, but both counts will be televised. Election results will be certified at the Council meeting on Tuesday, November 16, 2021.

**8. I would like a list of Absentee Ballot Requestors. When Will It Be Available?**

The Board does not release such lists until there have been a sufficient number of absentee ballots requested. In a District with very few requests a list may not be made available at all, in order to assure that the secrecy of an absentee voter's ballot is maintained.

**9. Do I Need a Treasurer?**

You need to designate a treasurer only if you intend to accept cash or in-kind contributions. (Volunteer campaign help is not considered an in-kind contribution.) If you don't intend to accept cash or in-kind contributions, you may serve as your own treasurer.

**10. As a Candidate, Should I Form a Political Committee?**

We do not suggest it. You can open a bank account that is called “Friends of John doe” to collect campaign contributions, but this is not the same as a

political committee. If you form a political committee, it may only contribute \$250 toward your candidacy. So if you form a "Friends of Mary Smith Political Committee" it can only spend \$250 in the election cycle. As a candidate with an appointed Treasurer, you may collect and spend any amount so long as you collect no more than \$250 from each contributor, not including yourself or your spouse.

**11. I am a current elected City official. What should I know about campaigning while also holding office?**

Once an incumbent has indicated his or her intention to seek reelection, whether or not official papers have been submitted, he or she is considered a candidate. In order to keep a "level playing field" among all candidates, certain privileges afforded a Councilmember are not afforded the incumbent candidate.

- Incumbent candidates may not use meeting space at a City building free of charge.
- The City will not copy material for a neighborhood meeting free of charge.
- Incumbent candidates may not use a City email address for campaign related matters.
- The City Ethics Commission issued an advisory opinion that addressed the question of whether incumbent candidates for office may distribute their City business cards with their campaign literature. Their conclusion states, *"...incumbent candidates for City office must not distribute their official, City-provided business cards in connection with mass distributions of campaign materials or during campaign activities such as door-to-door canvassing or public campaign appearances."*

For further clarification, please contact the City Clerk.

**12. Can I begin campaigning for office before I've submitted the required documents and have had them accepted/approved?**

Yes, you may begin campaigning for the current election whenever you wish. The submission and approval process ensures that you meet the City Code requirements to be elected to office. All contributions received, and

funds expended, prior to your certification as a candidate must be reported on your Initial Campaign Finance Report.

**13. Do all campaign documents need an original signature?**

All documents associated with the initial qualification for office must be original documents with an original signature. Campaign Finance Reports must be original documents with original signatures unless the “Authorization for Electronic Filing” has been previously submitted. In this case, typed signatures are acceptable on a Campaign Finance Report that is properly submitted by email.

4. **CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING REQUIREMENT  
FOR INDIVIDUALS:  
THE “INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE REPORT”**

The City of College Park requires reporting of independent expenditures in excess of \$100 made by individuals in support of candidates and issues.

[Chapter 34-15](#)(c) of the City Code states:

**“Within 48 hours after a person makes aggregate independent expenditures of \$100 or more in an election cycle for campaign material that is a public communication, the person shall file a registration form and independent expenditure report with the Supervisors of Elections. A person who files an independent expenditure report under this subsection shall file an additional independent expenditure report with the Supervisors of Elections within 48 hours after making an expenditure of \$100 or more for campaign material that is a public communication following the closing date of the person's previous independent expenditure report. "Person" includes an individual, a partnership, a committee, an association, a corporation, a labor organization, or any other organization, business, or group of persons.”**

Public communications are things like flyers, brochures, letters, signs, advertisements, advertising giveaways, robo-calls, etc. The cost of creating and disseminating campaign material, including any design and production costs, shall be considered in determining the aggregate amount of independent expenditures made by a person for campaign material.

The *Independent Expenditure Report* may be filed with the City Clerk for the Supervisors of Elections. If desired, it may be filed electronically if you have previously filed an *Authorization of Electronic Filing of Campaign Finance Reports*.

***Note: After your initial filing, you must file an additional report within 48 hours for any additional expenditures of \$100 or more.***

## 5. FORMS AND LINKS

### Forms:

1. [Petition for Candidacy – Mayor](#)
2. [Petition for Candidacy – Councilmember](#)
3. [Authorization of Candidacy – Mayor](#)
4. [Authorization of Candidacy – Councilmember](#)
5. [Appointment and Acceptance of Treasurer for Candidates](#)
6. [Appointment and Acceptance of Officers and Treasurer for a Political Committee](#)
7. [Financial Disclosure Statement \(Form #2\) for Candidates](#)
8. [Authorization of Electronic Filing of Campaign Finance Reports](#)
9. Campaign Finance Report
  - a. [PDF/Paper](#)
  - b. [Excel Spreadsheet](#)
10. [Resignation of a Treasurer for Candidates AND/OR Resignation of a Treasurer for a Political Committee](#)
11. Challengers and Watchers Certificate

### Links to Pertinent Sections of the City Charter and City Code

1. [City Charter – Article III: Mayor and Council](#)
2. [City Charter – Article IV: Voting and Elections](#)
3. [City Code –Chapter 30: Council Districts](#)
4. [City Code – Chapter 34: Elections](#)
5. [City Code – Chapter 38: Code of Ethics](#)
6. [City Code – Chapter 110-2: Penalties](#)
7. [City Code – Chapter 141-7: Nuisances/Signs](#)