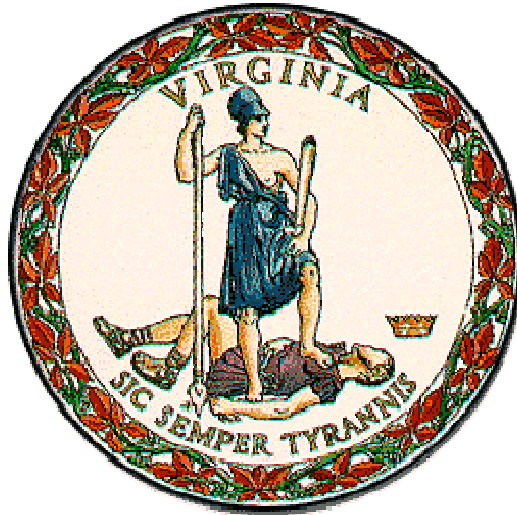


CANDIDATE CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES



Virginia's Campaign Finance Disclosure Act
Title 24.2 - Chapter 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5 of the *Code of Virginia*

***Summary of Laws and Policies
for
Candidate Campaign Committees***

*Revised January 10, 2011
Supersedes All Previous Versions*

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
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CHAPTER 1 – General Information

Section 1.1 - Purpose of Summary

In accordance with § 24.2-946 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Virginia State Board of Elections (SBE) has prepared this *Summary of Virginia's Campaign Finance Laws and Policies for Candidate Campaign Committees* (hereafter referred to as “Summary”), which will assist candidates and their treasurers on how to file the required campaign finance reports and outlines the provisions of the Campaign Finance Disclosure Act (CFDA or the “Act”), Chapters 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5 of Title 24.2 of the *Code of Virginia* and the policies adopted by State Board related to those laws.

It is important to understand that there is more to the law than just timely filing the required campaign finance reports. As a candidate or treasurer, you should familiarize yourself with this Summary for it will serve as a valuable resource. This document has been prepared to assist the candidate committee in understanding the laws enacted by the General Assembly and the related policies set forth by the State Board of Elections. This Summary is a basic reference tool, and is **NOT** a substitute for the actual law.

SBE makes the Summary available on the Internet to all candidates, their treasurers and the general public. SBE will also mail a copy of the Summary upon request.

Section 1.2 - Campaign Finance Staff

SBE staff is available to assist you in preparing reports and interpreting the requirements of the CFDA. Should you have questions or require clarification, contact:

Rise Miller, Service Specialist: rise.miller@sbe.virginia.gov

Marian Mines, Records Management Specialist: marian.mines@sbe.virginia.gov

Tina Edmonds, Compliance Specialist: tina.edmonds@sbe.virginia.gov

Section 1.3 - Related Publications

If your committee is required to file its campaign finance reports electronically, or if you have chosen to file electronically, please refer to the *VAFiling Handbook* found online at SBE's website: http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Campaign_Finance_Disclosure/VA_Filing/Index.asp

Candidates will also need to familiarize themselves with the appropriate candidate bulletin for the office they seek. These can be found online at SBE's website:

http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Cidate_Information/Cidate_Bulletins_Forms.html

Section 1.4 - Elections Not Covered

The provisions of CFDA do not apply to primaries and elections for:

- Members of the United States Congress;
- President and Vice President of the United States;

- Town office in a town with a population of less than 25,000;
 - §24.2-945 by ordinance the governing body of any town with a population of less than 25,000 may provide that the provisions of the Act shall be applicable to elections for town offices in the town. By ordinance, “Stand by your Ad” Chapter 9.5 of the *Code of Virginia* applies. Please check with your local electoral board.
- Directors of soil and water conservation districts; or
- Political Party Committee Officers.

In addition, persons (defined below) that make contributions from their direct operating or personal funds are not subject to the requirements of CFDA. However, any person, candidate campaign committee, or political committee that makes independent expenditures, in the aggregate during an election cycle, of \$1,000 or more for a statewide election or \$200 or more for any other election (**see § 24.2-945.2**), are required to file an Independent Expenditure report.

Person – any individual or corporation, partnership, business, labor organization, membership organization, association, cooperative or other like entity who makes contributions from their direct operating funds, or their own personal funds as in the case of an individual. Persons are subject to independent expenditure reporting requirements.

Section 1.5 - Federal Candidates and Committees

A federal candidate is required to file campaign finance reports with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The FEC (and *not* SBE) enforces federal campaign finance laws. The following are candidates who are not required to file with the State Board of Elections:

- President of the United States;
- Vice-President of the United States;
- United States Senate;
- United States House of Representatives; or
- Any political committee wishing to support or oppose federal candidates.

These committees must contact the Federal Election Commission (FEC) to obtain forms and information pertaining to federal campaign finance requirements and filing deadlines. You may contact the FEC at:

800-424-9530 (toll-free) or 202-694-1100 (within the Washington, D.C. area)
www.fec.gov – Internet address
 999 E. Street, NW, Washington, DC 20463-0002 – U.S. Mail

Since Virginia participates in the FEC’s State Filing Waiver Program and provides public electronic access to federal campaign finance reports via the Internet, federal candidates in Virginia are not required to file copies of their campaign finance reports with SBE. Federal Committees that are registered with the SBE who file their reports with the FEC are not required to file campaign finance reports with SBE. Please see the *Summary on Laws and Policies for Political Action Committees* for more information. Candidates for office in Virginia may accept contributions from these types of candidates or political

committees. However, it is important for you to review the provisions of § 24.2-947.3:1 and Section 3.7 of this Summary prior to accepting contributions from these types of committees.

Section 1.6 - Internal Revenue Service Requirements

SBE has no authority to provide any advice regarding federal campaign finance or tax laws. Therefore, if you have questions regarding whether or not your campaign meets the requirements of the federal Internal Revenue Code, please contact the Internal Revenue Service. Their website address is <http://www.irs.gov/charities/political/index.html>.

Section 1.7 - Cash-Basis vs. Accrual-Basis Reporting

Virginia's campaign finance reporting system works on an accounting principle known as 'cash-basis' reporting rather than 'accrual-basis' reporting. Cash-basis and accrual-basis accounting principles use different criteria for determining when to recognize and record contributions and expenditures in your campaign finance records.

In an accrual-basis reporting system, contributions are reported in the period in which they are earned (e.g., once contracted services are provided), regardless of when the cash from these contributions are received. Expenditures are recorded as they are owed (e.g. when supplies are ordered, the printer finishes your brochure, employees actually perform the work, etc.), instead of when they are paid.

On a cash-basis reporting system, contributions are reported when the cash is received. Expenditures are reported in the reporting period when the expenditures are paid. Therefore, it is important to remember that, in Virginia, contributions are reported on the dates when the funds are actually received (not deposited) and on the dates when the funds are actually expended. It is very similar to the method that most Americans use to balance their check books.

The exceptions to this rule apply only in cases where debts on material goods have been received or for In-Kind Contributions with regards to services or advertisements purchased on behalf of a candidate where coordination has also occurred. (See Chapter 4). Since no money is actually changing hands in this type of contribution, the information should be reported on the same date that the service was provided or when the advertisement benefiting the candidate was disseminated.

Section 1.8 - Definitions

The following are definitions of the terms used in the Summary that are of principal importance to candidates and their treasurers. Please keep in mind that some of the terms, while not specifically defined in CFDA, are useful in understanding this document. If you wish to read the exact definitions as they appear in CFDA, you may refer to § 24.2-945.1, 24.2-955.1 or 24.2-101 of the *Code of Virginia*.

Adjournment sine die – Adjournment on the last legislative day of the regular session (the regular session does not include the ensuing reconvened session or any special session following in the same year).

Advertisement – Any message appearing in the print media, on television, or on radio that constitutes a contribution or expenditure under Chapter 9 (§ 24.2-945 et seq.) of this title. "Advertisement" does not include issue advocacy or novelty items authorized by a candidate including, but not limited to, pens, pencils, magnets, and buttons to be attached to wearing apparel.

Agent of the candidate or candidate's campaign committee – One empowered to act for or represent the candidate made through an agreement, verbal or otherwise, between the candidate and the person. The term shall not include unpaid volunteers.

Aggregate Contribution – The total amount of contributions made by an individual or other entity during an election cycle.

Authorization – Means the express approval or consent by the candidate, the candidate's campaign committee, or an agent of the candidate campaign committee after coordinating the expenditure with the candidate, the candidate's campaign committee, or an agent of the candidate campaign committee.

Candidate – (as defined in § 24.2-101) an individual who seeks nomination for election, or election to public office, in the Commonwealth of Virginia whether or not that person's name is on the ballot. The definition includes 'write-in' candidates. An individual is considered, for campaign finance purposes only, a candidate seeking nomination for election or re-election under the provisions of the Act if they have:

- Provided payment of a filing fee for any party nomination method;
- Submitted a Statement of Qualification form (see § 24.2-501) (whether or not funds or resources have been solicited, received or expended);
- Personally, or through another person, solicited or received funds or other things of value, or made expenditures, including expenditures from personal funds, for the purpose of bringing about such individual's nomination or election to any office;
- Has been endorsed or nominated by a Political Party and is thus entitled to a position on the ballot at an election or primary (whether or not funds or resources have been solicited, received or expended);
- Has otherwise been qualified for placement on the ballot pursuant to the election laws (whether or not funds or resources have been solicited, received or expended);
- Has appointed a campaign treasurer, designated a campaign committee, or designated a campaign depository;
- Has not filed a final report for the previous election cycle prior to a new election cycles begin date. In this instance, an individual will be considered a candidate for the same office in the succeeding election for administrative purposes (see §24.2-947).

Candidate Types:

- Local Candidate – Candidate for a city, county or town's local or constitutional offices.
- General Assembly Candidate – Candidate for Virginia State Senate or House of Delegates.
- Statewide Candidate – Candidate for Governor, Lieutenant Governor or Attorney General.

Candidate's Campaign Committee - The committee designated by a candidate to receive all contributions and make all expenditures for them or on their behalf in connection with their nomination or election. A Candidate's Campaign Committee may not be established for multiple candidates.

Candidate's Election Cycle – An election cycle begins on January 1 of the year that the candidate first seeks election for the office through December 31 immediately following the election for such office. The election cycle provides for the aggregation of contributions and expenditures for the candidate's campaign finance reporting. A candidate with any activity to report in a new election cycle shall be presumed to be a candidate for reelection in the succeeding election solely for the purpose of filing campaign finance reports.

Conspicuous – So written, displayed, or presented that any reasonable person can notice it.

Contribution – Money or services of any amount, and any other thing of value, given, advanced, loaned, or in any other way provided to a candidate, campaign committee, political committee, inaugural committee or person for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election or defraying the costs of the inauguration of a Governor, Lieutenant Governor or Attorney General. "Contribution" includes money, services or things of value in any way provided by a candidate to his own campaign and the payment by the candidate of any primary filing fee.

Coordinated or Coordination – An expenditure that is made (i) at the express request or suggestion of a candidate, a candidate's campaign committee, or an agent of the candidate or his campaign committee or (ii) with material involvement of the candidate, a candidate's campaign committee, or an agent of the candidate or his campaign committee in devising the strategy, content, means of dissemination, or timing of the expenditure.

Debt – Any and all outstanding financial obligations.

Depository – The account(s) in a designated financial institution established to maintain all monetary receipts of a committee.

Designated Contribution – Means a contribution that is designated specifically and in writing for a particular candidate or candidates and that is made using a political committee solely as a conduit.

Election – Any general, primary, special election or referendum.

Expenditure – Money or services of any amount, and any other thing of value, paid, loaned, provided or in any other way disbursed by any candidate, campaign committee, political committee, inaugural committee or person for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election or for defraying the costs of the inauguration of a Governor, Lieutenant Governor or Attorney General.

Express Advocacy – A direct or indirect contribution, in-kind contribution, independent expenditure or loan made to a candidate or political committee for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election; an advertisement that refers to a party or candidate(s) by name and states "Vote for..."; "Support"; "Elect..."; "Smith for Congress"; "Send Him Home"; "Oppose", etc.

Failure to File – Any required campaign finance report not received by the State Board or local electoral board within 60 days after official notification from the State Board or local electoral board. For candidates for Statewide Office, a report shall be considered *failure to file* if the report is not received within fourteen days after official notification from the Secretary of SBE.

Federal Political Action Committee – Any political action committee registered with the Federal Election Commission that makes contributions to candidates or political committees registered in Virginia.

Full-screen – The only picture appearing on the television screen during the oral disclosure statement that (i) contains the disclosing person, (ii) occupies all visible space on the television screen, and (iii) contains the image of the disclosing person that occupies at least fifty percent of the vertical height of the television screen.

Inaugural Committee – Any organization, person or group of persons that anticipate receiving contributions or making expenditures, from other than publicly appropriated funds, for the inauguration of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or Attorney General.

Incomplete report – A campaign finance report that does not include all required information.

Independent Expenditure – An expenditure made by any person or political committee that is not made to, controlled by, coordinated with, or made with the authorization of a candidate, his campaign committee, or an agent of the candidate or his campaign committee. It includes an expenditure made by a candidate campaign committee (i) that is not related to the candidate's own campaign and (ii) that is not made to, controlled by, coordinated with, or made with the authorization of a different candidate, his campaign committee, or an agent of that candidate or his campaign committee.

In-Kind Contribution – The donation of goods, services, property or anything else of value that is offered for free or less than the usual and normal charge; or payments by a third party for goods and services rather than money. The basis for arriving at the dollar value of an In-Kind gift is as follows: new items are valued at retail value; used items are valued at fair market value and services rendered are valued at the actual cost of service per hour. Services are not to include personal services (outside of the person's professional occupation) for which no compensation is asked or given.

Occurrence – One broadcast of a radio or television political campaign advertisement in violation of the expanded disclosure requirements for television and radio.

Out-of-State Political Committee – Means an entity subject to § 527 of the United States Internal Revenue Code that is not registered as a political committee or candidate campaign committee in Virginia and whose contributions made to political committees and candidate campaign committees registered in Virginia is 50% or more of the committee's expenditures made in the form of contributions. The term does not include federal political action committees.

Person – Any individual or corporation, partnership, business, labor organization, membership organization, association, cooperative or other like entity who makes contributions from their direct operating funds, or their own personal funds as in the case of an individual. Persons are subject to independent expenditure reporting requirements.

Petty cash fund – Fund established by a campaign treasurer for the purpose of making expenditures or reimbursing verified credit card expenditures of less than \$200. The total must never exceed \$200 and if established, the treasurer must maintain complete records, as required by CFDA, of any expenditure less than \$200 (see § 24.2-947.2).

Political Action Committee (PAC) – Any organization, person, or group of persons, established or maintained in whole or in part to receive and expend contributions for the purpose of influencing the outcome of any election. The term shall not include a campaign committee, federal political action

committee, out-of-state political committee, political party committee, referendum committee, or inaugural committee. **Note:** May also be referred to as Political Committee.

Political Committee – A general term refers to any political action committee, political party committee, referendum committee, or inaugural committee. The term does not include:

- Federal Political Action Committee,
- Out-of-State Political Committee,
- Campaign Committee, or
- Person, which in making contributions does so out of their own personal funds or the entity's direct operating funds.

Political Party Committee – Any state political party committee, congressional district political party committee, political party committee for a county or city, other election district political party committee, organized political party group of elected officials, which anticipates receiving contributions or making expenditures in whole or in part, for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election. **Note:** May also be referred to as Political Committee.

Print Media – Means billboards, cards, newspapers, newspaper inserts, magazines, printed material disseminated through the mail, pamphlets, fliers, bumper stickers, periodicals, website, electronic mail, and outdoor advertising facilities. If a single print media advertisement consists of multiple pages, folds, or faces, the disclosure requirement of this section applies only to one page, fold, or face.

Radio – Any radio broadcast station that is subject to the provisions of 47 U.S.C. §§ 315 and 317.

Referendum Committee – Any organization, person, group of persons, or committee, that makes expenditures to advocate the passage or defeat of a referendum legally placed on the ballot.

Reporting Period – Means the activity beginning and activity ending dates for a particular campaign finance report.

Residence – Means and requires both domicile and a place of abode for all purposes of qualification to register and vote.

Scan Line – A standard term of measurement used in the electronic media industry calculating a certain area in a television advertisement.

Solicit – To request a contribution, orally or in writing. This does not include a request for support of a candidate or their position on an issue.

Sponsor – A candidate, candidate campaign committee, political party committee, political action committee, individual, or other entity that purchases an advertisement.

Surplus funds – The funds remaining after the payment of all debts (including penalties assessed by SBE) and expenses incurred by a committee. **Note:** May also be referred to as Excess Funds.

Television – Any television broadcast station, cable television system, wireless-cable multipoint distribution system, satellite company, or telephone company transmitting video programming that is subject to the provisions of 47 U.S.C. §§ 315 and 317.

Treasurer – The appointed bookkeeping officer of a candidate’s campaign committee.

Un-obscured – Means that the only printed material that may appear on the television screen is a visual disclosure statement required by law and that nothing is blocking the view of the disclosing person’s face.

CHAPTER 2 – Statement of Organization

Section 2.1 - Becoming a “Candidate”

All persons running for nomination or election to a non-federal office in Virginia are required to file a Statement of Organization for a Campaign Committee and campaign finance disclosure reports except:

- Candidates for a town office in a town with a population of less than 25,000 people (according to the 2000 decennial census);
- (§24.2-945 by ordinance, the governing body of any town with a population of less than 25,000 may provide, that the provisions of the Act shall be applicable to elections for town offices in the town. By ordinance, “Stand by your Ad” Chapter 9.5 of the Code of Virginia applies. **Please check with your local electoral board.**)
- Candidates for Directors of Soil and Water Conservation Districts; and
- Political Party committee officers.

Virginia does not allow for “exploratory committees,” therefore, if an individual is considering running for office and they intend to gauge that decision by soliciting contributions or making expenditures, that person is required to open a campaign finance account.

If the individual knows the office they are considering becoming a candidate for, then they must open a candidate campaign committee. However, if the individual is not certain of the office they intend to run for, then they should open a Political Action Committee (PAC). Please refer to the *Summary of Laws and Policies for Political Action Committees* for more information.

An individual is **not** required to file a Statement of Organization simply by publicly announcing their candidacy. An individual **is** required to file a Statement of Organization within **10 days** of meeting any one of the following conditions:

- Acceptance of a contribution;
- Expenditure of any funds;
- The payment of a filing fee for any party nomination method;
- The filing of a candidate statement of qualification pursuant to §24.2-501; or
- The appointment of a campaign treasurer, designation of a campaign committee, or designation of a campaign depository.

It is important to note that these requirements are only related to establishing a campaign finance account. There are other requirements for qualifying as a candidate for purposes of getting on the ballot. The

candidate will need to consult the appropriate candidate bulletin available on SBE's website: http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Cidate_Information/Index.html

Compliance with Reporting Requirements as a Requirement for Candidacy

Candidates for statewide office or the General Assembly will not be allowed to run for office in a future election if they have failed to file all required campaign finance reports for a previous election for which they participated in the previous five years and pay any outstanding civil penalties.

SBE is required to have notified the candidate that they have not filed the required reports at least 60 days prior to the deadline for the person to file the written statement of qualification.

Section 2.2 - Establishing a Candidate Campaign Committee

A candidate must file a Statement of Organization and register as a candidate for campaign finance purposes within 10 days of meeting any of the requirements listed in Section 2.1.

The candidate will be required to establish a campaign committee even if the committee does not consist of any individual other than the candidate. The committee is simply a term used to identify the entity responsible for receiving all contributions and making all expenditures on behalf of the candidate.

The following information is required on the Statement of Organization:

Naming the Campaign Committee

The individual's campaign committee name must be legible and include at least the last name of the candidate, as it is also required to match the name on the bank account. A *Statement of Organization* will not be accepted for a campaign committee which does not include at least the last name of the candidate. For individuals with common last names, it is recommended that the name of the campaign committee also include the first name or nickname of the candidate.

Candidate Campaign Committee Information

The *Statement of Organization* will ask for the mailing address of the campaign committee. This will be the address that SBE and local electoral boards will consider the primary means for contacting the committee. The committee may choose to enter the campaign headquarters, the candidate's residence address or the treasurer's residence address. The campaign is allowed to establish a Post Office Box as its primary mailing address.

Registering a Campaign Committee for a Special Election Which Has Not Been Called

No individual can register for an election which has not been called. In the case of a presumed special election, if an individual wants to begin fundraising for a presumed special election, the individual must register as a candidate for the next General Election for that office.

After a Special Election has been Called

After the special election has been called, the campaign committee must amend their Statement of Organization to reflect the new General Election date.

Candidate Information

The candidate must provide certain identifiable information so the reviewing authority can verify that the candidate is a registered voter and a resident in the district or locality where they intend to run for office. The candidate will be asked to provide the following information:

- The full name and residence address (including county or city) of the candidate;
- Email address and daytime telephone number;
- The office being sought and district, if any, for the office;
- Date of the General Election for the office the candidate is seeking;
- The recognized political party affiliation of the candidate for statewide office or the General Assembly. In the absence of any political party affiliation, Independent shall be used.

This information must be typewritten or may be handwritten if legible. Any form that is not legible will be returned.

Treasurer Information

A candidate is required to appoint one individual, who is a registered voter in Virginia, as treasurer of their campaign committee. The candidate can choose to serve as their own treasurer. In this case, the committee should leave the *Treasurer Information* section of the *Statement* blank.

The *Statement of Organization* will require the committee to include the following information about the treasurer:

- The full name and residence address (including county or city) of the treasurer;
- Email address and daytime telephone number.

The designated treasurer must sign the *Statement of Organization* signifying his or her acceptance of the appointment. No person can fulfill the duties of the treasurer unless they have signed the *Statement*. Any candidate who fails to appoint and report the appointment of treasurers shall be deemed their own treasurer.

For more information on the duties and responsibilities of the treasurer, see Section 2.5 of this Summary or § 24.2-947.3 of the Code of Virginia.

Establishing a Campaign Depository

Banks require persons setting up a new account to have an Employer Identification Number (EIN) . EIN numbers can be obtained online at www.irs.gov or by calling the Helpdesk for 527 Organizations. The phone number is 877-829-5500.

Campaign committees are required to establish a campaign depository in a financial institution located within the Commonwealth. The *Statement of Organization* will require your committee to identify the name and address of the committee's **PRIMARY** financial institution. You are not required to provide the committee's bank account number.

*****PERSONAL BANK ACCOUNTS MAY NOT BE USED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES*****

The name of the account must match exactly with the name of the campaign committee. All checks drawn off of the committee's depository must include the name of the campaign committee.

Establishing Secondary Depository Accounts

§ 24.2-947.2 allows for the establishment of a separate Federal Compliance Account in the candidate's designated campaign depository for complying with the requirements of federal campaign finance laws, including restrictions on sources and amounts of campaign contributions applicable to federal candidates and officeholders. All contributions and expenditures on this account must be disclosed on a consolidated basis with the candidate's campaign finance report. The Federal Compliance Account may only be used to facilitate compliance with FEC regulations and may not be used for any other purpose.

§ 24.2-947.2 also allows a campaign committee to transfer funds from the established checking account to another account or instrument for the purpose of earning interest on those funds. This can be done so long as:

- Complete records are maintained for each election cycle;
- All interest earned and fees paid are reported on the committee's campaign finance reports;
- The establishment of such an account is reported on the Campaign Committee's Statement of Organization;
- Expenditures are made only from the primary checking account; and
- Before filing a Final Report, the transferred funds and any earned interest are returned to the primary checking account.

Filing Method - Electronic or Paper?

Candidates for local and constitutional offices have the option to file paper or electronic reports. The committee must select which Filing Method it will use on the *Statement of Organization*. Local candidates who choose to submit their reports on paper may create their reports using SBE's *VAFiling Software*. The software allows for the reports to be printed and those forms can be submitted to the local electoral board. A local committee that files electronically cannot change its filing method to paper without first notifying SBE and their local General Registrar by submitting an Amended *Statement of Organization*. An electronic filer who submits a report on paper will not be considered to have filed a timely campaign finance report.

The SBE, shall by regulation, provide for an administrative fee of up to \$25 for each non-electronic report filed with the Board under §24.2-947.5. This fee may be waived upon indigence.

Candidates for statewide office are required to file campaign finance reports electronically. Candidates for the General Assembly have the option of filing their reports electronically or on paper. Therefore, candidates for the General Assembly and statewide office are required to indicate on the *Statement of Organization* the committee's intention to file campaign finance reports on paper or by electronic means. The form should also indicate whether the committee intends to use SBE's *VAFiling Software* or if they intend to use one of SBE's Approved Vendors.

SBE offers its *VAFiling Software* at no charge to any registered candidate in the Commonwealth. SBE provides all of the support for this program and is available to assist you with your questions. However, if your committee wishes to use an outside company, they may choose from one of SBE's Approved Vendors. SBE certifies all companies who wish to sell their software for the purposes of creating campaign finance reports to be filed in Virginia. Once their software is approved, SBE will accept campaign finance reports created from the company's software.

Where to File the Statement of Organization

- Candidates for Constitutional or local offices must file their *Statement of Organization* and any amended *Statements* with the local electoral board of their county or city of residence and electronic filers file a copy with the State Board of Elections
- *By ordinance*, candidates for town council must file their *Statement of Organization* with the local electoral board of their county or city of residence.
- General Assembly candidates must send the original, signed version, and any amended *Statements*, to the State Board of Elections. A copy of their *Statement of Organization* is to be sent to the local electoral board of their county or city of residence.
- Statewide office candidates must send their *Statement of Organization* and any amended *Statements* to the State Board of Elections.

§ 24.2-947.5(D) Any report that may be filed with the State Board by mail shall be (i) received by the State Board by the deadline for filing the report or (ii) transmitted to the State Board by telephonic transmission to a facsimile device by the deadline for filing the report with an original copy of the report mailed to the State Board and postmarked by the deadline for filing the report.

Amending the Statement of Organization

The committee must file an amended *Statement of Organization* within **10 days** of any change to a candidate's campaign committee information (e.g., a change in address, change of treasurer, etc.) to the appropriate office(s) as listed above.

If there is no change to the information submitted, candidates who are seeking election for the same office in a successive election do not need to file a new *Statement of Organization* for each successive election. The original *Statement of Organization* will continue in effect until a Final Report is filed or until a change in the information occurs.

Section 2.3 - Closing a Campaign Committee

Candidates Seeking the Same Office in Successive Election Cycles

At the end of an election cycle, candidates whose campaign accounts are still open automatically proceed to the next election cycle. That cycle begins as of January 1 after the date of the last election for that office. This designation on the reports is **NOT** a commitment or announcement to run for office in the next election.

The first cover page of reports filed in the next election cycle should indicate the next general election date and year for that office beginning with the first report that contains financial activity in the year immediately following the election.

Candidates who have an open account and choose not to run again

If, at any point, the candidate decides not to run for election for the same office then they are still required to file all reports related to that office until such time as they file a Final Report or they will be subject to civil penalties for failure to file.

Candidates are encouraged to close their committees as soon as they determine that they will not be running for the same office in the next scheduled election. Most penalties assessed to candidate campaign committees are a direct result of a campaign that has ended and has not filed a final report.

Section 2.4 - Exempt Candidates

Candidates for **local office** may file a request for exemption from filing campaign finance reports if:

- They do not intend to solicit or accept any contribution from any other person or political committee during the course of the campaign;
- Will not contribute more than \$1,000 of their own personal money during the course of the campaign;
- Will not expend more than \$1,000 of their own personal money during the course of the campaign; and
- That they will comply with all requirements of the Campaign Finance Disclosure Act.

Candidates that qualify for an exemption are still required to establish a campaign depository. All deposits and all expenditures from that depository are from the candidate's personal funds.

If, at any time, the candidate determines that they will engage in one or more of the prohibited activities listed above, they must file a *Rescind a Request from Exemption* form prior to engaging in the activities described above. The first campaign finance report must account for all prior contributions and expenditures pertaining to the campaign. The committee will then be required to file reports on the appropriate filing schedule.

Exempt candidates are required to file a final report prior to the candidate taking office. The final report must detail all contributions from the candidate's personal funds and all expenditures throughout the life of the campaign. A final report is also required from exempt candidates that were not successful in their nomination or election.

Section 2.5 – Campaign Committee Treasurer

In order to serve as a campaign treasurer the individual must be a citizen, resident and registered voter of the Commonwealth of Virginia. However, the treasurer is not required to live in the same district as the candidate. An individual may serve as treasurer of multiple committees; however, each committee must maintain separate campaign depositories.

Once appointed, the treasurer may serve indefinitely. When an appointed treasurer resigns or is replaced, in order to relieve the treasurer from assuming the filing obligations under CFDA, an amended Statement of Organization must be filed with the appropriate office. When this occurs, the candidate automatically becomes the treasurer until the candidate files an amended Statement of Organization designating another treasurer. The candidate is responsible for notifying the proper agencies within 10 days after appointing a replacement.

Duties and Responsibilities of Treasurers

The treasurer is responsible for maintaining the campaign finance records for the campaign committee. The duties of a treasurer can include, but are not limited to:

- Filing complete, accurate and timely campaign finance reports and other required forms;
- Signing campaign finance reports and other required forms;
- Authorizing expenditures;
- Monitoring disclosure to ensure compliance with Virginia Election Laws; and
- Keeping detailed and accurate records so as to comply with all of the requirements of the Campaign Finance Disclosure Act.

All contributions and expenditures received or made by the candidate, or any agent of the campaign committee, must be paid over or delivered to the treasurer.

The ultimate responsibility for compliance with the requirements of the Act always rests with the treasurer and the candidate, and it is the treasurer's or candidate's signature that is required on the campaign finance reports.

Disposal of Records

The treasurer must keep detailed and accurate records of all contributions and expenditures in their possession for at least one year from the date of filing the final report or three years after the December 31st immediately following the election.

Records

Campaign Finance Records can include, but are not limited to:

- Receipts;
- Invoices;
- Bank statements;
- Copies of checks from contributors;
- Any communications from State Board or local electoral board;
- Copies of checks for expenditures; and
- Completed solicitation forms.

CHAPTER 3 – Schedule A: Direct Contributions

Section 3.1 – Limits on Contributions

There are no contribution limits in Virginia. A committee can accept contributions from any individual, corporation, union, association or partnership. It is required that all contributions received by the committee, and that all required information identifying the contributor, be reported on the committee's campaign finance reports.

Federal law prohibits any political organization to accept contributions from a foreign national or foreign corporation. An exception to the law is granted for individuals who have a valid green card. For more information concerning the prohibition of contributions from foreign nationals please visit the FEC website at www.fec.gov.

Contributions to political campaigns in Virginia are not tax deductible.

Section 3.2 – Types of Contributions

A committee can solicit contributions from any source mentioned above. However, prior to accepting a contribution, the committee is required to retain certain information from each contributor regardless of the amount of the contribution.

A direct contribution may be made in the form of, but is not limited to:

- Cash;
- Check;
- Money Order;
- Credit or Debit Card.

Section 3.3 - Itemized Contributions vs. Unitemized Contributions

The candidate's election cycle begins on January 1 of the year immediately following the election of that office and ends on December 31 of the year of the election. Contributions must be aggregated between these two dates. Therefore, a committee must not aggregate contributions from contributors between election cycles.

Contributors who have contributed an aggregate amount of more than \$100 to a committee during an election cycle (begins January 1 after the date of the election) must be "itemized" on the committee's campaign finance report. This means that the committee must include the required occupation or business information for the contributor on the campaign finance report.

Contributors who have contributed an aggregate of \$100 or less to the committee during a single calendar year are reported as "unitemized" on the report. This means that the committee is not required to list the name of the contributor and other required information on the report. However, the contributor will have to be "itemized" if they provide additional contributions which increase their aggregate contribution for the calendar year to be more than \$100.

Designated Contributions

A designated contribution means a contribution that is designated specifically and in writing for a particular candidate or candidates and is made using a political committee solely as the conduit. For each designated contribution received from a political committee, out of state political committee, or federal PAC, it is required to report the name of the person who designated the contribution and provide the following information:

- The name and address of the person paid;
- A brief description of the purpose of the expenditure;
- The name of the person contracting for or arranging the expenditure;
- The amount of the expenditure; and
- The date of the expenditure.

Anonymous Contributions

If a campaign receives any cash contributions from an unknown source, the receiver of the contribution may donate the money to any organization described in § 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code. **In no case is it acceptable for a committee to accept an anonymous contribution.**

Section 3.4 – Contributor’s Required Information

The committee is required to report the following information about each contributor who contributes an aggregate of more than \$100 in an election cycle:

Name of the Contributor

The report must contain the individual or organization’s name as it appears on the check. The name of the cardholder must be reported for contributions received by credit card. If the contributor submitted their contribution by any other means then it is the responsibility of the treasurer to retain the name of the contributor for purposes of reporting.

The full name of the contributor is required to be reported, in alphabetical order, on the campaign finance report. For businesses and other types of organizations, the name of the company should be listed in alphabetical order. **The committee must report the full name of the organization. Acronyms are not acceptable.**

For individuals, the order must be alphabetical by the person’s last name.

Address of the Contributor

The full address of the contributor is required to be reported on the campaign finance report. The report must contain the individual or organization’s address as it appears on the check. For contributions received by credit card then the address of the cardholder must be reported. If the contributor submitted their contribution by any other means then it is the responsibility of the treasurer to retain the address of the contributor for purposes of reporting. Post Office Boxes are acceptable addresses in all instances.

Occupation of the Contributor (Individuals Only)

The occupation of the contributor must not state the title or position of the individual. The report should indicate the type of work the individual is employed to do.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of acceptable occupations:

- Construction
- Marketing
- Financial Advisor
- Entrepreneur
- Student
- Retired
- Homemaker/Housewife

Every person has an occupation even if that occupation is “retired” or “student”. In no case should a committee report the individual’s occupation as “N/A” or “not applicable.”

Principal Type of Business (Contributions from Businesses)

The treasurer must enter the type of business for the organization making the contribution. For example, a committee that received a contribution from an electric utility would enter “Electric Utility.”

Date Received

A contribution is considered “received” the date that it knowingly comes into the hands of an “agent” of the committee. Contributions should never be reported as the date that the money is deposited unless the contribution was received on the same date that the contribution is deposited. Contributions should also not be reported as the date written on the check unless that is the same date that the check is received.

Contributions by Credit Card

If a contribution is provided by credit or debit card on a website, the date that the contribution is considered received is the date that the contributor entered their information into the website. The treasurer should not report the contribution as being received on the date that the information is reported from the collecting agency to the committee. Contributions received via services such as PayPal should be reported when the funds are released to the committee’s account.

Section 3.5 – Soliciting Contributions

All contributors who contribute more than \$100 in an election cycle must be itemized on the committee’s campaign finance reports.

SBE strongly recommends that all committees make every effort possible to gather the required information at the time that a contribution is collected even if the contributor’s donation is less than \$100. Although this information is not required for contributors who contribute less than \$100, their aggregate contribution may exceed \$100 in the future. If the information is obtained at the time of the first contribution, time and energy will be saved in the future.

Recording Contributor's Information

When keeping records of contributions, each committee should maintain, at a minimum, the following detailed information:

- Contributor's full name;
- Contributor's mailing address;
- Contributor's occupation, employer and location (city/town and state) of principal place of business if the contributor is an individual;
- Type of business and location (city/town and state) of the corporation or business if the contributor is a business or corporation;
- Type of committee and the location (city/town and state) of the committee if the contributor is a political committee;
- Date contribution received;
- Amount of the contribution; and
- Contributor's total contributions to date, including "In-Kind" Contributions (see Chapter 4).

Solicitation Form

Certain efforts can be made to secure a contributor's required information. SBE recommends that each committee ensures that all contributions received by the committee be accompanied by a solicitation form. The solicitation form can be used to request the contributor's required information.

Each solicitation should include a request for the contributor's full name; complete mailing address, occupation, name of employer and location (city/town, state and zip code) of principal place of business. The following is an example of a solicitation form:

John Doe for Virginia

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Place of Employment: _____

Contribution Amount: \$_____

Are you a U.S. Citizen or Have a Valid Green Card: Y N

“Virginia law requires all candidate campaign committees to maintain a record of the name, mailing address, occupation information (includes type of work, employer and principal place of business) for each individual who contributes to

our committee. Your information will not be reported if your cumulative contribution is \$100 or less for this campaign.”

Best Efforts Policy

Most committees, at one time or another, will receive unsolicited contributions which do not include the required information necessary to comply with the Act. In such instances, the committee must make every effort to contact the contributor in order to gather the required information. SBE considers a “best effort” made by the committee to include sending a written request to the contributor asking for the required information.

If the campaign finance report is due and, after sending a written request, any of the required information of the contributor is still unknown, it shall temporarily suffice to report “Unable to Obtain” or “Information Requested” in the field missing the required information. The committee is also required to submit, along with the committee’s report, a copy of the written request to the contributor asking for the required missing information. SBE does not consider a report complete if more than 10% of the total number of contributors or other required itemized information is missing.

Section 3.6 – Other Contribution Policies

Joint Checks

It is unacceptable to enter two names on the committee’s campaign finance report when referring to one contribution. There are cases where the committee will receive a check that has two names listed in the address field. In most cases, these are contributions written on checks from married couples who have a joint checking account.

In these cases, the treasurer must report the contribution as being received by the person who signed the check. This cannot be changed unless there is written authorization from both persons listed on the check. For example, both individuals should sign the check in order to split the contribution between both individuals listed on the check. Conversely, a solicitation form could be submitted which states that the contribution should be designated to the individual’s listed on the solicitation form.

In no case should a committee’s campaign finance report show a single contribution from more than one person.

Returned Checks

If a contributor’s check is returned by the committee’s depository for insufficient funds or is otherwise not accepted by the committee, then the committee has the option to not record the contribution on its Campaign Finance Disclosure report if no report was due between the time the contribution was received and the time that the contribution was returned.

If the contribution was reported on a Campaign Finance report and later returned by the depository for insufficient funds, then the committee has the option to amend the report by removing the contribution. This policy is to prevent potential public embarrassment from a contributor whose bank account was overdrawn.

Contributions by Credit Card

A contribution that is made by credit or debit card may be made either in person, over the telephone or over the Internet. If this method of payment is used, the entire amount charged to the contributor's account must be reported. Any service fees charged to a candidate's campaign committee by the card processing agent must be reported separately on the report as an expense by the campaign or committee. Even if the company charges the campaign or committee a "per transaction fee," the fee per transaction shall not be used to reduce the amount of the contribution shown, but must be reported as an expenditure for the campaign or committee for the period being reported. "Per transaction" fees can be bundled into a single item on the Schedule of Expenditures.

Contributions During a Legislative Session

Contributions or promises of contributions may not be made, accepted or solicited by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, any member of the General Assembly or any person acting on behalf of these individuals on and after the first day of a Regular Legislative Session which annually begins on the second Wednesday in January and continues for no less than 45 days in odd years and 60 days in even years. The Regular Session does not end until the General Assembly agrees to adjournment sine die which signifies the end of the Regular Session. Contributions can be made to these candidates during Special Sessions or during any other non-Regular Legislative Session.

The restrictions of this section do not apply to contributions made by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General or any member of the General Assembly from their personal funds or to contributions made to the campaign committee of a candidate in a special election.

Violations of these provisions are punishable by a civil penalty equal to the contribution or \$500, whichever is less. The appropriate Attorney for the Commonwealth is required to initiate the proceedings for collections.

Section 3.7 - Contributions from FEC PACs and Out-of-State Political Committees

Prior to accepting contributions of \$10,000 or more in the aggregate in any calendar year from a political action committee registered with the Federal Election Commission or from an out-of-state political committee, the campaign committee must request the SBE-supplied registration number from the committee and verify that number with SBE. This can be done by sending an email to SBE at cfda@sbe.virginia.gov.

Therefore, it is important that the treasurer verify the registration status of a political committee before the campaign committee accepts a contribution from any political committee that aggregates to \$10,000 or more in the calendar year.

Section 3.8 – Fundraisers

Many candidates will wish to raise funds for their campaigns by organizing and hosting fundraisers. There are several items to be aware of when thinking about organizing fundraisers.

Contributions vs. Expenditures

Purchasing a ticket to a fundraiser is considered a contribution to the event.

A committee must report all expenditures related to the event. If other persons have paid for particulars of the fundraiser, then they must be reported as in-kind contributions. (See below for more on in-kind contributions.)

In no case is it acceptable for the committee to defray the costs from the amount raised. The contributions received must be reported independently of the expenses of the event.

Joint Fundraisers

Although joint fundraisers are not illegal, there are some precautions you may want to take to ensure that your committee is reporting correctly.

All contributors should make one check out for each committee participating in the fundraiser. At no time should a contribution be made to both committees on one check.

Common Fundraising Scenarios

The Act requires that all contributions collected by individuals for a committee be accompanied by certain identifying information. Anonymous contributions are illegal. As a result of this requirement, SBE has provided some examples of fundraising scenarios to avoid:

Pass the Hat

In a “pass the hat” scenario, the persons in the room may already be large contributors. Thus, any additional monies contributed would have to be reported. However, the contributor’s required information is not being gathered. Further, it is likely that someone in the room could contribute more than \$100. It is because of these issues that “pass the hat” fundraisers are illegal.

Golf Tournaments

Often, in order to compete in fundraising golf tournaments, a monetary contribution to the host campaign committee is necessary. However, once at the tournament, the competitors are able to purchase “mulligans.” The money from these purchases is considered additional contributions to the host campaign committee and therefore it is the responsibility of the committee to record the purchaser’s required information. Conversely, the committee could sell “mulligans” and give the money to charity. In this case, all contributions should be made out directly to the charity and the campaign should not deposit these funds.

Raffles

Political organizations in Virginia may not, under any circumstance, use raffles as a fundraising tool. However, Casino Nights may be used given that certain conditions are met. Please see Code of Virginia [§ 18.2-340.15](#) for more information, or visit the Department of Charitable Gaming’s website: <http://www.dcg.virginia.gov/>

CHAPTER 4 – Schedule B: In-Kind Contributions

An in-kind contribution is the donation of goods, services, property or anything of value that is offered for free or at less than the usual and normal charge, or payments by a third party for goods or services. This type of contribution does not include a donation of cash, checks, or promissory notes. In-kind contributions must be itemized in the same manner as direct contributions.

Section 4.1 - Types of In-Kind Contributions

Some types of in-kind contributions can include, but are not limited to:

- Voluntary contributions of advertising materials;
- Voluntary contributions of use of an automobile;
- Voluntary contributions of free lodging;
- Voluntary contributions of catering for a fundraiser;
- Voluntary contributions of printing of literature; and
- Voluntary contributions of office space and equipment.

Discounts are also in-kind contributions. A discount is the difference between the usual and normal charge for goods or services and the amount charged to the recipient committee.

Example 1:

A business entity sells to a committee food or beverages that normally would cost \$1,000, at a discount of 20%. The \$200 savings by the committee is considered an “In-Kind” Contribution from the business entity and this amount should be listed on Schedule B of the disclosure reporting forms. The remaining \$800 would be reported on Schedule D as normal.

Although services provided to a campaign committee can be considered an in-kind contribution, the uncompensated time volunteers spend working on a campaign – stuffing envelopes, knocking on doors, etc. is not considered an in-kind contribution.

Example 2:

Mrs. Dee Designer, a professional webpage developer, designs a webpage for John Q. Candidate free of charge. Since designing web pages is something Dee would normally charge \$2,500 for doing, she has made an in-kind contribution of \$2,500 to John Q. Candidate’s committee. This \$2,500 counts toward Mrs. Designer’s aggregate contributions to date to that candidate campaign committee.

Dee Designer still wants to do more to help John Q. Candidate. She volunteers to answer telephones at his campaign headquarters and to distribute flyers in the neighborhood. Since answering telephones and distributing flyers is not a service that Dee normally charges for, her activities are not considered an in-kind Contribution to the campaign.

Treasurers and In-Kind Contributions

A candidate's treasurer is considered a volunteer if the campaign committee is not paying the treasurer for the services rendered. SBE considers an accountant volunteering time to the campaign to assist in preparing campaign finance reports as a professional service. Therefore, SBE considers it proper to report the treasurer's time as an in-kind contribution if the person preparing the reports is offering the service at no charge or at a discounted rate.

Section 4.2 – In-Kind Contribution vs. Independent Expenditures

An independent expenditure is an expenditure which is intended to benefit a candidate (either by showing support for the candidate, or by showing displeasure with candidate's opponents), but one which has not been coordinated with the candidate or the agent of the candidate's campaign committee. A candidate or an agent of their committee may have knowledge of an independent expenditure, but that does not necessarily mean that they have received an in-kind contribution.

To qualify as an in-kind contribution, the candidate or an agent of the candidate's campaign committee must have either expressly requested or suggested to the person or committee that the expenditure be made, or the candidate or an agent of the candidate campaign committee must have material involvement in devising the strategy, content, means of dissemination, or timing of the expenditure.

Section 4.3 – Reporting In-Kind Contributions

It is the responsibility of the recipient of the in-kind contribution to obtain the information necessary to report the contribution. If the candidate or an agent of the committee has coordinated with the person or committee providing the in-kind contribution, then the candidate campaign committee is responsible for accurately reporting the in-kind contribution.

The required contributor information for reporting in-kind contributors is the same as for reporting direct contributions (See Chapter 3). There are a few differences that are outlined below.

Date Received

In-kind contributions must be reported as being received on the same date that the good or service was received and NOT the date the committee is informed of the cost of the good or service.

For example, if XYZ-PAC purchases an advertisement as an in-kind contribution for Candidate Doe, then the candidate's committee is required to report the In-Kind Contribution as being received on the date that the advertisement is first disseminated.

Service or Goods Received

As stated above, in-kind contributions can be professional services or material goods offered for free or less than the usual and normal charges or payments for goods or services through a third-party. The committee is required to indicate the type of service or the good received on their campaign finance report.

Basis Used to Determine Value

All in-kind contributions have an attached value whether they are a service or a good. Therefore, the committee is required to report what basis was used in order to determine the value for the service or goods received. SBE recognizes only two bases for determining an in-kind contribution's value: Actual Cost or Fair Market.

Actual Cost:

This basis must be used when the actual cost of a good or service was determined to be the value of the In-Kind Contribution. This is typically used when determining the value for goods bought by a third-party.

Fair Market Value:

This basis is used when an actual cost is not able to be determined. This basis is typically used when determining the value of used goods or services provided.

Aggregate-to-Date

Treasurers must always remember to aggregate a contributor's direct contributions with their in-kind contributions in cases where a contributor has given both directly and In-Kind.

CHAPTER 5 – Schedule C: Refunds, Rebates and Interest

A committee may receive income from sources that are not direct or in-kind contributions. Typically, these are funds received by the committee which did not come from entities who support the committee's stated purpose. These types of income are known as miscellaneous receipts and must be reported on Schedule C of the disclosure report.

Section 5.1 - Types of Miscellaneous Receipts

Bank Interest

Treasurers are allowed to establish depositories that accrue interest. At the end of every month, the bank will report to the committee the amount of interest accrued on the statement. Bank interest is required to be reported on each committee's campaign finance report.

If the treasurer establishes a secondary depository for the purpose of earning interest, such as a money market account, it is required that all interest accrued from that account be reported on Schedule C as well.

Refunded Expenditures

There are situations when a committee issues a check and it is returned to the committee or it is not cashed. In these instances, the committee must report the expenditure (see Chapter 6) and report the income back into the committee on Schedule C.

Rebates

If a committee receives a rebate on a previous expenditure it is to be reported on Schedule C. For example, if a committee purchases a computer and the manufacturer rebates the committee \$100, the receipt of this income must be reported on Schedule C.

CHAPTER 6 – Schedule D: Expenditures

Section 6.1 – Personal Use of Campaign Funds

Section 24.2-948.4 (B) states, "A final report shall be required when (i) a candidate no longer seeks election to the same office in a successive election, (ii) a candidate seeks election to a different office, or (iii) the candidate is deceased."

The law has to be taken as a whole, not by parts. When reading § 24.2-948.4 as a whole, it is clear that prohibition against converting contributed campaign funds to personal use only applies to the closing of a campaign finance account.

Section 6.2 - Reporting Expenditures

It is the treasurer's responsibility to ensure that all required information is retained at the time that the expenditure is made. The following is what is required to be reported on the committee's schedule of expenditures:

- **Full Name of Payee** - The report must contain the full name of the entity to which the expenditure was paid. For individuals, businesses and persons the full name is required. Entries containing acronyms for companies are not acceptable.
- **Mailing Address of Payee** - The report must contain the full mailing address of the entity to which the expenditure was paid.
- **Item or Service** - The committee should make every effort to be as descriptive as possible when reporting the item or service that was provided for the expenditure. Vague or incomplete descriptions must be avoided.
- **Date Paid** - The report must list the expenditures in order by the date that the expenditure was made (earliest first). It is not acceptable to report the expenditure on the date that the expenditure cleared the bank account.

Section 6.3 - Other Types of Expenditures

Independent Expenditures

Every person, campaign and political committee who makes an independent expenditure in an aggregate amount of \$1,000 or more for a statewide campaign or \$200 or more for any other election within an election cycle for the candidate supported or benefiting from the expenditure, must file an Independent

Expenditure Form within 24 hours of making the expenditure or within 24 hours after the expenditure is disseminated, whichever is first.

Any independent expenditure made by a committee must also be reported on Schedule D of the committee's next required campaign finance report.

Credit Card Expenditures

The Campaign Finance Disclosure Act requires that a committee itemize all credit card expenditures on its campaign finance report. It is not acceptable to report a single expenditure to the credit card company. Each individual item must be reported on the date that the expenditure was made.

The committee should not report the payee as being the credit card company. The payee should be listed as the entity which initially received the funds. For example, if the candidate uses a credit card to purchase a hotel stay, the report should list the name of the hotel as the payee and NOT the candidate or the credit card company.

Reimbursements

The treasurer may only reimburse authorized members of the campaign committee's staff with a check from the committee's primary depository if the staff member has used their personal funds for an expense made on behalf of the committee. It is the treasurer's responsibility to ensure that proper records for reimbursements are kept.

A reimbursement should not occur if the staff member does not provide the treasurer with a complete record of the expenditure including receipts that identify the nature of the expense and the names and addresses of each entity paid by the staff member who is being reimbursed.

To report a reimbursement, the committee may list the entity that was paid initially on the date that the initial expenditure was made. For example, on October 1st, Joe Staffer uses his personal credit card to purchase office supplies from "Office Warehouse." On October 9th, Mr. Staffer requests a reimbursement from the treasurer for \$50 providing a receipt for the expenses. On October 12th, the treasurer writes a check for \$50 to Mr. Staffer. In this case, the treasurer would report an expenditure paid on October 1st of \$50 to "Office Warehouse" and not an expenditure of \$50 to Mr. Staffer.

In the case of reimbursements to a single person which account for multiple expenditures of the same nature by said person, it is proper to report the single expenditure made by the campaign committee. For example, if Joe Staffer pays for parking for the month of June at \$6 per day for 20 days, it is proper for the campaign to reimburse Joe Staffer \$120 and report the payee as "Joe Staffer" with the item or service indicated as "Parking for the Month of June."

In no case should the treasurer enter simply "reimbursement" in the item or service column. The report must be as descriptive as possible.

Reimbursements for mileage should be valued at the current IRS rate. The current IRS rates can be found here: <http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/article/0,,id=178004,00.html>

Petty Cash Fund

A treasurer may establish a petty cash fund up to \$200. These monies are inclusive of the committee's total expendable funds. The fund should be used for the purpose of making expenditures or reimbursing credit card expenditures of less than \$200. Receipts must be kept and the expenditure made for reimbursement must be reported on the date the expenditure was made and not the date that the reimbursement was made. The treasurer may replenish the petty cash fund as needed provided the total balance of the fund never exceeds \$200.

CHAPTER 7 – Schedule E: Loans

Section 7.1 – Types of Loans

Loans are funds advanced to a committee that must be repaid sometime in the future. Loans must be recorded on Schedule E on the campaign finance report.

Section 7.2 - Reporting Loan Receipts and Repayments

Loans received and loans repaid are reported on Schedule E only.

When reporting loan payments list the:

- Date the loan was made;
- Name and address of the person making the loan and any co-borrower, guarantor, or endorser of the loan;
- Amount of the loan; and
- Date and amount of any repayment of the loan.

Schedule E – Part I (Income)

Part I of the form requires the disclosure of loans received (income).

Unpaid loans are reported on Schedule F (see Chapter 8) as a unpaid debt until the loan is fully repaid or forgiven.

Schedule E - Part II (Repayment)

Part II of the form requires the disclosure of loans repaid.

Requires the disclosure of loans repaid (expenditure). An expenditure for a loan repayment should never be reported on Schedule D.

Section 7.3 - Forgiving Loans

If there is an outstanding loan to the campaign, the contributor has the option of forgiving the loan and converting it into a contribution. The campaign finance report must show the conversion of the loan to a

contribution by listing the outstanding amount on Schedule A as a cash contribution and on Schedule E as a loan repayment.

CHAPTER 8 – Schedule F: Debts Remaining Unpaid

Section 8.1 Types of Reportable Debts

Any obligation for payment for a good, a service or a loan should be listed on Schedule F until the obligation is paid in full.

Virginia’s campaign finance system operates on a cash-basis reporting system. Therefore, it is not necessary to report debts for outstanding bills from utility companies, etc.

Loans

As soon as a committee receives a loan, the campaign finance report must report the amount of the loan remaining unpaid on Schedule F.

Section 8.2 - Reporting Outstanding Debts

It is required that the committee enter the full name and mailing address of the creditor, the date that the debt was incurred and the remaining balance of the debt. The committee must continue reporting any debt on Schedule F on each subsequent report until the debt is fully repaid. The repayment of the debt must be reported on Schedule D.

Purpose of Obligation

The committee should make every effort to be as descriptive as possible when reporting the purpose of the debt’s obligation. Vague or incomplete descriptions must be avoided.

CHAPTER 9: Schedules G and H: Summary Pages

Schedule G is a statement of the information on contributions, receipts, expenditures and loan transactions for the reporting period.

The Schedule H contains a summary of the total of contributions, receipts, expenditures of the current election cycle (current reporting year for committees).

Schedules G and H are used to summarize the data contained in the campaign finance report. Be sure to follow the instructions on each form to accurately complete the schedules.

Negative Balances and Outstanding Debts and Loans

SBE will not accept a report if the report shows a negative balance. Negative balances do not occur with correct reporting. Any committee must amend the appropriate (i.e., prior) reports and resolve the problem. A negative balance is usually due to a failure to report all income or a failure to report or properly disclose in-kind contributions.

CHAPTER 10 – Schedule I: Disbursement of Excess Funds

Section 10.1 - Filing a Final Report

All committees are required to file a Final Report when the committee disbands or closes, in order to discontinue filing campaign finance reports for a committee. A Termination Statement (hard copy) is required for all committees (paper and electronic filers). This is the Final Report cover sheet which must be signed by the treasurer stating that their bank account balance is zero and that no debts remain (including penalties owed). The Final Report must be sent to SBE. The Final Report cover sheet is located on our website under Campaign Finance Disclosure - go to your committee type and Forms.

A candidate must file a Final Report when he or she:

- No longer seeks election to the same office in a successive election; or
- Seeks election to a different office; or
- Is deceased. In this case, the campaign treasurer must sign the Final Report. If the deceased candidate was serving as his/her own treasurer, the executor of the candidate's estate should file and sign the Final Report.

The receiving office will close a campaign committee only if:

- There is no balance, deficit, outstanding debts, or outstanding loans (including loans from the candidate); and
- Surplus funds have been properly disbursed and reported; and
- There are no outstanding reports or civil penalties due.

Negative Balances, Outstanding Debts and Loans

Neither SBE nor a locality's Electoral Board will accept a Final Report if the report shows a negative balance. In this case, the campaign must first amend the appropriate (i.e., prior) reports and resolve the problem. A negative balance is usually due to a failure to report all income (including money from the candidate) or a failure to report or properly disclose in-kind contributions.

If there is an outstanding loan to the campaign, the lender has the option of forgiving the loan and converting it into a contribution. The campaign finance report must show the conversion of the loan to a contribution by listing the outstanding amount on Schedule A as a cash contribution and on Schedule E as a loan repayment.

Outstanding debts to the campaign must be repaid prior to filing a final report.

Section 10.2 – How to Dispose of Surplus Funds

Once a campaign has decided to submit a Final Report, the committee must no longer be active in fundraising. If there is no debt, any money remaining is considered surplus funds and must be properly disposed of by one or any combination of the following methods:

- Transferring the excess for use in a succeeding election or to retire the deficit in a preceding election;
- Returning the excess to a contributor in an amount not to exceed the contributor's original contribution;
- Donating the excess to any organization described in §170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code;
- Contributing the excess to one or more candidates or to any political committee that has filed a statement of organization;
- Contributing the excess to any political party committee; and
- Defraying any ordinary, non-reimbursed expense related to his elective office.

It shall be unlawful for any person to convert any contributed moneys, securities, or like intangible personal property to his personal use or to the use of a member of the candidate's "immediate family" as that term is defined in § 30-101.

Disbursement of Tangible Items of Value

Gifts of goods to the committee must also be disbursed. The disposition of this type of contribution may be carried out as follows:

- The tangible item may be sold to any buyer for fair market value. The proceeds of the sale must be reported as a rebate on Schedule C and used to pay off the debts of the campaign or as part of a surplus distribution.
- If the committee is indebted to the candidate, the items may be transferred to the candidate to satisfy any or all of the debt.
- The items may be distributed as non-cash surplus to any eligible recipient described above.
- If any item is leased, the campaign committee should simply return the item and discontinue the leasing agreement. If any item is loaned to the campaign committee, it should discontinue use and return the item.

CHAPTER 11 – Special Reports

Section 11.1 – Types of Special Reports

Candidate campaign committees will sometimes be required to file other reports in addition to the required regular campaign finance reports. These are called “special reports.”

Section 11.2 - Large Pre-Election Contribution Reports

A Large Pre-Election Contribution report is required to be filed by a candidate's campaign committee if they receive a direct or in-kind contribution or a loan if the contribution or loan amount is:

- \$5,000 or more if a candidate for Statewide office; or
- \$1,000 or more if a candidates for the General Assembly; or
- \$500 or more if a candidate for any other office,

And the contribution or loan is received by the campaign committee between:

- The 12th day preceding any nominating event and the date of the nominating event unless the candidate is running unopposed for the nomination; or
- The 12th day preceding a November election and the election date; or
- The 11th day preceding any other election in which the individual is a candidate and the Election Day.

Nominating Events

A Large Pre-Election Contribution Report is not required if the candidate for the nomination is or has become, by virtue of withdrawal of the opponent(s), running unopposed for the nomination.

Nominating events include, but are not limited to: primary, caucus, mass meeting, or other event at which the party's nomination shall be finally determined or an event at which delegates are chosen who pledge their support of a specified candidate on a ballot at a subsequent convention.

Reporting Large Pre-Election Contributions

The information required on Large Pre-Election Contribution reports is the same as required for direct and in-kind contributions or for loans. All contributions and loans reported in this manner must also be reported on the committee's next required regular campaign finance report.

When to File Large Pre-Election Contributions

Large Pre-Election Contribution reports are due no later than 5:00 pm on the next day after the committee has received the contribution.

If the large pre-election contribution is received on a Saturday then the report is not due until 5:00 pm on the following Monday.

If the large pre-election contribution is received on the day before the election, then the report is due on that day.

Where to File Large Pre-Election Contributions

Candidates for local offices file Large Pre-Election contributions, in writing, with their county or city Electoral Board only. Faxed copies are not acceptable in order to meet the deadline. An original, signed copy must be submitted to the local electoral board in person.

Candidates for shared local constitutional offices file Large Pre-Election Contributions in writing ONLY with the county or city Electoral Board where they are registered to vote. Faxed copies are NOT acceptable in order to meet the deadline.

General Assembly candidates, who report their regular campaign finance reports electronically, shall report their Large Pre-Election contributions electronically with SBE only.

General Assembly candidates, who report their regular campaign finance reports on paper, shall report their Large Pre-election Contributions in writing via facsimile with SBE. An original, signed copy must also be sent to the State Board and must be postmarked no more than 24 hours after the contribution is received.

Statewide candidates must report Large Pre-Election Contributions electronically through the SBE website only (faxes are not permitted).

Section 11.3 - Independent Expenditure Reports

An Independent Expenditure report is required if the committee makes independent expenditures that support, oppose or benefit a candidate in excess of \$1,000 or more to a candidate for statewide office or in excess of \$200 or more to any other candidate in the aggregate during an election cycle.

Reporting Independent Expenditures

The Independent Expenditure reporting form requires the filer to have the following information:

- Listing of the candidate(s) supported or opposed, including the office sought;
- Identifying the independent expenditures made, the payee, the amount and a description of the expenditure.

Any independent expenditure filed by the committee must also be reported on the committee's next required regular campaign finance report.

Where to File Independent Expenditure Reports

The Independent Expenditure Report is to be filed with the State Board of Elections if the candidate(s) supported or opposed is a candidate for statewide office or the General Assembly.

If the candidate supported or opposed is a candidate for local or constitutional office then the Independent Expenditure report must be filed with the local electoral board of that county or city.

In cases where multiple candidates are supported or opposed in multiple localities, one report must be filed in each candidate's locality which is supported or opposed.

Independent Expenditure Reports must be filed on paper and can be faxed to the appropriate office to meet the deadline with an original, signed copy sent and postmarked within 24 hours after the funds are expended.

When to File Independent Expenditure Reports

Independent Expenditure reports are due within 24 hours after the committee has made the expenditure or when the advertisement supporting or opposing the clearly identified candidate is disseminated, whichever is first.

CHAPTER 12 – Where and When to File Campaign Finance Reports

Section 12.1 - Filing Periods

Non-Election Year Reporting Schedule

Candidates for an office that is not being decided in the current calendar year must adhere to the following filing schedule:

ACTIVITY BEGINNING	ACTIVITY ENDING	REPORT DUE DATE*
Date of Inception or January 1	June 30	July 15
July 1	December 31	January 15

*Report due dates that fall on a holiday or weekend will be moved to the following business day.

November General Election Schedule

Candidates for an office to be decided at a November General Election during the current calendar year must adhere to the following filing schedule:

ACTIVITY BEGINNING	ACTIVITY ENDING	REPORT DUE*
January 1	March 31	April 15
April 1	13 Days Before a Primary	8 Days Before a Primary
Last Regularly Filed Report	June 30	July 15
July 1	August 31	September 15
September 1	September 30	October 15
October 1	13 Days Before General Election	8 Days Before General Election
Last Regularly Filed Report	23 Days After General Election	30 Days After General Election
Last Regularly Filed Report	December 31	January 15

*Report due dates that fall on a holiday or weekend will be moved to the following business day.

May General Election Schedule

Candidates for an office to be decided at a May General Election during the current calendar year must adhere to the following filing schedule:

ACTIVITY BEGINNING	ACTIVITY ENDING	REPORT DUE*
January 1	*If Primary Called 11 Days Before Primary	*If Primary Called 8 Days Before Primary
January 1	March 31	Not Later than April 15
*If Primary Called Last Regularly Filed Report	11 Days Before Election	8 Days Before Election
*If No Primary Called January 1		
Last Regularly Filed Report	June 10	June 15
June 11	June 30	July 15
July 1	December 31	January 15

*Report due dates that fall on a holiday or weekend will be moved to the following business day.

Special Election Reporting Schedule

If a special election is held on a regular election date then the committee must adhere to the filing schedule for the regular election. However, candidates for nomination or election to an office to be filled by a Special Election held on a date other than a regularly scheduled general election for that office must adhere to the following schedule:

ACTIVITY BEGINNING	ACTIVITY ENDING	REPORT DUE*
Inception	11 days Before Special Election	Eight Days Before Special Election
10 Days Before Special Election	Election Day	30 Days After Special Election**

*Report due dates that fall on a holiday or weekend will be moved to the following business day.

**Winning candidates for an office decided in a Special Election held on a date other than the a regular election date cannot take office until such time as their committee has filed a post-election report.

Immediately following the filing of the special election's post-election report, the candidate must refer to the normal filing schedule for that office's normal election. For example, for a candidate who participates in a special election for the House of Delegates; the candidate will be responsible for filing campaign finance reports on the November election schedule for the next year in which that office is scheduled for election immediately after filing a post-election report.

Section 12.2 - Reports as Condition to Qualification for Office

No person will be allowed to take office until their committee has filed the required reports from the applicable schedule listed above. Further, no officer authorized by the laws of Virginia to issue certificates of election shall issue one to any person determined to be elected to any such office, until copies of the reports cited above have been filed as required.

However, a person who is elected to fill a vacancy at a special election held on a General Election Day (May or November) may qualify for the office and be issued a certificate of election in advance of filing the 30-day post-election report, upon the filing of that post-election report complete through the Election Day.

Section 12.3 - Where to File Campaign Finance Reports

- Local Candidates that opt to electronically file upload their reports to the State Board. However, local electoral boards notify candidates and assess penalties for late or un-filed reports.
- Candidates for local offices filing by paper method file only with your county or city Electoral Board.
- Candidates for shared local constitutional offices file reports only with the county or city Electoral Board in the county or city where the candidate resides.
- General Assembly Candidates that file by paper file the original report with SBE and a copy with the candidate's county or city electoral board in the county or city where the candidate resides.
- General Assembly Candidates that file by electronic means file only with SBE.
- Statewide Candidates file only with SBE.

Section 12.4 – When to File Reports

When a report's due date falls on a weekend or holiday, or if the local office where the candidate committee files is closed on the report's due date, then the report is due the first business day immediately following the report due date.

- Reports filed with the Electoral Board must be received in the office of the Electoral Board or General Registrar by the close of business on or before the due date. Faxed copies are not acceptable. Postmarked dates are not accepted for reports filed at this level.
- Reports that are mailed to SBE must be received in the office by the deadline for filing the report or faxed and received by the 5:00 p.m. deadline for filing the report with the original copy of the report mailed to SBE and postmarked by the report due date.
- Reports that are electronically filed with SBE must file their electronic reports no later than 11:59 pm on the report due date.

Section 12.5 - Extension of the Filing Deadline

The Code of Virginia authorizes SBE or the local electoral boards to grant an extension of a filing deadline in certain situations. SBE or the local electoral boards will not impose civil penalties if an appropriate written request is received by the report's due date describing any of the following situations:

- If a candidate or treasurer who is required to file a report spouse, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, or sibling dies within the 72 hours before the deadline. (The State Board or the local electoral board is authorized to grant an extension of the filing deadline for a period not to exceed five days for good cause shown by the filer and found by the Board or board sufficient to justify the granting of the extension.);
- In emergency situations that interfere with the timely filing of reports. The extension is limited in scope to the areas and times affected by the emergency. The extension will be applicable only in the case of an emergency declared by the Governor pursuant to Chapter 3.2 (§ [44-146.13](#) et seq.) of Title 44 or declared by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Governor by executive order as an emergency.;
- A candidate who serves as his own campaign treasurer and who is a member of a uniformed service of the United States called to active duty during a reporting period will be granted a reasonable period, to be set by The Secretary of the State Board.
- In the event of a failure of the computer or electronic filing system that prevents timely filing, the extension will not exceed a period of up to five days after restoration of the computer or filing system to operating order. A receipt stating the date of restoration is required.

The following excuses are not sufficient and will not be considered for granting an extension of the filing deadline. They include, but are not limited to:

- Inclement weather, without a declaration of a state of emergency by the Governor or the President of the United States ;
- The loss of data due to, but not limited to: failure to back-up database, creating multiple databases in VA Filing software or failure to transfer data to a new or different computer.
- Treasurer or committee officer transition that may result in a “paper shuffle;”
- Candidate committee's lack of knowledge of how to file, the need to file or due date of filing; or
- Candidate's failure to have copies of necessary forms.

Section 12.6 - No Activity Reports

All committees are required to file a report on the required deadlines even if there is no financial activity for the committee, except for bank interest or bank fees, during the reporting period. In such cases, the committee can simply file a cover sheet and fill out the “No Activity” box indicating that there has been no financial activity, other than Bank Interest or Fees. The filer must promise to report all interest and fees on the next required report in which the committee has financial activity.

Committees who file electronically can simply create the electronic report being sure to indicate in the required area that there is no activity for the reporting period.

Section 12.7 - Other Reporting Policies

It is the responsibility of the filer to ensure that they receive documentation that the statement or report has been received by SBE or the local electoral board. All receipts should be maintained with the committee’s records. E-filers will be provided an automatic receipt at the time that they submit their report. No e-filing committee should consider SBE as having received the report until they have been provided a receipt. Local Candidates who paper file should receive a receipt from the office where they file their reports. Candidates that efile can print the receipt after uploading the report to the State Board. General Assembly candidates who file their reports on paper with SBE and the local electoral board should send their reports to SBE using a mail service which requires a signature for delivery. No report can be filed before the date through which activity is required to be complete. No report can include activity before or after the reporting period for the report. The first report filed must include all activity for the entire period from the time the candidate met any of the requirements for establishing the campaign committee. Any form required to be filed must be signed and certified as true and correct by the candidate, treasurer or other individual required to file it. The security code used by the committee when filing electronically is considered the signature as long as the committee has indicated their intention to file electronically. Please do not give your security code to any unauthorized individuals. In order to close a campaign committee, a Final Report must be filed for that campaign or the campaign will be required to file all required reports for that office’s election cycle. The report must have a zero balance and zero debt including penalties owed to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

CHAPTER 13 – Campaign Finance Reporting Penalties

Section 13.1 – General Provisions

Any committee that fails to file any report or statement (not received within 60 days of official notification from SBE or the local electoral board), files any report or statement late or fails to provide any required information in any report or statement that is required by the Act will be considered to have violated campaign finance law and may be subject to civil penalties which are assessed by the State Board of Elections, local electoral board or both.

The State Board has formally adopted the following schedules for the assessments of civil penalties. To ensure uniformity throughout the state, this schedule must be followed when the filing officer is assessing civil penalties.

“Official Notification,” or any variation of this phrase, as stated within this chapter refers to the letter sent via United States Postal Service Certified Mail to the committee’s primary mailing address as reported on the committee’s most recently filed Statement of Organization. The date of “official notification” is either the date that the letter is received and signed for or the date on which the USPS returned the mail to SBE or the local electoral board. The notification is considered made even if the notification is not signed for, or was undeliverable, so long as the notification was sent to the committee’s primary mailing address.

Section 13.2 - Procedure to Collect Penalties for Campaign Finance Reports

The State Board or local electoral board must notify the committee in violation via certified mail that the Board or board has not received the required Campaign Finance report.

The State Board or the local electoral board will notify the Commonwealth’s Attorney within 90 days of the deadline if the required payment or report has not yet been received. The Commonwealth’s Attorney will then initiate civil proceedings to collect the civil penalties.

The local electoral board of a county or city will notify the Commonwealth’s Attorney for the county or city in which the electoral board has jurisdiction.

For candidates for the General Assembly, the State Board will notify the Commonwealth’s Attorney of the county or city of the residence of the candidate in violation.

For candidates for statewide office, the State Board will notify the Commonwealth’s Attorney for the City of Richmond.

Candidates for the General Assembly or statewide office must make their checks payable to “Treasurer of Virginia” for deposit to the General Fund.

Candidates for local office must make their checks payable to the treasurer of their locality for deposit to their General Fund.

Section 13.3 – Penalty Schedule for Regular Reports

The following schedule applies to all candidate campaign committee’s campaign finance reports (other than special reports or reports due eight days prior to primary, general or special election) that are required to be filed by a candidate’s campaign committee.

Type of Violation	Amount	Reason
Late Report	\$100	Report not received by SBE or local electoral board by the report’s deadline, but before official notification of tardiness from SBE or the local electoral board.
Delinquent Report	\$100	Report not received by SBE or local electoral board within 10 calendar days from official notification of tardiness from SBE or the local electoral board.

Failure to File	\$500	Report not received by SBE or local electoral board within 60 days after official notification. At this point, the violation is presumed willful and must be forwarded to the appropriate Attorney for the Commonwealth.
Late, Delinquent or Failure to File: Second or Subsequent Violations	\$1,000	For a second or any subsequent reports during a single election cycle that are considered to be the failure to file a required report.

Section 13.4 – Penalty Schedule for Pre-Election Reports

For campaign finance reports due eight days prior to a primary or General or Special Election (excluding Large Pre-Election Reports).

Type of Violation	Amount	Reason
Late Report	\$250	Report not received by SBE or local electoral board by the report's deadline, but before official notification of tardiness from SBE or the local electoral board.
Delinquent Report	\$500	Report not received by SBE or local electoral board within 10 calendar days from official notification of tardiness from SBE or the local electoral board.
Failure to File	\$500	Report not received by SBE or local electoral board within 60 days after official notification. At this point, the violation is presumed willful and must be forwarded to the appropriate Attorney for the Commonwealth.
Failure to File: Second or Subsequent Violations	\$1,000	For a second report and any subsequent reports during a single election cycle that are considered to be the failure to file a required report.

Section 13.5 – Penalties for Late Filing or Failure to File Independent Expenditure Reports

The late filing or the failure to file an Independent Expenditure report will be assessed on the following schedule:

Type of Violation	Amount	Reason
Late Report	\$100	Independent Expenditure Report Received after the Deadline but Prior to Official Notification from SBE.
Failure to File Report	\$500	Independent Expenditure Report Not Received Within 60 days of Official Notification from SBE. At this point, the violation is presumed willful and must be forwarded to the appropriate Attorney for the Commonwealth.
Second or Subsequent Late Reports	\$500	Second or Subsequent Independent Expenditure Report from the Same Entity Not Received by its Deadline.

Section 13.6 – Penalty Schedule for Incomplete Reports

Best Efforts Policy

Once reports are received, SBE and the local electoral boards are required to review the reports and provide requests for additional information to the committee within 21 days of the deadline. The committee’s failure to file an amended report or late filing of an amended report will be assessed civil penalties.

In conducting its review, SBE and the local electoral board are required to review the following:

- the report is legible;
- there is no missing information in required fields or descriptions such as “N/A”, “none”, “unknown” etc. In fields where “requested” or “unable to obtain” is entered, verify that copies of letters to the contributors requesting this information have been filed;
- the beginning balance of the current report (Schedule H, Line 16) equals the ending balance of the previous period’s report (Schedule H, Line 19);
- Line 19 and Line 29 on Schedule H match;
- contributions are reported in alphabetical order on Schedule A and Schedule B as required by § 24.2-947.4;
- expenditures are reported in chronological order (earliest first) on Schedule D; and
- expenditure descriptions are relevant or listed simply as, “Reimbursement.”

If any required information is not included or the report is not completed properly, the report is deemed incomplete. However, SBE has determined that some missing information does not necessarily mean that

a report should be considered incomplete. SBE has adopted this “Best Efforts” policy in order to comply with the requirements of § 24.2-953.3.

Therefore, Campaign Finance reports are not considered incomplete if:

- Less than 10% of contributors are missing required information on Schedule A or Schedule B; or less than 10% of any other itemized information does not include the required information.
*For example, if there are 100 itemized contributors on Schedule A, then no more than 10 of those contributors can have missing information.

AND

- Letters requesting the required information from those contributors is filed with the report.

If these conditions are not met, then the report is considered incomplete and a letter requesting an amended report will be mailed to the committee.

The late filing of or failure to file the complete and amended report will result in the following civil penalties:

Election Cycle Expenditure Totals	Amount	Reason
\$0 - \$10,000	\$100	Report Not Received by Deadline Established by State Board or local board and Does Not Meet “Best Efforts” Policy.
	Additional \$400	Report Not Received within 60 Days of Deadline Established by State Board or local board.
\$10,000 - \$50,000	\$250	Report Not Received by Deadline Established by State Board or local board and Does Not Meet “Best Efforts” Policy.
	Additional \$500	Report Not Received within 60 Days of Deadline Established by State Board or local board.
More Than \$50,000	\$500	Report Not Received by Deadline Established by State Board or local board and Does Not Meet “Best Efforts” Policy.

	Additional \$500	Report Not Received within 60 Days of Deadline Established by State Board or local board.
Pre-Election Incomplete Report	\$1,000	Incomplete report filed less than 60 days prior to the election for which the person is a candidate.
Second or Subsequent Incomplete Reports	\$1,000	This penalty is not applicable to: (i) committees which have raised less than \$10,000 during their election cycle; and (ii) to a report that has been filed less than 20 days after official notification of a previous incomplete report from the State Board or local electoral board.

If the requested amended report is not filed within 120 days of the specified deadline then the violation is presumed willful and the matter will be forwarded to the appropriate Attorney for the Commonwealth.

Section 13.7 – Additional Penalties for Statewide Offices

The Act requires that candidates for statewide office be assessed penalties in addition to candidates for other offices.

Procedure to Collect Additional Penalties for Candidates for Statewide Office

Delinquent Completed Report (Statewide Office)

- An incomplete report for statewide candidates is defined as a report that is filed timely with the State Board but is missing required information or contains mathematical errors.
- Prior to assessing a penalty the Secretary of the State Board must notify the candidate and their treasurer within 14 days of the deadline for the required report, via certified mail, that an amended and completed report must be filed, citing the omissions from the report. No penalty will be assessed if the report or information required to complete the report is filed within seven days of the date of mailing the written notice.
- If the campaign committee fails to file the required report within seven days of the date of the written notice, these penalties will assess against the candidate and treasurer, who will be jointly and severally liable, for each day of non-compliance in addition to the prescribed penalties for candidate campaign committees.

- The Secretary of the State Board has the authority to extend the seven day time period for filing the completed report if good cause is shown. However, no additional time may be granted if the report was due eight days prior to a primary, general or special election.

Failure to file Report (Statewide Office)

- The failure to file a campaign finance report for statewide candidates will be defined as a report that is not filed with the State Board within seven days after the date that the Secretary of the State Board mails written notification to the candidate and its treasurer of the need for the required report.
- The Secretary of the State Board will notify the candidate and its their treasurer, via certified mail, that the missing report must be filed within seven days of the date of the written notice.
- If the campaign committee fails to file the required report within seven days of the date of the written notice, a penalty of \$500 per day of non-compliance will be assessed against the candidate and treasurer, who will be jointly and severally liable, in addition to the prescribed penalties for candidate campaign committees.

The Secretary of the State Board has the authority to extend the seven day time period for filing the completed report if good cause is shown. However, no additional time may be granted if the report was due eight days prior to a primary, general or special election. These penalties are to be assessed to candidates for statewide office in addition to the penalties enumerated above.

Type of Violation	Amount	Reason
Delinquent Completed Report	\$250 per day	Completed Report not received after 8 days of the date that SBE mailed written notice of the requirement to file an amended report.
Failure to File Report	\$500 per day	Required Report not received after 8 days of the date that SBE mailed written notice of the requirement to file the required report.

Section 13.8 - Procedure to Assess and Collect Large Pre-Election Contribution Reports and Local Candidate Large Contribution Reports

If either a Large Pre-Election Contribution report or a Local Candidate Large Contribution report is found to be late or was failed to be filed, there is a rebuttable presumption that the violation was willful. In either case, the State Board or the local electoral board is required to forward the matter to the appropriate Attorney for the Commonwealth. The Attorney for the Commonwealth is then required to investigate whether the violation was willful. In the case of a willful violation, violators will be charged with a Class 1 misdemeanor.

In the event that the violation is found not to be willful, the State Board or the local electoral board will assess a penalty according to the table below.

Type of Violation	Amount	Reason
Late Report	\$250	Special report filed after the deadline, but prior to the next required report.
Failure to File	\$500	Special report not received prior to the next required report.
Second or Subsequent Violations	\$1,000	For a second report and any subsequent special reports during a single election cycle that are considered to be the failure to file the required report.

Section 13.9 - Statement of Organization Penalties

New Committee

This schedule will be used when SBE or the local electoral board has determined that a person has met the qualifications to become a “candidate” for office in a non-federal Virginia election, but has failed to file a Statement of Organization:

Length of Delinquency*	Civil Penalty
1-15 Days	\$100
16-30 Days	\$200
31-45 Days	\$300
46-60 Days	\$400
61 Days or more	\$500
Late Filing of Committee formed within 30 Days Prior to an Election	\$500

*Virginia Law states that the committee has 10 days to submit a Statement of Organization form from the date that they have cause to register. The length of delinquency begins on the 11th day after the committee has cause to file a Statement of Organization.

Amended Statement of Organization

This schedule will be used when SBE or the local electoral board has determined that a candidate campaign committee has not amended their Statement of Organization as a result of changes regarding the information contained in the form on file with SBE within the 10 days as required by law:

Length of Delinquency*	Civil Penalty
1-60 Days	\$100
61-120 Days	\$150
121-180 Days	\$200

181 Days or More	\$300
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* Virginia Law states that the committee has 10 days to submit a Statement of Organization form from the date that they have cause to amend their Statement of Organization. The length of delinquency begins on the 11th day after SBE has contacted the committee requesting the amended form.

Procedure to Collect Penalties for Statement of Organization Violations

New Statements

The procedure for assessing penalties to committees who are late or fail to file the required Statement of Organization will be the same as for collecting for a late or failure to file a required Campaign Finance report.

Amended Statements

When determining this penalty, the State Board of Elections or the local electoral board must have concrete evidence that the committee in question has had cause to change the information contained on the form, but has not submitted an amended form (e.g. returned mail, phone line disconnected, etc.).

Before assessing the civil penalty, the State Board or the local electoral board will provide written notice to the committee requesting the updated information. If the form is not updated within 10 days of the date of the letter, then the committee will be considered delinquent and the appropriate civil penalty will be assessed.

Section 13.10 – Penalties for Accepting Contributions from Unregistered Out-of-State Political Committees or Federal Political Action Committees

It is unlawful for any committee registered in Virginia to accept contributions of more than \$10,000, in the aggregate during a calendar year, from an out-of-state political committee or federal political action committee that is not registered with SBE.

Accepting any contribution of \$10,000 or more, in the aggregate during a calendar year, without first verifying the committee's SBE registration status will result in a penalty equal to the amount of the contribution received.

SBE will assess the penalty at the time that it becomes aware of the violation. If the penalty is not paid within five days after official notification of the penalty then SBE will send the matter to the Commonwealth's Attorney for the city of Richmond to enforce its collection.

Section 13.11 - Willful Violations

A willful violation occurs when the filer's failure to file continues for more than 60 days after notice from the State Board or an investigation determines that the person intentionally attempted to subvert the provisions of the Act.

In the case of willful violation, a committee will be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and the Attorney for the Commonwealth will initiate civil proceedings to enforce any civil penalties prescribed. There will be a rebuttable presumption that the violation of the Act was willful if the violation is based on a committee's failure to file a report required and its failure to file continues for more than 60 days following the official notification by SBE or local electoral board.

CHAPTER 14 – Political Advertisement Disclaimers

Section 14.1 - When Disclaimer Statements are Required

A disclaimer statement is required for all political advertisements which uses express advocacy to support the election or defeat of a candidate or group of candidates.

A Disclosure Statement is NOT required on:

- Yard Signs;
- Novelty items such as;
 - Pens
 - Pencils
 - Magnets
 - Buttons to be attached to wearing apparel

A Disclaimer Statement IS Required on:*

- Billboards;
- Bumper Stickers;
- Cards or Business Cards;
- Sample Ballots;
- Newspaper ads;
- Newspaper inserts;
- Magazines;
- Advertisement disseminated through the mail;
- Pamphlets;
- Fliers;
- Periodicals;
- Websites;
- Electronic mail (E-mail);
- Outdoor advertising facilities
- Barns, baseball stadium, buses, etc.;
- Television advertisements;
- Radio advertisements.

* No disclaimer is required for individuals who incur only referendum expenses or whose aggregate expenditures for or against a candidate, in an election cycle, do not exceed \$200 for a non-statewide candidate or \$1,000 for a statewide candidate.

Section 14.2 - Requirements for Publications

It is unlawful for any of the entities listed below, to accept or receive or agree to accept or receive any money or other valuable consideration for supporting or advocating the election or defeat of any candidate:

- Owner;
- Clerk;
- Proprietor;
- Agent;
- Officer;
- Editor;
- Reporter;
- Manager; or
- Employee of any newspaper, magazine, or periodical printed or published in Virginia.

This section does not prevent any person, firm or corporation that is engaged in the publication of any newspaper, magazine or periodical from receiving from any person compensation for printing and publishing any matter or article that advocates the election or defeat of any candidate, as long as the statement “PAID ADVERTISEMENT,” appears in plain type in boldface Roman capitals in a conspicuous place at the beginning of the matter or article; and the matter or article otherwise complies with the provisions of § 24.2-955.2 of the Code of Virginia.

The person accepting a “PAID ADVERTISEMENT” for the newspaper, magazine or periodical will require and for one year, retain a copy of, proof of the identity (government issued identification) of the person who submits the advertisement for publication when the authorization statement on the advertisement is made by any person other than the:

- Candidate;
- Candidate’s Campaign Committee;
- Political Party Committee; or
- Political Action Committee (PAC) registered with the SBE.

This proof of identity must be submitted either:

- In person and include a valid VA driver’s license, or any other identification card issued by a government agency of the Commonwealth, one of its political subdivisions, or the United States; or
- If other than in person, the person submitting the advertisement must provide a telephone number and the person accepting the advertisement may phone the person to verify the validity of the person’s identifying information before publishing the advertisement.
- § 24.2-955.2 (B) states that a candidate who is clearly identified in a “Paid Advertisement” is entitled to obtain the identity of the person who submitted the

advertisement from the newspaper, magazine, or periodical that published in the advertisement. .

Section 14.3 - Print Media Disclaimer Requirements for Candidates

The visual statement required on print media advertisements must be displayed in a conspicuous manner. Advertisements with multiple folds, faces or pages must include the disclaimer on at least one fold, face or page.

Committees will be considered to have complied with the law if the disclaimer legend or statement conveys the required information.

“Paid for by...” Statement

Every political advertisement sponsored by a candidate that appears in Print Media must state who paid for the advertisement. The statement must include the name of the candidate or the candidate’s campaign committee.

If the candidate or his campaign committee is the sponsor of the advertisement AND the advertisement does not refer to any other clearly identified candidate then the committee can replace the “Paid for by...” statement with “Authorized by...”

In the case of a print media advertisement that has more than one sponsor, the disclaimer statement must name all of the sponsors.

“Authorized by...” Statement

If the political advertisement refers to any other clearly identified candidate, other than the sponsor of the advertisement, then the advertisement must state whether it was authorized by the candidate mentioned in the advertisement.

The disclaimer statement must state “Authorized by... [Name of candidate], candidate for [Name of office]” or “Not Authorized by any other candidate.”

It is not required to state whether the candidate authorized the advertisement if the candidate referred to in the advertisement is not the sponsoring candidate’s opponent or if the candidate referred to in the advertisement is not being expressly advocated.

Section 14.4 - Television Disclaimer Requirements for Candidates

Political advertisements that appear on television must also comply with the Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C. §§ 315 and 317 as well as the applicable laws in § 24.2-9957.1 of the Code of Virginia.

If the sponsor of the advertisement does not have control over the audio then the disclaimer requirements must be the same as for Print Media. The statements must be made in a conspicuous manner. Committees will be considered to have complied with the law if the disclaimer legend or statement conveys the required information.

“Paid for by...” Visual Statement

Every political advertisement sponsored by a candidate that appears on television must visually state who paid for the advertisement. The statement must be 20 scan lines in size and must include the name of the candidate or the candidate’s campaign committee.

If the candidate or his campaign committee is the sponsor of the advertisement AND the advertisement does not refer to any other clearly identified candidate then the committee can replace the “Paid for by...” statement with “Authorized by...”

In the case of a television advertisement that has one or more sponsors, the disclaimer statement must name all of the sponsors and the candidate must speak the disclaimer statement.

“Authorized by...” Spoken Statement

For any political advertisement appearing on television and sponsored by a candidate who refers to a clearly identified candidate or candidates other than the candidate who is sponsoring the advertisement must include a disclaimer statement spoken by the candidate which states “I am... (or “This is...”) [Name of candidate], candidate for [name of office], and I (or ‘my campaign’) sponsored this ad.” There must be a full-screen, unobscured photographic picture or actual appearance of the candidate throughout the entire spoken statement which must be at least 4 seconds in length.

It is not required to state whether the candidate authorized the advertisement if the candidate referred to in the advertisement is not the sponsoring candidate’s opponent or if the candidate referred to in the advertisement is not being expressly advocated.

The spoken statement can be spoken at any time during the advertisement unless the duration of the advertisement is more than 5 minutes. In this case, the spoken statement must be delivered at the beginning and the end of the advertisement.

If more than one candidate is sponsoring the advertisement then at least one candidate must speak the disclaimer statement.

Section 14.5 - Radio Disclaimer Requirements for Candidates

Political advertisements that appear on radio must also comply with the Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C. §§ 315 and 317 as well as the applicable laws in § 24.2-9957.1 of the Code of Virginia. The disclaimer statement must last at least two seconds and must be spoken so that its contents can be easily understood.

In the case of a radio advertisement that has one or more sponsors, the disclaimer statement must name all of the sponsors and the candidate must speak the disclaimer statement. If more than one candidate is sponsoring the advertisement then at least one candidate must speak the disclaimer statement.

Spoken Statement

For any political advertisement airing on radio and sponsored by a candidate which refers to a clearly identified candidate or candidates, other than the candidate which is sponsoring the advertisement, must

include a disclaimer statement spoken by the candidate which states “I am... (or “This is...” [Name of candidate], candidate for [name of office], and I (or ‘my campaign’) paid for this ad.”

If the candidate or his campaign committee is the sponsor of the advertisement AND the advertisement does not refer to any other clearly identified candidate then the committee can replace the “Paid for by...” statement with “Authorized by...”

It is not required to state whether the candidate authorized the advertisement if the candidate referred to in the advertisement is not the sponsoring candidate’s opponent or if the candidate referred to in the advertisement is not being expressly advocated.

Section 14.6 – Campaign Telephone Call Requirements

Campaign telephone calls are a series of telephone calls, electronic or otherwise, made to twenty-five or more telephone numbers in the Commonwealth during the 180 days before a general or special election or during the ninety days before a primary, conveying or soliciting information relating to any candidate or political party participating in the election or primary, and under an agreement to compensate the telephone callers. A violation of these disclaimer requirements will not void any election.

It is unlawful for any person, corporation or political committee making campaign telephone calls to intentionally modify the caller identification information for the purpose of misleading the recipient as to the identity of the caller.

It is unlawful for any candidate or campaign committee to make campaign telephone calls or to contract with persons making telephone calls without disclosing before the conclusion of each telephone call, information to identify the candidate or campaign committee who has authorized and is paying for the calls unless such call is terminated prematurely by means beyond the maker’s control. The person making the campaign telephone calls must disclose the following information prior to the conclusion of the call:

- The name of the candidate(s) or candidate campaign committee(s) paying for the call;
- The name of the candidate(s) or candidate campaign committee(s) who authorized the calls.

Chapter 15 – Political Advertisement Penalties

Section 15.1 - Procedure for Reporting Violations

The person alleging any violation to print media, radio or television advertisements should contact the State Board. Once the complaint is received, the Board has the authority to determine if a violation has occurred and assess the appropriate penalty or, if it appears that the violation is willful, they can forward the matter to the appropriate Attorney for the Commonwealth who has the authority to investigate the matter further.

Section 15.2 - Penalties for Candidates for Statewide Office

The following penalties will apply only to statewide candidates or statewide campaign committees which sponsor political advertisements.

Print Media

Violators shall be assessed a penalty as follows:

- \$50 for a first time violation with explanation, apology and/or remedial measures taken
- \$100 for a first time violation without explanation, apology and/or remedial measures taken
- \$250 for any second violation
- \$500 for any third violation
- \$1000 for any fourth or subsequent violation

If the advertisement is disseminated or on display in the 14 days prior to or on the Election Day for which the advertisement pertains, the above penalties will be doubled and the maximum penalty would be \$2,500.

Television

The penalty for violating required television disclaimers will be \$2,500 per occurrence unless the advertisement is disseminated or on display in the 14 days prior to or on the Election Day for which the advertisement pertains. In this case, the penalty will be \$10,000 per occurrence.

Radio

The penalty for violating required radio disclaimers will be \$2,500 per occurrence unless the advertisement is disseminated or on display in the 14 days prior to or on the Election Day for which the advertisement pertains. In this case, the penalty will be \$10,000 per occurrence.

Campaign Telephone Calls

The penalty for violating required campaign telephone call disclaimers will be \$2,500.

Section 15.3 - Penalties for Candidates for General Assembly or Local Office

The following penalties will apply only to General Assembly or local candidates and/or their campaign committees which sponsor political advertisements.

Print Media

Violators shall be assessed a penalty as follows:

- \$50 for a first time violation with explanation, apology and/or remedial measures taken
- \$100 for a first time violation without explanation, apology and/or remedial measures taken
- \$250 for any second violation
- \$500 for any third violation
- \$1000 for any fourth or subsequent violation

If the advertisement is disseminated or on display in the 14 days prior to or on the Election Day for which the advertisement pertains, the above penalties will be doubled and the maximum penalty would be \$2,500.

Television

Violators whose total expenditures for the election cycle are less than \$10,000 will be assessed a penalty of \$500 unless the advertisement is disseminated or on display in the 14 days prior to or on the Election Day for which the advertisement pertains. In this case, the penalty will be \$1,000.

Violators whose total expenditures for the election cycle are \$10,000 or more will be assessed a penalty of \$1,000 unless the advertisement is disseminated or on display in the 14 days prior to or on the Election Day for which the advertisement pertains. In this case, the penalty will be \$2,500.

Radio

Violators whose total expenditures for the election cycle are less than \$10,000 will be assessed a penalty of \$250 unless the advertisement is disseminated or on display in the 14 days prior to or on the Election Day for which the advertisement pertains. In this case, the penalty will be \$500.

Violators whose total expenditures for the election cycle are \$10,000 or more will be assessed a penalty of \$500 unless the advertisement is disseminated or on display in the 14 days prior to or on the Election Day for which the advertisement pertains. In this case, the penalty will be \$1,000.

Campaign Telephone Calls

The penalty for violating required campaign telephone call disclaimers will be \$2,500 per occurrence.