Campaign Committees
General Information

Organizing the Committee:
In order to run for office, you will need to organize a campaign committee. Organizing a committee consists of filing paperwork with the Board of Elections office. This paperwork needs to be filled out at the BOE office or either postmarked to the BOE within 10 days of either:

- the date of the committeeǿs first contribution, or
- the date of the committeeǿs first expense, or
- the date of the committeeǿs first loan, or
- the date of filing a Notice of Candidacy, or
- the date of filing a Statement of Organization, WHICHEVER COMES FIRST.

The Organization forms include:

- Statement of Organization (CRO-2100A)
- Certification of Financial Account Number Information (CRO-3500)
- Certification of Threshold form (CRO-3600)
- Certification of Treasurer (CRO-3100)
- Candidate Designation of Committee Funds (CRO-3900)

All of these forms are available at the County BOE office or on the State Board of Elections website at www.sboe.state.nc.us under Campaign Finance / Reporting Forms.

Bank Accounts:

- N.C.G.S 163.278.8(h) now requires that all committees use a SEPARATE bank account for their campaign. **Candidates can NO longer use their personal account(s) for the campaign committee.**
- If a candidate will not raise or spend ANY money other than their filing fee, or;
- They will not accept any contributions , they do not have to open a separate account. This certification must be made on the form CRO-3500.

Campaign Finance Manuals:
Copies of the Campaign Finance Manual are available in pdf format from the NC State Board of Elections website at www.sboe.state.nc.us

Websites:
The Rutherford County Board of Elections website can be accessed through www.rutherfordcountync.gov
Once you have located the website, click on Departments and then on Board of Elections.

The NC State Board of Elections website is also a great source of information for you to use. You can access the website at www.sboe.state.nc.us

Appointment of Treasurer:
A candidate may appoint himself or any individual, *with the exception of the candidate's spouse*, to serve as treasurer.

- **Every treasurer must receive mandatory treasurer's training regardless of whether or not you file under or over the $1,000 threshold limit.** Training can be completed on-line or by attending a training seminar. This training **must be completed within 3 months of appointment and again once every 4 years**. This training requirement can be accomplished by completing online training available on the SBOE website at www.sboe.state.nc.us (See brochure entitled: Mandatory Training Seminar of Campaign Treasurers.)
- Treasurers who do not complete the mandatory training requirement in a timely manner are NOT eligible to sign required disclosure reports. Only candidates, treasurers, or assistant treasurers that have been trained are eligible to sign disclosure reports. Reports that are submitted by a treasurer that has not received training are subject to penalties.
- In addition to taking the Treasurerôs training, the treasurer should review the NC Campaign Finance Manual. This manual can be found on the NC State Board of Elections website at www.sboe.nc.us under Campaign Finance.
- All money ï coming in and going out ï must go through the treasurer.
- The treasurer must maintain all financial records of the Committee.
- The treasurer is responsible for filing reports (if over the $1,000 threshold) in a timely manner. Failure to file reports in a timely manner can result in financial penalties.
- The treasurer is responsible for the accuracy of the reports and for compliance with the campaign finance laws.
- In the event a candidate needs to change their treasurer, a new *Certification of Treasurer* form must be completed within 10 days of the change in addition to amending the *Statement of Organization*. Failure to complete these forms in a timely manner could result in penalties.
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Campaign Reports:
When you organize your committee you are asked whether or not you intend to receive or spend more than $1,000. Campaigns that file over the $1,000 limit for contributions and expenditures are required to file reports. Any committee that initially files under the $1,000 threshold limit for contributions or expenditures but reaches the $1,000 limit during the election cycle is required to immediately notify the BOE office to amend their forms and file the required reports.

Candidates for County and Municipal offices and Local PACs file reports at their County Board of Elections office. Political parties, state and federal PACs, and candidates for statewide, legislative and judicial offices file reports at the State Board of Elections.

The reporting schedule for 2015 is as follows:

Within 10 days **Organizational Report**
* Disclosure Report Cover (CRO-1000)
* Detailed Summary (CRO-1100)
* Contribution forms as applicable (CRO-1205 thru CRO 1250)
* Disbursement forms as applicable (CRO-1310 thru CRO-1330)
* Loan Forms, if applicable (CRO-1410 thru CRO-1440)
* In Kind Contribution forms, if applicable (CRO-1510)
* Debts and Obligation forms, if applicable (CRO-1610 thru CRO 1620)

Sept 29, 2015 **35- Day Report**
* The first report covers from date of organization through Sept.22, 2015

Oct.26, 2015 **Pre-Election Report**
* All activity from date of last report thru Oct.19, 2015

Final Report
* Filed when all funds are disbursed, loans repaid or forgiven, debts paid and committee bank account closed.

All reports should be filed with the Rutherford County Board of Elections office.

Campaign Finance Guidelines:

The Campaign Finance manual and the Treasurerõs training will provide you with specific details concerning contributions and disbursements. Listed below, however, are a few guidelines that apply to most campaign committees.

1. **Any contribution over $50** has to be made in the form of a check, draft, money order, credit card charge, debit, or other noncash method that can be subject to written verification.

2. **All contributions need to be documented.** Once a contributor gives you a cumulative total over $50.00, you will have to report the contributorõs name, complete mailing address, occupation and employer information, date of receipt, form of payment, amount, and election sum to date for that contributor. This information does not have to be disclosed for people who give you $50 or less per election.

3. Contributions received at a fundraiser from the sale of items such as dinner tickets, t-shirts, buttons or hotdogs require disclosure and count toward an individualõs $50.01 threshold for identity reporting. **(You have to be able to tell how much money you collected from each individual person at the fundraiser)**

4. You cannot accept anonymous or joint contributions (ex. Mr. & Mrs. Joe Smith). You have to designate which spouse gave you the money.

5. A candidate may not accept more than $5,100 from any one individual per election. (A primary, a second primary, and a general election are considered separate elections). A candidate, the candidateõs spouse, parents, brothers and sisters may contribute unlimited amounts to the candidate and are not subject to limitations.

6. It is unlawful for any corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company to directly or indirectly contribute to a candidate. A registered political committee may contribute $5,100 per election to candidate committees. Registered referendum committees that receive any contribution from a corporation, labor union, insurance company, business entity or professional association may not contribute to a candidate committee.

7. In Kind contributions also have to be reported and are included in the $1,000 threshold amount. The contributor of the In-Kind contribution should provide the committee with a statement detailing the fair market value of the contribution. (In-Kind Contributions are contributions that are not monetary in nature and may be either a good or service. For example, an individual may contribute food for a fundraiser or cups and napkins to be used for an event. The ñfair market valueò of the food or the cups and napkins would be the amount of the contribution and would count toward the giverõs maximum contribution limits.)

8. All expenditures have to be listed by the payeeôs name, complete mailing address, purpose, form of payment, amount & date, and election sum to date for that payee.

9. All expenditures for media expenses must be made with a check.

10. All expenditures for non-media expenses of more than $50 should be made with a check or other verifiable form of payment.

11. If you loan your campaign money, you will need to fill out the appropriate forms to show these transactions.

12. Every advertisement appearing in the print media, on television or on radio that constitutes a contribution or expenditure under the Campaign Reporting Act must state who paid for the ad. TV ads require a visual legend.

13. A sponsor must state whether or not an advertisement is authorized by a candidate if the ad is not paid for by the candidate or the candidateôs committee and the ad supports or opposes a candidate. If the advertisement is not authorized by the candidate or the candidateôs committee, the sponsor must indicate such.

14. A Legend (the information stating who paid for and authorized the advertisement ï ex. Paid for by Smith for Mayor Campaign) is required on the following: newspaper ads, newspaper inserts, fliers, business cards, post cards, mass mailings (over 500 pieces), portable signs, periodicals, TV ads, Radio ads, magazines, billboards, pamphlets, magnetic car signs. There are different types of legends so check the campaign finance manual to make sure you are using the correct one.

15. Legends are not required on: buttons and bumper stickers, websites, yard signs and window posters (approximately 14 x 22 inches and posters used in stores, on stakes in yards, etc.), barn posters (3 x 5 feet, or similarly sized used on the sides of buildings or walls, etc. generally at no cost), and campaign paraphernalia such as balloons, nail files, etc. imprinted with a campaign message.

16. Please check the Campaign Finance Manual for other regulations on Print, Radio & TV advertising.

17. ***Using Credit Cards***:
    a. If you use your personal credit card to make campaign purchases, then these charges will need to be reported as an ñIn-Kindò contribution to the campaign. ñIn-Kindò Contributions have to be reported on two separate forms; the CRO-1210 (Contributions from Individuals) as well as CRO-1510 (In-Kind Contributions). This shows the money coming into your campaign via the credit card and then going out as expenditures.
    b. Should you decided to reimburse yourself for campaign purchases made using your personal credit card, you are required to file form CRO 1320 (Refunds/Reimbursements from the Committee).
    c. If you have opened a credit card for the sole use of the campaign committee, then any charges made on this card that are still outstanding when your reports are filed will need to be reported as a campaign debt on CRO-1610 (Debts and Obligations Owed by the Committee). When payments are made to the credit card company, these payments would be listed as an expenditure on the form CRO-1310 (Operating Expenditures).

Closing the Campaign Committee

After the election, you will be mailed a letter asking you to determine the future status of your campaign committee. If you are going to continue raising funds and spending money, then you will need to keep your committee open and file the necessary campaign finance reports. If you still have money in your account and you want to leave it there, but you are not planning on making any expenditures or accepting contributions; then you can make your account inactive. If you have disbursed all the money in your account and you are finished with this yearôs campaign; then you can elect to close your account. Any campaign account that remains open will be required to file reports.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, 282-287-6030.