

Campaign Finance Research

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- The Election Code Committee requested that staff research examples of an independent process for campaign compliance oversight
- Staff contacted municipalities across Colorado and found two examples outside of the state

- The City Clerk's Office performs basic verification of submission timing and balance matching
- Limited resources are available for candidate education and public inquiry response
- Reliance on City staff to review campaign submittals and compliance for candidates can create an appearance of a conflict of interest

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR OPTION



Staff evaluated ways to address these limitations and recommends the City contract with an outside service provider for increased monitoring, review, oversight and investigation of campaign activities, including:

- Regular review of campaign finance submissions
- Investigation of potential violations
- Response to public inquiries
- Documentation of complaint resolutions
- Inform committees and others involved in campaign activities of observed violations
- Facilitate cure of violations
- Work with a special prosecutor to take enforcement action for uncured violations

Funds have not been allocated to this function and further assessment and estimation of the costs for an outside reviewer are needed.

- Two Colorado municipalities reported using specialized software for campaign finance submission to streamline the process and increase transparency
- This represents a potential operational improvement in receiving financial information from candidates
- It does not address the fundamental oversight needs identified

If the Committee is interested in further exploration of this as an avenue for improvement, staff can develop estimates and additional information about technology options.

- Staff identified two local government jurisdictions with established oversight bodies: Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Alameda County, California.
- Santa Fe, New Mexico
 - Implemented an Ethics and Campaign Review Board that provides comprehensive oversight of campaign finance and ethics matters
 - The Board receives and investigates complaints, carries out regular audits and provides educational resources for candidates and committees
- Alameda County, California
 - Has an Elections Commission that provides systematic review of campaign finance reports, compliance monitoring and enforcement

Staff does not have feedback related to the efficacy of these bodies compared to a professional staff-driven model.

QUESTIONS?