

# You've decided to run for office...

# Now get to know the PDC

## First: Introduce yourself.

Several actions [make you a candidate in the eyes of the law](#) and prompt the requirement for filing reports with the Public Disclosure Commission. For candidates who did not previously announce their candidacy, raise funds or spend money on their campaigns, the declaration of candidacy is the triggering event.

Within two weeks of filing that declaration, most candidates must register their campaigns ([C-1 report](#)) and disclose personal financial affairs ([F-1 report](#)). **Note:** [Exceptions](#) apply in cases where candidates are running for office in small jurisdictions and don't plan to spend more than \$5,000.

## Second: Consider your (reporting) options.

Candidates who are required to register their campaigns can choose [mini or full reporting](#). Choose wisely – candidates who initially opt for mini reporting but then switch to full reporting face deadlines for doing so and must retroactively document their contributions and expenditures.

Mini reporting is available to candidates who plan to raise and spend no more than \$5,000 and who will receive no more than \$500 from any one contributor other than themselves. Those candidates do not have to file contribution and expenditure reports, but they must keep records of that activity and allow [public inspection of campaign books](#) during the 8 days before an election.

Candidates who choose full reporting must abide by state and local contribution limits, but have no cap on how much they may raise and spend. They also must file their contribution and expenditure reports [electronically](#) if they plan on spending more than \$5,000.

## Three: Know your limits.

Candidates using mini reporting may not raise more than \$5,000 and cannot accept more than \$500 from a single donor. Most other candidates face limits on contributions that [vary by office sought and type of donor](#). If a candidate is on the ballot twice (for example, in the primary and general), the limits apply per election. Additional limits apply in the [21 days before the general election](#).

## Four: Meet your deadlines.

Candidates who choose full reporting must file reports showing donations, in-kind contributions, expenditures and debt. They face [deadlines](#) for making those reports, and the reporting windows shrink as the campaign season progresses.

Much, much more information – including rules about political advertising – is available at our website, [www.pdc.wa.gov](http://www.pdc.wa.gov). Can't find what you need? Email us at [pdc@pdc.wa.gov](mailto:pdc@pdc.wa.gov).

*“The public’s right to know of the financing of political campaigns and lobbying and the financial affairs of elected officials and candidates far outweighs any right that these matters remain secret and private.”*

RCW 42.17A.001(10)