

State Elections Enforcement Commission

Convention Campaign Grant Overview

The State Elections Enforcement Commission (“the Commission”) has prepared this overview to provide general guidance on the new Convention Campaign Grant, which will be available for the first time during the 2026 election cycle. This public financing option is designed to support major party gubernatorial candidates who participate in their party’s nominating convention and choose to participate in the Citizens’ Election Program (CEP). This document outlines key eligibility criteria, application requirements, and funding provisions to help candidate committees navigate the process. Please note that this overview is for informational purposes only and does not replace the official laws and regulations governing campaign finance. For complete legal references, visit the Commission’s website at <https://portal.ct.gov/seec>.

Eligibility

The Convention Campaign Grant is available to **major party gubernatorial candidates** who are eligible to apply for and receive the grant **before** their party’s nominating convention.

Section 189 of Public Act 23-205 defines a “convention campaign” as the period beginning on the day a candidate files the affidavit under section 9-703 – certifying their intent to abide by the expenditure limits under the Citizen’s Election Program (a CEP Form 10) – and ending at the close of the state convention held pursuant to section 9-382 by the major party for the purpose of endorsing a candidate for nomination to office of Governor.

Grant Amounts

The amount of the Convention Campaign Grant is initially set at **\$806,875**.

In early January 2026, this grant amount will be adjusted for inflation occurring from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2025, pursuant to General Statutes. § 9-705 (d) (1).

- Candidates who apply **before** the January 2026 adjustment for inflation is made will receive a grant of **\$806,875**.
- Candidates who apply **after** the January 2026 adjustment for inflation is made will receive the **adjusted grant amount**, which is likely to be a higher amount.

Personal Funds

Participating candidates are permitted to provide **\$20,000.00** in personal funds to their campaigns. These funds:

- Must be provided ***before the candidate applies for the grant.***
- Will result in a **dollar-for-dollar reduction** in the grant amount.

- Include any money the candidate deposits into the committee's bank account or uses to pay for campaign-related expenses **without seeking reimbursement**.

Candidates **may not** make qualifying contributions or loans to their own candidate committees.

When to Apply and Application Requirements

Candidate committees may apply for the Convention Campaign Grant at **any time after** submitting their SEEC Form CEP 10, *Affidavit of Intent to Abide by Expenditure Limits*, to the Commission. To be eligible, candidates must:

- i. Raise a **total of \$250,000** in small-dollar monetary contributions from individuals (potential qualifying contributions) in amounts between **\$5 and \$250**; and
- ii. Ensure that at least 90% (**\$225,000**) of those contributions come from individuals residing in the state.

Inflation Adjustments in January 2026

In early January 2026, in addition to the adjustment to the grant amount, the following adjustments will take place:

- The maximum individual contribution amount of **\$250** will be adjusted for inflation occurring from January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2025, pursuant to General Statutes § 9-704 (c) (1) (A), as amended by P.A. 25-26, section 7.
 - Potential qualifying contributions received by candidate committees **before** the adjustment is made must not exceed the **\$250 aggregate limit** per individual contributor.
 - Potential qualifying contributions received by candidate committees **after** the adjustment is made may increase to the **new aggregate limit**.
- The aggregate qualifying thresholds of **\$250,000** (total raised) and **\$225,000** (from in-state contributors) will also be adjusted for inflation occurring over the same period, pursuant to General Statutes § 9-704 (b) (1) (A).
 - Candidates applying **before** the adjustment must meet the **original thresholds** (\$250,000).
 - Candidates applying **after** must meet the **adjusted thresholds**.

Application Package

The grant application package consists of at least five parts:

1. A completed and signed grant application form (SEEC Form CEP 15);

2. A completed and electronically submitted campaign finance disclosure statement (SEEC Form 30) that itemizes all financial activity since the last filed disclosure statement. This form must be **completed no more than three days before the date of submission**;

Important Note: *All monies included in a grant application must be collected by midnight on the day before SEEC Form 30 is submitted*

3. Copies of documentation for all potential qualifying contributions received by the candidate committee (including Qualifying Contribution Certification Forms and other required documentation);
4. If online contributions were collected: merchant account processor (MAP) letters, transactional receipts, excel spreadsheets, and any other documentation pertaining to the contributions; and
5. A committee check made out to “Citizens’ Election Fund” or “CEF” for the amount of any excess qualifying contributions (i.e., the “buffer”).

Note: *Gubernatorial candidates applying for a convention campaign grant are **not** required to submit proof of ballot access*

If not already submitted, SEEC Forms 1 & 1A, CEP 10, and CEP 12 must also be included. A grant application checklist will be provided to committees prior to submission and must be completed and placed on top of the application package. Committees should schedule an appointment with their Elections Officer when they are ready to submit their application.

Expenditure Limits

Expenditures made or incurred before a primary or general election campaign by an eligible candidate receiving a convention campaign grant are limited to the sum of:

- the required qualifying contributions,
- personal funds, and
- the convention campaign grant amount received by the committee.

(See General Statutes § 9-702 (c) (2).)

Permissible Expenditures

- CEP funds may be used only for campaign-related expenditures that directly advance the participating candidate’s campaign.

- Campaigns must maintain detailed documentation showing that each campaign expenditure was made to directly further the participating candidate's race. This documentation should be created at the time of the transaction.
- Campaign records are subject to comprehensive examinations to ensure compliance with Program requirements.
- Expenditures lacking adequate supporting documentation are considered impermissible under the Program regulations.

Gubernatorial Primary and General Election Rollover Grants

A participating candidate who receives a convention campaign grant and complies with the expenditure limit will, upon receiving **ballot access**, be eligible for a **rollover primary or general election grant**, as applicable.

If a candidate previously received the CEP grant for the convention campaign, the base primary grant amount for which they may be eligible is **\$2,420,625**. In contrast, candidates who make the primary ballot but did not apply for the convention campaign grants are eligible for a base primary grant in the amount of **\$3,227,500**. Both of these base amounts will be adjusted for inflation in January 2026 so the amounts released to those who qualify will be larger.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Convention Campaign Grant represents an expansion of the Citizens' Election Program, aimed at supporting candidates early in the election cycle while maintaining transparency and public trust in the campaign finance system. Candidate committees are encouraged to review this guidance carefully and consult directly with the Commission's Candidate Services Unit to ensure compliance with all requirements.

For the most current and comprehensive information, please refer to the relevant statutes and regulations available on the Commission's website.

Questions about the application process can be directed to the Candidate Services Unit at (860) 256-2985, and technical assistance with eCRIS filings is available through the eCRIS Helpdesk at (860) 256-2930.