



CONNECTICUT STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

NEWSLETTER

December 2017

Volume 4



10
CELEBRATING

YEARS

eCRIS



NEWSLETTER



eCRIS Turns **TEN!**

January 3, 2018 will mark the 10th anniversary of our Electronic Campaign Reporting Information System, also known as eCRIS. Electronic filing was an essential component of Connecticut's landmark campaign finance reform legislation. eCRIS remains a highly regarded national model to facilitate transparency in the financing of political campaigns. The system has a 10 year legacy of being both robust and extremely reliable. Today, we are pleased to have approximately 98% of our committees filing electronically on eCRIS. eCRIS has not only greatly assisted in increasing public access to campaign finance records but has also reduced paper and postage costs to our committees and has made filing much easier on treasurers.

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eCRIS Trainings for General Assembly and Statewide Office Committee Treasurers

As electronic filing is now mandatory for all exploratory and candidate committees that raise or spend \$1,000 or more, new treasurers must be sure they are trained and ready to use eCRIS for the 2018 election cycle. To that end, Commission staff will be offering a series of eCRIS trainings specific for General Assembly and statewide office committee treasurers.

To register for a training, please visit our website and select the session you would like to attend.

If you are unable to make a training or would like a refresher on a particular subject, we also now offer a series of online training videos that you can watch on your own time. "Creating an account" and "how to reset your password" are available on our public website. Once you have an eCRIS account, you can access an additional 19 videos covering topics from adding a data entry operator to reporting expenses incurred but not paid, both when incurred and when paid off. The videos walk you through where to report specific information as well as the step by step process for creating a draft report and filing the report to the state. Check them out!



CAMPAIGN REPORTING INFORMATION SYSTEM



Listed below is the eCRIS schedule for the first quarter of the year:

DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Thursday, February 15 9:00am-10:00am	SEEC 5 th Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, February 28 5:00pm-6:00pm	SEEC 5 th Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, March 7 9:00am-10:00am	SEEC 5 th Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, March 21 5:00pm-6:00pm	SEEC 5 th Floor Conference Room





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CEP Trainings

Commission staff will also be offering trainings for candidates and treasurers interested in participating in the Citizens' Election Program ("CEP").

In addition to teaching the basics of the public financing program (CEP 1.0), this election cycle we will also be offering a separate CEP training for more seasoned treasurers (CEP 2.0).

Listed below is the CEP schedule for the first quarter of the year:

DATE/TIME	SUBJECT	LOCATION
Wednesday, January 31 5:00pm-7:00pm	CEP 2.0	SEEC 5 th Floor Conference Room
Tuesday, February 13 9:00am-11:00am	CEP 2.0	Capitol Building
Thursday, February 15 10:00am-12:00pm 12:00pm-1:00pm	CEP 1.0 CEP 2.0	SEEC 5 th Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, February 28 6:00pm-8:00pm	CEP 1.0	SEEC 5 th Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, March 7 10:00am-12:00pm 12:00pm-1:00pm	CEP 1.0 CEP 2.0	SEEC 5 th Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, March 21 6:00pm-8:00pm	CEP 1.0	SEEC 5 th Floor Conference Room

To register for a training, please visit our website and select the session you would like to attend.

Online training videos will also be available for CEP topics in April 2018!



Running for Office in 2018??

If you have recently registered a committee for the 2018 election cycle or plan to do so soon, please contact Elections Officer Sarah Clark (860.256.2985) to set up a meeting with our staff and, if you are planning to collect contributions online, to have your website reviewed before you start raising any money through that mechanism. We are here to help your campaign start off on the right foot!





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Legislative Changes - June 2017 Special Session

The legislature's June special session this year brought significant changes to the campaign finance laws, particularly the Citizens' Election Program. Public Act 17-2 (June Special Session) makes the following changes to the Program for the 2018 election cycle:

- ◆ Raises the maximum qualifying contribution amount that 2018 General Assembly candidates can receive from individuals from \$100 to \$250 (the amounts for statewide will go up for the 2022 election cycle);
- ◆ Implements consumer price index ("CPI") adjustments to the total amount of qualifying contributions that must be raised by General Assembly and statewide office candidates other than Governor and Lieutenant Governor candidates;
- ◆ Reverts the 2018 grant amounts back to their original amounts as provided in the statutes (removing CPI adjustments); and
- ◆ Establishes a grant reduction schedule so the later a campaign applies for a general election grant, the smaller the grant it will be eligible to receive.

The Act also modifies the formula the Commission will use in selecting General Assembly candidate committees for post-election reviews, taking into account the frequency with which the districts have been reviewed in previous election cycles. In addition, the Act provides that for any complaints received on or after January 1, 2018, the Commission must dismiss the complaint if it does not issue a decision within one year of the complaint being filed. Extensions are permitted in specified circumstances. The legislature further clarified in Public Act 17-4 (June Special Session) that the grant reduction schedule does not apply to special elections.

More detailed summaries of these law changes, as well as the 2018 grant amounts based on date of application, are available on our [website](#). The summaries also explain how the changes to the CEP will play out in future election cycles.

**JANUARY QUARTERLY
FILING DUE WEDNESDAY,
JANUARY 10, 2018**

The filing period for the January quarterly report (January 10 Filing) commences January 1, 2018 and ends January 10, 2018. All state central committees, town committees, political committees, and candidate and exploratory committees must file this report regardless of financial activity.



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2018 Pre - Application Reviews

The Commission will be offering eligible candidate committees who intend to participate in the CEP a voluntary opportunity to receive one pre-application review ("PAR") prior to the 2018 grant application season which begins in late May.

To be eligible for a PAR, candidate committees must have raised the qualifying contribution threshold plus an adequate buffer prior to the applicable deadline to submit a financial disclosure statement (SEEC Form 30). Guidelines for what amounts to an adequate better are contained in the PAR checklist which must be submitted with backup documentation to be reviewed.

Since each committee will be able to receive only one PAR, Commission staff stresses the importance of making sure your committee is organized and prepared. If the result of your PAR is that the committee has to fix contribution cards or raise additional money, the committee will not

be able to have a second review before applying for a grant.

The SEEC has posted a [PAR checklist](#) on the website and will email it to all registered candidate committees for the 2018 election cycle. Specific backup documentation is required, and outlined in the checklist, including providing the Commission with **TWO COPIES of numbered** contribution documents (e.g. contribution certification forms, as well as transaction receipts and spreadsheets/settlement reports if the committee received online contributions).

Schedule a meeting with your Elections Officer to hand deliver your materials and to have staff review your materials with you prior to submission. This is a voluntary review provided as a service to committees, and the assigned Elections Officer will provide his or her committees with feedback as soon as it is available.

2018 PAR CALENDAR/SCHEDULE

Treasurers: Within your eCRIS Reporting Homepage for your 2018 candidate committee, there will be additional non-standard reports available for you to tailor your reporting schedule to accommodate a PAR.

Dates to Submit SEEC 30	Period Covered	Eligible Candidate Committees
February 1-10, 2018	1/1/18-1/31/18	Statewide and General Assembly
March 1-10, 2018	1/1/18-2/28/18	Statewide and General Assembly
April 1-10, 2018	1/1/18-3/31/18	Statewide *

Committees should contact their assigned Elections Officer if they are interested in having a PAR completed this spring.

**The April PAR process may be opened to General Assembly candidates if the statewide candidate committees desiring review have all received responses.*



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SEEC Form CEP 10 - Early Submission Can Lead to Problems Later

To all 2018 Candidates for General Assembly or Statewide Office looking to participate in the Citizens' Election Program: Please hold off on submitting your SEEC FORM CEP 10 (Affidavit of Intent to Abide by Expenditure Limits and Other Program Requirements) until **after** your nominating convention or official notice that you have achieved ballot access. Candidates who will be in a primary have until 4:00 pm on July 20, 2018 to file their CEP 10 while general election only candidates have until 4:00 pm on September 27, 2018.

Candidates must declare a party status when filing the CEP 10. A candidate who changes his or her party status after filing the CEP 10 because he or she achieves ballot access through a different party or by petitioning onto the general election ballot will no longer be eligible to apply for a Program grant. (For example, if you submit your CEP 10 indicating "Democrat" as your party status but then do not qualify for that primary ballot, you will not be able to participate in the public financing program if you gain ballot access by being nominated by the Independent, Green, Working Families or another party or if you decide to petition on to the general election ballot.)

If you wait to submit your CEP 10 until after you absolutely know how you are getting on the ballot, you will be able to participate in the Program under whichever party designation has gotten you onto the ballot. Prior to submitting the CEP 10, you should still fundraise consistent with CEP regulations and you can tell your voters, campaign team and the media that you are participating in the Program.

Every election cycle the staff has to explain this rule to candidates who cannot participate in the Program after unexpected results at local conventions because they filed their CEP 10 too early with a party designation that later changes for purposes of ballot access. The SEEC is taking a more proactive approach to preventing any issues. Thank you for your cooperation.

CONTACT US

SEEC Main Line: 860-256-2940

Email: seec@ct.gov

SEEC Candidate Services Unit: 860-256-2985

Email: public.finance@ct.gov

SEEC Compliance Unit: 860-256-2925

Email: seec.compliance@ct.gov

eCRIS Help Desk: 860-256-2930

Email: seec.ecris.info@ct.gov





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STAFF SPOTLIGHT

On October 26, 2017, the O'Neill Endowed Chair and Center for Public Policy and Social Research at Central Connecticut State University sponsored a forum entitled, "The 2005 Campaign Finance Reform Act – the Initiation, Passage, Implementation and Impact of Connecticut's Citizens' Election Program." Executive Director and General Counsel Michael Brandi, along with Former Governor M. Jodi Rell, current and former legislative leaders, and other key players involved in the passage of the CEP, served as speakers and panelists. Also in October, Michael served as a guest lecturer in legislative process classes taught by Cornelius O'Leary at the University of Connecticut School of Law and Senator Martin Looney at Quinnipiac School of Law.

Staff Attorney Kevin Ahern served on the Program Committee for the 2017 Council on Government Ethics Laws (COGEL) Conference that was held in early December. Kevin developed three panels this year and served on the "Elections Update" panel alongside United States Elections Assistance Commission Vice-Chair Thomas Hicks and Dr. Michael Boda, Chief Electoral Officer, Elections Saskatchewan. Legal Program Director Shannon Kief also served on a panel at COGEL – "Shining a Light on Dark Money: Lessons Learned from Early Reform Efforts" with Paul Ryan of Common Cause and Michael Sullivan, Director of the Massachusetts Office of Campaign & Political Finance. Kevin recently accepted reappointment to the Program Committee for the 2018 COGEL Conference.

This past fall, Shannon, along with Staff Attorneys Joshua Foley and Lindsey Leung, served on panels sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Southeastern Connecticut which focused on the Citizens' Election Program. Josh also represented the agency at the 35th Annual Connecticut Lobbying Conference held in October, serving on a panel concerning lobbyist compliance with elections and ethics laws.



We celebrate the following staff members for their years of state service:

Lead Legal Investigator
Gilberto Oyola – 30 years

DP Technical Analyst
Richard Bramande – 25 years

Staff Attorney
Kevin Ahern – 10 years

Staff Attorney
Joshua Foley – 10 years

Paralegal Specialist
Evelyn Gratacos – 10 years

Associate Accounts Examiner
Salman Munir – 10 years

Information Technology Analyst
Geetha Natarajan – 10 years

Disclosure and Audit Director
Linda Waterman – 10 years

