

FAIR ELECTION FUND COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

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May 10, 2024

This notice is coming to you because you were a candidate, committee chairperson, or treasurer with a Campaign Finance Entity created and used in a Prince George's County election prior to the current 2026 election cycle.

The County's new Fair Election Fund will provide matching funds to qualifying candidates for County Executive and County Council for the 2026 election cycle. Should candidates for those offices choose to opt-in for public financing there are limits on expenditures they may make from existing Campaign Finance Entities, including a deadline of June 30, 2024 to cease using funds from existing accounts. This and other restrictions are summarized below.

The publicly financed election program established by the County in 2018 is similar to those operating in Montgomery (2018 & 2022) and Howard (2022) counties. Candidates here may opt-in to finance their campaigns for County Executive and County Council offices using small contributions from County residents. Once candidates have reached a qualifying threshold for the program, the contributions they receive from County residents are matched with public funds from the County. The attached document shows the qualification threshold, the match rate, and the maximum public funds for each race.

In 2023, the County Council amended the 2018 legislation. Most amendments were technical in nature but there were a few substantive amendments we wish to bring to your attention. The 2023 bill passed by the County Council, CB-076-2023, is attached with important portions of the legislation highlighted on pages 4 and 5. Please read this carefully. Here are some relevant points:

Fair Election Fund Commission

c/o Office of Finance, Prince George's County Government
1301 McCormick Drive, Suite 1100, Largo, MD 20774

<https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/boards-commissions/fair-election-fund-commission>

1. Candidates who have not made any expenditures or transfers from their campaign accounts in the current election cycle are fully eligible to establish and run publicly financed campaigns in 2026, provided that the candidate certifies to the State Board of Elections that the candidate will freeze the pre-existing Campaign Finance Entity and will not accept any contributions nor make any expenditures or transfers from the Campaign Finance Entity.
2. Campaigns that have received contributions or made expenditures or transfers from pre-existing campaign accounts in this 2026 election cycle, which began January 1, 2023, have the following restrictions placed on their participation in the public financing program for 2026:
 - a. Candidates are ineligible for the program if they have already spent or transferred in excess of:
 - i. \$25,000 for County Executive office
 - ii. \$10,000 for County Council At-Large office
 - iii. \$5,000 for County Council District office
 - b. Those who have spent or transferred amounts less than specified in Section 2a above in the current election cycle, may participate in the 2026 public financing program provided:
 - i. They file notice of intent 24 months before the 2026 primary election, which is June 30, 2024, and
 - ii. They freeze their existing account and accept no further contributions nor make any further expenditures from their existing account.
 - c. On the date that the candidate certifies to the State Board of Elections that the candidate will freeze funds and not engage in any expenditures and transfers, the candidate must freeze those funds and not engage in any expenditures and transfers as of that date.
3. Before raising any contributions under this program, all candidates who intend to participate in the County's publicly financed election program must:
 - a. File a notice of intent with the State Board of Elections
 - b. Freeze any existing campaign accounts
 - c. Establish a Citizen Funded Campaign Account

This letter is a summary of some of the factors that may disqualify those with existing Campaign Finance Entities from participating in the County's new publicly funded campaign program that incentivizes small donor participation. In no way is this notification intended to provide legal or political advice to any campaign or candidate. Consult the Prince George's County Code (Sections 10-322 through 10-333) available at https://library.municode.com/md/prince_george's_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIIT117PULOLAPRGECOMA_SUBTITLE_10FITA_DIV26FAELFU and State and County election boards as soon as possible for complete information, and with any questions, so that you may fully understand the campaign finance options available to you and others for some of our 2026 County elections.

The Fair Election Fund Commission, whose volunteer members were appointed by the County Council and County Executive, is charged with overseeing the rollout and successful operation of the Prince George's County Fair Elections Fund and program. We welcome your assistance in publicizing this exciting new effort to advance grass roots democracy in Prince George's County. Information on our work and meetings, which are open to the public and usually held the second Wednesday of the month at 6:00 pm, can be found at <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/departments-offices/boards-commissions/fair-election-fund-commission>.

Sincerely,



Mrs. J.M. Parker
Chair, Fair Elections Fund Commission