

Wisconsin Ethics Commission

For candidate committees, political party committees, legislative campaign committees, political action committees, independent expenditure committees, referendum committees, and recall committees

Acceptance and Reporting of Anonymous Contributions

This guideline is provided as an information resource only. For authoritative advice, contact the Wisconsin Ethics Commission.

ACCEPTANCE OF ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS

Wisconsin Statutes allow committees to accept anonymous contributions not exceeding \$10.¹

REPORTING OF ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS

Wisconsin Statutes require committees to make full reports of contributions on forms prescribed by the Commission.² Committees shall make a good faith effort to obtain all required information regardless of the amount of the contribution.³ Required information includes the full name and street address of each person who has made a contribution to the committee.⁴ Reports shall include an itemized statement of each contribution given anonymously.⁵ Committees that accept anonymous contributions of \$10 or less must itemize and report each anonymous contribution as a separate transaction.⁶ Committees may *not* report an aggregate total of anonymous contributions of \$10 or less.⁷

As Wisconsin Statutes prohibit anonymous contributions over \$10 and require that anonymous contributions be itemized, the Commission recommends against the following practices:

- Placing or circulating contribution jars, baskets, buckets, etc., at properties, gatherings, or events.
- Conducting raffles, silent auctions, etc., where names and addresses are not collected.⁸
- Selling event tickets or merchandise, including, but not limited to yard signs, t-shirts, pins, stickers, where names and addresses are not collected.

If a committee wishes to engage in these practices, the Commission recommends that a responsible individual monitor the contribution jars or baskets, raffle or auction, or sales of tickets or merchandise

¹ [WIS. STAT. § 11.1108.](#)

² WIS. STAT. §§ [11.0204\(1\)\(a\)](#), [11.0304\(1\)\(a\)](#), [11.0404\(1\)\(a\)](#), [11.0504\(1\)\(a\)](#), [11.0604\(1\)\(a\)](#), [11.0804\(1\)\(a\)](#), [11.0904\(1\)\(a\)](#).

³ [WIS STAT. § 11.0103\(1\)\(a\)](#).

⁴ WIS. STAT. §§ [11.0204\(1\)\(a\)1.](#), [11.0304\(1\)\(a\)1.](#), [11.0404\(1\)\(a\)1.](#), [11.0504\(1\)\(a\)1.](#), [11.0604\(1\)\(a\)1.](#), [11.0804\(1\)\(a\)1.](#), [11.0904\(1\)\(a\)1.](#)

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *See Id.*

⁸ A raffle may have additional requirements as set forth by the Department of Administration's Division of Gaming. Committees should contact the Division for any questions on statutory requirements associated with raffles.

to make a good faith effort to obtain the names and addresses of contributors. A committee that engages in these practices must be able to accurately itemize each anonymous contribution received.

It is important to note that if a committee requests an individual to provide a name and address for a contribution of \$10 or less, the individual may request to remain anonymous, and the committee may accept that contribution. The contribution shall be itemized and reported as anonymous.

EXCESS ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS

If a committee accepts an anonymous contribution in excess of \$10, the committee shall donate the contribution to the common school fund or to a charitable organization.⁹ This means that, if a committee receives an anonymous contribution of more than \$10, the committee must donate the entire amount contributed. It is not sufficient to donate only the amount that the contribution exceeds \$10. Additionally, the committee shall specify in its report whether the committee donated the contribution to the common school fund or to a charitable organization and shall include the name and mailing address of the donee.¹⁰

CONTRIBUTIONS THAT SHOULD NOT BE REPORTED AS ANONYMOUS

When a committee receives the following types of contributions they should not be reported as anonymous:

- Any contribution over \$10
- Membership dues
- Periodic payroll deductions

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This is a guideline adopted by the Wisconsin Ethics Commission. Guidelines are prepared to provide general information to the public concerning the laws within the Commission's jurisdiction. Guidelines are not the law. Legal authority can be found in Wisconsin Statutes, the Wisconsin Administrative Code, case law, and the Commission's advisory opinions. If you have additional questions, please contact the Wisconsin Ethics Commission staff by email at CampaignFinance@wi.gov, or by phone at (608) 266-8123. Advice sought from the Ethics Commission is confidential. For additional information, please visit the Ethics Commission website: <https://ethics.wi.gov>.

⁹ [WIS. STAT. § 11.1108](#).

¹⁰ [WIS. STAT. §§ 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)4., 11.0304\(1\)\(a\)4., 11.0404\(1\)\(a\)4., 11.0504\(1\)\(a\)4., 11.0604\(1\)\(a\)4., 11.0804\(1\)\(a\)3., 11.0904\(1\)\(a\)4., and 11.1108](#).