



STATE OF MAINE  
COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS  
AND ELECTION PRACTICES  
135 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0135

## **ADVICE FOR TRADITIONALLY FINANCED CANDIDATES ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN THE MAINE CLEAN ELECTION ACT PROGRAM IN 2022**

The following guidance is for candidates who have previously run traditionally financed campaigns and who are considering participating in the Maine Clean Election Act (MCEA) program for 2022.

### **1. I ran for the Legislature in 2018 or 2020 and my previous campaign has surplus funds and/or an outstanding debt or loan. What do I need to do to run as an MCEA candidate in 2022?**

Surplus funds. To participate in the MCEA program in 2022, you must dispose of all your surplus funds. The Commission has guidance available at [www.maine.gov/ethics](http://www.maine.gov/ethics) that outlines nine options for donating or spending surplus campaign funds. The most frequently used options are contributing the funds to a party committee or non-profit organization, or returning the funds to their donors. Surplus funds may not be donated to a PAC. You may not use these funds to influence your 2022 election, other than carrying them forward as seed money (see next paragraph). Please dispose of the funds prior to collecting any seed money for 2022. You must file a final campaign finance report for your previous campaign to disclose how you disposed of your surplus. Please call a Candidate Registrar at 287-4179 about filing this report.

Carrying forward surplus funds as seed money. You may carry forward a limited amount of your surplus campaign funds as seed money – up to \$1,000 for House candidates and up to \$3,000 for Senate candidates. You are allowed to carry forward only contributions from individuals up to the amount of their contribution but no more than \$100. For example, you raised \$1,000 for your 2020 campaign – \$700 came from businesses, \$250 from Jane Doe and \$50 from John Doe. You have a campaign surplus of \$500. You can carry forward only \$150 – \$100 from Jane Doe and \$50 from John Doe. If you have any questions about how much surplus and which contributions you can carry forward, please call a Candidate Registrar.

Debt or loans from a previous campaign. You should dispose of unpaid debts and loans before registering as a candidate for 2022. You may raise more contributions or use your own funds to liquidate unpaid debts and loans from your previous campaign.

**2. I already registered for the 2022 elections as a traditionally financed candidate. May I switch to running as a MCEA candidate?**

If you have not yet raised or spent any funds since registering, you may switch from traditional financing to MCEA. Please file an amended registration and a Declaration of Intent form. If you have already accepted contributions that do not comply with seed money restrictions, you are ineligible for MCEA funding in this election. Please contact this agency if you are considering a change in your financing type and have further questions.

**3. I have a leadership PAC. Do I have to close it to run as a MCEA candidate in 2022?**

Yes, you would need to close your PAC by April 1, 2022 in order to be a MCEA candidate. You may be involved in your party's legislative caucus PAC. You may also be involved in ballot question committees, a PAC that supports or opposes a ballot question, and state and local party committees. The Commission has prepared [separate advice](#) on this, which is available at [www.maine.gov/ethics](http://www.maine.gov/ethics).

**4. When are MCEA candidates required to file their first campaign finance report for the 2022 elections?**

Candidates who have received or spent more than \$500 in seed money in 2021 must file a campaign finance report due January 18, 2022. This report is also required if you carried forward more than \$500 from your previous campaign during 2020. Otherwise, the seed money report due on April 20, 2022 will be your first report.

If you are disposing of surplus cash or liquidating a debt or loan from 2018 or 2020, you must also file a separate campaign finance report closing out your previous campaign.

**Please call your Candidate Registrar at 287-4179 with any questions!**