

Public Matching Funds

Los Angeles City Charter § 471

Effective April 8, 2011

Los Angeles City

ETHICS COMMISSION

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**Los Angeles City Charter
ARTICLE IV – ELECTIONS**

Additional limits and requirements are housed in Los Angeles Administrative Code §§ 24.31 et seq.

SEC. 471. PUBLIC MATCHING FUNDS AND CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURE LIMITATIONS.

(a) Findings and Purposes.

(1) Monetary contributions to political campaigns are a legitimate form of participation in the American political process, but the financial strength of certain individuals or organizations should not permit them to exercise a disproportionate or controlling influence on the election of candidates.

(2) Therefore, this section is enacted to accomplish the following purposes:

(A) To assist serious candidates in raising enough money to communicate their views and positions adequately to the public without excessive expenditures or contributions, thereby promoting public discussion of the important issues involved in political campaigns.

(B) To limit overall expenditures in campaigns, thereby reducing the pressure on candidates to raise large campaign funds for defensive purposes, beyond the amount necessary to communicate reasonably with voters.

(C) To provide a source of campaign financing in the form

of limited public matching funds.

(D) To substantially restrict fundraising in non-election years.

(E) To increase the value to candidates of smaller contributions.

(F) To reduce the excessive fundraising advantage of incumbents and thus encourage competition for elective office.

(G) To help restore public trust in governmental and electoral institutions.

(H) To avoid corruption or the appearance of corruption by providing an alternative source of funding for campaigns and reducing real or perceived ties between elected officials and special interests.

(b) Matching Funds and Expenditure Limitations Authorization.

The City shall also adopt by ordinance limitations on campaign expenditures by candidates for elected City office who qualify for and accept public matching funds. The City shall adopt by ordinance regulations concerning the use of public funds to partially finance campaigns for elected City office through a system of matching public funds for qualifying campaign

contributions. Such ordinances may be amended to further the purposes of this section of the Charter.

(c) Appropriation of Funds.

(1) The City Council shall appropriate two million dollars (\$2,000,000) per fiscal year for public matching funds. The Council shall appropriate such funds for each following fiscal year. The amount of such appropriation shall be adjusted for cost of living changes based on the percentage increase or decrease in the Consumer Price Index (for all items other than housing) for the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County metropolitan statistical area using 1991 as the base year. The City Council, by a two-thirds vote, may reduce or eliminate the annual appropriation made during a fiscal year provided that: (a) the City Council has declared a fiscal emergency by resolution that is in effect for that fiscal year; (b) the trust fund balance is no less than eight million dollars (\$8,000,000) in 1991 dollars adjusted to the Consumer Price Index at the time of the appropriation; and (c) the City Council has considered the City Ethics Commission's analysis regarding projected costs and estimated public funding needs for the next four years.

(2) All such funds shall be appropriated into a trust fund established by the Council by ordinance with interest accruing to the fund. In addition to the authority provided by Charter section 340, the City Council, by a

two-thirds vote, may temporarily transfer funds from the trust fund to meet obligations of the City in any fiscal year, provided that: (a) the City Council has declared a fiscal emergency by resolution that is in effect for that fiscal year; (b) the City Council has considered the City Ethics Commission's analysis regarding projected costs and estimated public funding needs for the next four years; and (c) the funds transferred are limited to funds above a trust fund balance of eight million dollars (\$8,000,000) in 1991 dollars adjusted to the Consumer Price Index. Any transferred funds shall be reimbursed to the trust fund by either (a) the date the City Ethics Commission determines the funds are needed for their intended purposes, or (b) before the end of the next fiscal year, whichever is earlier.

(3) If there are insufficient funds to provide the maximum matching funds available to a candidate in any election, as specified by ordinance, the limitations on total contributions from persons other than individuals imposed by Section 470 shall not apply to any of the candidates for the same office.

(4) The funds used to make payments for matching funds shall come exclusively from City sources of revenues.

*History:
Charter Amendment H §§ 6 and 7: Subsecs. (a)(2) and (c)
amended, approved March 8, 2011, effective April 8, 2011.*