

I'd Like To...



## Democracy Fund

**Notice: The New Haven Democracy Fund is actively seeking new board members from any political party. Apply today!**

## About the Democracy Fund

The New Haven Democracy Fund, utilizing appropriations from the Board of Aldermen and citizens' contributions, provides public matching funds and public financing grants to Mayoral candidates who voluntarily agree to abide by certain restrictions and limitations on how campaign funds are raised and spent.

The Democracy Fund is a pilot program approved in 2007 by the State Elections Enforcement Commission of the State of Connecticut. The State General Assembly had authorized the Commission to approve up to three pilot programs for public financing of municipal election. The City of New Haven is the first and only municipality in the State to establish a public financing system for municipal elections.

The purpose of the Democracy Fund is to ensure that all citizens of the City of New Haven have a fair and meaningful opportunity to participate in the election of their Mayor. Specifically, the ordinance aims to counter the perception that New Haven's public policy is influenced by campaign contributions; to ensure that meritorious Mayoral candidates are able to raise and spend sufficient funds through public financing of elections to convey their messages to the voters; to reduce the need for ongoing fundraising and to encourage Mayoral candidacies to spend more time communicating with citizens; and to give all citizens an opportunity for a reasonable supporting role in the selection of Mayor by making even small contributions meaningful.

The Democracy Fund is overseen by a seven-member volunteer board. A Democracy Fund Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Democracy Fund. A Democracy Fund Investigator is responsible for investigating alleged violations of the Democracy Fund ordinance and complaints made against participating candidates.

A Mayoral candidate becomes a participating candidate by agreeing to abide by the contribution and expenditure limitations and ceilings established by the Democracy Fund ordinance. Contributions are limited to no more than \$390.00 from individuals or a town committee. A participating candidate must not accept contributions from political committees or business entities. Qualified campaign expenditures are limited to no more than \$368,000.00 in a primary election and \$368,000.00 in a general election.

The Democracy Fund provides public matching funds up to \$125,000.00 and a public financing grant of \$20,000.00 for both the primary elections and the general election. A candidate's contribution of his or her own personal funds is limited to no more than \$20,000.00 per primary or general election.

In order to qualify for public matching funds for a primary election or a general election, a participating candidate must raise two hundred (200) contributions, from separate individuals who are electors (that is, registered voters) of the City of New Haven, of no less than \$10.00 and no more than \$390.00. Matching funds consist of \$30.00 per distinct individual contributor of \$30.00 or more; contributions under \$30.00 are matched two-to-one.



The Democracy Fund Board has the authority to levy fines for violation of the Democracy Fund Ordinance by participating candidates.