

Campaign Finance Reporter Online (CFRO) Training - Basic



MINNESOTA
CAMPAIGN FINANCE BOARD

What Will Be Covered

- Changes and similarities between Campaign Finance Reporter (CFR) and Campaign Finance Reporter Online (CFRO)
- How to access CFRO
- Committee info and officers
- Receipts and expenses
- Maintaining entities
- Compliance warnings
- Reports
- Political contribution refund (PCR) receipts
- Affidavit of contributions (for candidates)



What Has Changed

- CFRO is web-based and encrypted data is stored on a remote server
- Multiple individuals may manage one filer from any location with internet
- Simplified set up based on registration info
- User may change or reset username and password
- No need to initialize new calendar year
- No software or updates to download
- Enhanced ability to edit transactions and to import receipts and expenses
- Waivers of electronic filing requirement granted prior to 2023 have been revoked

What Remains Similar

- Menu options and process of entering most types of receipts and expenses is very similar
- CFRO checks for potential compliance issues in a similar manner
- Filing reports is easier but similar
- Maintenance of entities is easier but similar
- One individual may manage multiple filers and it is easier to switch between filers

CFRO Tips and Tricks

- Names of individuals are formatted lastname, firstname in lists and on reports
- Dates are formatted mmddyyyy
- Use tab key to move between fields
- Decimal point and subsequent zeros may be omitted when entering even amounts
- When entering contributions to or from entities registered with Board, use registration number whenever possible
- Enter data and review compliance warnings regularly to reduce risk of violations

How to Access CFRO

- Committee must be registered with the Board
- CFR users should follow [CFRO migration video](#) or [these written instructions](#)
- Former paper report filers should email andrew.d.olson@state.mn.us to request a username and password
- Sign in at logon.cfb.mn.gov/sso/, then select Report online
- Use forgot username/password buttons if needed

Committee Info and Officers

- Navigate to Committee > Information to view info including contribution limits for candidates
- Screen is also used to view or change beginning cash balance when needed
- Navigate to Committee > Officers to view officer contact info on file with the Board

Entering Receipts

Receipts

Add List

Choose receipt type

Select receipt type ▼

Save

Cancel

Cash Contributions From Individuals

- Select receipt type Contribution from individual or lobbyist
- Search by last name or lobbyist registration number, and if not found, add new entity – include address and employment info
- Add amount and date, then Save

Joint Cash Contributions

- Only applies to contributions from married spouses
- Process starts the same as for contributions from individuals
- Select Yes radio button, select spouse, enter amount attributable to that spouse, enter amount attributable to other spouse, enter date, then Save
- Unlike CFR, neither amount should be the total amount of the joint contribution

Cash Contributions From Registered Groups

- Select appropriate receipt type
- Search by registration number or name
- Add amount and date, then Save
- If unsure whether contributor is a committee/fund or a party unit, try each
- Disclosure statement required for contribution to candidate from terminating state-level candidate

Cash Contributions From Individuals of \$20 or Less

- Select receipt type Contribution from individuals – each \$20 or less
- Add total amount, date, and a brief description, then Save
- This receipt type is used for pass-the-hat type fundraising in which multiple individuals provide small amounts of cash and no contributor names are collected

In-Kind Contributions

- Select receipt type Inkind contribution
- Select entity type of contributor
- Search by name and if not found, add new entity – if individual, add employment info
- Add amount, date, and a brief description, select Record Inkind Expenditure, select appropriate corresponding expense type, add remaining required info, then Save

Loan Receipts

- Select receipt type Loan receipt – committee borrowing
- Select entity type of lender
- Search by name and if not found, add new entity including full address
- Add amount, date, and a brief description, then Save

Miscellaneous Income

- Select receipt type Miscellaneous income
- Select entity type of payor
- Search by name and if not found, add new entity – if individual, add employment info
- Add amount, date, and a brief description, then Save

Public Subsidy Payment (for candidates only)

- Add amount and date, then Save
- If you receive one public subsidy payment after the primary and another small payment in December, please enter both payments

Return of Contribution Made in a Prior Year

- Select entity type of payor
- Search by name or registration number
- Add amount, date, and a brief description, then Save
- This receipt type should be used only when a refund is received for a contribution made more than 90 days prior, in a prior calendar year

Modifying Receipts

Receipts

Add List

Receipt type		In-Kind	
Contribution from individual or lobbyist		☐ Yes ☒ No	
Source		Joint contribution	
Foster, Kate 400 Bishop Ave Elko New Market MN 55020 Edit		☐ Yes ☒ No	
Receipt date	Deposit date (Optional)	PCR Number (Optional)	
05/01/2023		10001_2147141765	
Retained Amount	Reported Amount	Deposit Amount	
500	500	500	
Choose project (Optional)			
Select a project			
Save Delete Cancel			

Deleting a Receipt

- Navigate to Receipts > List, select Edit button next to receipt, then Delete
- Receipts may only be deleted prior to being reported to the Board, and some receipts that trigger a compliance warning cannot be deleted
- If needed, you may zero out a receipt rather than deleting it

Changing Amount of a Receipt

- Navigate to Receipts > List, select Edit button next to receipt, change retained amount, enter effective date of the change, select reason, then Save
- Use this method to zero out a receipt that was entered in error
- Use this method if a receipt was refunded in whole or in part within same year in which it was received; ensure effective date is date refund was issued

Wrong Receipt Type or Source

- Receipt type and source cannot be changed
- If wrong receipt type or source was selected, delete or zero out receipt and then re-enter it
- Click Edit next to Source name to modify name, address, and/or employment info of a contributor

Entering Expenses

Expenses

Add List Unpaid

Choose expense type

Select expenditure type ▼

Save Cancel

Cash General Expenditures

- Select expense type General Expenditure
- If not yet paid, select unpaid
- Select vendor's entity type
- Search by name or registration number and if not found, add new entity
- Add date and amount, select most applicable description, add a brief explanation, then Save

Cash Noncampaign Disbursements (for candidates only)

- Some noncampaign disbursements are classified automatically based on description selected; if not, and expense is a noncampaign disbursement, select Yes then select appropriate category
- See [Guidance document](#) or contact Board staff with questions

Cash Contributions to Other Registered Entities

- Select proper expense type based on the type of recipient
- Search by registration number or name of recipient; if recipient is a candidate committee, search by the candidate's last name
- Add date and amount, then Save

Cash Contributions to Local Committees (does not apply to state-level candidates)

- Select expense type Contribution to local committee
- Select local region, then search by last name of candidate; select Region not listed for any committee outside regions listed, search by name of recipient and if not found, add new entity
- Add date and amount, then Save

Reimbursement of Individual

- Select expense type Reimburse individual
- Enter reimbursement date, or if unpaid leave blank and select unpaid
- Search for individual by last name and if not found, add new entity
- Select vendor's entity type
- Search for vendor by name or registration number and if not found, add new entity
- Add date and amount, select description, and add a brief explanation, then Save

Credit card expenses

- Use expense type Credit card expenditures
- Enter date card issuer was paid, or if unpaid leave blank and select unpaid
- Search for card issuer by name and if not found, add new entity
- Select vendor's entity type
- Search for vendor by name or registration number and if not found, add new entity
- Add date and amount, select description, and add a brief explanation, then Save

Contribution to charity

- Use only for donation to 501(c)(3) charity; \$100 per year limit unless terminating
- Search by name of recipient and if not found, add new entity
- Add date, amount, and brief explanation, then Save
- Expenses for advertising related to sponsoring an organization's event should be entered as an expenditure

In-kind expenses

- Use expense type Inkind Expenditure if you received an in-kind contribution, unless item was donated to another entity
- Select corresponding receipt and a description, add an explanation, then Save
- Inkind expenses are typically entered at the same time that the corresponding in-kind receipt is entered

Loan payments

- Select expense type Loan payment
- Select the loan being repaid
- Enter date, amount, and a brief explanation, then Save

Cash Independent Expenditures (does not apply to candidates)

- Select expense type Independent expenditure
- If for/against “local candidate” in Hennepin County, select local candidate and local region
 - Expenditures for/against other local candidates entered as general expenditures
- Search by last name of candidate, or registration number of state candidate

Cash Independent Expenditures, cont.

- If not yet paid, select unpaid
- Select vendor's entity type
- Search by name or registration number and if not found, add new entity
- Add date and amount, select most applicable description, and add a brief explanation of what was purchased
- Select for or against, then Save

Approved Expenditures (does not apply to candidates)

- Select expense type Approved expenditure
- If for “local candidate” in Hennepin County, select local candidate and local region
 - Expenditures for other local candidates entered as general expenditures
- Search by last name of candidate, or registration number of state candidate
- If not yet paid, select unpaid

Approved Expenditures, cont.

- Select vendor's entity type
- Search by name or registration number and if not found, add new entity
- Add date and amount, select most applicable description, and add a brief explanation of what was purchased
- Select yes if written approval obtained from candidate's treasurer, then Save

Modifying Expenses

Expenses

[Add](#) [List](#) [Unpaid](#)

Choose expense type

Expenditure

Expense status

☒ Paid ☐ Unpaid

Vendor

Bob's Coffee LLC 123 Main St Cloquet MN 55720 [Edit](#)

Description

Food and Beverages

Non-campaign disbursement

☒ Yes ☐ No

Choose project (Optional)

Select a project

Check number

Invoice, etc (Optional)

Date

05/01/2023

Amount

2,500

Explanation

Catering for fundraising event

[Guidance on use and reporting of campaign money for noncampaign disbursements \(PDF\)](#)

Non-Campaign Disbursement Type

Food, beverages and supplies for fundraising event

[Save](#) [Delete](#) [Cancel](#)

Marking an Unpaid Bill as Paid

- Navigate to Expenses > Unpaid, select Pay button next to expense, enter date and amount, then Save
- This is the only way to mark an unpaid bill entered in CFRO as paid
- If unpaid bill was never entered in CFR or CFRO, navigate to Expenses > Add, then add General Expenditure using description Payments on Prior Year Unpaid Bills

Deleting an Expense

- Navigate to Expenses > List, select Edit button next to expense, then Delete
- Expenses may only be deleted prior to being reported to the Board, and some expenses that trigger a compliance warning cannot be deleted
- If needed, you may zero out an expense rather than deleting it

Changing Amount of an Expense

- Navigate to Expenses > List, select Edit button next to expense, change amount, enter effective date of the change, select reason, then Save
- Use this method to zero out an expense that was entered in error
- Use this method if a payment was refunded in whole or in part within same year in which it was made

Wrong Expense Type, Vendor, Affected Committee, Reimbursee

- These selections cannot be changed
- If wrong expense type, vendor, affected committee, reimbursee, credit card company, or corresponding in-kind receipt was selected, delete or zero out expense and then re-enter it
- Click Edit next to Vendor name to modify name, address, and/or entity subtype of a vendor

Maintaining Entities

Entities						
Add List						
Page 1 of 1 20 1 to 16 of 16 Export Clear Filters						
Edit/View	Entity type	Name	Address	City	State	Zipcode
	--Select--	Filter (begins with)	Filter (begins with)	Filter (begins with)	Filter (begins with)	Filter (begins with)
Delete Edit	Individual	Cameron, Alford	400 Bishop Ave Elko New Market MN 5...	Elko New Market	MN	55020
Delete Edit	Business	AdSpace	75 53rd Lane Faribault MN 55021	Faribault	MN	55021
Delete Edit	Business	KLIX Radio	47 Jennings Avenue Farmington MN 55...	Farmington	MN	55024
Delete Edit	Charity	People for Parks	7752 South St Margarets Street Forest...	Forest Lake	MN	55025
Delete Edit	Federal	American Values PAC	631 Court Road Babbitt MN 55706	Babbitt	MN	55706
Delete Edit	Individual	Casey, Elise	9225 Wood Lane Grandy MN 55029	Grandy	MN	55029
Delete Edit	Charity	People for Pollinators	1409 Smith Rd Cloquet MN 55720	Cloquet	MN	55720
Delete Edit	Federal	Stars and Stripes PAC	1505 W St Washington DC 20005	Washington	DC	20005
Delete Edit	Individual	Wilson, Donald	315 Birch Trl Elko New Market MN 55020	Elko New Market	MN	55020

Name, Address, Employment Info, and Entity Subtypes

- To edit an entity, navigate to Entities > List, then select Edit button to left of entity
- Make changes as needed, then Save
- For employment info, include employer name; if self-employed or not employed, add occupation, such as retired, plumber, etc.
- Entities registered with Board cannot be edited, except to add employment info for lobbyists

Contributor Spouse Info

- Navigate to Entities > List, then select Edit button next to contributor
- Search by last name in Choose spouse field, select spouse, then Save; if not found, select Click here to add a new entity, enter spouse's info, then Save
- To remove a spouse, select Remove to right of Choose spouse field

Entity Merge

- Navigate to Maintenance > Entity merge, select entity to be eliminated on left, select entity to remain on right, then Save
- This will result in any transactions linked to eliminated entity being linked to entity that remains

Compliance Warnings

Compliance Warnings		
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Fix/List	Name ^	Description
▼ List	Aggregate	The maximum amount that may be contributed to a 501(c)3 charity in a calendar year is \$100. This limit does not apply to a committee that is terminating.
✎ Fix	American Values PAC	This contribution is from an association not registered in Minnesota. The contribution may not be accepted unless a disclosure report was provided with the contribution.
✎ Fix	Bowling Political Action Committee	Contributions from a political committee, political fund, lobbyist, or unregistered association received during a legislative session are prohibited.
✎ Fix	Cortez, Arthur	An in-kind receipt must be reported as fully expended during the same reporting period it is received.
▼ List	Cox, Brandy	With this contribution or loan, the committee is over the aggregate limit for contributions from this donor.
▼ List	Save America PAC	With this contribution or loan, the committee is over the aggregate limit for contributions from this donor.
✎ Fix	Sharif, Suleyman	Employment information is required for this individual, who has contributed or loaned over \$200 in aggregate.
✎ Fix	Test Company 1	Expenditures of more than \$200 have been made to this vendor. The complete vendor address is required.
▼ List	Wagner, Leon	With this contribution or loan, the committee is over the aggregate limit for contributions from the candidate during a two year segment.

Viewing Compliance Warnings

- Select the Compliance warnings button from the home screen, or navigate to Maintenance > Compliance warnings
- If you think changes have been made that should have caused less or more compliance warnings to be displayed, navigate to Reports > Initialize Batch compliance to reset the warnings displayed

Addressing Compliance Warnings

- Select Fix to left of warning; select List if warning pertains to an aggregate limit, then select Fix to left of transaction; some warnings may be Ignored
- If warning pertains to info about an entity, add missing info, then Save
- If warning pertains to a contribution limit, modify contributions as needed to fix data entry errors or account for returned contributions, then Save

Addressing Compliance Warnings, cont.

- If warning pertains to info about an entity, add missing info, then Save
- If warning pertains to an unexpended in-kind receipt, add a corresponding in-kind expenditure or contribution, then Save
- If warning pertains to a contribution from an unregistered association, obtain any required disclosure statement, edit receipt to state that it was obtained, then Save

Addressing Compliance Warnings, cont.

- If warning pertains to a prohibited contribution or exceeding a contribution limit, remember that a contribution may be returned within 90 days of deposit
- If warning pertains to a candidate spending limit, make sure expenses are properly classified as expenditures or noncampaign disbursements
- When in doubt, contact Board staff

Previewing and Filing Reports

Board reports

2023 Year-End Report



(Due date: 01/31/2024) - Not submitted

- ☐ Transaction summary
- ☐ Contributions received (A1 Schedules)
- ☐ Other receipts (A2 Schedules)
- ☐ Expenditures and disbursements
- ☐ Contributions made (B2 Schedules)
- ☐ Outstanding loans in prior years (Schedule C)
- ☐ Unpaid bills (Schedule D)

Print

Special report indicators

- ☐ No change since last report ☐ Amendment ☐ Termination

Certification

First name

Middle name

Last name

Kerttu

Virtanen

- ☐ I certify that this report is complete, true, and correct.

Submit

Board Reports

- Navigate to Reports > Board reports
- Ensure correct report is selected
- Use checkboxes to preview portions of the report, then select Print
- Before filing, check any applicable boxes under Special report indicators heading
- Complete certification, then Submit
- After filing, screen will say Submitted

User Reports

- Navigate to Reports > User reports
- May generate reports showing all receipts, all expenses, or both
- Reports are sorted by date or by name
- Reports may cover the calendar year only, the two-year election cycle segment, or a custom period
- User reports include transactions that are not itemized within Board reports

Pre-Election Large Contribution Notices (does not apply to party units)

- Enter large contributions immediately after receipt during notice periods
- You should be prompted automatically to file a notice after entering a contribution necessitating a notice
- If no notice is filed at that time, navigate to Reports > Large contribution notices, then select Generate Notices
- Select generated to view filed notices

Political contribution refund (PCR) receipts (does not apply to political committees/funds)

Public Subsidy

Public subsidy signed on 02/01/2023

[Affidavit of Contributions](#) [List PCR](#)

Filter type

☒ Pending ☐ Generated

☐ Enable range condition

[Generate PCRs](#) [Clear Filters](#)

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Edit	Name ▲	Date	PCR Number	PCR Sent	Amount	Value received	Address
	Filter (begins with)	Filter (>)		Filter (>)	Filter (>=)	Filter (>=)	Filter (contains)
Edit	Banks, Kayla	2/12/23			50.00		95 West Young Court Hastings...
Edit	Burns, Meredith	2/6/23			250.00		8843 South Tallwood St Front...
Edit	Carter, Ellen	2/24/23			300.00		9685 Lafayette Lane Bruno M...
Edit	Cortez, Arthur	2/14/23			50.00		291 S Fordham St Hinckley M...
Edit	Cox, Brandy	5/6/23			100.00		81 Garden St Aurora MN 55705
Edit	Foster, Kate	2/2/23			50.00		400 Bishop Ave Elko New Mar...
Edit	Frazier, Jerald	2/21/23			150.00		7250 Maple St Bovey MN 557...
Edit	Guzman, Bobby	2/10/23			450.00		80 Westminster Dr Hampton ...
Edit	Hansen, Leland	2/7/23			300.00		425 St Margarets Street Good...
Edit	Hodges, Gwendolyn	2/25/23			350.00		5 E College Street Buhl MN 55...

Generating/Viewing PCR Receipts

- Navigate to Public Subsidy > Political contribution refund
- Select Generate PCRs to generate pending PCR receipts, then select Print PCRs to view/print receipts, Print Labels to view/print mailing labels, and Process Complete to note receipts have been sent
- Select Generated to see generated PCR receipts, then use the same options to view/print all or record all as sent

Affidavit of Contributions (for candidates only)

Public Subsidy

Public subsidy signed on 02/01/2023

[Affidavit of Contributions](#) [List PCRs](#)

Candidate's Name Wagner, Leon House of Representatives 11A Committee

Registration number 10001

Required qualifying contribution amount: \$1,500.00

Current qualifying contribution amount reported by Campaign Finance Reporter Online since January 01, 2023.

\$2,800.00

Affidavit

☒ The undersigned candidate, treasurer, or deputy treasurer certifies pursuant to Minnesota statutes, section 10A.025, subdivision 2, that the following is true:

The principal campaign committee named above has received at least \$1,500.00 from eligible Minnesota voters between January 01, 2023 and July 18, 2024, counting only the first \$50 from each contributor.

Certification

First name

Kerttu

Middle name

Last name

Virtanen

☒ I certify that this affidavit is complete, true, and complete.

[Submit](#)

[Cancel](#)

Filing Affidavit of Contributions

- Navigate to Public Subsidy > Affidavit of Contributions
- Once committee has reached qualifying amount, certify that fact, then Submit
- Only principal campaign committees with a public subsidy agreement may file an affidavit of contributions
- There is no grace period; if affidavit is not filed by due date, candidate will not receive a public subsidy payment

When In Doubt Ask



- Online training videos at cfb.mn.gov/filer-resources/self-help/education-and-tools/online-videos
- Call (651) 539-1180 or (800) 657-3889
- The Board's website address is: cfb.mn.gov
- You can find handbooks, download forms, and obtain staff contact info on the website