

Commissioner of Political Practices Program Goals		Agency/Program #: 3202-01-G2
		Division: _____
		Program: Administration
Agency Name:	Commissioner of Political Practices	
Agency Contact:	Dennis Unsworth	444-2942
LFC Contact:	Representative Sesso, Representative Taylor	
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Program or Project Description:

This project involves providing an electronic filing system and additional resources on the web for political campaigns in order to simplify reporting, reduce campaign reporting errors, enhance public disclosure, and improve compliance with the law.

Appropriation, Expenditure and Source					
Fund Name:	2008		2009		Approp & Expenditure numbers are as of June 30, 2009
	Approp.	Expended	Approp.	Expended	
General Fund	58,101	58,101	111,812	111,490	<i>Budget updated to April 30, 2010</i>
State Special					
Federal Funds					
Total:	\$58,101	\$58,101	\$111,812	\$111,490	

Legislative Goal(s):

Facilitate accurate and timely filing of the required campaign finance reports.

Legislative Performance Measures:

Reduce filing errors by 25 percent by December 2008. Point those with questions to the website and maintain timely and topical information so that fewer than 25 percent of callers call back with more questions.

2009 Biennium Significant Milestones:	Completion Dates	
	Target	Actual
Testing for candidate registration and reporting is underway.	12/21/2007	Registration -- 12/7/2007
Launch of candidate registration and reporting is planned for early in the new year.	1/10/2008	Registration -- 12/12/2007
Development of committee registration is underway with launch planned for March '08	revised to 12/15/2009	delayed again -- unknown
Testing continues for both candidate and committee reporting. Services will be launched as soon as they're ready	revised to 12/15/2009	candidate 12/11/2009 **
The degree of success in meeting our goal will be evident following reporting on the Nov '08 election.	12/23/2008	failed
Remake the CPP website; provide more information and an enhanced 'search' function.	12/15/2008	6/23/2008

Agency Performance Report:

We've made good progress on the second performance measure – reducing the need for call-backs with additional resources on the web.

- All the frequently used forms are on the front page - home page - of the website. There's no need to search.
- These forms are now available in 3 versions, including on-line fillable PDFs and fully-functional Excel versions.
- All candidate and committee-filed campaign finance forms are available to the public on-line now, for both viewing and printing.
- Current issues are put front-and-center on the home page. For example, the Citizens United Supreme Court Decision is featured prominently, with a brief analysis of how it affects Montana.
- Both the candidate and committee reporting manuals have been fully updated to be easier to use, with an emphasis on helpful advice.
- Answers to nearly 200 questions in a Frequently Asked Questions format are now available and searchable on the website.
- Formal opinions are more readily available – all decisions dating back to 1990 are now posted on the web and searchable. This allows us to respond to requests for legal advice by referring callers to past complaint decisions, instead of venturing into the dangerous territory of having non-attorneys give legal advice.

When we reported late last year, information was provided on 9 status items related to electronic filing that were taken care of already, or were in progress.

Most significant, in my opinion, is that the public-facing side of the service is not completed, and won't be in the foreseeable future. Our goal for searchable, sortable, downloadable data – the widely accepted and logical goal of these programs -- won't be met without much more work and expense. An opportunity was missed, and that failure will be felt for years to come.

Just as troubling is that once again this campaign season, we're using work-arounds and paper based systems instead of on-line systems for campaign reporting. We continue to work on and support the on-line services, but half of that is working poorly and the other half once again won't be ready for campaign season, despite assurances from the contractor to the contrary.

** Candidate reporting and upload services were launched December 11, 2009. Work started immediately on the committee (PAC) side of the service. On March 15, a candidate's treasurer reported that about two weeks worth of data entry had disappeared – had been "dumped" by the service. On March 30, a second incident of lost data was reported. March 31 we requested that the system be taken down for repairs. Some changes were made April 2 and the service was brought back up, but the problem persists. The contractor estimates 160 hours to fix most of the problem. On May 17 a work order was approved. Work on the committee (PAC) service won't resume until the candidate fix is made and tested.

LFD Narrative:

LFD Assessment: On Track, with exceptions

Data Relevance: The agency provided information that is relative to the stated performance measures, however there has not been presented a complete list of the features and functions that the system was intended to have and which of those are operational.

Appropriation Status: The \$169,913 appropriations made for the 2009 biennium for the on-line registration and reporting system in the report have been expended (\$24,025 encumbered). The 2009 legislature provided a restricted appropriation to the agency of \$40,000 for work to complete the campaign filing system. Total project expenditures have been just over \$179,000.

Options:

- 1) Dismiss from further review
- 2) Review again in October, 2010
- 3) Request additional information
- 4) Upgrade or downgrade the rating

Potential questions for the workgroup:

- Do you have an enumerated list of the features that were originally specified for the system, modifications that were made to the list or items, and the status (functional or non-functional) of the items?
- Has there been an item by item cost estimate produced for each of the non-functioning items?
- Has a prioritized list of items to be fixed been created?
- What is the net impact of the project in terms of work load decreased or increased, accuracy of information, ease of use, and access to information?

Version	Date	Author
	6/2/2010	Stayner

Change Description