

Democracy Dollars Program Postponed

At its July 12 meeting, the Public Ethics Commission (PEC) voted unanimously to postpone distribution of Democracy Dollars vouchers for the 2024 election cycle. The Democracy Dollars program was established by Oakland voters with the passage [Measure W](#), the Oakland Fair Elections Act, in November of 2022. This advisory provides candidates with an update of the program's status and where to find additional information.

What is the Democracy Dollars Program?

The democracy Dollars Program establishes a newly designed public campaign financing program that disperses \$100 in Democracy Dollar vouchers to eligible Oakland residents who can then assign the Dollars to the candidate of their choice. The Program is modelled after Seattle's pioneering Democracy Vouchers public financing system and is designed to address recommendations in the Commission's 2020 [Race for Power report](#) to make Oakland elections more equitable.

Why is the Democracy Dollars Program launch delayed for the 2024 election cycle?

Under Oakland Fair Elections Act, the Commission is required to vote on a delay if it cannot fully implement the program. Because the Fiscal Year 2023-2025 Adopted Budget does not provide funding for the Democracy Dollars vouchers or sufficient staffing and resources to administer the full Program or a pilot, the Commission voted to postpone the distribution and use of Democracy Dollars vouchers for the 2024 election cycle. However, the Commission is continuing to build out the technology, policy, and staffing infrastructure to successfully implement the Program in subsequent elections.

When is the first election that Democracy Dollars will be used?

Funds available for 2026 candidates will be announced after the 2025-2027 Budget is adopted in June 2025. In early 2026, the PEC will distribute the Democracy Dollars to Oakland residents. Eligible residents can then use their Democracy Dollars to support participating candidates running for Oakland elected offices.

Are new contribution limits and other campaign rules amended by Measure W postponed?

No. Amendments to the Oakland Campaign Reform Act, such as revised campaign contribution limits and new disclaimer requirements for political ads and social media accounts, took effect January 1, 2023, and are not altered by the delayed Democracy Dollars roll-out. For a summary of changes visit: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/recent-campaign-rules>

How can I stay informed about the Democracy Dollars Program?

- [Subscribe](#) for email updates from the Public Ethics Commission;
- Follow us on social media;
- Visit the [Democracy Dollars](#) website;
- Come to the Commission's [monthly meeting](#).

Please contact Jelani Killings at (510) 484-1292 or jkillings@oaklandca.gov if you have any questions.