

Item 9 – Disclosure Report



James E.T. Jackson, Chair
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Whitney Barazoto, Executive Director

TO: Public Ethics Commission
FROM: Suzanne Doran, Lead Analyst
Jelani Killings, Ethics Analyst
Whitney Barazoto, Executive Director
DATE: October 22, 2020
RE: Disclosure and Engagement Report for the November 2, 2020, PEC Meeting

This memorandum provides a summary of the Public Ethics Commission's (PEC or Commission) Disclosure and Engagement program activities since the last monthly meeting. Commission staff disclosure activities focus on improving online tools for public access to local campaign finance and other disclosure data, enhancing compliance with disclosure rules, and conducting data analysis for PEC projects and programs as required. Engagement activities include training and resources provided to the regulated community, as well as general outreach to Oakland residents to raise awareness of the Commission's role and services and to provide opportunity for dialogue between the Commission and community members.

Filing Officer/Disclosure

Campaign Finance – October 22 marked the second pre-election deadline for the November 2020 election. The first pre-election deadline occurred on September 24. All candidates on the November ballot must file pre-election statements for their campaign committees as well as any other committees that they control. Ballot measure committees and other recipient committees with fundraising or spending activity connected with the November ballot must also file by the pre-election deadlines. Pre-election filings are undergoing facial review by Commission staff.

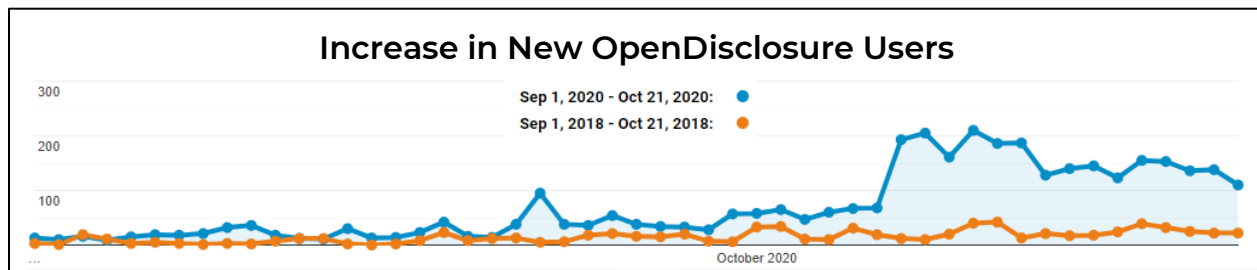
Just under \$2 million in independent spending to influence Oakland elections was reported through October 21. Independent expenditures totaling more than \$125,000 have been made by an independent committee in the race for City Council At-Large and more than \$27,000 by an independent committee in each of the City Council District 3, Oakland School Board District 1, School Board District 3, School Board District 5, and School Board District 7 races. Per the Oakland Campaign Reform Act, this means that the local campaign expenditure ceilings no longer apply to any candidate seeking election to those offices and they are able to spend money over the expenditure ceiling (see our webpage for a [list of the expenditure ceilings for each City office](#)). Expenditure ceilings for all other races remain in effect. Commission staff issued advisories to campaign filers as the threshold to lift the expenditure ceiling was reached for each of the aforementioned electoral races.

Lobbyist Registration and Reporting – The third quarter lobbyist activity report deadline is October 30. Deadline notifications emails were issued through our new OakApps lobbyist reporting system.

Illuminating Disclosure Data

Open Disclosure – The www.OpenDisclosure.io campaign finance app went live in September with new features and data for the 2020 election as reported in October. Increasing the number of OpenDisclosure users was a major goal for the 2020 election period. Commission staff targeted outreach to individuals looking for information on elections and local politics by focusing on announcements and ads coinciding with election coverage and voter education. Digital and print ads are running in the East Bay Express and [Oaklandside](#) from early October through Election Day. Announcements have been sent out through the League of Women Voters Oakland newsletter, East Bay Express e-alerts, and Oaklandside newsletter. The site is also being promoted via social media through the PEC, OpenDisclosure, and East Bay Express social media accounts.

In addition, the League of Women Voters [election resources webpage](#) and [Voter’s Edge](#) website are both linking to Open Disclosure. Online referrals (users clicking a link from another source) are an important source of users. Over 1,000 user referrals came from the Voter’s Edge website, a voter information site produced by MapLight in partnership with the California League of Women Voters. User engagement with Open Disclosure content is already showing significant increases over prior election years. Users increased by 97 percent over 2018, with 6,226 new users visiting the site in 2020 so far. Open Disclosure received 29,932 pageviews between January 1 and October 21. Website data shows upticks in daily users roughly corresponding with the publication of ads and email alerts as well as major pre-election filing deadlines. In prior years, engagement usually peaks in the week leading up to the Election Day.



Since launching Open Disclosure in 2014, the site has reached 27,523 users with 127,329 views of Open Disclosure content. Open Disclosure is a project of Open Oakland volunteers in partnership with Public Ethics Commission staff.

New Oakland Campaign Finance App – An innovative new tool that builds maps showing the geographic source of campaign contributions to Oakland candidates and political committees will soon be available to Oakland residents. The “Show me the money” tool was developed by Tyler Technologies for the Socrata data platform, which provides the [OakData](#) Open Data portal for the City of Oakland. Tyler approached Commission staff earlier this year to collaborate on the launch of the tool citing the Commission’s commitment to innovative disclosure tools and experience with publishing high-quality open datasets. Oakland will be the first city to implement the campaign finance mapping app.

Users of “Show me the money” enter the name of a candidate or committee in a search box to generate a map showing the sources of campaign cash. The application also shows a bar chart of top

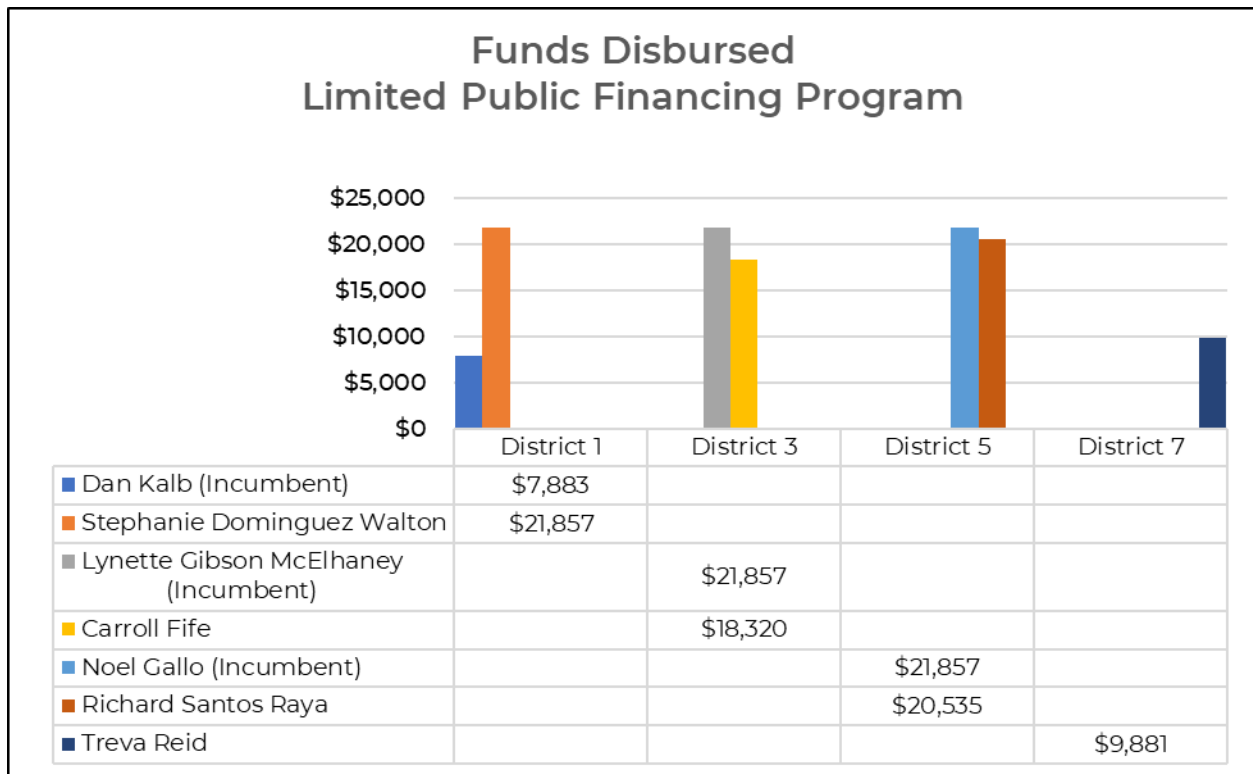
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contributors and a graph of contributions over time.¹ Up to three candidates may be selected at a time for comparison. Like the Commission’s other campaign finance projects, the data will be updated daily from the City’s campaign finance database.

Commission staff is finalizing the process of extracting the data from Oakland’s campaign finance database, transforming the data into the appropriate format, and loading to the mapping tool in collaboration with the City’s IT department. The “Show me the money” tool will go live the last week of October in time for the November election. Once the new app is live, links will be accessible on the Commission website, OakData portal, and OpenDisclosure.

Limited Public Financing Program (LPF)

To date, \$122,189 of the \$153,000 available through the election fund has been claimed and processed for reimbursements to participating candidates. Each of the seven participating candidates can claim up to \$21,857 in reimbursements for qualified campaign expenditures.



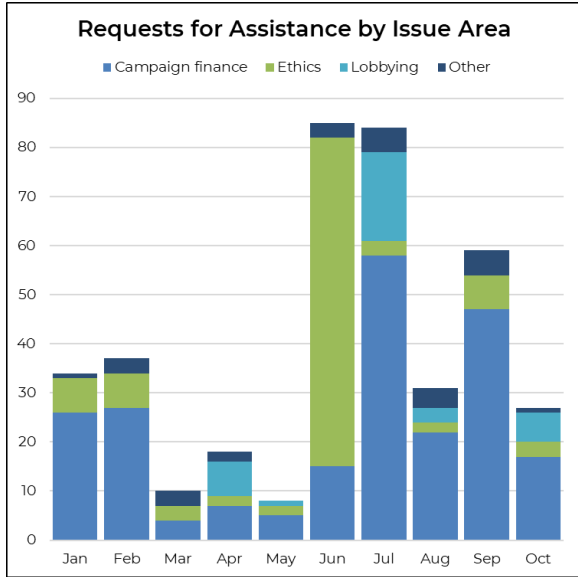
LPF participants have until Monday, November 2 to file reimbursement claims up to their allotted amount. Staff continues to work closely with participants to process claims.

Advice and Engagement

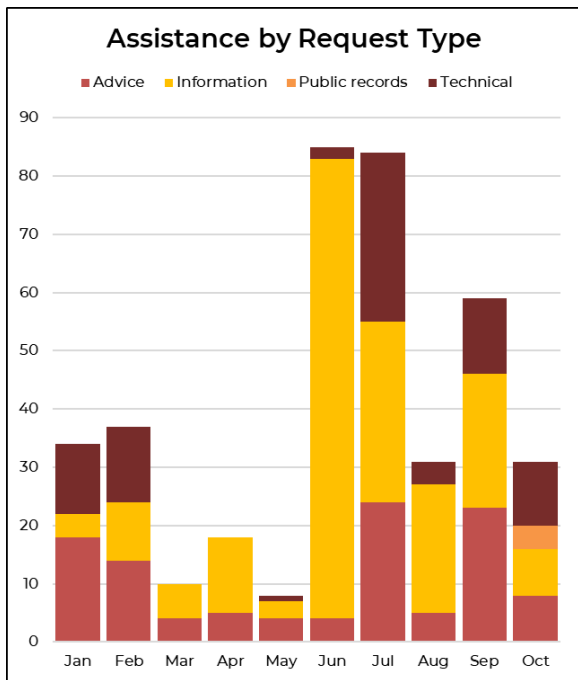
Advice and Assistance – Commission staff responded to 27 requests for advice and assistance during the month of October. Commission staff fulfilled 393 requests for advice and assistance this year.

¹ Only candidates and campaign committees that file campaign statements with the City of Oakland appear in the app. Oakland candidates that spend under \$2,000 are not required to file detailed campaign statements and therefore will not have data in the system.

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Candidates and Campaigns – As part of campaign education efforts, staff routinely issues advisories to ensure that candidates and committees are aware of local rules during election season. On October 19, staff issued an advisory about rules specific to non-candidate-controlled committees, such as independent expenditure, ballot measure and general purpose committees. The advisory covered provisions including advertisement disclaimers, disclosure of principal officers, committee sponsors, contribution limits, and understanding responsibilities under both state and local rules.



Ethics – On October 7, staff made an ethics presentation at the request of the City’s Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) Planning and Oversight Committee. Staff provided board members with information about the Commission and its services and gave an overview of the Government Ethics Act, including Form 700 filing requirements.

On October 12, staff provided an ethics presentation for City employees at the request of the Department of Human Resources regarding campaign rules for City staff. The training covered the prohibition on using City resources for campaign activity, the prohibition on soliciting contributions from other public servants, ballot measure activities, and mandatory reporting requirements for solicited contributions.

Staff continues to make presentations at the City’s monthly New Employee Orientation (NEO) providing new employees with an introduction to the PEC and overview of the Government Ethics Act (GEA). On

October 21, staff trained a total of 40 new employees on GEA provisions.

General Outreach

Social Media – Communications in October focused on promoting Open Disclosure and awareness of campaign finance and lobbyist filing deadlines.