

SMALL CONTRIBUTIONS NOW HAVE GREATEST IMPACT IN LOS ANGELES HISTORY

The Ethics Commission announced that its recommendation to make smaller contributions more valuable to City candidates became effective today. The Ethics Commission has championed this proposal for five years.

The matching funds program provides public dollars to help qualified candidates finance their campaigns for elected City office. Effective today, qualified contributions will be matched at a six-to-one rate. Previous match rates were one-to-one, two-to-one, or four-to-one, depending on the candidate's qualification activity and the type of election. Up to \$114 per contributor may be matched, resulting in up to \$684 in public funds.

"The \$6 to \$1 match gives a megaphone to ordinary people who are tired of having their voices drowned out by wealthy special interests," said Kathay Feng, former executive director of California Common Cause. "We commend the Ethics Commission for recommending the reform and the City Council for implementing it."

Other aspects of the matching funds program are also new today. The number and value of contributions that a candidate must obtain to qualify for public funds has been updated. Candidates must now participate in either a debate or a town hall meeting to qualify for public funds. And the total amount of public funding available to a qualified candidate has been increased by approximately 50 percent, to \$151,000 in a City Council primary election and \$189,000 in a City Council general election.

In addition to the changes to the matching funds program, a certification is now required from every City contributor. Contributors must certify that their contributions are lawful and that the personal information they are required to provide is accurate.

"The Ethics Commission is committed to promoting broad participation in City elections, and these changes ensure that City law will continue to support this important goal," said Ethics Commission President Melinda Murray. "We are pleased that the City Council moved forward with our recommendations, which also promote transparency and help inform the public about who is funding City elections."

The updated [Campaign Finance Ordinance](#) is available online. At its meeting on February 19, 2019, the Ethics Commission will discuss further refinements to the amount of contributions a candidate must obtain to qualify for matching funds and the debate requirement. Public comments are encouraged and may be submitted to ethics.policy@lacity.org.

The Ethics Commission was created by Los Angeles voters in 1990 to impartially administer and enforce the City's governmental ethics, campaign financing, and lobbying laws.