



WAMPAC Guide to Physician Hosted Fundraisers

Why hold a fundraiser?

There are several reasons to hold a fundraiser for a candidate:

- It helps get candidates who support physician issues elected.
- It gives you an opportunity to get to know the candidates so you can become a resource to them on health care related issues.
- It takes several contacts to establish a relationship with an elected official, and this is one of those contacts.

The average political campaign for the Washington state legislature costs well over \$100,000 with key races running in excess of \$250,000.

So I'd like to host a fundraiser—what next?


Keep it simple. This takes a lot of the stress out of fundraisers. Some frequent fundraiser planners say they think of a fundraiser as just another gathering of friends that they are putting together.

Remember that time is a very valuable commodity not only to you and the people you invite, but also to the candidate. They have very busy schedules that may run from early morning to late into the evening sometimes with multiple events to attend in a given evening.

- It is best to limit your fundraiser to a couple of hours. The type of event you sponsor is not limited.
- Host the fundraiser in your home. There is no need to go to the expense of renting a hall, and candidates would prefer to meet you and your guests in this type of environment.
- Your event might be an evening reception, a dessert party, an open house, a continental breakfast, a barbecue, or morning coffee. The point is that you decide the type of event that you are comfortable with, keeping in mind that different types of events are best suited to different size groups. For example, a morning coffee is best for a few attendees where an evening reception works well for larger groups.

“It’s easier to elect someone who thinks like you, than it is to change their mind once they are elected.”

— George Meany, AFL-CIO

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- Keep the fare simple. Light hors d'oeuvres and beverages are fine. Generally stay away from hard alcohol.
 - A brief program should begin about an hour into the fundraiser—before the guests start to drift out. The host addresses the group for no more than a few minutes thanking the guests for coming and briefing attendees about issues that the candidate is prepared to address. Following the host's remarks, ask the candidate to briefly address the group. The host or another person can give some remarks on how important financial support is to the campaign.

Who should I invite?

By sending out invitations to an event you are attempting to accomplish two goals; first, to raise as much money as possible, and second, to put the candidate in contact with as many people in your sphere of influence as possible—that means people who will pass the word and vote for him or her.

Invite your colleagues, business associates, friends and neighbors, and your family.

Timeline

- First, understand what you can and cannot do under the law, (see next page).
- Second, contact the campaign to begin the process of setting the date and location. This can take a week or more. At the same time decide what type and size of event you want to hold.
- When the date and location have been scheduled, contact five to ten associates who you want to be your core group or table captains. Have them commit to and be responsible for getting 5-10 individuals to attend. Make sure to tell them that the event is a political fundraiser.
- Three to four weeks out from the event send your invitations. The invitations need not be fancy. They can range from a postcard to your letterhead, to more formal invitations. On the invitation you'll want to include who, what, where, and when. Also include RSVP instructions and an RSVP date.
- Two weeks out from the event send reminder emails to the attendees.
- One week prior to the event have your table captains call each of their people. An effective technique is to tell them that you need information for the event nametags.

Additional tips to make your fundraiser a success.

Have someone greet the guests and make sure that everyone gets a nametag.

Have a guest register for the guests to sign in with their name, address, phone number, and especially email address. After the fundraiser you and/or the candidate may want to send thank you notes to those who make contributions.

What everybody needs to know about giving to candidates for state office.

LEGISLATURE

As an individual you, your spouse, or children over age 18 (or emancipated children under 18) can each give \$675 per election to a candidate for the legislature. That means \$675 each for the primary and general elections for a total of \$1350. This total includes cash and in-kind contributions.

In-kind contributions are contributions of goods and services. The campaign contribution limits include cash and in-kind contributions. So the cost of hosting a fundraiser would be included in the total contribution limit of \$675 per election.

STATEWIDE

As an individual you can contribute \$1350 to a candidate for statewide office. The statewide elected officers are: governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, treasurer, auditor, insurance commissioner, lands commissioner, superintendent of public instruction. That means \$1350 each for the primary and general elections for a total of \$2700. As with legislative races this includes total cash and in-kind contributions.

As with legislative races, the campaign contribution limits include cash and in-kind contributions. So the cost of hosting a fundraiser would be included in the total \$1350 per election contribution limit.

Washington state law makes no distinction between personal and corporate contributions.

Contributing to candidates for federal office is very different.

The FEC rules for contributing to candidates for federal office are more complex than those for state office. Here are some general rules for direct individual contributions to candidates. For any other type of federal contribution, more thorough research will be necessary.

An individual can contribute a maximum of \$2,000 per election, primary and general, to a federal candidate for a total of \$4,000 for the election cycle. If two or more people, including a spouse, contribute using the same check, BOTH must sign the check or attach a statement showing how much should be attributed to each.

Corporations, foreign nationals, federal government contractors, and some minors are prohibited from making contributions.

VOLUNTEERING

If you hold a fundraiser in your home, your costs, up to \$1,000 per election, are NOT considered contributions. Further, spouses may each spend up to the limit so their combined limit per election is \$2,000.

“Democracy is the only system that persists in asking the powers that be whether they are the powers that ought to be.”

— Sydney J. Harris

If you contemplate using your office or paid staff you become subject to more FEC rules. For example, staff can use an employer's phone for "incidental use" (one hour per week which "cannot prevent an employee from completing normal work") in connection with their volunteer activities.

Who governs campaign contributions?

There are two sets of laws governing candidates for office. The laws for each are very different and you need to review the relevant parts before you put on a fundraiser.

- The Public Disclosure Commission (**PDC**) regulates **state elections** such as Governor, State Senate, and State House of Representatives. (www.pdc.wa.gov)
- The Federal Election Commission (**FEC**) regulates **federal elections** such as President, US Senate, and US House of Representatives. (www.fec.gov)

We are Here to Help

WAMPAC can help physicians with logistics of the fundraiser—everything from setting up an initial meeting with the candidate, to dates, to wording of the invitations. Call Carl Nelson, WAMPAC Director, at (360) 352-4848 or 1 (800) 562-4546 (can@wsma.org).



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