

Coalition for Integrity

The State Campaign Finance Index 2022: Note on Methodology

The State Campaign Finance Index 2022 analyzes the laws of 50 states and the District of Columbia relating to the scope, independence, and powers of state agencies which regulate campaign finance, as well as each state's laws on campaign coordination, campaign contributions, disclosure of those contributions, requirements for transparency of funding of independent expenditures and political advertisements, and the availability of campaign finance information. The Index focuses on laws pertaining to state executive and legislative races. The Index looks at ten questions:

1. What agency is charged with administering the state's campaign finance laws? Does it have authority to conduct its own investigations, including public hearings and subpoena power?
2. Does the agency have the ability to sanction, including injunctions and fines?
3. Is the agency headed by an elected official? If not, are the members of the agency protected from removal without cause?
4. Campaign Coordination
 - A. Are there rules defining the types of conduct and campaign spending that presumptively establish coordination between campaigns and independent expenditure committees?
 - B. Does the state have a safe harbor rule and, if so, what does it allow?
5. Campaign Contributions
 - A. Does the state limit the amount of contributions to political candidates for state level offices per election by individuals, corporations, other entities (PACs, 501(c)(4)s)?
 - B. Does the state limit the amount of contributions to state political parties per year?
6. What is the dollar amount for disclosure of campaign contributions to candidates?
7. Does the state require reporting of contributors to independent expenditure committees, including second level disclosure of members of contributing LLCs and donors to contributing 501(c)(4)s or similar entities?
8. Does the state require the disclosure of the payors of political advertisements or other electioneering communications to appear directly on the communication made through print media, broadcast media (TV, radio etc.), and Internet-based media (Facebook, Twitter, Google, and other online platforms)?
9. Campaign Finance Filing Requirements
 - A. Is there a requirement for candidates to report contributions of \$1,000 or more received within 30 days prior to an election and, if so, what is the filing deadline?
 - B. Is there a requirement for independent spenders to report expenditures of \$5,000 or more that are made during the 30 days prior to an election and, if so, what is the filing deadline? Also do these reports include information on contributions received, as well as expenditures made?
 - C. Is there a requirement for candidates and independent spenders to file a post-election report within 30 days of an election and, if so, what is the filing deadline?
10. Accessibility of Campaign Finance Reports
 - A. Can the reports be filed through an online portal provided by the agency?
 - B. Are reports available on an easily searchable and sortable website?



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Creating the Index

To create the State Campaign Finance Index 2022, the Coalition for Integrity team produced detailed reports for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Each report contains answers to the ten questions, along with citations and links to relevant statutes and regulations. After finalizing the reports, Coalition for Integrity applied the Scoring Rubric (available on our website) to determine what score to assign each state for each individual part of the ten questions. Each question is worth 10 points for a total maximum score of 100 points.

Drafting the State Reports

Each state report went through four phases of drafting, revision, and review involving two to three team members.

- For each state report, two team members formed a researcher-reviewer pair. The researcher made a first attempt at answering the ten questions, then passed on the drafted state report to the reviewer.
- As part of the research process, we contacted the relevant state agencies to gain a fuller picture of their campaign finance regimes.
- The reviewer independently examined the statutes underlying the answers and ensured that all information relevant to scoring was included in the answers. The researcher and reviewer together addressed the reviewer's comments until they reached a consensus on the answers to the ten questions.
- Once they agreed on the substance of the answers, the reviewer and researcher each scored the campaign finance regime on their own, following the scoring rubric, before meeting to reconcile any differences of opinion.
- In addition, we engaged additional support for a citation review to confirm that the cites in each state report generally support the claims made about the state's campaign finance regime, and that they followed a standard format.
- We emailed the 51 reports to the relevant agencies in each jurisdiction. Each agency was given the opportunity to comment on, but not independently approve or edit, the report for their jurisdiction. We received comments back from 29 states and incorporated the relevant comments in our state reports.
- Finally, we reviewed the reports and scores for a fourth time to ensure consistent treatment.

Information Available Online

- The Scoring Rubric with detailed information on our assigned scores.
- The Index Scoring Chart with the scores for each question by state.
- A detailed report for each state and the District of Columbia with links to the relevant statutes and regulations that informed its contents.



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