

Fair Elections Fund

2023 Report



Denver
Votes!

OFFICE OF THE CLERK AND RECORDER | HON. PAUL D. LÓPEZ
CITY CLERK | ELECTIONS | PUBLIC TRUSTEE | RECORDING



Overview

- High participation in the fund
 - 81% of candidates chose to participate in the FEF
 - 87.5%, of those candidates elected to office utilized the fund
- Fund disbursed \$7,695,471.92 to qualified candidates
- Matched 21,520 donations from 19,275 unique donors
- Post-election, C&R conducted thorough audits of every FEF expenditure, ensuring that taxpayer dollars were spent responsibly, and any surplus funds returned to safeguard public confidence in the Fund's management.



FEF Participation and Impact

Participation

- Of the 58 candidates who made the ballot, 47 participated in the Fund and 11 did not, an 81% participation rate
- Uncontested races: Clerk and Recorder and Council Districts 3, 6 and 11
- Of the 47, ten received the maximum disbursement amount. Only one mayoral candidate, Kelly Brough, received the maximum disbursement a candidate is eligible for: \$750,000
- Five races went to the June Run-Off Election, with all ten candidates receiving funds totaling \$563,641.78
- 73% of surveyed participants in the fund said that the Fair Elections Fund impact their decision to run for office
- Every committee that received funds made the ballot

Impact

- Average donations dropped
 - 2015 average donation: \$316.69
 - 2019 average donation: \$300.93
 - 2023 average donation: \$100.26
- Significant increase in number of reported donors:
 - 2015 total donations: 16,795
 - 2019 total donations: 25,529
 - 2023 total donations: 54,111
- Fair Elections Fund contributions were matched in every precinct in the city. While the number of donations and the amount donated vary across the city, data analysis shows that all pockets of the city were able to participate in the program.



Auditing

Expenses

- Rigorous audit of every expenditure made using FEF dollars During course of 2023. Including review of invoices and receipts and banks statements
- Ensuring any unexpended funds or ineligible expenses were repaid
- Office had to handle more complaints than filed
- Insufficient authority for the Office to launch investigations and determine violations

Donations

- Every submitted donation was reviewed by C&R staff
- Each submitted donation was address validated, receipt verified, and any rejected submission was reviewed by a second staffer.
- Matched donations reviewed. On average 2.5 mins per review . Estimated hours reviewing submission: 950 hours



Survey Highlights

By engaging directly with the individuals who have participated in this initiative, the Office was able to gain a deeper understanding of various candidates' experiences and challenges. The feedback helped guide the Office's evaluation of the Fund's efficacy and identify areas where improvements may be needed to safeguard the Fair Election's Fund's future viability.

If you were to run for office in Denver again, do you think you would participate in the Fair Elections Fund?

Yes – 100%

Did the Fair Elections Fund make it easier or harder to run for elected office?

Easier – 82%

Harder – 18%

Did you highlight that you were part of the Fair Elections Fund during your campaign?

Yes – 100%

Donations are matched 900% up to the \$50.00 threshold. Do you feel that the match is?

Too High – 9%

About Right – 83%

Too Low – 9%