
FEC Announces 1996 Presidential Spending Limits, March 15, 1996

Federal Election Commission

This FEC document, published in the spring of the 1996 general election year, lays out the federal funds available to presidential candidates in the primaries and the general election and the conditions they must meet in order to receive these funds, as well as funding available for the party conventions.

If a candidate does not accept federal funds, his or her spending is not limited, nor is there then any limitation on the use of personal funds or the amounts that can be spent in any particular state.

WASHINGTON—Presidential candidates who accept public funding may spend \$37.092 million on their prenomination efforts while each party's nominee will be able to spend \$61.82 million during the 1996 general election, according to unofficial calculations released today by the Federal Election Commission (see table 1).

Each of the two major parties will be able to spend up to \$11,994,007 on behalf of their presidential nominees and \$12,364,000 on their conventions, according to those calculations.

There is an overall spending limit for the entire preconvention period as well as limits for spending in each state (see table 2). The limits apply only to those campaigns choosing to accept federal funds. Campaigns that forgo federal funding may spend unlimited amounts of money.

The overall "base" spending limit for presidential primary campaigns is \$10 million, plus a cost-of-living adjustment (over 1974). For the 1996 primary season, the "base" spending limit is \$30,910,000. An exemption for 20 percent of a campaign's fund-raising expenses effectively raises the amount primary contenders may spend in the preconvention period to \$37,092,000. Candidates may spend unlimited amounts for certain legal and accounting costs.

TABLE 1. Presidential Spending Limits

	1996	1992	1988	1984	1980	1976
Primary (+20%)	\$30,910,000.00	\$27,620,000.00	\$23,050,000.00	\$20,200,000.00	\$14,720,000.00	\$10,910,000.00
Maximum Entitlement	\$37,092,000.00	\$33,144,000.00	\$27,660,000.00	\$24,240,000.00	\$17,664,000.00	\$13,092,000.00
Convention	\$15,455,000.00	\$13,810,000.00	\$11,525,000.00	\$10,100,000.00	\$7,360,000.00	\$5,455,000.00
General	\$12,364,000.00	\$11,048,000.00	\$9,220,000.00	\$8,080,000.00	\$4,416,000.00	\$2,182,000.00
Party 441a(d)	\$61,820,000.00	\$55,240,000.00	\$46,100,000.00	\$40,400,000.00	\$29,440,000.00	\$21,820,000.00
	\$11,994,007.30	\$10,331,702.92	\$8,291,453.80	\$6,924,802.40	\$4,637,653.76	\$3,203,786.96
<i>Spending Limits per Statute</i>						
Primary	\$10,000,00 + COLA base spending limit. Campaigns are also allowed to exempt 20 percent of fund-raising costs from overall limit, which in effect raises their total spending limit by 20 percent. Legal and accounting costs incurred to comply with the law are exempt from the limit.					
Convention	\$4 million + COLA. Originally, the limit was \$2 million + COLA. The base was raised to \$3 million for the 1980 convention; then to \$4 million for the 1984 convention.					
General	\$20,000,000 + COLA. Legal and accounting costs incurred to comply with the law are exempt from the limit and may be defrayed from private monies raised in separate compliance funds (subject to contribution limitations and prohibitions.)					
Party 441a(d)	\$.02 × VAP of U.S. + COLA. Commonly referred to as the coordinated party spending limit, this is the amount that the national party may spend on behalf of its nominee. The party may work in conjunction with the campaign, but the money is raised, spent, and reported by the national party committee. This limit only applies to the general election.					

NOTE: COLA is the cost-of-living adjustment [increase] over the base year of 1974.

TABLE 2. 1996 State-by-State Expenditure Limits for Presidential Candidates

<i>State</i>	<i>Voting-Age Population (in thousands)</i>	<i>Expenditure Limit</i>
Alabama	3,173	\$1,569,239
Alaska	414	618,200
Arizona	3,025	1,496,044
Arkansas	1,834	907,023
California	22,796	11,273,990
Colorado	2,765	1,367,458
Connecticut	2,477	1,225,025
Delaware	538	618,200
District of Columbia	440	618,200
Florida	10,794	5,338,281
Georgia	5,277	2,609,793
Hawaii	878	616,200
Idaho	815	618,200
Illinois	8,704	4,394,650
Indiana	4,316	2,134,521
Iowa	2,117	1,046,984
Kansas	1,873	926,311
Kentucky	2,888	1,428,289
Louisiana	3,103	1,534,620
Maine	936	618,200
Maryland	3,770	1,864,491
Massachusetts	4,642	2,295,748
Michigan	7,030	3,476,757
Minnesota	3,364	1,663,700
Mississippi	1,935	956,974
Missouri	3,942	1,949,556
Montana	834	618,200
Nebraska	1,194	618,200
Nevada	1,132	618,200
New Hampshire	853	618,200
New Jersey	5,982	2,958,458
New Mexico	1,185	618,200
New York	13,599	6,725,521
North Carolina	5,396	2,658,646
North Dakota	471	618,200
Ohio	8,291	4,100,397
Oklahoma	2,400	1,186,944
Oregon	2,344	1,159,249
Pennsylvania	9,163	4,531,653
Rhode Island	752	618,200

TABLE 2. (continued)

State	<i>Voting-Age Population (in thousands)</i>	<i>Expenditure Limit</i>
South Carolina	2,729	1,349,654
South Dakota	523	618,200
Tennessee	3,946	1,951,534
Texas	13,324	6,589,517
Utah	1,277	631,553
Vermont	438	618,200
Virginia	5,006	2,475,767
Washington	4,013	1,984,669
West Virginia	1,406	695,351
Wisconsin	3,770	1,864,491
Wyoming	344	618,200
<i>U.S. Territories</i>		
American Samoa		618,200
Guam		618,200
Puerto Rico		618,200
Virgin Islands		618,200

State spending limits are keyed to the voting age population (VAP) of each state, with a minimum of at least \$200,000 plus a cost-of-living adjustment for those states with a low VAP. The formula for setting state limits is 16 percent VAP + cost of living. A less populated state, such as New Hampshire, would have a limit of \$200,000, plus cost of living, or \$618,200. A larger state, such as California, would have a limit of $16 \times 22,796,000$ (VAP), plus cost of living, or \$11,273,990.

The two major party nominees will be given \$61,820,000 each for the general election campaign. Candidates opting for general election funding have a spending limit of \$20 million plus a cost-of-living adjustment (over 1974). They receive all of their funds from the U.S. Treasury and may not raise private contributions for the campaign, other than for legal and accounting costs, which are not subject to the spending limit.