

2012 Updated Program Report Card: Campaign Disclosure and Audit (State Elections Enforcement Commission)

Quality of Life Result: Connecticut citizens have increased confidence in the electoral process and their elected government.

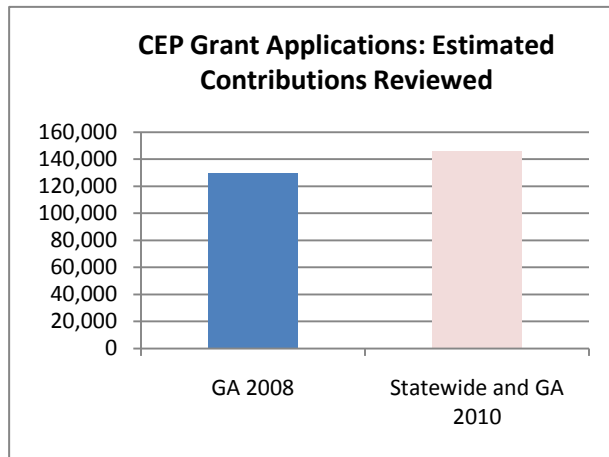
Contribution to the Result: Improving public trust in government and increasing confidence in the electoral process by making campaign finance data available to the public in a timely manner, ensuring accurate disclosure of committees' financial activities, and protecting the public fisc.

Partners: Officers of political and party committees, candidates and treasurers of candidate committees formed for statewide, General Assembly, Judge of Probate, and municipal offices.

Program Expenditures	State Funding	Federal Funding	Other Funding	Total Funding
Actual FY 11: \$1,043,934	\$1,043,934	0	0	\$1,043,934
Estimated FY 12: \$597,657	\$597,657	0	0	\$597,657

How Much Did We Do?

Performance Measure 1: Number of contributions to committees reviewed for Citizens' Election Program grant applications to insure that public funds were awarded only to properly qualified candidates.



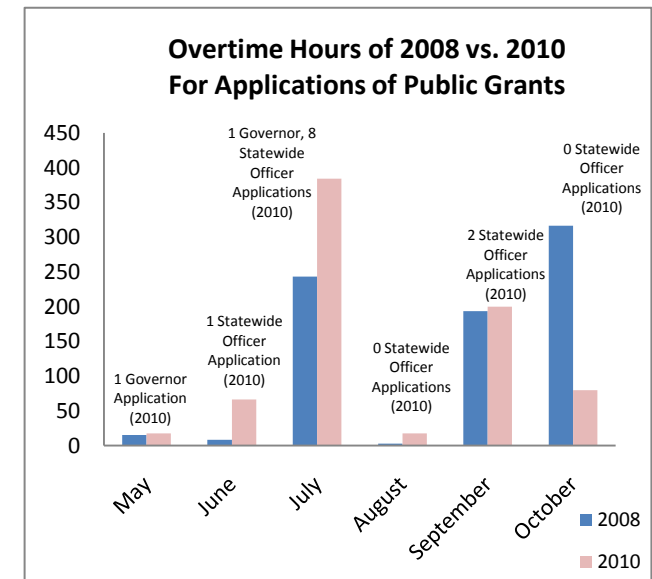
Story behind the baseline: Because the Program only began offering grants in general elections in 2008, no data is available before that time and 2008 is the baseline by necessity. In 2008, approximately 129,900 qualifying contributions were reviewed. In 2010, approximately 145,900 were reviewed. The Audit staff reviews documentation and reporting

of between approximately 150-400 contributions to participating committees for each General Assembly application and between approximately 750-6000 for each statewide application to determine if committees met statutory thresholds to qualify for a grant. This review ensures that grants go only to qualified committees so that public funds (gathered from the sale of unclaimed property) are protected. Staff conducted 323 General Assembly application reviews in 2008 and 331 General Assembly and 9 statewide application reviews in 2010. These 9 additional statewide applications contained the majority of the 16,000 additional contributions that were reviewed in 2010. Although legislation has been passed that will decrease the number of *audits post-election* that will be conducted by audit staff, **it is fair to assume that the number of contributions reviewed will continue at the 2008 level in 2012** (because there are no statewide elections in 2012). Unfortunately, 2011 saw a drastic reduction in the number staff auditors (from 11 to 5 with 1 current vacancy) who will be available for the wave of 2012 applications, which may affect the timeliness of each application review.

Trend: ▲ Projected 2012: ▼

How Well Did We Do It?

Performance Measure 2: Meeting the statutory deadline for review of grant applications for Citizens' Election Program funds.



Story behind the baseline: Commission staff met the statutory deadline 100% of the time for applications received in 2008 and 2010, but overtime payments were necessary even with a full complement of trained staff.

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Commission staff must review and make a recommendation to the full Commission within 5 business days of receipt of grant applications, which arrive by weekly filing deadlines during a specified period (mid-May through early October). Even with 11 Audit staff, overtime payments were necessary in 2008 and 2010 in order to ensure that audit staff could review applications within the short statutory review period and that only candidates who had legitimately qualified for grants received them. This graph shows that, despite the fact that more contributions were reviewed in 2010, overtime decreased (780 hours in 2008 vs. 765 hours in 2010), probably due to the efficiency from an experienced staff. It also shows that the overtime was required earlier in the grant season, demonstrating that applicants for CEP grants applied earlier, stemming from an aggressive educational outreach program on the benefits of early application.

However, as of November 2011, there are 6 positions in the Audit unit, with 1 vacancy, for a staffed total of 5. In 2008 and 2010 grant application review was performed by 11 Audit staff with overtime work performed to accomplish its 100% success rate. Without permission to fill the Audit vacancy and restructure to augment the unit, **there is great uncertainty whether the remaining staff will be able to meet the statutory review deadline in 2012. Even if filled, overtime costs will likely grow significantly higher in order to make certain that applications are reviewed timely 100% of the time.** The lowest projected overtime cost in 2012 of \$64,653 assumes that two positions are allocated and filled, that there are no additional staff changes and that grant applications and re-applications do not occur in an even more compressed timeframe than 2010, and that staff are willing and able to work double shifts consistently for several weeks at a time.

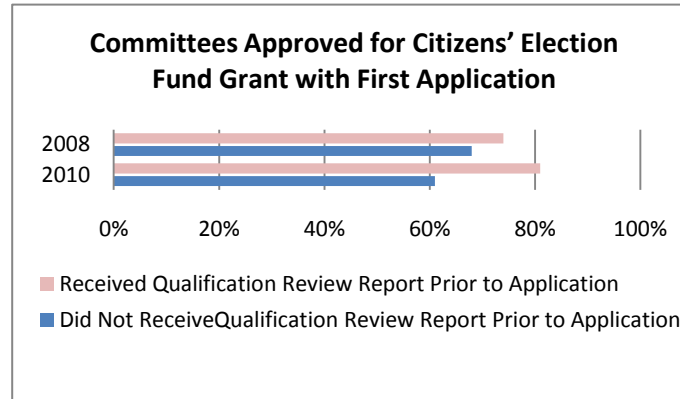
Trend: 2008-2010: ▲ Projected 2012: ▼

(1/12)

Trend Going in Right Direction? ▲ Yes; ▼ No; ◀▶ Flat/ No Trend

Is Anyone Better Off?

Performance Measure 3: The percentage of applications where the issuance of a grant occurs after the first submission



Story behind the baseline: The early review of qualifying contributions, pre-application, offers tangible benefits for campaigns and efficiencies for the Commission. Committees may submit all their qualifying contribution documentation at the time of grant application, or may ask for an early review by Audit staff at the time that any regular campaign finance reports are filed. The early review process benefits committees because they know before applying for a grant how many of their contributions will indeed count as qualifying and how many contributions need corrections to qualify. Committees who submit documentation for early review have a higher success rate when they apply. These advantages to candidates and treasurers will be lost to a large extent in 2012 due to the reduction of Audit staff. Interim reviews are key to a successful initial application, but must be done with a financial filing. It is unlikely that staff will be available for early reviews of the July 10th regular quarterly filings and filings associated with primaries because all staff time will likely shift to grant application review.

Trend 2008-2010: ▲ Projected 2012: ▼

Proposed Actions to Turn the Curve

Performance Measures 2 and 3:

In order to have SEEC again meet its statutory 5-day grant review and determination deadline 100% of the time in 2012, SEEC and its legislative and executive partners should consider the following actions:

Critical to the success of the CEP:

- Permit SEEC to restructure and then fill vacant positions in the Disclosure and Audit Unit by April 1, 2012;
- Replace funds in our budget to cover anticipated overtime costs for grant application season.

Low-cost and no-cost actions

- Cross-train existing SEEC staff to facilitate the grant application review process;
- Enact SEEC's legislative proposal for mandatory e-filing in eCRIS for those committees eligible to participate in the CEP, which saves the accounts examiners at least one full business day because application review can begin immediately and also saves money paid for outsourcing data entry; and
- Continue to urge all grant applicants to apply 1-3 days prior to each weekly deadline to avoid logjam, and to file via eCRIS.

Data Development Agenda:

SEEC will continue to survey candidate committees participating in the Citizens' Election Program to identify measures most important to candidates and how Campaign Disclosure and Audit can better serve them.

SEEC will continue to collect and analyze data on staff time and overtime required for its grant application review and audit processes.