



New Haven Democracy Fund

"To ensure that all the citizens of New Haven have a fair and meaningful opportunity to participate in the election of mayor."
New Haven Code of General Ordinances, Chapter 2, Article XI, §2-821 • Established in 2007 • democracyfund@newhavenct.net



Board requested changes to the New Haven Democracy Fund Ordinance 2024:

Concern	Solution (ref.)
Narrow language defining legislation	Replaced "mayor" with "citywide office" (Throughout.) Defined "Citywide Office" to explicitly refer to the races the Fund would govern, (Sec. 2-822 (1).)
Program only covered Mayor's race	Expanded the definition of Citywide office to include City Clerk (Sec. 2-822 (1).)
Outdated Gender language	Changed references to Mayor and "his" committee to gender neutral language; references to Alderman to Alder; Replaced "his or her" with "their" (singular). (Throughout.)
Unclear language governing Exploratory Committees (AKA The exploratory committee loophole)	Explicitly include Exploratory Committees as a disallowed source to a qualifying candidate's account. (Sec. 2-825(a).) Limited an individual's contribution to a combined maximum for exploratory and primary phases (Sec 2-822 (8) v.) Candidates who choose to have an exploratory committee first, must zero out the account before accepting public funds. (Sec 2-822 (8) v. and Sec. 824(d) 7.)
Needed language governing expected elections that are never held (AKA The early drop out loophole)	Required candidates who drop out to return the Democracy Fund Grant to the Fund and any remaining money in their candidate accounts to contributors or the Fund (Sec. 2-830(d).)
Filing timeline out of sync with the State's filing calendar	Corrected dates, allowed for eCRIS filing for all necessary financial filing deadlines (Sec. 2-824(d) 8.)
Candidates not able to receive matching funds fast enough during the election	Changed minimum requests from \$3,000.00 to \$1,000.00 (Sec. 2-827(8).) Ensured Finance Department and the Board invested funds with liquidity in mind (Sec 2-823.)
Minimum contribution amount above state allowed minimum	Reset minimum contribution and matchable contribution to \$5.00 (Sec 2-822 (8) vi.)
Confusing monetary amounts throughout document	Reset the matchable contribution and contribution limits to \$35.00 and \$400.00 and then tied them to inflation. (Sec 2-827.) Changed in cash contributions to the state's maximum (Sec 2-827 (3).)
Candidates able to bankroll their campaign and accept public money	Reset the maximum candidate contribution from \$15,000.00 to \$1,500.00 to maintain the spirit of the ordinance.(Sec. 2-826 (3))
Good Governance and Transparency	Expanded language to include more Board oversight (Sec 2-823.) Made non-communication from candidates an indication of nonparticipation (Sec.2-824(e).)