

## Item 8 - Disclosure Report



James E.T. Jackson, Chair  
Jill M. Butler, Vice-Chair  
Avi Klein  
Michael B. MacDonald  
Janani Ramachandran  
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Jerett Yan

Whitney Barazoto, Executive Director

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TO: Public Ethics Commission  
FROM: Suzanne Doran, Lead Analyst  
Jelani Killings, Ethics Analyst  
Whitney Barazoto, Executive Director  
DATE: November 25, 2020  
RE: Disclosure and Engagement Report for the December 7, 2020, PEC Meeting

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This memorandum provides a summary of the Public Ethics Commission's (PEC or Commission) Disclosure and Engagement program activities since the last monthly meeting. Commission staff disclosure activities focus on improving online tools for public access to local campaign finance and other disclosure data, enhancing compliance with disclosure rules, and conducting data analysis for PEC projects and programs as required. Engagement activities include training and resources provided to the regulated community, as well as general outreach to Oakland residents to raise awareness of the Commission's role and services and to provide opportunity for dialogue between the Commission and community members.

### Filing Officer/Disclosure

**Campaign Finance** – As reported last month, the second pre-election deadline for the November 2020 election was October 22. All candidate-controlled committees with candidates on the November ballot must file pre-election statements for their campaign committees as well as any other committees that they control. Ballot measure committees and other recipient committees with fundraising or spending activity connected with the November ballot must also file by the pre-election deadlines.

All 2020 candidate-controlled, ballot measure and general purpose committees have filed their September and October pre-election campaign statements. A total of \$600 in late fees were assessed against six committees for campaign statements submitted past the deadline. Commission staff completed surface review of all 118 pre-election campaign statements. The next scheduled campaign statement covers the period from October 18 through December 31 and is due February 1, 2021.

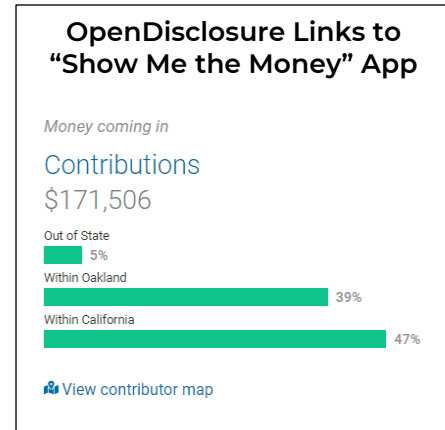
**Lobbyist Registration and Reporting** – The third quarter lobbyist activity report deadline passed on October 30. To date, 57 reports have been filed, 95 percent timely. Lobbyists reported 179 contacts with City officials and \$391,234 in economic consideration (payments) to influence government actions during the third quarter of 2020, for a total of \$1,314,373 for the year.<sup>1</sup>

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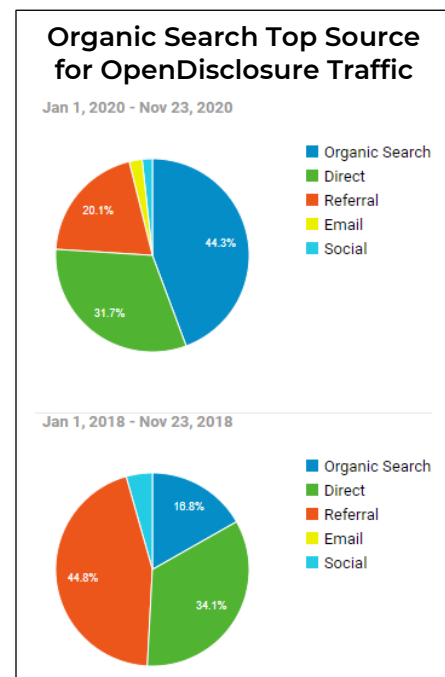
<sup>1</sup> Reporting client payments is voluntary. Figures are based on the data provided and do not reflect unreported payments.

## Illuminating Disclosure Data

**OpenDisclosure** – The 2020 release of campaign finance app [OpenDisclosure](#) added new features to increase transparency, including a search function that makes campaign donation records easy to search and sort and allows users to seek campaign donors by name across multiple campaigns and elections. The site shows funds donated to both political candidates and ballot measure committees and provides clear summaries of money raised and spent as well as financial trends for each election. Links to the PEC’s new [“Show Me the Money”](#) app, which enables users to map the source of campaign contributions, are now included on candidate pages.



User engagement measures for 2020 showed major improvements over prior election years. Just under 8,000 users visited the site in 2020, a 160 percent increase over 2018. By comparison, the City’s Campaign Finance and Lobbyist Disclosure Portal, where users can download campaign filings and raw data, had 1,951 users during the same time period. During the four weeks leading up to election day, OpenDisclosure received an average of 137 visitors per day. Sessions by users of the site increase by 103 percent (9,900 in 2020 vs. 4,866 in 2018) and totaled 35,450 pageviews of OpenDisclosure content.



An important indicator of effective outreach was the large increase (581 percent) of users arriving at OpenDisclosure through organic search results. The term “organic search” refers to website visitors coming from a search engine, such as Google or Bing. Users through organic search is the primary channel that marketing seeks to increase. In 2020, organic search rose to the top source of users as compared with users referred by links on other websites, emails, or social media. Our collaboration with the Voter’s Edge website, a project of the League of Women Voters in partnership with Maplight, also continued to be an important avenue for connecting with OpenDisclosure users as the largest source of referrals (77 percent).

Since launching Open Disclosure in 2014, the site has reached 29,065 users with 132,853 views of OpenDisclosure content. OpenDisclosure is a project of OpenOakland volunteers in partnership with Public Ethics Commission staff.

**“Show Me the Money” Campaign Finance App** – The Commission’s new [“Show Me the Money”](#) app went live on October 28 just in time for the November election. “Show Me the Money” is an interactive disclosure tool that provides an easy way visualize the source of campaign contributions and to make comparisons across races and years. Users of “Show me the money” enter the name of a candidate or committee in a



# Item 8 - Disclosure Report

search box to generate a map showing the sources of campaign cash. The application also shows a bar chart of top contributors and a graph of contributions over time.<sup>2</sup> Like the Commission’s other campaign finance projects, the data is updated daily from the City’s campaign finance database. The app is accessible on the Commission website, OakData portal, and OpenDisclosure.

Special appreciation goes out to Oakland’s Information Technology Department, in particular Application Developer Titus Kress, for providing the support necessary to launch the app within a very tight timeframe for the November election.

## Limited Public Financing Program

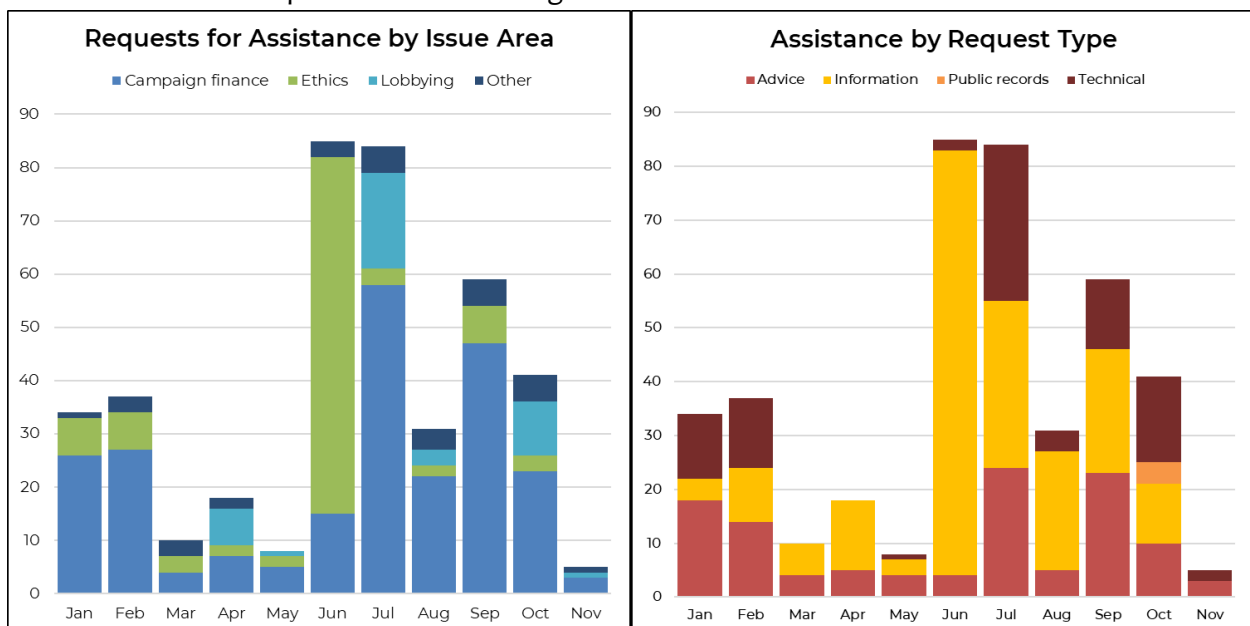
The deadline for candidates participating in the 2020 LPF Program to submit final reimbursement claims was Monday, November 2. Commission staff dispersed a total of \$137,485 in processed reimbursements to participating candidates out of the \$153,000 available through the election fund. More information about the implementation of this project is provided in a separate report on the Commission’s December 7, 2020, meeting agenda.

## Advice and Engagement

**Advice and Assistance** – Commission staff responded to five requests for advice and assistance during the month of November. Commission staff fulfilled 412 requests for advice and assistance this year.

**Candidates and Campaigns** – As part of campaign education efforts, staff routinely issues advisories to ensure that candidates and committees are aware of local rules during election season. The final 2020 advisory covers the rules for use of surplus funds and terminating committees to ensure that campaigns are aware of responsibilities after the election and properly close committees.

**Ethics** – On November 4, PEC staff conducted a live Government Ethics Training for Form 700 Filers via Zoom. The training was hosted by the Department of Human Resources (HR) and served as an alternative for employees that have not completed the PEC’s online training. Staff will continue to coordinate with HR to provide ethics trainings.



<sup>2</sup> Only candidates and campaign committees that file campaign statements with the City of Oakland appear in the app.

## Item 8 - Disclosure Report

On November 12, staff made an ethics presentation at the request of the City's Redistricting Commission. Staff provided board members with information about the Commission and its services, gave an overview of the Government Ethics Act including Form 700 filing requirements, and provided members with the PEC's Board and Commission Member Handbook.

Staff continues to make presentations at the City's monthly New Employee Orientation (NEO) providing new employees with an introduction to the PEC and overview of the Government Ethics Act (GEA). On November 17, staff trained a total of 30 new employees on GEA provisions.

### **General Outreach**

**Social Media** – Communications in November focused on promoting Open Disclosure and the “Show Me the Money” app.