

## HOW TO FIND MONEY INVOLVED IN COLORADO STATE & COUNTY POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

### Step 1 Check the Colorado Secretary of State [TRACER](#) system

[Political Race Search](#) Find candidates in political races.

[Candidate Search](#) Find candidate information, contributions and expenditures.

[Committee Search](#) Find committee contributions and expenditures.

[Contribution Search](#) Find out what groups and individuals made contributions.

[Expenditure Search](#) Find out what groups and individuals made expenditures.

[Independent Expenditure Detailed Report](#) Shows some expenditures by independent expenditure committees.

[Electioneering Report](#) Find money spent on political advertisements by groups not registered as committees.

[Data Download](#) Shows contribution and expenditure data for all county and state campaigns in Colorado.

**Step 2 Check Nonprofits and Other Political Organizations:** You may be aware of the involvement of nonprofits in the political campaigns you are researching. To find out if the group is a nonprofit search the Colorado Secretary of State [Business Database](#) or the Secretary of State in the nonprofit's home state. Unfortunately, the public can only view a nonprofit's total contributions and expenditures. There is no way to view itemized contributions and expenditures which show exactly who the money comes from and what it is spent on. A work around to this lack of information is searching [contributions](#) in TRACER, [Federal Election Commission](#) or [Internal Revenue Service](#) forms. [Guidestar](#) is a great source of information about nonprofits and their various IRS forms.

**Step 3 Check Political Files:** Political files or public inspection files are documents that show the purchase of advertisement space for political purposes by groups or individuals. You can search television and radio stations on the [Federal Communication Commission](#) website for political files. Usually FCC political files only contain the name of the buyer and a vague purpose and rarely shows the dollar amounts. Political files held by cable and satellite companies are available to the public in-person for a small per page fee. Political files from cable and satellite companies may be available online in the future. Comcast Spotlight handles advertisements and provides political files with dollar amounts.

**Step 4 Check Other Sources:** Other websites may provide additional information: [National Institute on Money in State Politics](#) for state campaign finance information; [Center for Responsive Politics](#) for federal campaign finance information.

Useful Websites		
Organization	Information	URL
Colorado Secretary of State TRACER	Colorado candidates & committees	<a href="http://tracer.sos.colorado.gov/PublicSite/homepage.aspx">http://tracer.sos.colorado.gov/PublicSite/homepage.aspx</a>
Colorado Secretary of State Business Records	Colorado business records search	<a href="http://www.sos.state.co.us/biz/BusinessEntityCriteriaExt.do">http://www.sos.state.co.us/biz/BusinessEntityCriteriaExt.do</a>
Federal Election Commission	Federal candidates & committees	<a href="http://www.fec.gov/finance/disclosure/candcmte_info.shtml">http://www.fec.gov/finance/disclosure/candcmte_info.shtml</a>
Internal Revenue Service	Political organizations	<a href="https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/political-organizations/political-organization-filing-and-disclosure">https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/political-organizations/political-organization-filing-and-disclosure</a>
Federal Communications Commission	Political files	<a href="https://publicfiles.fcc.gov/">https://publicfiles.fcc.gov/</a>
National Institute on Money in State Politics	State candidates, committees, lobbying	<a href="http://www.followthemoney.org/">http://www.followthemoney.org/</a>
Center for Responsive Politics	Federal candidates, committees, lobbying	<a href="https://www.opensecrets.org/">https://www.opensecrets.org/</a>
Guidestar	Nonprofits	<a href="http://www.guidestar.org/Home.aspx">http://www.guidestar.org/Home.aspx</a>
ProPublica	Nonprofits	<a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/">https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/</a>