



STATE OF MICHIGAN
TERRI LYNN LAND, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

MEMORANDUM

TO: Campaign Finance Electronic Filing Vendors
FROM: Michigan Department of State, Bureau of Elections
SUBJECT: Procedure for Receiving Approval of Campaign Finance Electronic Filings

Thank you for your interest in the Michigan Department of State's, Bureau of Elections campaign finance electronic filing vendor approval process. To begin the approval process, please review the following information.

Approval Process Overview

Each vendor is required to follow a file format approval process in order for committee(s) registered in Michigan with the Bureau of Elections to file campaign finance reports electronically. You must allow at least 90 days for the approval process to be complete. The Bureau cannot guarantee completion of the approval process within the 90 days.

The purpose of the approval process is to ensure that the data submitted electronically are represented accurately in the Bureau's database. The approval process is in no way an approval of the software for compliance with the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA) requirements.

After approval, you will be given a vendor approval letter that can be distributed to your customers. Vendor software that has not been approved is blocked from filing into the Bureau's database. If it is discovered at a later date that the system being used by the filers does not match the test files submitted by the vendor, the approval may be instantly revoked. In this case, a letter will be sent to you informing you of the change in approval status. A letter will also be sent to any known filers using your software.

Only vendors that have submitted test data electronically to the Bureau and that pass the MERTS Plus validation, loading on the test server and review by Bureau staff will be allowed to file electronically with the Bureau. Electronic submission of the test data is acceptable via diskette, CD or email.

Vendor Tools and Materials

To download the vendor tools, go to www.mertsplus.com and click "MERTS Software Downloads". Download both the MERTS Plus *Vendor Technical Pack* and the *Vendor File Layout* document.

The file layout is a text file that provides the exact file layout with field descriptions for system requirements.

For downloading the MERTS Plus *Vendor Technical Pack*, the username is vendor and the password is vendor1015. The download includes the tools needed to develop compatible data files that will automatically load into the BOE database. The website should be checked often for updates.

Items included in the *Vendor Technical Pack* are the following:

- *MiLoad*: is a program that will package the files and prepare them for disk/CD filing or Internet filing.
- *MiCheck*: is a file validation program that is used to help make sure your load file meets both system and BOE CFR requirements. **Note:** Not all of the loading and file requirements are included in the validation and it should not be used as a sole test of compatibility with the

Bureau's system. Nor is it a guarantee that a Notice of Error or Omission will not be sent to the filer.

- *MiPrint*: is a program that converts the data into the standard paper reports for the filers.

In addition to the MERTS Plus *Vendor Technical Pack* and the *Vendor File Layout* document, you may access committee forms, instructions and manuals at www.michigan.gov/sos.

Select "Elections in Michigan"
Select "Campaign Finance Disclosure"
Select "Forms and Filing Materials"
Select the specific committee type

Test Files

When requested, copies of the original test reports and amendment test scripts will be provided. The test files are designed to be a complete test of all schedules types needed in a campaign statement. The test files for the original campaign statements must be tested and deemed working properly before any amendments will be tested. You may be asked to submit a copy of the software that is creating the files for testing by Bureau staff as well.

Listed below are the required report test files:

PAC Test Files Include:

- 5 original reports: April, July, October, January and July
- 2 amended reports
- 1 twice amended report

Candidates and other Committee Types:

- 5 original reports: Pre Primary, Post Primary, Pre General, Post General and Annual
- 2 amended reports
- 1 twice amended report

As there may be several vendors submitting files for approval, all submissions and resubmissions will be reviewed in the order they are received. Your prompt attention to addressing issues found in the filings will assist in a timely completion of our verification process and approval of the filing.

Filer Requirements

Committees filing using vendor software are required to meet certain requirements with this office in order to file electronically. This includes an original or amended Statement of Organization with the certification of the electronic signature(s) on file with the Bureau. Filers wishing to file via the Internet must request a password. A password can be obtained on line at www.mertsplus.com. Filers without a password can file via removable media only.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

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