

Campaign Finance: Attribution/Disclaimer Requirements

What is an Attribution?

An attribution, or disclaimer, is a statement placed on a public communication that identifies the person(s) who paid for the communication, and in some cases, the person(s) who authorized the communication.

Which Communications Require an Attribution?

Every printed advertisement, billboard, handbill, sample ballot, television or radio advertisement, or other communication containing any of the following requires an attribution:

- Express advocacy which is paid for by any contribution or disbursement (§ [11.1303\(2\)\(a\)](#))
 - Express advocacy is a communication which clearly identifies a candidate and clearly relates to the election or defeat of the candidate. Common terms include "Vote for," "Elect," "Support," "Cast your ballot for," "Smith for ... (an elective office)," "Vote Against," "Defeat," "Reject," and "Cast your ballot against." (§ [11.0101\(11\)](#))
- Statement(s) made for the purpose of influencing the recall from or retention of an official holding a state or local office (§ [11.1303\(2\)\(em\)](#))

An attribution isn't required on small items where it can't be conveniently printed, like a pen or a keychain. This also includes text messages, social media communications, and certain small advertisements on mobile phones (§ [11.1303\(2\)\(f\)](#)).

Attribution Formats & Examples

Registered Committees

- A committee should identify itself as the source of a communication by the words "Paid for by" followed by the name of the committee. The attribution may also include the name of the committee's treasurer or other authorized agent of the committee. Whether a committee directly pays for a communication or accepts a communication as an in-kind contribution, the committee is responsible for the communication and should be listed in the attribution (§ [11.1303\(2\)\(b\)](#))
- The attribution must be readable, legible, and readily accessible (§ [11.1303\(2\)\(g\)](#))
- A candidate committee may not use an abbreviation to identify the committee (§ [11.1303\(2\)\(e\)](#))

Example: Paid for by Mary Smith for Governor

- When a committee places a communication for express advocacy in coordination with a candidate committee, both the committee making the payment and the committee accepting the communication as an in-kind contribution should be listed in the attribution (§ [11.1303\(2\)\(b\)](#))

Example: Paid for by Citizens for Government, Authorized by Mary Smith for Governor

- When a committee places a communication for express advocacy that is not in coordination with a candidate, that committee should include the words "Not authorized by any candidate or candidate's agent or committee" in the attribution (§ [11.1303\(2\)\(d\)](#))

Example: Paid for by Citizens for Government, Not Authorized by Any Candidate or Candidate's Agent or Committee

Other Persons

- Communications for express advocacy costing more than \$2,500 and paid for by any person other than a committee shall identify its source by the words "Paid for by" followed by the name of the person (§ [11.1303\(2\)\(c\)](#))
- The communication should also include the words "Not authorized by any candidate or candidate's agent or committee" in the attribution (§ [11.1303\(2\)\(d\)](#))
- The attribution must be readable, legible, and readily accessible (§ [11.1303\(2\)\(g\)](#))

Example: Paid for by John Smith, Not Authorized by Any Candidate or Candidate's Agent or Committee