



Grant eligibility policy: Restrictions on public office holders and those seeking public office

The New Jersey Civic Information Consortium is committed to maintaining its independence, impartiality, and integrity in advancing the public's access to civic information and supporting an equitable information ecosystem. To ensure that our grantmaking process upholds these principles, the following policy applies to all grant applicants:

Prohibition on Public Office Holders

- The Consortium will not consider a grant application for any project or organization whose lead applicant or project leader is currently serving in public office.
- Public office is defined as any elected or appointed position in government, whether at the local, state, or federal level.
- Lead applicant or project leader is defined as the executive director or other senior official with decision-making authority over the project's direction and execution, including editor of the news outlet/provider. It does not extend to general team members or contributors.

Prohibition on Candidates for Public Office

- The Consortium will not consider a grant application for any project or organization whose lead applicant or project leader is an active candidate for public office.
- A candidate is defined as an individual who has formally declared their candidacy, registered with the appropriate electoral authority, or is actively campaigning for election to public office.

Prohibition on campaigning

- The Consortium will not consider a grant application for any project or organization whose lead applicant or project leader is actively engaged in a campaign for public office.
- "Actively engaged" is defined as participating in a leadership role.

Transparency and Compliance

- All grant applicants are required to disclose any affiliations or current involvement in public office or candidacy as part of their application.
- Failure to disclose such information may result in disqualification of the application or, if a grant has already been awarded, termination of the grant agreement and return of the funds.

Purpose of the Policy

- This policy aims to ensure the Consortium's funding decisions remain free from political influence and to avoid any potential conflicts of interest that may arise from supporting projects associated with individuals in or pursuing public office.

Final Determination of the Board

- While this policy provides a framework for eligibility, the final decision on awarding any grant rests solely with the Consortium Board of Directors. The Board will evaluate each case on its merits and exercise its discretion in determining compliance with this policy.

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