

# Campaign Finance Election Cycle Dates

Election Cycles are used to accumulate contributions and expenditures for reporting purposes and to avoid violating the Act by accepting or making an excess contribution. Contribution Limits for all offices are based on the election cycle of the office. For contribution limits please see [Contribution Limits - State Elective Offices](#) and [Contribution Limits - Local Candidates](#).

If you are using the Merts Plus Software, the election cycles must be entered properly for the software to accumulate contributions and expenditures properly.

## **Determining the Election Cycle for a Campaign**

For a general election, the election cycle begins the day following the last general election in which the office appeared on the ballot and ends on the day of the next general election in which the office appears on the ballot. For a special election the election cycle begins the day the special general election is called or the date the office becomes vacant (which ever is earlier) and ends on the day of the special general election.

## **Entering the Election Cycles into the Merts Plus Software**

The Merts Plus Software is designed to calculate the cumulative contributions and expenditures made by committees and provide warnings if the committee may have accepted or made an excess contribution. For the software to work properly, the election cycles must be entered and used properly.

***Candidate Committees and Ballot Question Committees:*** A separate election cycle must be entered for each campaign that the committee participates in. It is recommended that directly following each election, a new election cycle is entered, even if you there are no plans to participate in the next election. The date of a contribution must be associated with the election cycle whose range includes this date. When filing an annual campaign statement that contains activity in the old and the new election cycle, use the election cycle of the past election.

***PACs and Political Party Committees:*** A separate election cycle must be entered for each cycle that is involved in an expenditure; however, it is not necessary to enter a separate election cycle for each candidate that the committee makes contributions to. However, each candidate must have their own campaign. You may have a State Rep committee and a local office that have the same election cycle. The election cycle would be entered once in the Election Cycles window and associated with both the State Rep and Local campaigns. The date of a contribution must be associated with the election cycle whose range includes this date.

***Recommendations for Naming Election Cycles:*** For all election cycles, it is recommended that the election cycle name is entered in the Merts Plus Software with the month and year of election and the length of the cycle. For example, a 2 year cycle for the November General election in 2008 would be: 11/08 2 YR.

We have provided the cycles for the upcoming even year general elections in the charts below. If there is an office that is to be elected on a date not specified below, use the calculator provided below to determine the election cycle.

### Election Cycle Dates for 2010 November 2, 2010 General Election

Office	Cycle	Election Cycle Begins	Election Cycle Ends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supreme Court</li> <li>• State Board of Education</li> <li>• State University Boards</li> </ul>	(8 year cycle)	11/6/2002	<b>11/2/2010</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court of Appeals</li> <li>• Circuit Court</li> <li>• District Court</li> <li>• Probate Court</li> <li>• Local Offices with 6 year terms</li> </ul>	(6 year cycle)	11/3/2004	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governor</li> <li>• Attorney General</li> <li>• Secretary of State</li> <li>• State Senator</li> <li>• Local Offices with 4 year terms</li> </ul>	(4 year cycle)	11/8/2006	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Representative</li> <li>• Ballot Issues</li> <li>• Local Offices with 2 year terms</li> </ul>	(2 year cycle)	11/5/2008	

### Election Cycle Dates for 2012 November 6, 2012 General Election

Office	Cycle	Election Cycle Begins	Election Cycle Ends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supreme Court</li> <li>• State Board of Education</li> <li>• State University Boards</li> </ul>	(8 year cycle)	11/3/2004	<b>11/6/2012</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court of Appeals</li> <li>• Circuit Court</li> <li>• District Court</li> <li>• Probate Court</li> <li>• Local Offices with 6 year terms</li> </ul>	(6 year cycle)	11/8/2006	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Offices with 4 year terms</li> </ul>	(4 year cycle)	11/5/2008	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Representative</li> <li>• Ballot Issues</li> <li>• Local Offices with 2 year terms</li> </ul>	(2 year cycle)	11/3/2010	

### Election Cycle Dates Calculator

Office	Election Cycle Begins the day after the last election for that office. <i>Enter the previous date of election + one</i>	Election Cycle Ends on the date of the Election. <i>Enter the date of the Election</i>
• Offices with 8 year terms	___/___/___	___/___/___
• Offices with 6 year terms	___/___/___	
• Offices with 4 year terms	___/___/___	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ballot Issues</li> <li>• Offices with 2 year terms</li> </ul>	___/___/___	