Online Candidate®

Campaign websites and more.

Political Fundraising
With PayPal

A free guide from OnlineCandidate.com

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NOTICE OF LIABILITY

Political Fundraising with PayPal

Incorporating PayPal into your campaign fundraising program isn't very difficult, and the overall expenses are about the lowest you'll find with any payment processor. Donors make contributions on PayPal's secure pages, and PayPal stores all sensitive payment data, so you don't have to worry about data breach or PCI compliance.

Once an account is created, campaigns can generate donation buttons and links. To enable donors to contribute to your campaign or PAC on a regular schedule, you can implement PayPal recurring donations by utilizing the Subscribe button. PayPal's Custom Payment Pages feature gives you the ability to tailor PayPal's payment pages to the style of your political organization's website, providing donors with a seamless payment experience.

OnlineCandidate.com websites are designed to easily integrate with PayPal and other online payment systems.

 Here are the basic steps for accepting campaign contributions through PayPal:

1) Sign up for a [PayPal Business Account](#).
a. Select Nonprofit as the business type
b. Select Political as the subcategory

2) Confirm that your political campaign account is a nonprofit,. You will need to submit a tax letter from the IRS and a bank statement or voided check in the name of your organization, along with your PayPal email account and contact details, to compliance@paypal.com.

3) Add a Donate button to your campaign's website. Use the button designer on PayPal.com to create your button, then simply copy and paste the resulting code into your site.

Be sure to [open your account](#) early, as there's some verification to complete before your account can be set up!

Note that your organization will be responsible for gathering donor information, such as employer and occupation, and obtaining permission from donors before sending future marketing outreach.

Additional Resources from PayPal:

- [Political Fundraising with PayPal](#)
- [Download Political Campaigns Datasheet (PDF)](#)
- [Download Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Reasons You May *Not* Want To Use PayPal

Many political campaigns use PayPal as a way to transact online fundraising. There are a number of pros to using PayPal – It's a well-known platform, it can be simple to set up, and the fees are quite low for a payment processor. Now you can even take offline donations through a mobile phone.

However, there are a few *negatives* to using PayPal for fundraising.

There is no information capture: While PayPal captures payment information, it does not by default allow you to collect all the required information that a campaign requires. This can include employer information, profession, age testimonials and so on. To get around this, you must create your own form to gather this information from the donor before sending them to PayPal. *(See below for details on Online Candidate's built-in, customizable PayPal form.)*

There are no tools: There are no social media widgets, buttons or tracking with PayPal. Many other donation systems have these tools. While other systems may charge a higher transaction percentage, leveraging their built-in tools can help you bring in more money overall.

There is no recurring payment option (sort of): You can set up a recurring payment button to take, say, monthly or quarterly donations. You can even set the number of times that a recurring payment is transacted. Some other payment systems allow you to automatically stop after a set date, like Election Day. They also make it easier for a donor to get into that 'recurring' mode during the transaction.

A lot of campaigns use PayPal successfully. It's an easy, no-frills payment option. But if you want more advanced online tools, PayPal might not be right for you.

Online Candidate websites allow for integration of any fundraising system. Many of our clients use PayPal. For more online tools, including custom donation forms, recurring donation options and better reporting, we recommend Raise The Money. They get you set up fast, and their system is very easy to use.
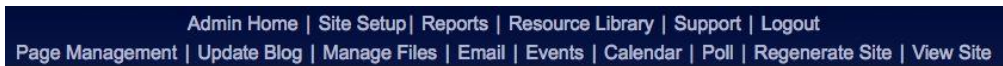
Incorporating PayPal Into Your Online Candidate Website

PayPal itself does not collect much of the necessary donor information that a campaign may require. To make that process easier, Online Candidate incorporates a two-step process where the donor data is first collected before they are passed off to PayPal.
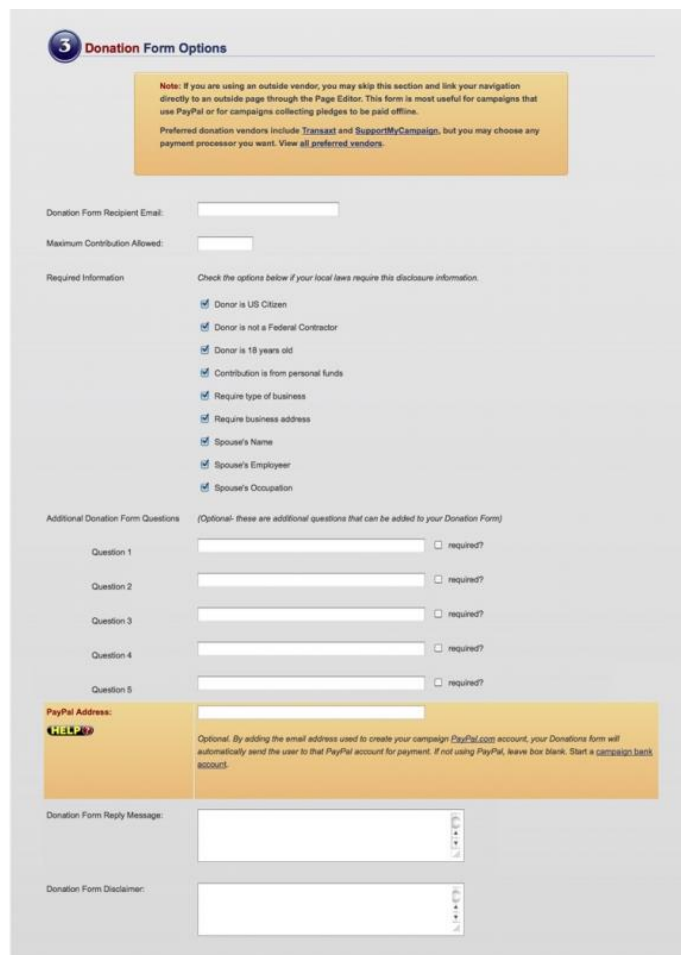
When a donation form is filled out and submitted, the data is collected on the site and you are emailed a copy of the form. When the donor has completed the transaction on PayPal, they are returned to your website.
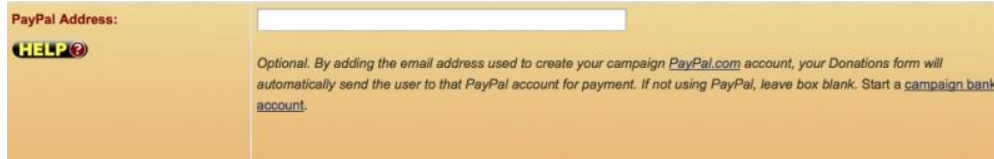
Integrating PayPal into your donation form is easy!

1. In your Site Administration, click 'Site Setup'

Admin Home | Site Setup| Reports | Resource Library | Support | Logout
Page Management | Update Blog | Manage Files | Email | Events | Calendar | Poll | Regenerate Site | View Site

2. Go to **Section 3: Donation Form Options.** Here you can modify all of your form options.

3. To tie in your PayPal account to the form, simply enter the email address used to create the Paypal account into the **PayPay Address** field.

4. Save the settings

5. Then regenerate your site, and you are all set!

That's it! Now when someone fills out your donation form, they will be automatically taken to your PayPal account to complete the donation transaction.

Sample Campaign Fundraising Letter

Below is a sample template for an initial fundraising appeal from a candidate to his or her friends or close acquaintances.

For more letter templates, download our [Political Letter Templates](#) ebook.

Dear [Name],

Having been involved in [name civic activities] since [time period], I have long worked for positive change in [location]. [My family and] I now feel that the time has come for me to seek elected office. I want to bring [fresh ideas and positive solutions or other attribute] to the [appropriate government body] by running for [position].

As you know, I have always been very concerned about [issue]. I believe there are workable solutions available that will enhance [qualities related to primary issue]. I would like to see [result of issue success]. [Add additional results you would like to see on this issue.]

Another important issue is [secondary issue]. We are [what is currently being done that is wrong]. [Include an additional sentence or two to describe issue]. We need to find ways to [describe result of solving secondary issue].

To succeed in this effort, I need to mount an aggressive campaign. My opponent is [describe opponent without naming him or her. Provide background of how long in office, if unopposed in previous elections, etc.] It's for these reasons that I have decided offer the voters of [location] a real choice [in this election].

This campaign will require a strong and organized grassroots organization. [Describe work that you are already doing to prepare for the campaign.] With brochures, flyers, yard signs, [local or specific type] advertising to place, and [location areas] to canvass, I cannot do this alone. That's why I'm inviting the people that know me best to join my campaign and help make a real difference.

An early contribution of $25, $50, $100, $250, $500 or [maximum amount], made payable to "[Organization Name]", will help raise the initial funds needed to launch the campaign.

We hope to raise [$ amount] by [date]. I ask for your support in meeting this goal.

An envelope and reply card is enclosed. I do hope that you will use them to return your personal check and help me to bring better government to the people of [location].

Thanks in advance for your encouragement and support. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Candidate Name]

[PS: You can make an online donation right now! We now have a website at [www.websitename.com] where you can find out more about our campaign and how you can get involved.]

Your Online Pitch

To take online donations, your campaign website will need a dedicated page. This donation page should have your "Donate Now" button to allow your donors to take action. Start your contribution page with a few short sentences about how and why a donor's gift will make a difference. There's no need to go into detail about your campaign, and at no point should the donor be distracted with links to other organizations or information about other giving opportunities.

Your contribute page should note any legal requirements that your campaign falls under, such as:

- No corporate funds may be used for a contribution.
- That the donor be an American citizen or resident alien.
- That the donor does not exceed the maximum legal contributions.
- That the political contribution is not tax deductible.

Also, list an address where checks can be mailed and to what organization the contribution should be made out.

Online donation tips

•   Include a donation button on every page of your website. The upper right area of a page is the most valuable call to action location.

•   For many donors, their first online contribution may very well be to your campaign. They will expect your campaign to maintain high standards of privacy and security. Be sure that your site's privacy policy reflects this.

•   Use clear language on your Donate or Give Now page. Make the call to action without ambiguity: No 'please give' or 'support us' kind of text. The same rule goes for your volunteer page as well.

•   Use messaging on your donate page to reinforce *why* they are donating. It can be whatever fits the request, such as, "For every $25 you give, we can reach another hundred voters."

• A theme-based appeal (explaining how a donation will be used) is generally more effective than a generic appeal for funds.

• In your mailings, always state that online donations are accepted. People who might not take the time to write a check might be willing to make a quick donation online. This also works well in tandem with phone calls, where callers mention that donations can be made through your campaign website.

• Donors can be contacted repeatedly for additional contributions during a campaign. Many successful campaigns follow the "rule of three", where contributors are first asked to contribute early in the campaign, once again in the middle, and then finally again near the end.

For more tips, tricks and useful strategies for running your political campaign online, download our ebook
[Running for Office as an Online Candidate](#)

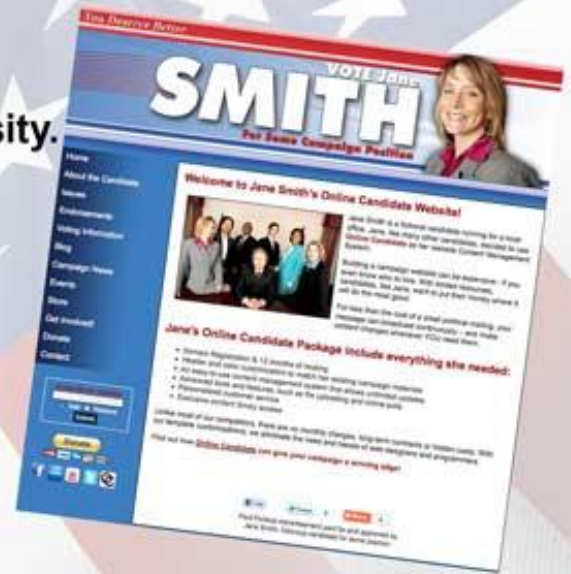(Also available on [Amazon.com](#))

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