

## **Kitchin demonstrates that Public Campaign Financing can work**



There is general agreement that **large political campaign contributions by individuals, businesses, and organizations can influence a candidate's perspective and improve the donor's access to the candidate.** Many argue that financial contributions can lead to disproportionate political influence by wealthy individuals and powerful organizations. This raises questions about the integrity and equality of democratic systems.

**Public campaign funding is an alternative** in which governments provide financial resources to political candidates for election campaigns and has received attention as a way to improve the fairness, transparency, and integrity of elections. By reducing reliance on private donations, public campaign funding reduces undue influence of wealthy donors and special interest groups. In privately funded systems, candidates often depend heavily on large contributions from corporations, lobbyists, or affluent individuals, which can create real or perceived obligations.

**Public funding can also encourage candidates to focus more on engaging with voters** rather than fundraising. In private funding systems candidates spend a substantial portion of their time soliciting donations, which can detract from meaningful policy discussions and voter outreach. With financial support provided through public means, candidates can devote more time to community engagement and developing policy proposals.

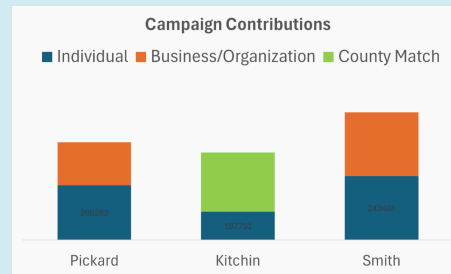
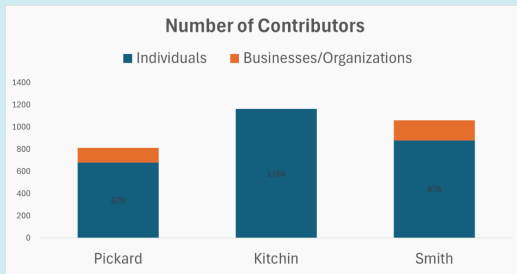
**In a step toward reducing the impact of money in local politics, Anne Arundel County adopted legislation in 2023 which established the [Public Campaign Financing Fund \(PCFF\)](#) in July 2023 for the 2026 election cycle.** The program is open to candidates for County Council and County Executive. The approved County budget for Fiscal Year 2026 brought the PCFF budget to \$1.25 million.

To qualify for matching funds, a contribution must be made by a County resident and cannot exceed a total of \$250 in the full election cycle. The total public contribution payable to a certified candidate for County Executive may not exceed \$750,000 in an election cycle, and the matching dollars equal:

- \$6 for each dollar of a qualifying contribution received for the first \$50 of each qualifying contribution;
- \$4 for each dollar of a qualifying contribution received for the second \$50 of each qualifying contribution; and
- \$2 for each dollar of a qualifying contribution received for the third \$50 of each qualifying contribution.

Candidates are naturally a bit cautious about embarking on a campaign that is solely funded by an untested process. In Anne Arundel County only a candidate for County Executive, James Kitchin, has chosen this route in the current election cycle. However, Mr. Kitchin has clearly demonstrated the feasibility of public funding.

Contribution data below was taken from the [campaign finance reports](#) for the period January 2025 - January 2026. published by the Maryland Board of Elections.



Over the past year Mr. Kitchin has received campaign contributions from more donors than either of his top competitors (Allison Pickard and Pete Smith)

Kitchin's total campaign funding is in the same general range as both of his leading opponents.

GAN does not endorse candidates for political office, and we are not endorsing James Kitchin's candidacy, but we are strongly endorsing the public campaign finance program that he is using

**We hope that Kitchin's funding results will encourage candidates in the next election cycle to choose public funding for their campaign, restore faith in our electoral system, and increase momentum toward getting money out of politics.**

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Next GAN Board meeting is March 25, All members are welcome to observe and comment. See calendar for link.

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