

NOMINATING PETITION OVERVIEW

ISSUING PETITIONS

- Petitions may not be issued more than ninety (90) days before the qualifying deadline.
- Petitions must be typed or handwritten in ink.
- Petitions must have the name of the candidate, the office sought and any identifying number for the office on each page.
- The front and the back of each page must to be marked “original”.
- Petitions must be signed and dated by the issuer on each page.
- An individual may pick up a petition on a candidate’s behalf. An individual may return the petition for the candidate. However, only the candidate may complete the candidate’s section and the candidate’s signature on each page. (No titles may be printed with the candidate’s name.)
- Petition pages may not be photocopied. Additional pages must be issued by the county office or the state coordinator and must include the above information on each page. Additional pages must also bear the signature of the candidate and the date.
- If the candidate loses their original petition, the candidate must start the process over and obtain another original petition form the county election office.
- Petitions that are altered or photocopied by the candidate will not be accepted. If the county election commission (CEC) photocopies the petition, it shall indicate that the petition has been copied in the upper-right hand corner of each page.

CIRCULATING A PETITION

- A candidate’s qualifying petition is required to have twenty-five **(25)** nominating signatures, other than the candidate’s signature. These signatures must be people who are eligible to vote for the candidate. It is recommended that the candidate obtain at least fifty **(50)** signatures due to the fact that some people may not be registered voters, may have become ineligible to vote, or have not changed their address with the Election Office.
- Voters signing the petition should sign their name as it is listed on their voter registration record. (Example: If their name is listed as Eula Mae Gregory on their voter registration record, they shouldn’t sign it Bessie Gregory or Mrs. Joe Gregory, even though that may be what they are called.)

- Each voter must sign their own name. This includes well-meaning spouses! Anyone who cannot sign their own name due to disability must have two (2) witnesses. (Example: John Doe witnessed by Sally Smith, 12 Main Street and Joe Brown, 10 Main Street.)
- Voters should list their correct residential address including the city. Post Office Box numbers will not be accepted as a residential address.

FILING PETITIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Except for a petition for a delegate candidate, a postmark does not satisfy the filing deadline. For this reason the election commission recommends that the candidate, or their staff, hand deliver the petition in person. The election office staff will provide a receipt of the filed petition for the candidate's record. Any petition filed after the deadline will prevent the candidate's name from being placed on the ballot.
- All candidates are encouraged to return their nominating petition before the last day of the qualifying period to avoid missing the **Noon Deadline**. Nominating petitions will be checked in the order in which they are returned.
- The State of Tennessee does not use "filing fees" as part of the nominating process.

CANDIDATES FOR STATEWIDE AND FEDERAL OFFICES

- Candidates for Statewide offices and Federal offices must file their original nominating petition with the State Election Commission by the qualifying deadline.
 - Those offices include: Governor, United States Senate, United State House of Representatives (except for US House district 9), Independent Presidential Candidates, Delegate Candidates.
- Candidates for the above offices must also file a certified copy of the nominating petition with the coordinator of elections and with the chair of the party's state executive committee by the qualifying deadline.
- Candidates for the above offices can not file their nominating petitions at the CEC office. Candidates cannot qualify to seek public office if the petitions are filed incorrectly.
 - Caveat: if the petition is for the office of representatives to the United States congress and the district is located entirely in one county, the candidate must file the petition in the CEC office as stated below.

CANDIDATES NOT SEEKING STATEWIDE OR FEDERAL OFFICES –

- All other candidates file their original nominating petition with the CEC office in which the candidate is a resident by the qualifying deadline. A certified duplicate of the petition must be filed with the CEC offices in all counties wholly or partially within the area served by the office sought by the qualifying deadline.
- Those offices include members of the general assembly (Tennessee Senate and House of Representatives), non-statewide judges, county and city offices.

INDEPENDENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

- Must be issued eleven (11) separate petitions for each of his/her chosen electors.
- Each elector shall circulate his/her own petition and must obtain the signatures and addresses of at least twenty-five (25) registered voters. One elector must be chosen from each congressional district and two (2) electors must be chosen at large.
- Candidates must submit all eleven petitions with at least 25 registered voter's signatures on each by the qualifying deadline to appear on the November ballot.
- The original petitions must be filed with the State Election Commission and a certified duplicate with the Coordinator of Elections.

PETITION STATUS AND QUALIFICATION PROCESS

- The local County Election Commission will notify individuals in writing if the petition had or didn't have the necessary number of signatures. Information about the Campaign Treasurer and any additional documents are included in this written notice. (The Election Office Form is labeled **(P1)**)
- The members of the local County Election Commission have the legal responsibility to place only the names of candidates on the ballot who have met all the necessary qualifications. A nominating petition is part of the process along with residency, felony inquiries, and qualification checks.
- Individuals that have a felony conviction need to have their rights restored by a court before they can qualify, seek, or hold any office in the State of Tennessee.
- Candidates for Sheriff, Road Superintendent and Constable must file affidavits with state agencies two (2) weeks before the qualifying deadline. School Board candidates are required to file proof of high school graduation or proof of a GED. More information about this process will be provided by the election office specific to the office involved.

WITHDRAWAL PROCESS

- Individuals that wish to withdraw their nominating petition have one week to do so after the qualifying deadline. A written request over the candidate's original signature must be filed by the withdrawal deadline with the local County Election Commission. A fax will not be accepted. A phone call will not be accepted.

CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

- Under state law candidates for local elected office are **required to file financial disclosure documents in a timely manner**. It is the candidate's sole responsibility to meet the requirements of the campaign financial laws.
- An "*Appointment of Treasurer Form*" is always provided with the petition package. Under state law a candidate must file an Appointment of Treasurer before they spend or receive any money.
- A person who has an unpaid civic penalty imposed by the Registry of Election Finance cannot qualify to seek public office unless such penalty has been paid and the required report has been filed as documented by the Registry of Election Finance.
- The "Paid for by ..." statutes still apply to campaigning for office in Tennessee.