Minnesota Votes

Guide for Candidates

2012

Running for Partisan Office as a Minor Party or Independent Candidate

Unlike candidates affiliated with a major party such as the Democratic-Farmer-Labor, Independence, and Republican parties, independent and minor party candidates for partisan office need to submit a petition when filing for office. Major party candidates must win in a state primary to have their names placed on general election ballots, but the names of independent and minor party candidates are placed directly on the general election ballot once they have filed for office and their petitions have been approved.

Qualifications for federal and state partisan offices:

President and Vice President: Must be a natural born citizen, at least 35 years old and a resident of the United States for 14 years. Candidates for president and vice president must be residents of different states.

U.S. Senator: Must live in Minnesota when elected, have not filed for more than one office for the upcoming primary or general election, be at least 30 years old and a U.S. citizen for at least nine years on January 3, 2013.

U.S. Representative: Must live in Minnesota when elected, have not filed for more than one office for the upcoming primary or general election, be at least 25 years old and a U.S. citizen for at least seven years on January 3, 2013.

State Senator or Representative: Must be eligible to vote in Minnesota, have not filed for more than one office for the upcoming primary or general election, be at least 21 years old by January 3, 2013, a resident of Minnesota for at least one year, and of the legislative district for at least six months before November 6, 2012.

Filing as an Independent or Minor Party Candidate for President and Vice President

Presidential and vice presidential candidates must gather nominating petition signatures between May 22, 2012 and ending August 21, 2012. Nominating petitions must include the names of the candidates, their electors, and a statement of political party or political principle. A petition nominates a slate of up to 10 presidential electors.

Filing for Other Partisan Offices:

Candidates file for office by:

1. Collecting signatures on a nominating petition during the filing period beginning May 22, 2012 and ending June 5, 2012 at 5:00 p.m.; and
2. Submitting an affidavit of candidacy, the nominating petition and a filing fee *(or a petition in place of the filing fee)* with the filing officer during the filing period.

   Note: Candidates who will be out of the state during the filing period may file an affidavit of candidacy and pay any required filing fee *(or submit a petition, in place of the filing fee)* during the seven days immediately preceding their absence from the state. Candidates who must unexpectedly leave the state during the filing period may submit their affidavits of candidacy by fax or as a scanned attachment to an e-mail. Contact the proper filing officer for more information.

Filing Location:

Candidates for federal office must file with the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. Candidates for state office may file with either the county auditor of the county in which they reside or with the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State.

Nominating Petition Guidelines:

To be valid, a petition must comply with the following guidelines:

- The petition must be prepared on paper no larger than 8.5 inches wide and 14 inches long.
- The petition may not contain more than one candidate name unless it is for the joint nomination of candidates such as president and vice president.
- Each page of the petition must state the following information:
  - the candidate's name;
  - the candidate's residence addres
  - the office the candidate seeks in the election;
  - the candidate's political party or political principle expressed in no more than three words. *(No part of a major party's name may be used as a minor or independent candidate's political party or political principle. In addition, the term "nonpartisan" cannot be a statement of political principle. However, the term "independent" may be used to designate a political party or political principle*);
  - the following oath in at least 12-point bold text must appear above the signature lines:

    "I solemnly swear (or affirm) that I know the contents and purpose of this petition, that I do not intend to vote at the primary for the office for which this nominating petition is made, and that I signed this petition of my own free will.";
  - the following two statements: "All information must be filled in by person(s) signing the petition unless disability prevents the person(s) from doing so." "All information on this petition is subject to public inspection."
  - a brief title describing the purpose of the petition and statement summarizing the purpose of the petition; and
- The signer's oath and signature lines must be on the same side of the paper.
- The petition text must be printed as large as possible, but no smaller than 10-point text.
- Each page must have no more than 10 consecutively numbered signature lines with space provided for signature; date of signature; signer's year of birth; printed first, middle, and last name; and residence address, municipality, and county.

Nominating Petition Signatures:

The number of signatures required for nominating petitions are:

- President and vice president: 2,000
- U.S. Senator: 2,000
- U.S. Representative: 1,000
- State Legislator: 500

Nominating petitions may be signed only by individuals eligible to vote for the candidate being nominated. In addition, no individual is allowed to sign more than one nominating petition for candidates running for the same office.

Petition signers are required to provide the following:

- signature date
- printed name
- year of birth
- residence address including street and number, if any, and mailing address if different from residence address

Petition signers must write out their whole printed name and signature. Ditto marks are not allowed for these items. It is acceptable to use ditto marks for the date, year of birth and residence address as long as it is clear as to what information the marks are referring.

Affidavits of Candidacy:

On an affidavit of candidacy, candidates state that they meet the qualifications for the office for which they are filing and that the name listed is their true name by which they are commonly known in the community.

Affidavits of candidacy for federal and state offices may be completed between March 23 through June 5, 2012. Affidavits must be signed in the presence of a notary or an individual authorized to administer oaths. The Secretary of State and county auditor staff, if delegated, may witness affidavits of candidacy.

Filing Fee:

Candidates have the option of either paying a fee when filing an affidavit of candidacy or filing a petition in place of the filing fee with their affidavit. The nominating petition may also be used as a petition in place of filing fee provided it states that it is being used for both purposes. The number of signatures required on the petition in place of paying the filing fee is the same number required for the office on the nominating petition. Sample petition forms are available from the filing officer. Candidates opting to pay the filing fee must submit the following amounts:

- U.S. Senator: $400
- U.S. Representative: $300
- State Senator or Representative: $100

Write-in Candidates

Independent candidates for federal and state office who choose to run a write-in campaign instead of filing an affidavit of candidacy and nominating petition must file a written request if they want to have their write-in votes tallied. Written requests must be submitted to the filing office no later than the seventh day before the general election.

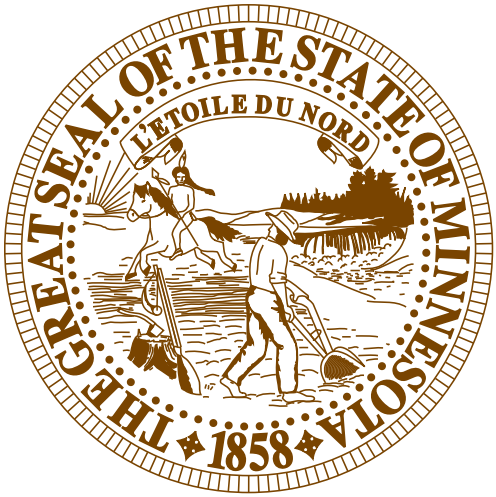
Campaign Expenditure Reporting Informaton:

Financial reports related to federal offices must be filed with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). Candidates for federal office whose reports are published on the FEC website are not required to file with the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State.

FEC contact information:

Federal Elections Commission
999 E. Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20463
Phone: 1-800-424-9530
Website: www.fec.gov

Financial reports related to state offices must be filed with the Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board (Minnesota Statute 10A).

Board contact information:

Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board
190 Centennial Office Building
St Paul, MN 55155
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Website: www.cfboard.state.mn.us