



2016 GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES

Minor Party or Independent Candidates Running for Partisan Office

Independent and minor party candidates for partisan office need to submit a petition when filing for office. 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. This document summarizes filing requirements under Minnesota law for candidates (*Minnesota Statutes sections 204B.03; 204B.06; 204B.09; 204B.11; 204B.12; 205.13; 205A.06; 211A.02*).

Qualifications for Federal and State Partisan Offices

U.S. President, Vice President: Must be a natural-born citizen of the United States; be at least 35 years of age and have been a resident of the United States for at least fourteen years on January 20, 2017.

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 2, 2017.

State Senator, State Representative: Must be eligible to vote in Minnesota; have not filed for more than one office for the upcoming primary or general election; and be at least 21 years old on January 2, 2017, a resident of Minnesota for at least one year; and of the legislative district for at least six months before November 8, 2016.

State Judicial Officers: 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 on January 2, 2017; and be licensed to practice law in Minnesota.

How Candidates File for Partisan Office

- Collect signatures on a nominating petition during the filing period from May 17 to 5 p.m., May 31, 2016. The filing period for candidates for the office of U.S. President runs from May 17 to August 23.
- Submit 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. Candidates for the office of U.S. President are not required to submit an affidavit of candidacy or pay a filing fee.

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 in an email. 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.

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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:
 - Candidate's name.
 - Candidate's residence address.
 - Office the candidate seeks in the election.
 - 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 used as the name of the political party or 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.
- 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.

- Petitions for the office of U.S. President must include the name of a candidate for Vice President, up to three words stating the political party or principle, up to ten presidential electors, and up to ten alternate presidential electors

Number of Nominating Petition Signatures Required

- U.S. President: 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 and date.
- Printed name.
- Year of birth.
- Residence address including street 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.

Affidavit 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 18 and May 31, 2016. Affidavits must be signed in the presence of a notary or an individual authorized to administer oaths. Staff of the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State and county auditor, if delegated, may witness affidavits of candidacy.

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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. President: \$0
- U.S. Representative: \$300
- State Senator, State 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 officer no later than November 1, 2016. Presidential candidates must also include the name of a vice-presidential candidate and the name of at least one, but not more than ten, candidates for presidential elector.

Campaign Expenditure Reporting Information

Information about financial reporting requirements is available from the following sources:

Federal Offices

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 those reports with the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. FEC contact information:

Federal Elections Commission
999 E. Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20463
1-800-424-9530
www.fec.gov

State Offices (includes all judicial offices)

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

Minnesota Campaign Finance
And Public Disclosure Board
190 Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 296-5148
www.cfboard.state.mn.us