

A Guide for Candidates

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1. REGISTERING AS A CANDIDATE

Every person seeking public office should register with the appropriate filing officer as soon as the person has decided they would like to become a candidate (See A & B below).

State or Federal Offices – Government Accountability Board

Senate
Congress
Assembly
Judges
District Attorney
Superintendent of Public Instruction

County Offices – County Clerk

County Clerk
Treasurer
Sheriff
Clerk of Circuit Court
Register of Deeds
County Board Supervisor
Multi-jurisdictional Municipal Judge

Municipal Offices – City, Village, or Town Clerk

Mayor, President, Chairperson
Aldersperson, Trustee, Supervisor
Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Constable

School Board Offices – School District Clerk

School Board Member

A. Declaration of Candidacy

A Declaration of Candidacy form (GAB-162) must be filed no later than the latest time provided for filing nomination papers. (Wisc. Stats. 8.21(1)).

B. Campaign Registration Statement

A Campaign Registration Statement (GAB-1) must be filed with the appropriate filing officer as soon as the candidate has formed the intent to run for office. It **must** be filed before spending or receiving any money for the campaign and no later than the deadline for filing nomination papers. Both the candidate and the treasurer must sign it. Depository information must be completed. Any change in information must be reported within 10 days following the change (Wisc. Stats. 11.05(2)(g) and 11.05(12)).

C. Penalty for Not Filing a Registration Statement

Failure to file the original registration statement (GAB-1) by the deadline for filing nomination papers will prevent a candidate's name from appearing on the ballot. If a required statement or amendment is not filed on time, the registrant may be subject to a fine.

2. NOMINATION PAPERS

Nomination papers may be obtained from your filing officer or the Government Accountability Board. The form may be reproduced in any way, and the candidate's picture and biographical data may also be added to the form. No disclaimer or attribution statement is required on nomination papers.

Each candidate is responsible to assure that his/her nomination papers are prepared, circulated, signed, and filed in compliance with statutory requirements.

THE CIRCULATOR MUST PERSONALLY PRESENT THE NOMINATION PAPER TO EACH SIGNER. THE NOMINATION PAPER MAY NOT BE LEFT UNATTENDED ON COUNTERS OR POSTED ON BULLETIN BOARDS.

- A. Candidate's Name** – Insert the candidate's name *as it will appear on the ballot*. No abbreviations or titles are permitted. A candidate may use his or her full legal name or nickname with last name; however, shortened forms of proper names, such as "Red," "Skip," or "Lower Taxes" are not permitted.
- B. Candidate's Residence** – If a candidate's municipality of residence is different than the candidate's mailing address (P.O. address), both must be given. The candidate's municipality of residence must indicate if it is a town, village or city.
- C. Date of Election** – Insert the date of the election.
- D. Title of Office** – The name of the office must be listed along with any district, branch, or seat number that clearly identifies the office the candidate is seeking, such as Dodge County Supervisor, District #1.
- E. Name of Jurisdiction** – The nomination papers must also identify the municipality or jurisdiction in which the signing electors are qualified to vote as it relates to the office sought by the candidate. For example, the Title of Office is Dodge County Supervisor, District #1. The Name of the Jurisdiction would be 1st & 3rd Wards, City of Beaver Dam.
- F. Signatures of Electors** – Only qualified electors of the jurisdiction or district the candidate seeks to represent may sign the nomination papers.

Each elector signing a nomination paper must list all of the information required. Each elector's municipality of residence must be listed on the nomination paper, along with the mailing address, including any street name and number, rural route, P.O. Box number and/or fire number. The street & number or Rural Route section for each elector's address is split into two lines. The first line is for the street address. The second line is for the municipality for mailing purposes. **The municipality of residence listed for each signing elector must clearly identify the town, village, or city where the elector's voting residence is located.** A post office box number does not show where the elector actually resides.

A husband may **not** sign for his wife or vice versa. A married woman may sign "Mrs. John Brown" or "Mary Brown".

Only one signature per person for the same office is valid. Where an elector is entitled to vote for more than one candidate for the same office, a person may sign the nomination papers of as many candidates for the same office as the person entitled to vote for at the election.

Signatures shall **not** be counted if:

- ... The address of the signer is missing or incomplete, unless residency can be determined by the information provided on the nomination paper.
- ... The date of the signature is missing, unless there is a valid date above and below the signature.
- ... The circulator did not sign and date the nomination paper.

The circulator may add any missing or illegible address, information, or dates before the papers are filed with the filing officer.

G. Signature of Circulator – The circulator's complete address (including municipality of residence) must be listed. **After** obtaining signatures, the circulator must sign and date the certification.

H. Filing Deadline – Nomination papers must be in the physical custody of the appropriate filing officer by the filing deadline. A postmark on the filing deadline is **not** sufficient. Nomination papers **cannot** be faxed to the filing officer.

Spring Election – Nomination papers may not be circulated prior to December 1, of the year prior to the election. Nomination papers must be filed, with the required number of signatures, with the appropriate filing officer no later than 5:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday in January before the spring election.

Fall Election – Nomination papers may not be circulated prior to June 1, of the year of the election. Nomination papers must be filed, with the required number of signatures, with the appropriate filing office no later than 5:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday in July.

In order for a candidate's name to be placed on the ballot, the candidate must file a Campaign Registration Statement (GAB-1), a Declaration of Candidacy (GAB-162), and Nomination Papers (GAB-169) containing the appropriate number of signatures for the office sought no later than the filing deadline.

Candidates for state office and municipal judge must also file a Statement of Economic Interests with the State Ethics Board by the 3rd business day after the nomination paper filing deadline.

If any one of these required forms are not filed by the deadline, the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot.

I. Number of Signatures Required (Dodge County)

Dodge County Supervisor	20-100
Dodge County Constitutional Offices	200-400
Multi-jurisdictional Municipal Judge	20-100

J. Challenging Nomination Papers – Nomination papers may be challenged within 3 business days. The challenge must contain a sworn statement and supporting evidence establishing an insufficiency in a candidate's nomination papers and must be filed with the proper filing officer.

3. CAMPAIGN FINANCES (Wisc. Stats. Chapter 11)

The information required to be listed on a Campaign Finance Report (GAB-2) discloses the financial activity of the registrant's campaign. The law requires disclosure of campaign income, disbursements and incurred obligations. Full information regarding campaign finances is outlined in the *Campaign Finance Instruction & Bookkeeping Manual*.

If you have any questions, contact your filing officer or the Government Accountability Board. **Even if the candidate is exempt from filing financial reports, he/she must keep complete financial records.**

A. Exemption from Filing Campaign Finance Reports

Most candidates for county and municipal offices will be eligible for an exemption from filing campaign finance reports under the provisions of the state statutes. Candidates are eligible for this exemption if the candidate does not anticipate accepting contributions, making disbursements, or incurring obligations in an aggregate amount of more than \$1,000 in a calendar year.

In addition, the candidate may not accept any contributions from a single source in excess of \$100 in a calendar year. This \$100 limit on contributions from a single source does not apply to the contributions from the candidate's personal

funds to his or her campaign, if the candidate's contributions total \$1,000 or less in the calendar year.

A candidate requesting exemption should check the appropriate box and sign on the appropriate line on the Campaign Registration Statement (GAB-1).

A candidate who is eligible for exemption from filing campaign finance reports may use a personal account as the campaign depository, as long as he/she remains exempt from reporting. This account must be listed on the Campaign Registration Statement (GAB-1).

B. Campaign Depository Account

Candidates must designate a campaign depository account within 5 business days after the candidate receives his/her first contribution and before the candidate makes or authorizes any disbursement on behalf of his/her candidacy. The account should be a checking account, but it could be a savings account if a negotiable instrument can record the withdrawals.

C. Campaign Treasurer

The candidate may appoint himself/herself or any other elector as Campaign Treasurer. The candidate may remove a Campaign Treasurer at any time and designate a successor. An amended Campaign Registration Statement must be filed with the filing officer with 10 days of the change.

The candidate bears the responsibility for accuracy of each campaign finance report for purposes of civil liability whether or not the candidate certifies it personally.

D. Campaign Finance Reports

Pre-primary and pre-election reports, called Campaign Finance Reports (GAB2), shall be filed with the filing officer no earlier than 14 days and no later than 8 days preceding the primary and the election.

Election reports shall be filed with the filing officer no earlier than 23 days and no later than 30 days after each special election.

If a candidate receives no contributions and makes no disbursements during the reporting period, he/she may file a Campaign Finance Report, Short Form (GAB-2a). It should be used only when there has been no financial activity and the cash balance is unchanged during the reporting period.

E. Limitations on Contributions

No individual may make any contributions to a candidate for the following offices of more than a total of the amount specified per candidate:

<u>Office</u>	<u>Amount</u>
County Board Supervisor	\$250.00*
County Constitutional Office	\$858.97*

*The greater of \$250 or \$.01 times the number of inhabitants of the jurisdiction or district, according to the latest federal census or the census information on which the district is based, as certified by the appropriate filing officer, but not more than \$3,000.

F. Unlawful Contributions

No person may directly or indirectly make any contribution other than from funds or property belonging to the contributor.

In addition, a candidate may not accept:

- ... Anonymous contributions of more than \$10.
- ... Cash contributions over \$50.
- ... Contributions given in the name of someone other than the contributor or contributions from Corporations or Cooperatives.
- ... Contributions in excess of the limits set by law or rule.

4. CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING

A. Disclaimer

State law requires that all campaign advertising carry a disclaimer (information identifying its source). The disclaimer shall be identified by the words “Paid for by” followed by the name of the candidate or other individual making the payment or reimbursement or assuming responsibility for the communication. No abbreviation may be used in identifying the name of a committee or group. Disclaimers must be readable and legible (Wisc. Stats 11.30).

Items that are exempt from having a disclaimer printed on them are: pins, balloons, pens, buttons, nail files and other small items on which the information cannot be conveniently printed.

B. Signs

Signs may be placed on private property with the owner’s permission. Renters of residential property may exercise the same right as the owners to place a sign upon the property in any area of the property occupied exclusively by the renter.

Signs Cannot:

- ... Constitute a traffic hazard.
 - ... Be placed within 100 feet of an entrance to a building containing a polling place unless they are on private property.
- Cities, villages, and towns may have their own rules regarding the placement of signs. It would be best to check with the municipality before placing your signs (Wisc. Stats 12.04).

C. Campaign Literature

A disclaimer must be listed on all literature, including signs. When distributing literature, you may **not** put it in mailboxes.

5. SOME PROHIBITED ELECTIONS PRACTICES

- A. No election official may engage in electioneering on election day.
- B. No person may engage in electioneering during polling hours on election day within 100 feet of an entrance to a building containing a polling place.
- C. No person may knowingly make or publish, or cause to be published, a false representation pertaining to a candidate.
- D. No person may advance, pay or cause to be paid any money to or for the use of any person with the intent that such money or any part thereof will be used to bribe electors at any election.

6. NOTIFICATION OF NON-CANDIDACY (INCUMBENT OFFICEHOLDERS)

Incumbent officeholders who do not plan to seek re-election must file a Notification of Non-Candidacy (GAB-163) with the filing officer no later than 5:00 p.m. on the second Friday preceding the deadline for filing ballot access documents.

If an incumbent officeholder has not filed a Notification of Non-Candidacy or filed ballot access papers by the filing deadline, the deadline for that office is extended for 72 hours for all other candidates for that office only. The 72-hour extension is not granted to the incumbent.

If an incumbent candidate timely files the Notification of Non-Candidacy and later changes his or her mind, the incumbent may still run for re-election by timely filing all the appropriate ballot access papers.

7. **CONTACTS**

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