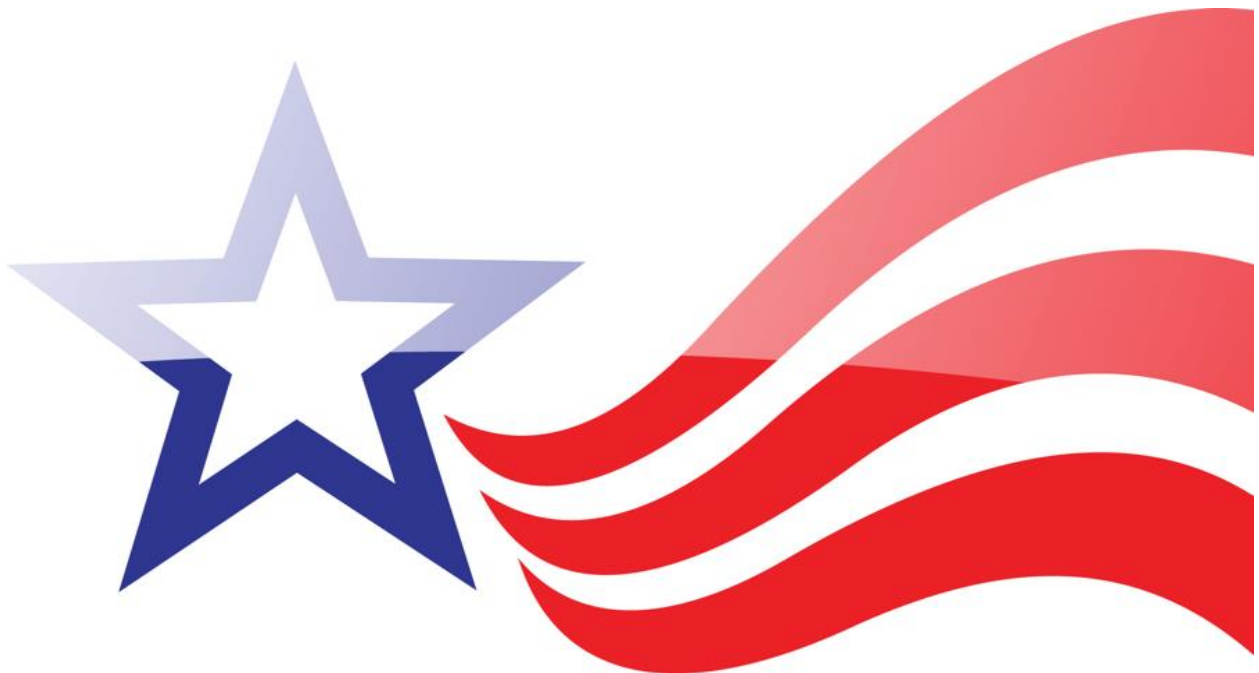


WASHINGTON COUNTY CANDIDATES' PACKET

**Washington County Elections Office
100 W Beau St, Ste 206
Washington PA 15301
724-228-6750**



DISCLAIMER

The Washington County Elections Office cannot provide legal or accounting advice. All candidates are strongly advised to solicit advice from a licensed professional in the appropriate field in advance of statutory deadlines and before filing documents with this office.

These instructions are strictly introductory in scope and should not be construed as legal advice. Filers are responsible for ensuring the correctness and completeness of ALL documents: The Washington County Elections Office is not responsible for errors and omissions on the part of a candidate.

NOMINATION PETITIONS

IMPORTANT DATES

- The first day to circulate petitions for signatures is February 16, 2021.
- The filing deadline is March 9, 2021. All petitions **must be received** in the Elections Office **no later than 4:30 pm on March 9**. Postmarks are not accepted as timely filing.
- Someone else can file your petition, but if it is not complete it will be rejected.
- Make sure all your documents are notarized before you file with the Elections Office. Our Office does not have a Notary. The Prothonotary's Office offers notary services, or you can use any Notary. The Prothonotary's Office is located in the Courthouse.

FILLING OUT THE PETITION

- Please print legibly or type your petition. Our Office obtains the information for the ballot from your petition.
- Be consistent when filling out your petition. Make sure your name is the same throughout the petition and be consistent in the name of the office and the municipality.

- **TOP OF PETITION**

The top of the petition **MUST** be filled out prior to circulating the petition.

- *"Electoral District in which the nomination or election is to be made"*: County, Borough, Township, or School District (include your ward or region, if applicable)
- *"Enrolled members of the"*: Your political party (must be Democratic or Republican for the Primary)
- *"Name"*: Name as you want it to appear on ballot (If you are using a nickname that is not part of your legal name, you must obtain, complete, and file an Affidavit for Ballot Name Change with the Elections Office).
- *"Occupation"*: If you are retired writing in "retired" is acceptable.
- *"Place of Residence"*: Must be your 911/physical address. PO boxes and work addresses are not acceptable.
- *"For the year"*: 2021
- *"Office of"*: Office you are running for and term (number of years). **If you are running for an unexpired term of an office, list the balance of the years**

remaining in that term. Listed below are the **normal** terms for offices appearing on the Ballot:

- ✓ County wide: 4 years
- ✓ Magisterial District Judge: 6 years
- ✓ City wide: 4 years
- ✓ Township Supervisor: 6 years
- ✓ Township Commissioner: 4 years
- ✓ Borough Mayor: 4 years
- ✓ Borough Council: 4 years
- ✓ Tax Collector: 4 years
- ✓ Auditor: 6 years
- ✓ Constable: 6 years
- ✓ School Director: 4 years

- **ELECTOR SIGNATURES**

- **DO NOT** begin to collect signatures before Tuesday, February 16, 2021.
- Signers must be registered to vote.
- Signers must be from the same political party you are registered and seeking the nomination.
- They must live and be registered in the municipality or school district (and ward or region where applicable) you are running in.
- Signers must fill out the entire line for themselves.
- Signers can only sign as many petitions as there are offices up for election.
- Signature of Elector: Should be as they are registered
- Printed Name of Elector: **PRINT** name as signed and registered
- Place of Residence: Where the signer lives
 - ✓ House number: House number of signer's house
 - ✓ Street or Road: Physical name of street where signer lives

- ✓ City, Township, Borough: NOT the mailing city. This is the municipality where the signer lives.
- ✓ Date of Signing: Date at time of signing
- **DO NOT** let the signer use ditto (“”) marks.
- If the signer makes a mistake, simply draw a single line through the entry. DO NOT use white out, erase, or completely black anything out on the petition.
- It is recommended to obtain more signatures than the required number of signatures. This will help safeguard your petition in the event that someone challenges the validity of the signatures.
- There are 30 signature lines on each petition. You can submit multiple petitions if you need more signature lines.
- Below is the minimum number of signatures required for offices appearing on the Ballot:
 - ✓ County wide: 250 signatures
 - ✓ Magisterial District Judge: 100 signatures per party
 - ✓ City wide: 100 signatures
 - ✓ Township Offices: 10 signatures
 - ✓ Borough Offices: 10 signatures
 - ✓ Constable: 10 signatures
 - ✓ School Directors: 10 signatures per party
- **STATEMENT OF CIRCULATOR**
 - In most cases, the candidate circulates their own petition; however, petitions can be circulated by anyone as long as the circulator is a registered voter of Pennsylvania and of the same party affiliation as the candidate.
 - School Directors, Magisterial District Judges, and Common Pleas Judges are the only offices on the ballot this election cycle that can cross-file.
 - School Board candidates can cross-file but **MUST** have someone from the **opposite party** circulate the petition for that party. For example, if the candidate is a Republican and they want to cross-file to appear on the Democratic ballot, they must have a Democrat circulate that petition.

- Magisterial District Judges can cross-file; however, their circulators do not need to be of the same party affiliation. For example, if the candidate plans to cross-file, they can circulate both the Democratic and the Republican petitions themselves. They do not need to have someone from the opposite party circulate the opposing party petition.
- Only 1 (one) circulator per petition sheet.
- The Statement should not be signed and completed until all signatures have been obtained.
- The circulator must complete **ALL** sections of the Statement: County of petition-signers' residence; printed name of circulator; signature of circulator; number and street address; and city, borough, or township – PO Boxes are not acceptable)

CANDIDATE'S AFFIDAVIT

- To be completed by the Candidate
- An Affidavit must be filed with each set of petitions (a set of petitions are the petitions you file in one visit to the Elections Office).
 - If you are a candidate for School Director or Magisterial District Judge and you are cross filing, you must complete and file an Affidavit with the Democrat petitions and an Affidavit with the Republican petitions.
 - If you are running for more than one office you must complete and file an Affidavit for each Office's set of petitions.
- Complete the top fields with the required information
 - Name
 - Residential address
 - City, state, zip
 - Municipality (city, borough, or township)
 - Mailing address (if difference from your residential address)
 - Mailing city, state, zip
 - Office you are running for
 - Political Party (either Democrat or Republican for the Primary)

- Name as you want it to appear on the Ballot
- The Affidavit section is split into two (2) sections:
 - Left side is for a notary to complete
 - Right side is for the candidate to complete
 - “*Signature of Candidate*” – **DO NOT** sign this until you are in front of the Notary
 - The other sections can be completed prior to notarization. (Phone number and Election District – County; Borough; Township; or School District, include your ward or region, if applicable)

WAIVER OF EXPENSE ACCOUNT REPORTING AFFIDAVIT

- To be completed by the candidate.
- This Affidavit is not required to be completed; however, we **strongly** advise completing it. If you choose not to complete this Affidavit you will be required to file Campaign Finance Reports whether you spend money on a campaign or not.
- The Affidavit is split into two (2) sections:
 - Left side is for a notary to complete
 - Right side is for the candidate to complete
 - “*Signature of Candidate*” – **DO NOT** sign this until you are in front of the Notary.
 - The other sections can be completed prior to notarization. (Printed Name of Candidate; Street Address; City, State, and Zip; and City, Borough, or Township – PO Boxes are not acceptable)
 - “*Election District*”: County, Borough, Township, or School District (include your ward or region, if applicable)
 - “*Office seeking Nomination*”: Office you are running for
 - “*Political Party*”: Party you are registered either Democrat or Republican for the Primary

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL INTEREST/ETHICS

- The form is administered by the State Ethics Commission.
- Its purpose is for the candidate to disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

Washington County Elections Office
2021 Primary Election

- The original is filed with the secretary of the municipality or school district in which you are running, or Chief Clerk if it is a county wide office. Constables file their original with the State Ethics Commission. It **MUST** be filed by the March 9, 2021 petition filing deadline.
- A copy **MUST** be filed along with your nomination petition at the Washington County Elections Office on or before March 9, 2021.
- All information is for the previous year – 2020.
- If you are already an office holder, this is in addition to your yearly filing.

FILING FEES

- Filing fees **MUST** be paid when the petition is filed.
- Only money orders, cash, or certified checks are accepted. We do not accept personal or business checks. Money orders and certified checks need payable to Washington County.
- These fees are non-refundable.
- **AMOUNTS**
 - ✓ County Offices: \$100
 - ✓ Magisterial District Judge: \$50 for each party if cross filing
 - ✓ City Offices: \$25
 - ✓ Constable: \$10
 - ✓ Borough and Township: No Filing Fee
 - ✓ School Director: No Filing Fee

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

- As a candidate it is your responsibility to understand the laws and requirements for campaign finance reporting. A manual on campaign finance reporting laws for candidates and political committees can be obtained from the Elections Office.
- Our Office cannot give you legal or financial advice.
- If you or your political committee intend to spend or receive funds over \$250 in a reporting period, you must file a campaign finance report, regardless of whether you signed the Waiver of Expense Account Reporting Affidavit on the back of your petition.
- There are four (4) reporting periods and an annual report for candidates/committees:

Washington County Elections Office
2021 Primary Election

- Second Friday Pre-Primary complete as of 5/3/21 due date 5/7/21
 - Thirty Day Post-Primary complete as of 6/7/21 due date 6/17/21
 - Second Friday Pre-Election complete as of 10/18/21 due date 10/22/21
 - Thirty Day Post Election complete as of 11/22/21 due date 12/2/21
 - 2021 Annual Report complete as of 12/31/21 due date 1/31/22
- Postmarks are acceptable as proof of timely filing when report is postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service no later than the day prior to the filing deadline.
 - If you **do not** sign the Waiver of Expense Account Reporting Affidavit on the back of the petition, then you are **required** to file reports even if you do not spend or raise any funds.
 - Penalties for overdue reports are \$20 for the first 6 days and \$10 per day after that with a maximum fee of \$250.
 - Campaign Finance Reports for county and local offices are filed with the Washington County Elections Office.
 - Our recommendation is to sign the waiver and then file reports if necessary. Signing the waiver does not prevent you from being able to spend and raise funds over \$250 if you decide to.
 - **POLITICAL COMMITTEES**
 - If you sign the waiver and then form a committee, that negates the waiver and you **MUST** file campaign finance reports. Both the committee and the candidate must file separate reports
 - If you form a committee, they **MUST** register with the Washington County Elections Office.
 - A registration of political committee form can be obtained from our Office.
 - Committees must be authorized by the candidate.
 - An authorization to accept funds on behalf of the candidate form can be obtained from our Office.
 - Every committee must have a treasurer and chairperson. The treasurer and chairperson cannot be the same person.

- Each candidate/committee shall keep records of the names and addresses of each person who contributes \$10 or more.
- If a report is not filed in a timely matter for a committee, the treasurer is personally responsible for any and all late fees.
- All the same campaign finance laws apply to committees and candidates.

CASTING OF LOTS FOR BALLOT POSITION

- If there is more than one candidate for the same office of the same party, then each candidate may draw in person or have a proxy draw in their place to determine the ballot position.
 - The candidate needs to provide their proxy with a written authorization to submit at the drawing.
- If neither the candidate nor the proxy appear for the drawing then a member of the Elections Office staff will draw.
- The casting of lots will take place beginning at **10:00 am on March 17, 2021** in the Public Meeting Room (Room 103) of the Courthouse Square Building, 100 W Beau St; Washington.

CAMPAIGNING/CAMPAIGN SIGNS

- All printed materials must include a disclaimer such as “Paid for by...”.
- The placement of campaign signs is regulated by the municipalities (boroughs, townships) not the County Board of Elections. Check with the municipality in regards to the time frame of when campaign signs are allowed to be displayed.
- On Election Day campaign signs must be a minimum of ten (10) feet from the entrance to the polling locations.
- On Election Day campaigners must be a minimum of ten (10) feet from the entrance to the polling locations.

WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

CHECKLIST FOR FILING YOUR PETITION

- Completed nomination petition with the required number of signatures and the Circulator Statement signed and completed

- A completed and notarized Candidate's Affidavit

- A completed and notarized Waiver of Expense Account Reporting Affidavit (if applicable)

- Appropriate Filing Fee in the form of cash, money order, or certified check (if applicable)

- A copy of your completed State Ethics Commission Statement of Financial Interest

**The filing deadline is March 9 by 4:30 pm in the Elections Office.
Postmarks are not accepted as timely filing.**

Any questions please contact the Washington County Elections Office by phone at 724-228-6750, by e-mail at washcoelections@co.washington.pa.us, or by visiting our Office at 100 W. Beau St, Ste 206; Washington PA 15301.