

BECOMING A CANDIDATE

(Revised: February 23, 2025)

Information provided may be subject to Legislative Changes

What is a Candidate?

A candidate is defined in 97.021(5), Florida Statutes, as any person to whom any one or more of the following applies:

- Any person who seeks to qualify for nomination or election by means of a petitioning process.
- Any person who seeks to qualify for election as a write-in candidate.
- Any person who receives contributions or makes expenditures or gives his or her consent for any other person to receive contributions or make expenditures, with a view to bringing about his or her nomination or election to, or retention in, public office.
- Any person who appoints a treasurer and designates a primary depository.
- Any person who files qualification papers and subscribes to a candidate's oath as required by law.

However, this definition does not include any candidate for a political party executive committee.

Who can be a Candidate?

- You must be a registered voter in Volusia County to run for local public office.
- A candidate for County Council shall be a qualified elector of the county and shall have been a resident of the county for two years immediately preceding the date on which they qualify to run for office. District candidates shall have resided within the district from which they are elected for at least six months prior to the date on which they qualify to run for office (**County Charter, Sec. 302**).
- School Board candidates must reside in the district for which they are qualifying at the time of qualifying. For specific requirements of qualifying as a candidate for school board, please contact the **Volusia County School Board**.
- If required by the "resign to run law" to resign from one's current position or office, the written resignation must be filed by **April 10, 2026 for Circuit Court Judge, County Court Judge, State Attorney and Public Defender candidates or May 29, 2026 for all other candidates** (99.012(3), Florida Statutes). The Resignation is irrevocable.

Announcing Candidacy and Forms Required

- Candidacy may be announced at any time.
- You MUST file an Appointment of Campaign Treasurer and Designation of Campaign Depository (**Form DS-DE 9**) with the Supervisor of Elections Office before any contributions are accepted, before opening a campaign account, and before expenditures are made (106.021, Florida Statutes).
- You MUST file a Statement of Candidate (**Form DS-DE 84**) within ten (10) days of filing the Appointment of Campaign Treasurer and Designation of Campaign Depository (106.023, Florida Statutes).
- Candidates for County Judge MUST file a Statement of Candidate for Judicial Office (**Form DS-DE 83**).

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Filing Qualifying Papers

Qualifying is the final step that allows a candidate to have his or her name on the ballot. Qualifying must be finalized during the assigned dates. Municipal Candidates qualifying dates may vary according to municipal charters. Contact your municipality for dates.

When

U.S. Senator, Representative in Congress, Judicial, State Attorney and Public Defender Candidates:

NOON April 20, 2026 – NOON April 24, 2026

Statewide, Multi-County, County and Special District Candidates:

NOON June 8, 2026 – NOON June 12, 2026

Where

- For federal, state, or multi county offices, you must file your qualifying papers with the Department of State.
- For county and special district offices, you must file your qualifying papers with the Supervisor of Elections.
- For municipal offices, you must file your qualifying papers with the City Clerk's office in your municipality.

Please Note: Qualifying officer may accept and hold qualifying papers 14 days prior to the beginning of the qualifying period to be processed and filed during qualifying period.

Forms Required to File

1. **Form DS-DE 9**, Appointment of Campaign Treasurer and Designation of Campaign Depository and Statement of Candidate (**Form DS-DE 84**), unless you have already filed these forms with the Supervisor of Elections.
2. Loyalty Oath
Partisan Races:
Form DS-DE 301SL, for Candidates with Party affiliation or,
Form DS-DE 301SL, for Candidates with No Party affiliation
Non Partisan Races:
Form DS-DE 302NP, for Candidates running in a Non Partisan election. (All Candidates Except for School Board and Judiciary)
Form DS-DE 303JU, for Candidates running for Judicial Office
Form DS-DE 304SB, for School Board Candidates
3. **Form 6** Full and Public Disclosure of Financial Interests for **2025** (and any other forms applicable as identified on Form 6) for all elected constitutional officers and candidates for such office. A public officer who has filed the full and public disclosure or statement of financial interests for the year **2025** with the Commission on Ethics prior to qualifying for office may file a copy of that disclosure at the time of qualifying. **Must be filed electronically with the Commission on Ethics.**
Form 1 Statement of Financial Interests for **2025** for local officers and candidates for local offices. **Must be filed electronically with the Commission on Ethics.**

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Qualifying Methods (Qualifying Fee or Petition Process)

Qualifying Fee

Pursuant to 99.092, Florida Statutes, qualifying fees for 2026 Volusia County candidates are comprised as follows:

- Filing Fee 3.0% of salary for office being sought as of **July 1, 2025**
- Election Assessment Fee 1.0% (deposited into the Elections Commission Trust Fund)
- Party Assessment Fee 2.0% (Partisan offices only)

The qualifying fee must:

- Be on a properly executed check; and drawn upon the candidate's campaign account;
 - Special District Candidates ONLY – *check is not required to be drawn on campaign account
- Be made payable to Volusia County Supervisor of Elections;
- Be in an amount not less than the fee required.

Qualifying fee by office for 2026 is as follows:

County Judge	\$ TBD
County Council At Large	\$ TBD
County Council District 1	\$ TBD
County Council District 3	\$ TBD
County Council District 5	\$ TBD
School Board District 1	\$ TBD
School Board District 3	\$ TBD
School Board District 5	\$ TBD

***Special District Offices:**

West Volusia Hospital Authority	\$ 25.00
Volusia Soil & Water Conservation District	\$ 25.00
Community Development District (CDD)	\$ 25.00

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Petition Process

Pursuant to 99.095, Florida Statutes, a person seeking to qualify for nomination to any office may qualify to have their name placed on the ballot by means of the petitioning process.

Where to obtain petition cards:

Candidates who have filed the Appointment of Campaign Treasurer and Designation of Campaign Depository (**Form DS-DE 9**) and Statement of Candidate (**Form DS-DE 84**) may obtain petition cards (**Form DS-DE 104**) from the Division of Elections website (<https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/forms-publications/forms/>).

Petition requirement by office for 2026 is as follows:

County Judge	3,843
County Council At Large	3,843
County Council District 1	759
County Council District 3	859
County Council District 5	731
School Board District 1	779
School Board District 3	854
School Board District 5	722

***Special District Offices:**

West Volusia Hospital Authority	25
Volusia Soil & Water Conservation District	25
Community Development District (CDD)	25

It is recommended to obtain at least 15–20% more signatures to allow for those that do not meet eligibility requirements.

- Signed petitions must be submitted to the Supervisor of Elections Office for verification prior to:
 - **NOON, March 23, 2026**, for U.S. Senator, Representative in Congress, Circuit Court Judge, County Court Judge, State Attorney and Public Defender candidates; and
 - **NOON, May 11, 2026**, for all other candidates
- Candidates are encouraged to submit petitions periodically while they are being gathered. The Supervisor of Elections will notify you, in writing, whether the required number of signatures has been obtained prior to the first day of qualifying.
- **During the qualifying period you will need to submit the petition certification form**, along with your qualifying papers to the Supervisor of Elections.
- The supervisor shall be paid in advance the sum of **10 cents for each signature** checked. If you are unable to pay such charges without imposing an undue burden on personal resources or upon the resources otherwise available to you, you may file written certification of such inability given under oath to the supervisor and be entitled to have the signatures verified at no charge. (99.097, Florida Statutes).

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- If an undue burden oath has been filed and payment is subsequently made to any person to solicit signatures on a petition, the undue burden oath is no longer valid and a fee for all signatures previously submitted shall be paid by the candidate.
- If you have submitted the required number of eligible signatures, you will not be required to pay the qualifying fee or party assessment and will be entitled to have your name printed on the ballot.

Please Note: Prior to disposing of campaign funds, pursuant to 106.141, Florida Statutes, any candidate who filed an oath stating that he or she was unable to pay the election assessment or fee for verification of petition signatures, or who qualified through the petition process and was not required to pay an election assessment, shall reimburse the state or local governmental entity, whichever is applicable, for such waived assessment or fee for verification or both. Such reimbursement shall be made first for the cost of petition verification and then, if funds are remaining, for the amount of the election assessment. The remaining funds shall be disbursed in the manner prescribed.

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Frequently Asked Questions

If my qualifying papers are filed with an error or omission, will I be considered disqualified?

Pursuant to 99.061(7), Florida Statutes; if the filing officer receives qualifying papers that do not include all items required, the filing officer shall make a reasonable effort to notify the candidate of the missing or incomplete items and shall inform the candidate that all required items must be received by the close of qualifying.

(NOON, April 24, 2026, for U.S. Senator, Representative in Congress, Circuit Court Judge, County Court Judge, State Attorney and Public Defender candidates or NOON, June 12, 2026, for all other candidates)

After filing as a candidate, may I later change the way my name is to appear on the ballot?

Pursuant to 99.061(7)(b), Florida Statutes; a candidate's name as it is to appear on the ballot may not be changed after the end of qualifying.

May I get my qualifying fee back if I decide not to run?

Yes, 99.092(1), Florida Statutes; provides for reimbursement for the qualifying fee, provided that you withdraw your candidacy before the qualifying period ends.

May a candidate appoint himself or herself as campaign treasurer?

Yes, 106.021(1)(c), Florida Statutes; a candidate may appoint herself or himself as campaign treasurer.

How many deputy treasurers may a candidate or political committee have?

Pursuant to 106.021(1)(a), Florida Statutes; Candidates for statewide office may appoint up to 15 deputy treasurers. Other candidates and political committees may appoint up to 3 deputy treasurers.

If I make a mistake on my report, can I go back in and correct it on the Electronic Filing System (EFS)?

Once the report is submitted to the Division of Elections, the EFS will not permit you to go back and make changes. In order to correct mistakes or add and delete information, you must submit an amended report.

How long are campaign records kept at the Division of Elections or the Supervisor of Elections Offices?

Pursuant to 98.015(5) and 106.22(4), Florida Statutes; the supervisor shall preserve statements and other information required to be filed with the supervisor's office pursuant to chapter 106 for a period of 10 years from date of receipt.

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TIPS...

1. Read "Chapter 106 Florida Statutes" and the "Candidate Handbook on Campaign Financing".
2. File the "Appointment of Campaign Treasurer and Designation of Campaign Depository" (**Form DS-DE 9**) with the Supervisor of Elections Office.
3. It is a good idea for the Candidate to appoint themselves as a Deputy Campaign Treasurer.
4. File the "Statement of Candidate" (**Form DS-DE 84**) with the Supervisor of Elections Office, within ten days of filing the DS-DE 9.
5. File Campaign Treasurer's Reports according to the reporting schedule for the current year. Avoid late fees.
6. If you are assessed with a late fee, you cannot pay the fee from your campaign account. Payment is to be made on a personal basis.
7. Remember to safeguard your password. If you change it, we can only reset it.
8. When accepting contributions, remember to get the person's name and address to document on your Campaign Treasurer's Report.
9. All contributions, whether monetary or in-kind must be recorded.
10. Keep campaign and personal transactions separate in order to avoid confusion when documenting and filing your reports.

Municipal Candidates:

- Municipal Candidates must file with their respective municipality.
- Refer qualifying and campaign questions to your City/Town Clerk.
- The City/Town Clerk of your municipality is your Qualifying Officer.

The information contained on these pages and other literature is not all-inclusive. It is the responsibility of the candidate to become acquainted with relevant Florida election laws and local charters, which may have a bearing on a campaign or qualifications to run for an office.

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For further information go to dos.myflorida.com/elections