



A Candidates Guide

We have had a number of people ask what they need to do to become a candidate. This summary is meant to serve as a brief guide for potential candidates.

To be placed on the ballot, you have to personally pick up a petition at the Knox County Election Commission in Room 218 of the Courthouse. You must get 25 registered voters from the jurisdiction you are running in to sign the petition. The commission can only count registered voters who list the address we have on file. The petitions must be returned to the Commission office by the qualifying deadline. The candidate does not have to return it personally. It is acceptable to mail it or have someone else drop it off. The Election Commission does need the original petition so faxes or emails will not be accepted.

The petitions for the 2008 county Election are not available until September 14th. The qualifying deadline is noon December 13th. The election date has been moved to February 5th, 2008.

Before a candidate raises or spends any money, the candidate needs to file an "Appointment of Political Treasurer" with the Election Commission. This form is available on our website, [Knoxvotes.org](http://www.knoxvotes.org), or at <http://www.state.tn.us/tref/forms/ss-1120.pdf>. You can print it out online and mail it or bring it to us. We must have the original, so a fax or e-mail will not work.

You may file the Appointment of Political Treasurer at any time, but it must be filed before you raise or spend any money. The staff at the Registry of Election Finance has told us that "incidental" expenses while you are thinking about running do not count. For example, if you go out to the Gibbs Democrat or Republican club to talk to people about the possibility of running, you would not have to count your gas driving out there as an expense.

You must file an Appointment of Treasurer for each election cycle. If you are running for re-election, or if you ran last time, a new Appointment of Treasurer needs to be filed. You can transfer the money over but you have to file a new form for each election.

Keep in mind one important change in the Campaign Finance Laws. It is now against the law to make donations in cash that in the aggregate exceed fifty dollars (\$50). (T.C.A. 2-10-311). The contribution limits in section 2-10-302 still apply. For local candidates the maximum aggregate contribution is one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

The State Registry of Election Finance (615-741-7659) or (<http://www.state.tn.us/tref/contact.htm>) has jurisdiction over election finance issues. The Knox County Election Commission merely files the reports and makes them available to the public. The state office can answer any question you have about financial reports or requirements.

Finally, within 30 days after the qualifying deadline, a candidate must file a Conflict of Interest Statement with the Tennessee Ethics Commission in Nashville (<http://www.tennessee.gov/sos/tec/>). You can contact them at 615-253-8634.

Once a candidate files an Appointment of Treasurer, the candidate is required to file periodic disclosure reports. The reports are to be filed quarterly during the election year and semi-annually in either the year(s) before or after. Additionally a report is due 10 days before any election. Our office will notify you by mail of any forms due under this statute.

Since petitions are not available until September, potential candidates may wonder how they can declare or announce that they are running. That is a political strategy issue and each candidate must make that decision. The Knox County Election Commission has posted and will continue to update a list of all persons who have filed an Appointment of Political Treasurer for the 2008 elections.

Here are some websites that might be helpful:

The Registry of Election Finance:
<http://www.state.tn.us/tref/contact.htm>

Tennessee Ethics Commission:
<http://www.tennessee.gov/sos/tec/>

The Campaign Financial Disclosure Law:
http://www.state.tn.us/tref/forms/cfd_law.pdf

Ethics bill changes:
http://www.knoxcounty.org/election/pdfs/ethics_legislation_points.pdf

Financial filing dates:
http://www.knoxcounty.org/election/pdfs/2008_local_candidate_filing.pdf

The Knox County Election Commission

Room 218 in the Courthouse
300 Main Street, Knoxville, TN 37902
865-215-2480 fax 856-215-4239

www.KnoxVotes.org