



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ELECTIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20003-4733



CIRCULATING AND FILING NOMINATING PETITIONS

As a candidate seeking elected office in the District of Columbia, you are responsible for ensuring that each individual who circulates nominating petitions on your behalf complies with all pertinent rules and regulations regarding petition circulation. Each person who circulates petitions on your behalf must:

- Be at least 17 years of age and who will be 18 years of age on or before the next general election *and* either a resident of the District of Columbia or a resident of another jurisdiction who has registered as a petition circulator with the Board prior to circulation of a petition;
- Personally circulate each petition sheet for which they sign a circulator's affidavit;
- Personally witness the signing of each signature on each petition sheet for which they sign a circulator's affidavit;
- Inquire whether each signer is a registered voter in the District of Columbia and, if applicable, whether each signer is a registered voter in the same political party and/or ward or single-member district as the candidate, depending on the office sought;
- Complete and sign, under penalties of perjury, the circulator's affidavit on each petition sheet they circulate;
- Make sure that only one circulator signature is affixed to a single petition sheet and that the date in the circulator's affidavit does not pre-date those of the registered voters who sign the petition sheets;
- Ensure that each signer legibly provides all required information, in addition to their signature; and
- Adhere to the provisions in the election statute and regulations regarding nominating petition circulation, with the understanding that any circulator who knowingly and willfully violates any such provisions could, upon conviction, be fined up to \$10,000 and/or imprisoned for up to six (6) months.

Non-Resident Petition Circulators

Each non-resident petition circulator must register in-person with the Board by completing a Non-Resident Petition Circulator Registration Form and submitting valid proof of residence. Valid proof of residence is any official document showing the circulator's name and residence address. Acceptable forms of proof of residence include:

- A copy of a current and valid government-issued photo identification;
- A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or government check;
- A copy of a government-issued document; or

- A copy of any other official document, including leases or residential rental agreements, occupancy statements from homeless shelters, or tuition/housing bills from colleges or universities.

Electronic Circulation

All candidate petitions can be circulated either electronically or via paper versions.

To circulate petitions electronically, candidates can request digital, PDF versions of their petitions, and then share the PDF version of the petition with qualified petition circulators to gather signatures from voters. It is the duty of the candidate though to ensure that when the petition is printed, the formatting matches the original document.

When the qualified petition circulators finish gathering signatures, they can submit the petition sheets to the candidates electronically or in paper form. Candidates must submit hard copies of completed petition sheets to the Board.

Valid Petition Signatures

In order for a signature on a nominating petition to be valid:

- The signer must be a duly registered voter in the District of Columbia; (However, if an address on a petition is different than the address which appears in the Board's records, it shall be deemed valid if the signer's current address is within the electoral jurisdiction from which the candidate seeks nomination *and* the signer files a change of address form with the Board within ten (10) days after the date the candidate receives notice that a challenge has been filed to the nominating petition.)
- The signer must be designated as “active” in the voter roll at the time the petition is signed;
- The signature must not be a duplicate of a valid signature appearing elsewhere on the petition;
- The signature must be dated;
- The signature must be accompanied by the signer’s address; (a P.O. Box number is not acceptable.)
- The signature must include the printed name of the signer if the signature is not sufficiently legible for identification;
- The circulator of the petition sheet must have been a qualified petition circulator at the time the petition was signed;
- The circulator of the petition must complete all required information in the circulator’s affidavit;
- The signature must not be a forgery;
 - (**Note:** A voter who is unable to sign their name may make their mark in the space for the signature. Such mark will be counted as a valid signature if a completed Signature Attestation Form is inserted directly behind the page in the petition that bears the mark. (The Signature Attestation Form is an affidavit indicating that the witness explained the content of the petition to the signer and witnessed their mark.)

- The signer must have been a registered voter in the ward or single-member district from which the candidate seeks nomination at the time the petition was signed; or
- (For primary elections) The signer must have been registered to vote in the same party as the candidate at the time the petition was signed.
- For the offices of President, Delegate to the US House of Representatives, US Representative, and US Senator, the signature is valid if the signer is a US citizen.

Note: Qualified petition circulators who are also registered voters may sign the petition sheet they are circulating, provided they are eligible to sign the petition.

Filing Nominating Petitions and Other Supporting Documents

- The Board will **not** make copies of each petition sheet for you, so if you'd like copies for your own records, make copies or take pictures of each sheet before coming to the office to file.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that your petition is complete and contains the minimum number of valid signatures for ballot access before you file it with the Board. You can do this by: verifying each signature you collect against the voter list provided for your electoral jurisdiction; checking for any other defects as you collect signatures; and getting more signatures than the minimum requirement to offset errors.
- Please arrive at the Board ready to file. Petition sheets should be complete, in numerical order, and correctly assembled. For example, if you collect signatures and end up using 10 sheets, you would label the petitions in the top right hand corner as follows: 1 of 10, 2 of 10, 3 of 10, and so on. If a petition sheet has no signatures on it, do not include it in the count.
- While not required, filing the minimum number of signatures *prior to the filing deadline* can be very helpful. This will give you time to correct any errors before the deadline. You can always file supplemental petition sheets until the deadline once you have made the initial filling with the minimum signature requirement.
- Before filing, make sure that each signer's address matches the address listed for that voter in the Board's records. If a signer's address on the petition is not the same as their address in the Board's records, but the voter still resides in the same electoral jurisdiction in which you are seeking office, the voter can complete and submit a change of address up until the 10th day after the candidate has received notice that a challenge has been filed to the nominating petition, if any.
- Make sure the Circulator's Affidavit on each petition sheet is completed correctly and signed. All the required fields should be filled out, only one circulator signature should be affixed to a single petition sheet, and the circulator's signature and date should not pre-date those of the registered voters who sign the petition sheets.

- Make sure you have the Receipt for Completed Ballot Access Documents completed and signed. You will be given a copy of this receipt for your records, once it's signed and date stamped by BOE staff.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Board's Voter Services Division at (202) 727-2525 or by email at candidate@dcboe.org.