

2026 Ballot Access Checklist:

Municipalities Where Nomination Papers are Used



Each of the following forms must be completed and filed on time by a candidate for municipal office in order for the candidate's name to be placed on the ballot at the **February 17, 2026 Spring Primary** and the **April 7, 2026 Spring Election**.

In the City of Milwaukee, the filing officer is the Milwaukee City Election Commission. In all other municipalities, the filing officer is the municipal clerk (town, village or city). Candidates should contact their filing officer for further information or to obtain any of the necessary forms.

- ☐ **Register your Campaign Committee** A current registration (CF-1L) must be filed prior to raising or spending any funds, and no later than **5:00 p.m. on January 6, 2026** or the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot. For questions, please contact the Ethics Commission: ethics@wi.gov | 608-266-8123.
- ☐ **Complete and Submit a Declaration of Candidacy (Form [EL-162](#))** to the filing officer no later than **5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 6, 2026** or the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot. If the form is faxed or emailed, the original document must follow, postmarked no later than January 6, 2026. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10(5), 8.21, 8.30(4), Wis. Admin. Code EL § 6.04.
- ☐ **Circulate and Submit Nomination Papers for Nonpartisan Office (Form [EL-169](#))** to the filing officer no later than **5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 6, 2026** or the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot. Only original nomination papers (no photocopies, faxes, or emailed documents) will be accepted. Nomination papers may not be circulated before December 1, 2025. Wis. Stat. § 8.10(2), Wis. Admin. Code EL § 6.04(2).

The number of signatures required is as follows:

All village and town offices:		20 - 100
1 st Class Cities:	Citywide offices	1,500 - 3,000
	Aldersperson elected to district	200 - 400
2 nd and 3 rd Class Cities:	Citywide offices	200 - 400
	Aldersperson elected at large	100 - 200
	Aldersperson elected to district	20 - 40
4 th Class Cities:	Citywide offices	50 - 100
	Aldersperson elected to district	20 - 40

- ☐ **Municipal Judge Candidates:**
Complete and submit a Statement of Economic Interests (SEI) to the Ethics Commission using the website (<https://sei.wi.gov>). Incumbent candidates will receive a filing notice around December 1, 2025, and new candidates will receive an email notice within one or two days of registering their committee. The SEI must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, January 9, 2026, or the candidate's name will not appear on the ballot. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10(5), 8.30(3), 19.43(4). Candidates may also print the SEI form and instructions from the Ethics Commission website (<https://ethics.wi.gov>), and return those forms by email or fax. For more information, please contact the Ethics Commission at 608-266-8123 or ethics@wi.gov.

Important Note Regarding Statements of Economic Interests:

A municipality may enact an ordinance establishing a code of ethics for public officials that may require a candidate for municipal office, *in addition to the office of Municipal Judge*, to file a **Statement of Economic Interests (SEI)**. The ordinance may also provide that failure to timely file an SEI will prevent the candidate's name from being placed on the ballot. Wis. Stat. § 19.59(1m),(3)(b). Please contact the filing officer to learn if this requirement applies to you.



CAMPAIGN FINANCE REGISTRATION STATEMENT —
LOCAL CANDIDATE COMMITTEE
STATE OF WISCONSIN

***CAUTION:** A personal telephone number that is identified as a confidential telephone number on page 3 of this form should **not** be entered on page 1 of this form. Do **not** enter any personal telephone numbers of the candidate, the candidate committee treasurer, and any other custodian of books and accounts on page 1 of this form.

1. Is this an Amendment? ☐ No ☐ Yes

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

A1. Committee Name (Required for all Candidates - must be included in disclaimer on all communications)				
A2. Committee Email		A3. Committee Phone (Do not enter a confidential phone number)		
A4. Mailing Address		A5. City	A6. State	A7. Zip
Depository Institution Information				
A8. Institution Name	A9. Street Address	A10. City	A11. State	A12. Zip
Treasurer/Administrator Information				
A13. Name		A14. Treasurer Email	A15. Treasurer Phone (*See Caution)	
A16. Mailing Address		A17. City	A18. State	A19. Zip
Other Officers (Optional)				
A20. Name	A21. Title	A22. Email	A23. Phone (* See Caution above)	
A24. Name	A25. Title	A26. Email	A27. Phone (* See Caution above)	
Filing Exemption <i>Registrants which do not anticipate accepting or making contributions, making disbursements, or incurring obligations in an aggregate amount exceeding \$2,500 in a calendar year may claim an exemption from filing campaign finance reports. This exemption applies until the registrant exceeds the \$2,500 aggregate activity threshold, amends its registration, or is terminated.</i>			A28. Exemption Affirmation ☐ Yes, this registrant is eligible for exemption. ☐ No, this registrant is not eligible for exemption.	

SECTION B: CANDIDATE INFORMATION

B1. Office Sought (include District/Branch)		B2. Political Party	B3. Election Date	
Candidate Information				
B4. Name		B5. Candidate Email	B6. Candidate Phone (* See Caution)	
B7. Mailing Address		B8. City	B9. State	B10. Zip
Second Candidate Committee <i>An individual who holds a state or local elective office may establish a second candidate committee to pursue another state or local office.</i>		B11. Is this your only registered candidate committee in Wisconsin? ☒ Yes, this is my only candidate committee in Wisconsin. ☐ No, this is my second candidate committee in Wisconsin.		
B12. Other Office Held or Sought (include District/Branch) Only complete B12 if you responded "No" to B11.				

SECTION C: CERTIFICATION

Accurate Information

☐ I certify that I am an authorized representative of the candidate committee and that to my knowledge all of the information contained within this registration is true, correct, and complete.

Timely Amendments

☐ I am aware of the requirement to amend this registration statement within 10 days of any change of information contained within, including any change to the candidate committee's eligibility for exemption from campaign finance reporting.

Records Retention

☐ I acknowledge the requirement to maintain the records of the candidate committee in an organized and legible manner for three years from the close of the most recent contribution limit period (June 30 following the April election, December 31 following the November election).

Continuing Compliance

☐ I acknowledge that I am required to continue to comply with all applicable requirements under Chapter 11 of the Wisconsin Statutes until this registration is terminated. I understand that I am not released from any liability simply because the election date has passed.

Treasurer

C1. Printed Name	C2. Signature	C3. Date

Candidate

C4. Printed Name	C5. Signature	C6. Date

Form Instructions

Candidates must complete all sections A, B, and C.

Item 1. Is this an amendment? Have you registered with this local clerk to run for office in a prior election?

Item A1: Committee Name. All candidates are required to register a committee. It is not required that the name include the candidate's name, but it is recommended. This committee name is required to be part of the disclaimer on all communications with express advocacy: 'Paid for by ...'

A28: Exemption. Candidates claiming exemption may not have more than \$2,500 of activity, in the aggregate per year. In a calendar year, if you raise \$1,600 and spend \$1,000 you have \$2,600 of aggregate activity and are not eligible to claim exemption.

Depository Institution Information. All candidates must designate a depository institution. While it is recommended that all candidates have a designated campaign depository account, candidates who will serve as their own treasurer may designate a single personal account to serve as the committee depository account while claiming a filing exemption and may intermingle personal and campaign funds (Wis. STAT. § 11.0201(2)(b)).

Treasurer Information. Each committee must appoint a treasurer. Any adult may serve as a treasurer. A candidate may serve as his or her own treasurer. If you are serving as your own treasurer, please write "Self" or "Candidate". A candidate serving as their own treasurer does not need to provide their name, address and contact information here because that information will already be provided in section B. Do not leave this section blank.

Section B: Candidate Information

B1. Be sure to include the name of the county, municipality, or school district. There are 72 counties with county supervisors, 100's of school boards, and 1000's of municipal boards.

B2. Party - "N/A" or "None" for nonpartisan offices (April). Democrat, Republican, Constitution, Green, Independent, or other ballot status party for partisan (fall) primary/election.

Section C: Certification. All candidates must complete section C. If the candidate is serving as their own treasurer, they would only need to sign once, as either the candidate or treasurer.



CAMPAIGN FINANCE REGISTRATION STATEMENT —
LOCAL CANDIDATE COMMITTEE—CONFIDENTIAL PHONE CONTACTS
STATE OF WISCONSIN

All information on pages 1 and 2 of this form is available to the public. Pursuant to 2023 Wisconsin Act 120, candidates, treasurers, and any other custodian of books and accounts (such as an assistant treasurer) are required to provide a personal telephone number. This page provides you the space to provide those required telephone numbers. Personal telephone numbers are confidential and are not subject to the right of inspection and copying under Wis. STAT. § 19.35(1). *See* Wis. STAT. § 11.0203(bd). However, a personal email address provided is subject to the right of inspection and copying under Wis. STAT. § 19.35(1) and may be disclosed.

Failure to provide a valid email may result in failure to receive filing reminders and notifications from the filing officer. Failure to receive a form or notice from a filing officer does not exempt a committee from a reporting requirement under this chapter (Wis. STAT. § 11.0103(b)). The candidate committee is required to report any change in information previously submitted in a registration statement within 10 days following the change. Wis. STAT. § 11.0203(3).

Candidate Information	
Name	Personal Phone Number

Treasurer Information	
Name	Personal Phone Number

Other Custodians' Information	
Name	Personal Phone Number
Name	Personal Phone Number
Name	Personal Phone Number

Declaration of Candidacy

(See instructions for preparation on back)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Is this an amendment?

☐ **Yes** (if you have already filed a DOC for this election)

☐ **No** (if this is the first DOC you have filed for this election)

I, _____, being duly sworn, state that
Candidate's name

I am a candidate for the office of _____
Official name of office - Include district, branch or seat number

representing _____
If partisan election, name of political party or statement of principle - five words or less (Candidates for nonpartisan office may leave blank.)

and I meet or will meet at the time I assume office the applicable age, citizenship, residency and voting qualification requirements, if any, prescribed by the constitutions and laws of the United States and the State of Wisconsin, and that I will otherwise qualify for office, if nominated and elected.

I have not been convicted of a felony in any court within the United States for which I have not been pardoned.¹

My present address, including my municipality of residence for voting purposes is:

House or fire no.	Street Name	Mailing Municipality and State	Zip code	Town of ☐ Village of ☐ City of ☐	Municipality of Residence for Voting
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My name as I wish it to appear on the official ballot is as follows:

(Any combination of first name, middle name or initials with surname. A nickname may replace a legal name.)

STATE OF WISCONSIN

County of _____
(County where oath administered)

}

ss.

(Signature of candidate)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, _____.

(Signature of person authorized to administer oaths)

**NOTARY SEAL
REQUIRED, IF OATH
ADMINISTERED BY
NOTARY PUBLIC**

☐ Notary Public or ☐ other official _____
(Official title, if not a notary)

If Notary Public: My commission expires _____ or ☐ is permanent.

The information on this form is required by Wis. Stat. § 8.21, Art. XIII, Sec. 3, Wis. Const., and must be filed with the filing officer in order to have a candidate's name placed on the ballot. Wis. Stats. §§ 8.05 (1)(j), 8.10 (5), 8.15 (4)(b), 8.20 (6), 120.06 (6)(b), 887.01.

¹ A 1996 constitutional amendment bars any candidate convicted of a misdemeanor which violates the public trust from running for or holding a public office. However, the legislature has not defined which misdemeanors violate the public trust. A candidate convicted of any misdemeanor is not barred from running for or holding a public office until the legislature defines which misdemeanors apply.

Instructions for Completing the Declaration of Candidacy

All candidates seeking ballot status for election to any office in the State of Wisconsin must properly complete and file a **Declaration of Candidacy**. This form must be **ON FILE** with the proper filing officer no later than the deadline for filing nomination papers or the candidate's name will not appear on the ballot. A facsimile will be accepted if the FAX copy is received by the filing officer no later than the filing deadline **and** the signed original declaration is received by the filing officer with a postmark no later than the filing deadline.

Information to be provided by the candidate:

- Type or print your name on the first line.
- The title of the office and **any district, branch, or seat number** for which you are seeking election must be inserted on the second line. *For legislative offices insert the title and district number, for district attorneys insert the title and the county, for circuit court offices insert the title, county and branch number, and for municipal and school board offices insert the title and any district or seat number.*
- Type or print the political party affiliation or principle supported by you in five words or less on the third line. *Nonpartisan candidates may leave this line blank.*
- **Felony convictions: Your name cannot appear on the ballot if you have been convicted of a felony in any court in the United States for which you have not been pardoned. Please see footnote on page 1 for further information with respect to convictions for misdemeanors involving a violation of public trust. These restrictions only apply to candidates for state and local office.**
- Your current address, including your municipality of residence for voting purposes, must be inserted on the fourth line. This must include your entire mailing address (**street and number, municipality where you receive mail**) and the name of the municipality in which you reside and vote (town, village, or city of ____). If your address changes before the election, an amended Declaration of Candidacy must be filed with the filing officer. Wis. Stat. § 8.21. *Federal candidates are not required to provide this information, however an address for contact purposes is helpful.*
- Type or print your name on the fifth line as you want it to be printed on the official ballot. You may use your full legal name, former legal surname, or any combination of first name, middle name, and initials, surname or nickname with last name.

Note: The Wisconsin Elections Commission has determined that, absent any evidence of an attempt to manipulate the electoral process, candidates are permitted to choose any form of their name, including nicknames, by which they want to appear on the ballot.

No titles are permitted. In addition, names such as "Red" or "Skip" are permitted, but names which have an apparent electoral purpose or benefit, such as "Lower taxes," "None of the above" or "Lower Spending" are not permitted. It is also not permissible to add nicknames in quotes or parentheses. For example, John "Jack" Jones or John (Jack) Jones are not acceptable, but John Jones, Jack Jones or John Jack Jones are acceptable.

This form must be sworn to and signed in the presence of a notary public or other person authorized to administer oaths, such as a county or municipal clerk. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.21(2), 887.01(1).

Information to be provided by the person administering the oath:

- The county where the oath was administered.
- The date the Declaration of Candidacy was signed and the oath administered.
- The signature and title of the person administering the oath. If signed by a notary public, the notary seal is required and the date the notary's commission expires must be listed.

All candidates for offices using the nomination paper process must file this form (*and all school district candidates must file the EL-162sd*) with the appropriate filing officer no later than the deadline for filing nomination papers. Wis. Stats. §§ 8.10 (5), 8.15 (4)(b), 8.20 (6), 8.21, 8.50 (3)(a), 120.06 (6)(b). Candidates nominated for local office at a caucus must file this form with their municipal clerk within 5 days of receiving notice of nomination. Wis. Stat. § 8.05 (1)(j).

NOMINATION PAPER FOR NONPARTISAN OFFICE

Candidate's name (required); no titles may be used.		Candidate's residential address (required) <i>No P.O. box addresses</i> Street, fire, or rural route number, box number (if rural route); and name of street or road		Candidate's municipality for voting purposes (required) ☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
Candidate's mailing address, including municipality for mailing purposes (required if different than residential address or voting municipality)		State (required) WI		Zip code	
Title of office (required)		Branch, district or seat number (required if applicable) ☐ Branch ☐ District ☐ Seat		Name of jurisdiction or district in which candidate seeks office (required)	
		Type of election (required) ☐ spring ☐ special		Election date (required) <i>Do not use primary date.</i> Mo/Day/Year	

I, the undersigned, request that the candidate, whose name and residential address are listed above, be placed on the ballot at the election described above as a candidate so that voters will have the opportunity to vote for ☐ him or ☐ her for the office listed above. I am eligible to vote in the jurisdiction or district in which the candidate named above seeks office. I have not signed the nomination paper of any other candidate for the same office at this election.

The municipality used for mailing purposes, when different than municipality of residence, is not sufficient. The name of the municipality of residence must always be listed.

Signatures of Electors	Printed Name of Electors	Residential Address (No P.O. Box Addresses) Street and Number or Rural Route (Rural address must also include box or fire no.)	Municipality of Residence Check the type and write the name of your municipality for voting purposes.	Date of Signing Mo/Day/Year
1.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
2.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
3.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
4.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
5.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
6.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
7.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
8.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
9.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
10.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	

CERTIFICATION OF CIRCULATOR

I, _____ (Name of circulator) _____ certify: I reside at _____ (Circulator's residential address - include number, street, and municipality.) _____.

I further certify I am either a qualified elector of Wisconsin, or a U.S. citizen, age 18 or older who, if I were a resident of this state, would not be disqualified from voting under Wis. Stat. §6.03. I personally circulated this nomination paper and personally obtained each of the signatures on this paper. I know that the signers are electors of the jurisdiction or district the candidate seeks to represent. I know that each person signed the paper with full knowledge of its content on the date indicated opposite his or her name. I know their respective residences given. I intend to support this candidate. I am aware that falsifying this certification is punishable under Wis. Stat. § 12.13(3)(a).

_____, (Date) _____ (Signature of circulator)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING NOMINATION PAPERS FOR NONPARTISAN OFFICE

This is a sample nomination paper form. It conforms to the statutory requirements for nomination papers for nonpartisan office. All information concerning the candidate must be completed in full before circulating this form to obtain signatures of electors. All information concerning the signing electors and the circulator must be completed in full before filing with the appropriate filing officer. This form may be reproduced in any way. A candidate's picture and biographical data may also be added to this form. The Wisconsin Elections Commission has determined that no disclaimer or other attribution statement is required on nomination papers. Candidates are advised to send a sample of their completed form the filing officer for review before circulation.

Page Numbers – Number each page consecutively, beginning with “1”, before submitting to the filing officer. A space for page numbers has been provided in the lower right-hand corner of the form.

Candidate's Name - Insert the candidate's name. A candidate may use his or her full legal name, or any combination of first name, middle name, and initials or nickname with last name. The Wisconsin Elections Commission has determined that, absent any evidence of an attempt to manipulate the electoral process, candidates are permitted to choose any form of their name, including nicknames, by which they want to appear on the ballot.

No titles are permitted. In addition, names such as “Red” or “Skip” are permitted, but names which have an apparent electoral purpose or benefit, such as “Lower Taxes,” “None of the above” or “Lower Spending” are not permitted. It is also not permissible to add nicknames in quotes or parentheses between first and last names. For example, John “Jack” Jones or John (Jack) Jones are not acceptable, but John Jones, Jack Jones or John Jack Jones are acceptable.

Candidate's Address – Insert the candidate's residential address (*no P.O. Box addresses*) and the municipality for voting purposes. Indicate if the municipality of residence is a town, village, or city. If a candidate's mailing address is different from the residential address or voting municipality, a complete mailing address must also be given.

Date of Election - Insert the date of the election. If the nomination paper is being circulated for a spring election, the date is the first Tuesday in April. If the election is a special nonpartisan election, the date of the special election must be listed.

Title of Office - The name of the office must be listed **along with any branch, district, or seat number** (if applicable) that clearly identifies the office the candidate is seeking. If necessary, the name of the jurisdiction that identifies the office, such as Dane County Circuit Court Judge, Branch 3, must also be listed.

Name of Jurisdiction - The nomination papers must also indicate the municipality or jurisdiction in which the signing electors are qualified to vote, as it relates to the office sought by the candidate named on the nomination paper. For example, for a statewide office the jurisdiction is the State of Wisconsin. Others may be the county, town, village, city, aldermanic district, school district, or town sanitary district, as required.

Signatures and Printed Name of Electors - Only qualified electors of the jurisdiction or the district the candidate seeks to represent may sign the nomination papers. Each signer must also legibly print their name. Each elector must provide their **residential** address (*no P.O. Box addresses*), including any street, fire or rural route number, box number (if rural route) and street or road name, and municipality of residence. A post office box number alone does not show where the elector actually resides. The name of the Municipality of Residence must be listed for each signing elector and must clearly identify the town, village or city where the elector's voting residence is located. The date the elector signed the nomination paper, including month, day and year, must be indicated. Ditto marks that follow correct and complete address or date information are acceptable. The circulator may add any missing or illegible address or date information before the papers are filed with the filing officer.

Signature of Circulator - The circulator should carefully read the language of the *Certification of Circulator*. **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.** The circulator's complete residential address including municipality of residence must be listed in the certification. After obtaining signatures of electors, the circulator must sign and date the certification.

Other Instructions- Candidates and circulators should review Ch. Wisconsin Elections Commission §§ 2.05, 2.07, Wis. Adm. Code.

- *Original* 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. Ch. Wisconsin Elections Commission § 6.04(2), Wis. Adm. Code.
- Nomination papers with the required number of signatures must be filed with the appropriate filing officer **no later than 5:00 p.m.** on the first Tuesday in January (or the next day if the first Tuesday is a holiday) before the spring election. Special elections may have different filing deadlines. Check with the filing officer.
- In order for a candidate's name to be placed on the ballot, a candidate must file a *Campaign Registration Statement* (ETHCF-1), a *Declaration of Candidacy* (EL-162), and *Nomination Papers* (EL-169) containing the appropriate number of signatures for the office sought no later than the filing deadline. Wis. Stat. § 8.10(3). Candidates for state office and municipal judge must also file a statement of economic interests with the Wisconsin Ethics Commission by the third business day after the nomination paper filing deadline. Wis. Stat. § 19.43. If any one of these required forms is not filed by the deadline, the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot. Wis. Stat. § 8.30.
- If a candidate or circulator has any questions, he or she should contact the filing officer.



GENERAL INFORMATION

BOARD MEETINGS

- Village Board normally meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Village Hall.
- Special Village Board meetings are also held during the year – they are scheduled with input from all board members.
- At budget time approximately two additional meetings are held in mid-October to review the budget.

SERVING ON VARIOUS BOARDS/ COMMITTEES / COMMISSIONS

Trustees are placed on various committees, commissions, and/or boards after they are elected. The President nominates, the Board confirms.

- **Brown County Planning Commission Board of Directors**
- **Central Brown County Water Commission**
- **Historic Preservation Commission** (meets as needed, the fourth Wednesday at 6:00 pm)
- **Parks, Recreation & Forestry Committee** (meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm)
- **Plan Commission** (meets the third Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm)
- **Public Works Committee** (meets the first Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm)
- **Room Tax Commission**
- **Various Ad Hoc Committees** (Ex: Finance/Personnel Committee)

COMPENSATION

- Village President earns \$10,000 annually
- Village Trustees earn \$6,732 annually
- Municipal Judge earns \$14,000 annually



Wisconsin Elections Commission

212 East Washington Avenue | Third Floor | P.O. Box 7984 | Madison, WI 53707-7984
(608) 266-8005 | elections@wi.gov | elections.wi.gov

MEMORANDUM

TO: Wisconsin County Clerks and the Milwaukee County Elections Commission
Wisconsin Municipal Clerks and the Milwaukee City Election Commission

FROM: Elections Commission Staff

DATE: September 13, 2019

SUBJECT: Effect of Constitutional Amendment Barring Convicted Felons from
Running for or Holding Elective Office in Wisconsin

In November 1996, the electors of the State of Wisconsin ratified a constitutional amendment which bars any person, who has been convicted of a felony for which they have not been pardoned, or who has been convicted of a misdemeanor involving a violation of public trust for which they have not been pardoned, from holding a state or local office. As a result of the adoption of this constitutional amendment, which took effect on November 5, 1996, local election officials may need to address a number of questions relating to convicted felons who seek to run for office or who are elected to office.

The constitutional amendment deals with two different types of crimes. The first involves felony convictions. Any person convicted of a felony in any federal or state court in the United States is barred from running for state or local office in Wisconsin, unless that person has been pardoned.

The second involves misdemeanor convictions involving a violation of public trust. The term, "misdemeanor involving a violation of public trust," has not been defined by state law. Filing officers do not have to worry about individuals convicted of that category of crime until the term has been defined. At the present time, there is no such thing as a misdemeanor involving a violation of public trust.

The Declaration of Candidacy form (EL-162) reflects this constitutional change. Any person seeking to be a candidate for state or local office must file a Declaration of Candidacy. That declaration contains a sworn statement that the person has not been convicted of any felony for which they have not been pardoned, or any misdemeanor involving a violation of public trust for which they have not been pardoned. Any person who falsely signs this statement could be convicted of a violation of Wis. Stat. § 12.13(3)(a), (am). If a person seeking to become a candidate advises you that they have been convicted of a felony, your best approach is to advise

Wisconsin Elections Commissioners

Dean Knudson, chair | Marge Bostelmann | Julie M. Glancey | Ann S. Jacobs | Jodi Jensen | Mark L. Thomsen

Administrator
Meagan Wolfe

them that they cannot be a candidate and discourage them from filing ballot access documents, including nomination papers, a Declaration of Candidacy and Campaign Registration Statement.

If it is brought to your attention that a person who is a convicted felon has filed ballot access documents, the matter needs to be resolved in consultation with your municipal or county attorney. It is the position of the Wisconsin Elections Commission that you should only act on information that has been presented to you, in the form of a sworn complaint, alleging that a person has been convicted of a felony and evidence is provided in support of that allegation. Your municipal attorney can assist you in verifying the basis of the complaint.

Once it has been determined that a candidate or an elected official has been convicted of a felony, your municipal attorney can assist you in removing the person's name from the ballot or take appropriate steps to have the person removed from office. A formal notice should be sent to the candidate or elected official informing that person of the filing officer's decision to remove his or her name from the ballot.

This change to Wisconsin law regarding candidate qualifications and the qualifications of elected public officials does not require the municipal clerk to verify that every elected official or candidate for elected public office has not been convicted of a felony for which they have not been pardoned. The clerk should rely on the sworn statement of the candidate on the Declaration of Candidacy. No action should be taken unless there is evidence, in the form of a sworn complaint, setting forth allegations which establish that a candidate or elected official has been convicted of a felony for which they have not been pardoned.

Wisconsin Candidate Eligibility

Candidate, age, residency, and special requirements

United States Senator: 30 year of age, a citizen of the United States for 9 years and an inhabitant of the state at the time of the election. Article I, Section 3, U.S. Constitution.

Representative in Congress: 25 years of age, a citizen of the United States for 7 years and an inhabitant of the state at time of election. Article I, Section 2, U. S. Constitution.
(Representative need not be a resident at the time he/she files nomination papers and executes declaration of candidacy. 61 Atty. Gen. 155).

Governor and Lieutenant Governor[†]: A qualified elector* of the state at the time of taking office. Article V, Section 2, Wis. Constitution.

Attorney General: A qualified elector* of the state at the time of taking office.

State Representative Office[†]: A resident for one year within the state and a qualified elector* of the district at the time of taking office. Article IV, Section 6, Wis. Constitution. 65 Atty. Gen. 165.

Supreme Court Justice[†]: Licensed to practice law in Wisconsin for 5 years immediately prior to the election and a qualified elector* of the state at time of election. Article VII, Sections 10, 24, Wis. Constitution.

Court of Appeals Judge[†]: Licensed to practice law in Wisconsin for 5 years immediately prior to the election and a qualified elector* of the appeals court district at the time of election. Article VII, Sections 10, 24, Wis. Constitution.

Circuit Court Judge[†]: Licensed to practice law in Wisconsin for 5 years immediately prior to the election and a qualified elector* of the circuit at the time of election. Article VII, Sections 7, 10, 24, Wis. Constitution.

District Attorney[†]: Licensed to practice law in Wisconsin and a resident of the prosecutorial unit (county) at the time of taking office. Wis. Stat. § 978.02.

County Supervisor (including Milwaukee)[†]: Resident and qualified elector* of district at the time of filing nomination papers. Wis. Stat. § 59.20(1).

Other County Office[†]: A qualified elector* of the county at the time of filing nomination papers. Wis. Stat. § 59.20(1).

Aldersperson (including Milwaukee)[†]: A qualified elector* of the city and, if aldermanic district, a qualified elector* of the district and actually residing in the district at the time of election. Wis. Stat. § 62.09(2)(a).

Other City Office (including Milwaukee)[†]: A qualified elector* of the city and an actual resident of the city at the time of election. Wis. Stat. § 62.09(2)(a).

Village office[†]: A qualified elector* and an actual resident of the village at the time of election. Wis. Stat. § 61.19.

Town Office[†]: A qualified elector* of the town at the time of taking office, except an assessor who is appointed under Wis. Stat. § 60.307. Wis. Stat. § 60.30(2).

School Board Member (At-Large)[†]: A qualified elector* of the school district at the time of filing a Declaration of Candidacy. Wis. Stat. §§ 120.06(2), (6)(b)2.

School Board Member Representing an Apportioned Area[†]: A qualified elector* of the school district at the time of filing a Declaration of Candidacy and a resident of the apportioned area at the time of taking office (4th Monday in April). Wis. Stat. §§ 120.05(1)(d), 120.06(2), (4).

[†]No person may hold any state or local elected office in Wisconsin if the person has been convicted of a felony in any court in the United States unless the person has been pardoned of the conviction. No person may have his/her name placed on the ballot for any state or local elected office in Wisconsin if the person has been convicted of a felony in any court in the United States unless the person has been pardoned of the conviction. Article XIII, Section 3 (2), (3), Wis. Constitution.

*Qualified elector is defined in Wis. Stat. § 6.02, as a U.S. citizen, 18 years of age or older, who has resided in the election district for at least 10 consecutive days before any election at which he or she offers to vote (and who is not disqualified by virtue of one or more of the impediments described in Wis. Stat. § 6.03).

Terms-Federal Offices

The terms of the President and Vice-President begin and end at noon on the 20th day of January. The terms of U.S. Senators and Representatives in Congress begin and end at noon on the 3rd day of January. Article XX, Section 1, U.S. Constitution.

Terms-State Offices

State Senator, Representative to the Assembly, District Attorney, and County Offices.

The terms for these offices begin and end on the first Monday of January. Article XIII, Section 1, Wisconsin Constitution

State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The term for this office begins and ends on the first Monday in July. Article X, Section 1, Wisconsin Constitution.

Supreme Court – August 1 Article VII, Sec. 4 Wisconsin Constitution

§ 44-6 Disclosure of certain financial and personal interests.

- A. In addition to the financial and personal disclosures required by § 44-5E of this chapter, all officials of the Village and such other officers, representatives and employees as shall from time to time be designated by the Ethics Board shall file with the Village Clerk-Treasurer a statement of financial and/or personal interests within a time period specified by the Ethics Board. Individual members of boards, committees and commissions, including members of the Ethics Board, may be required to file a statement of financial and/or personal interest within a time period specified by the Ethics Board if the Ethics Board deems such statement is necessary in the evaluation of a formal written complaint charging any member of a board, committee or commission with a conflict of interest.
- B. Within seven days after a person becomes a candidate for any elective Village office enumerated in Subsection A, or prior to appointment to such office, such person shall file a statement of financial and/or personal interest with the Village Clerk-Treasurer.
- C. No person required to file a statement of interests under this section who has not complied with Subsection B shall have his or her name appear on the ballot, take the oath of office, or receive any salary or compensation until he or she files such statement of interests. The Village Clerk-Treasurer is directed to strike from the ballot the name of any candidate who has not complied with the provisions of Subsection B.

VILLAGE OF FALLOUEZ

CODE OF ETHICS DISCLOSURE STATEMENT FOR OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES

1. State your name and home address:

2. State your spouse's name and home address:

3. State the name and address, relationship to you, and age of minor persons, of any relative by marriage, lineal descent or adoption who receives from you, or from whom you receive, either directly or indirectly, more than one-half of your annual support:

4. State if different from that indicated above, any names used by you, your spouse or your minor children in any business or professional practice, and list all licenses or permits issued by the Village to each such person, except for pets and bicycles.

5. As to both you and your spouse, state the name and address of your employer, and a brief statement of the nature of employment.

6. State the street address and legal description of all parcels of real estate within the Village and adjoining municipalities in which you, your spouse and/or your minor children own any interest (including an option to purchase), either directly or indirectly, which interest has a value of \$10,000.00 or more, or which constitutes 10% or more of the total interest, but excluding your principal residence; state the nature of the interest, the name and address of the person or entity holding records title, the name and address of all other persons or entities holding an interest, and the location of the real estate.

7. Identify every organization with which you are associated, and the nature of your association with that organization, except that you need not disclose:
- (a) Any organization described in Section 170(c), Internal Revenue Code;
 - (b) Any organization which is organized and operated primarily to influence voting at an election;
 - (c) Any non-profit organization which is formed exclusively for social purposes;
 - (d) Any non-profit community service organization, and
 - (e) Any trust.

8. List all gifts and their values received by you and all members of your immediate family, having a collective value of \$500.00 or more, received within the last twelve months, from any person, firm or corporation which is now engaged, or has within the last twelve months engaged in, business dealings with the Village.

9. State the name and address of all persons, firms and corporations from whom either you or any immediate member of your family has received earned income of \$1,000.00 or more within the last twelve months, other than from employment as listed above if such entity has at any time within the last three years done, is now doing, or is likely to do, business or engage in any transactions with, or advocate a particular position to be taken by, the Village.

10. State the name of all corporations in which you or any member of your immediate family owns capital stock or any type of security which has a total value of \$10,000.00 or more, or which constitutes 5% or more of the outstanding stock or indebtedness; and describe the stock or indebtedness if such entity has at any time within the last three years done, is now doing, or is likely to do, business or engage in any transactions with, or advocate a particular position to be taken by, the Village.

11. State the name and address of all persons, firms and corporations to whom you or any member of your immediate family are indebted or whom are indebted to you or any member or your immediate family, in an amount of \$10,000.00 or more; but you may exclude any mortgage which covers only your principal residence if such entity has at any time within the last three years done, is now doing, or is likely to do, business or engage in any transactions with, or advocate a particular position to be taken by, the Village.

12. State the name of or otherwise identify any sole proprietorship, partnership, joint venture, trust, association or other entity in which you have an interest which has a value of \$10,000.00 or more, or which constitutes 5% or more of the total interests, if such entity has at any time within the last three years done, is now doing, or is likely to do, business or engage in any transactions with, or advocate a particular position to be taken by the Village.

13. Disclosure statement shall be updated by July 1 of every even year for all Village Officials as required by the code.

THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS TRUE AND CORRECT AND ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE GIVEN PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF CODE 44, CODE OF ETHICS OF THE VILLAGE OF ALLOUEZ. I UNDERSTAND THAT I MAY NOT ENGAGE IN ANY ACT OR TRANSACTION IN WHICH I HAVE A FINANCIAL OR PERSONAL INTEREST WHICH SHALL BE IN CONFLICT WITH THE VILLAGE'S INTEREST, OR WHICH MAY IMPAIR OR TEND TO IMPAIR THE PROPER PERFORMANCE OF MY DUTIES ON BEHALF OF THE VILLAGE. I FURTHER UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE A CONTINUING DUTY TO SUPPLEMENT THIS STATEMENT AND TO OTHERWISE TIMELY DISCLOSE TO THE VILLAGE ANY FINANCIAL OR PERSONAL INTEREST THAT I MAY HAVE WHICH IS OR MAY BE IN CONFLICT WITH THE INTERESTS OF THE VILLAGE OF ALLOUEZ.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Witnessed by:

Official or Employee

Wisconsin Ethics Commission

For candidate committees, political party committees, legislative campaign committees, political action committees, independent expenditure committees, referendum committees, and recall committees Acceptance and Reporting of Anonymous Contributions

This guideline is provided as an information resource only. For authoritative advice, contact the Wisconsin Ethics Commission.

ACCEPTANCE OF ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS

Wisconsin Statutes allow committees to accept anonymous contributions not exceeding \$10.¹

REPORTING OF ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS

Wisconsin Statutes require committees to make full reports of contributions on forms prescribed by the Commission.² Committees shall make a good faith effort to obtain all required information regardless of the amount of the contribution.³ Required information includes the full name and street address of each person who has made a contribution to the committee.⁴ Reports shall include an itemized statement of each contribution given anonymously.⁵ Committees that accept anonymous contributions of \$10 or less must itemize and report each anonymous contribution as a separate transaction.⁶ Committees may *not* report an aggregate total of anonymous contributions of \$10 or less.⁷

As Wisconsin Statutes prohibit anonymous contributions over \$10 and require that anonymous contributions be itemized, the Commission recommends against the following practices:

- Placing or circulating contribution jars, baskets, buckets, etc., at properties, gatherings, or events.
- Conducting raffles, silent auctions, etc., where names and addresses are not collected.⁸
- Selling event tickets or merchandise, including, but not limited to yard signs, t-shirts, pins, stickers, where names and addresses are not collected.

If a committee wishes to engage in these practices, the Commission recommends that a responsible individual monitor the contribution jars or baskets, raffle or auction, or sales of tickets or merchandise

¹ WIS. STAT. § 11.1108.

² WIS. STAT. §§ 11.0204(1)(a), 11.0304(1)(a), 11.0404(1)(a), 11.0504(1)(a), 11.0604(1)(a), 11.0804(1)(a), 11.0904(1)(a).

³ WIS. STAT. § 11.0103(1)(a).

⁴ WIS. STAT. §§ 11.0204(1)(a)1., 11.0304(1)(a)1., 11.0404(1)(a)1., 11.0504(1)(a)1., 11.0604(1)(a)1., 11.0804(1)(a)1., 11.0904(1)(a)1.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *See Id.*

⁸ A raffle may have additional requirements as set forth by the Department of Administration's Division of Gaming. Committees should contact the Division for any questions on statutory requirements associated with raffles.

to make a good faith effort to obtain the names and addresses of contributors. A committee that engages in these practices must be able to accurately itemize each anonymous contribution received.

It is important to note that if a committee requests an individual to provide a name and address for a contribution of \$10 or less, the individual may request to remain anonymous, and the committee may accept that contribution. The contribution shall be itemized and reported as anonymous.

EXCESS ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS

If a committee accepts an anonymous contribution in excess of \$10, the committee shall donate the contribution to the common school fund or to a charitable organization.⁹ This means that, if a committee receives an anonymous contribution of more than \$10, the committee must donate the entire amount contributed. It is not sufficient to donate only the amount that the contribution exceeds \$10. Additionally, the committee shall specify in its report whether the committee donated the contribution to the common school fund or to a charitable organization and shall include the name and mailing address of the donee.¹⁰

CONTRIBUTIONS THAT SHOULD NOT BE REPORTED AS ANONYMOUS

When a committee receives the following types of contributions they should not be reported as anonymous:

- Any contribution over \$10
- Membership dues
- Periodic payroll deductions

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This is a guideline adopted by the Wisconsin Ethics Commission. Guidelines are prepared to provide general information to the public concerning the laws within the Commission's jurisdiction. Guidelines are not the law. Legal authority can be found in Wisconsin Statutes, the Wisconsin Administrative Code, case law, and the Commission's advisory opinions. If you have additional questions, please contact the Wisconsin Ethics Commission staff by email at CampaignFinance@wi.gov, or by phone at (608) 266-8123. Advice sought from the Ethics Commission is confidential. For additional information, please visit the Ethics Commission website: <https://ethics.wi.gov>.

⁹ WIS. STAT. § 11.1108.

¹⁰ WIS. STAT. §§ 11.0204(1)(a)4., 11.0304(1)(a)4., 11.0404(1)(a)4., 11.0504(1)(a)4., 11.0604(1)(a)4., 11.0804(1)(a)3., 11.0904(1)(a)4., and 11.1108.

CANDIDATE BALLOT ACCESS PROCEDURES

Nomination Papers

October 2023



Wisconsin Elections Commission
P.O. Box 7984
Madison, WI 53707-7984

Phone: (608) 261-2028
FAX: (608) 267-0500
Email: elections@wi.gov
Web: <http://elections.wi.gov>

Introduction

Throughout Wisconsin, nomination papers and associated ballot access documents are the primary way for candidates to get their name on the ballot when seeking elected office. Following correct procedure when obtaining and submitting nomination paper signatures is crucial to ensure ballot placement for a candidate. Based on current election law, WEC staff has worked to aide candidates with guidance documents and direct candidate contact via phone and email.

Understandably, questions remain. This manual is meant to serve as a resource for both clerks and candidates who may have questions related to the ballot access process.

Candidate Eligibility

Anyone who is giving consideration to becoming a candidate for elected office should be aware of the candidate eligibility requirements for that office. Every public office has its own conditions for candidate age, residency, and other special requirements. Eligibility requirements are codified in federal and state law, with the requirements of each office governed by the U.S. Constitution, Wisconsin Constitution, or Wisconsin State Statute. Questions on candidate eligibility for a specific office can be directed to the filing officer for that office.

In accordance with Article XIII, Section 3(2),(3) of the Wisconsin State Constitution, no person may hold any state or local elected office in Wisconsin if the person has been convicted of a felony in any court in the United States unless they have been pardoned of the conviction. Additionally, no person may have their name placed on the ballot for any state or local elected office in Wisconsin if they have been convicted of a felony in any court in the United States, unless they have been pardoned of the conviction. Candidates for federal office are not excluded from running due to a previous felony conviction.

Filing Officer

The filing officer is the person to whom candidates submit their ballot access documents. These documents include nomination papers, declaration of candidacy, campaign registration statement, and, for state office and some local offices, a statement of economic interest. The level of government in which the candidate is seeking office determines who the filing officer will be.

For federal and state level office, the Wisconsin Elections Commission is the appropriate filing officer for nomination papers and declarations of candidacy. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10(6)(a), 8.15(8)(a), 8.20(7). Campaign registration statements and statements of economic interest for state level office must be filed with the Wisconsin Ethics Commission. Candidates for county office should file their ballot access documents with the county clerk. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10(6)(b), 8.15(8)(b), 8.20(7). Local offices in a city, village, or town use the municipal clerk for a filing officer. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.05(3), 8.05(4)(b), 8.10(6)(c). Finally, if seeking a school board seat, candidates file documents with the school district clerk. Wis. Stat. § 8.10(6)(d). Nomination papers are required to be submitted by the first Tuesday in January for spring elections. Wis. Stat. § 8.10(2)(a). June 1 is the filing deadline for November elections. Wis. Stat. § 8.15(1). Special election filing deadlines are dependent on the date that the special election is announced. Wis. Stat. § 8.50.

Ballot Access Checklists

In an effort to make the nomination process as seamless as possible, WEC offers candidates a ballot access checklist for each election. Ballot access checklists detail all steps required in order to become an official candidate for office. Candidates are provided with information on the forms required to be submitted to gain ballot access, the required number of nomination paper signatures needed per office, and all relevant deadlines for submission. The checklists are separated into categories, each delineated with the prefix 'ELIS'. Below are four examples of checklists available for candidates. Others for county, federal, and additional state offices can be found on the WEC website.

ELIS-01

ELIS-01 is a checklist for state level non-partisan candidates to be elected at a spring election. Candidates for office who would use this checklist include Circuit Court Judges, Appeals Court Judges, and Justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The filing officer for these offices is the Wisconsin Elections Commission.

ELIS-05

ELIS-05 is a checklist for school district offices. Candidates for school board throughout the state of Wisconsin can utilize this checklist throughout the process. School district clerks serve as the filing officer for school board seats and any other elected district office.

ELIS-07

ELIS-07 serves as a checklist for municipal candidates in towns, villages, and cities where nomination papers are used. Anyone running for the offices of town or village board, city council, municipal clerk, or other elected municipal office can reference this checklist. These offices are nonpartisan and elected in a spring election. For municipal offices, the municipal clerk acts as the filing officer. In towns where the caucus system is used in place of nomination papers, candidates can contact their town clerk, the WEC or consult the caucus manual here: <https://elections.wi.gov/resources/manuals/caucus-manual>.

ELIS-09

ELIS-09 is a ballot access checklist for candidates seeking state legislative office. This checklist is used by candidates for seats in the State Assembly or State Senate. WEC is the filing officer for these candidates.

Required Filings

Candidates for elected office in Wisconsin are required to submit certain forms and documents in order for their name to appear on the ballot. These are called ballot access documents. It is crucial for candidates to submit their ballot access documents to the correct filing officer. If documents are given to the incorrect filing officer, there is no guarantee that they will be forwarded to the intended recipient in time to meet filing deadlines. For example, if a school board candidate mails

their declaration of candidacy to the municipal clerk on the day of the filing deadline, that clerk may be unable or unwilling to forward the document to the school district. Court decisions have determined that ballot access documents filed with the incorrect filing officer are not sufficient to qualify for ballot access.

There are four primary documents that must be filed by the deadline for a candidate to gain a place on the ballot.

Declaration of Candidacy (EL-162)

Wis. Stat. § 8.21

The declaration of candidacy provides important candidate information to the filing officer. When filling out a declaration of candidacy, candidates are required to include their name, home address, their name as it will appear on the ballot, and the office for which they are a candidate. Please note that titles such as PhD, MD, etc. are not allowed in the name on ballot section. The name of the office being sought must be accurate and include any district, branch, or seat number, if applicable.

Prior to, or at the time of, submitting a declaration of candidacy to the filing officer, candidates must get the form notarized. When the candidate is ready to submit the declaration of candidacy, the original physical copy is hand-delivered or sent to the correct filing officer. An electronic copy of the form is acceptable only if it is followed by the physical copy and received by the filing officer on or prior to the date of the filing deadline. If any candidate information changes throughout the election period, such as a name or address change, the declaration can be amended by contacting the filing officer and submitting an amended form.

Nomination Papers (EL-168, EL-169)

Wis. Stat. § 8.10(2), (3), Wis. Stat. § 8.15, Wis. Admin Code § EL 2.05

With the exception of locations where caucuses are held and some school board candidates, all candidates seeking elected office in Wisconsin must submit nomination papers as part of the ballot access process. School board candidates should confirm with their school board clerk or administrative office to determine whether nomination papers are required. To successfully complete nomination papers, candidates circulate signature petitions and collect a specific number of signatures, as required by law, from qualified electors residing in the jurisdiction or district they wish to serve. The period of circulation for an April election begins on December 1 and ends on the first Tuesday in January. For November general elections the circulation period is from April 15 to June 1.

Number of Signatures Required

Depending on the level of office, from municipal to federal, the minimum number of signatures required varies widely from 20-2,000. Please see below for examples

of signature requirements for candidates in several offices. For information on a specific office not listed below, reference the appropriate ELIS checklist on the WEC website.

2,000-4,000:

Statewide Constitutional Offices (Wis. Stat. § 8.15(6)(a))

United States Senator (Wis. Stat. § 8.15(6)(a))

Justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court (Wis. Stat. § 8.10(3)(a))

1,000-2,000:

Representative in Congress (Wis. Stat. § 8.15(6)(b))

Court of Appeals Judge (Wis. Stat. § 8.10(3)(am))

Circuit Court Judge (Milwaukee) (Wis. Stat. § 8.10(3)(c))

400-800:

State Senator (Wis. Stat. § 8.15(6)(c))

500-1,000

**District Attorney-County population over 100,000
(Wis. Stat. § 8.15(6)(dm))**

200-400:

Representative to the Assembly (Wis. Stat. § 8.15(6)(d))

Circuit Court Judge (Wis. Stat. § 8.10(3)(b))

**District Attorney-County population of 100,000 or less
(Wis. Stat. § 8.15(6)(dm))**

Filling out the Header

The top portion of the nomination paper form, or the header, is where candidates enter information relevant to themselves, the election at which they will be a candidate, and the office they seek. Correctly filling out the top three lines of the nomination paper form is one of the most important things a candidate can do. If any of the boxes in the header are filled out incorrectly, electors might not be provided with all candidate and election information as required by law. A header that is incorrectly filled out also presents the possibility of challenges being issued to the validity of those nomination papers, resulting in the disqualification of all signatures on those pages.

Candidate Name

In the candidate's name field, the candidate should enter their full name as it will appear on the ballot. As with the declaration of candidacy, titles such as Mr., Mrs.,

Dr., PhD, etc., are not allowed. Nicknames are acceptable so long as the nickname has nothing to do with any sort of campaign stance and no quotation marks are used. For example, Peter “Maverick” Mitchell is not allowed because of the quotation marks. Likewise, Andre High Speed Rail Johnson is unacceptable due to the campaign stance taken. However, Reginald Red Forman would be allowed since the nickname has no quotes and no political views expressed.

Candidate Address

Candidates must list their residential address and their municipality of residence for voting purposes. If the candidate has a mailing address that is different than their residential address, this needs to be added as well. In the event that a candidate changes addresses during the nomination paper circulation period; the candidate should use nomination papers with that new address beginning on the first day they live there. Any nomination papers that were circulated when living at a previous address are considered valid, since the candidate resided at that address at the time of circulation.

Election Information

There are two boxes in the nomination paper header that provide for information specifically related to the election, the type of election and the election date. Type of election is a checkbox that is completed by the candidate. Options in this field include general, spring, and special. Candidates for nonpartisan office elected at the April spring election should choose “spring”. Candidates who are seeking partisan office found on the ballot at the November general election should check “general”. Any election that occurs outside of those normally scheduled or as the result of a vacancy should check “special”. The date of election should always be listed as the date of the final election, not the primary, even if a primary is expected.

Party Affiliation

Candidates for partisan office put the name of the party with which they are affiliated in this box. Candidates may choose from recognized political parties such as Constitution, Democrat, or Republican. A candidate who does not wish to be affiliated with any recognized political party may place a statement of principle in this box. A statement of principle is limited to five words. It may contain relevant information to a platform that the candidate will take such as “Seatbelts Save Lives”. A statement of principle may not include the name, in whole or in part, of a currently recognized political party. The party affiliation box is listed only on nomination papers for partisan office (EL-168). Any candidates seeking nonpartisan office do not need to list a party affiliation.

Title of Office

The title of office should be listed as the proper, formal name of the office being sought by the candidate. Abbreviations or colloquialisms are not recommended as the full title of the office should be listed. Examples include: Representative in Congress, Representative to the Assembly, United States Senator, State Senator, Circuit Court Judge, Town Board Chair, School Board Member, etc. Any questions related to the title of a specific office can be directed to the filing officer or WEC.

District or Jurisdiction

For certain offices, a district number or jurisdiction name is required. State Assembly and State Senate and other district numbers should be listed here. Any office with a specific jurisdiction, such as a Circuit Court Judge or a numbered school board seat should also be listed here. The final box of the header requires candidates to list the name of jurisdiction in proper format such as Madison Metropolitan School District, Assembly District 68, or Congressional District 7.

Nomination Paper Signature Lines

Qualified electors who support the candidacy of the person seeking office complete the signature lines of the nomination papers. Electors complete their portion of the nomination paper by providing their signature, printed name, residential address, municipality of residence, and the date on which they signed. An elector's address cannot be a P.O. Box. It must be their physical street address. Each elector is only allowed to sign nomination papers for one candidate per office. If an elector may vote for more than one candidate for the same office, they may sign nomination papers for as many candidates for the same office as the person is entitled to vote for at the election. EL 2.05(11). Nomination paper circulators should closely observe the signing process to ensure that each elector correctly provides all required information. Signature lines that are filled out incorrectly or are missing required information are often subject to challenge.

Certification of Circulator

After each page has been completed, the person responsible for its circulation must sign the certification of circulator at the bottom. The circulator must complete a certification for each page they circulate. A successfully completed certification will include the circulator's name, address, the date on which the page was completed, and their signature. The circulator's address must list their street number, street name, and municipality. Anyone acting as a circulator for nomination papers must meet the standards of a qualified elector, though circulators do not need to be residents of the district in which the candidate seeks office. Circulators are allowed to gather nomination paper signatures for only one

candidate per office in each election. If a circulator collects signatures on nomination papers for more than one candidate, the earlier papers are valid, and the later papers are invalid. Wis. Stat. § 8.04. Candidates are not required to circulate their own nomination papers but may do so if they wish. Please note that signatures gathered after the Certification of Circulator section has been signed and dated may not be counted during the nomination review process.

Campaign Registration Statement (CF-1)

Wis. Stat. § 11.0202(1)(a), Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10(5), 8.15(4)(b), 8.20(6)

A campaign registration statement is required to be filed with the Wisconsin Ethics Commission for state offices, and this form is filed online. For local offices, the statement must be filed with the appropriate filing officer. For questions related to the CF-1 or campaign finance, please contact the Wisconsin Ethics Commission at 608-266-8123 or the local filing officer.

Statement of Economic Interest (SEI)

Wis. Stat. § 19.43(4), Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10(5), 8.15(4)(b), 8.20(6)

For some state and local level offices candidates must file a statement of economic interest. Where applicable, this form is filed online with the Wisconsin Ethics Commission or the appropriate filing officer. For questions related to a Statement of Economic Interest, please contact the Wisconsin Ethics Commission at 608-266-8123.

Tips for Successful Circulation

1. **Circulators and Circulating:** Circulators are allowed to gather nomination paper signatures for only one candidate per office in each election. Wis. Stat. § 8.04. Nomination papers must be personally circulated by the circulator who signs each page. The circulator must witness the signature and nomination paper pages may not be left unattended in a public place for people to sign. This means that circulators may not leave them on the table in a break room, posted on a bulletin board, sitting on the bar at a local watering hole, etc. Wis. Stat. § 8.15(4)(a).
2. **Templates:** It is always recommended that candidates use a template which has the header properly completed for their nomination papers. Using a template ensures that all circulators will have identical sheets for collecting signatures. This can help clear up any issues that may be experienced if circulators were to be responsible for completing the header of the pages where the circulator may not use the correct nomination paper document or may incorrectly detail candidate information. Templates can and should be submitted to the filing officer prior to circulation to be reviewed for any errors.
3. **Number of Signatures:** WEC advises that candidates and circulators collect signatures

totaling well over the minimum number required for ballot placement. This presents the candidate with a buffer of signatures, should any individual signatures be deemed insufficient by the filing officer and protects against signatures being successfully challenged.

4. **Preparing to File:** Candidates should also ensure that each page has all of the required information completed prior to submission to the filing officer. A thorough review of the papers can quickly determine if any of the signatures need correction or if the circulator information is filled out improperly. Number the pages consecutively.

Reviewing all nomination paper pages also gives the candidate an opportunity to organize the petition prior to submission. Candidates should number every page and place pages with the highest number of “good” signatures on top of the stack. Partial pages should be placed toward the back. When submitting nomination papers to the filing officer, have a general estimate of the number of signatures contained on all pages.

What Happens Next?

Determining Sufficiency

Wis. Admin Code § EL 2.05

After candidates submit their nomination papers to the correct filing officer, they will be reviewed for sufficiency. The filing officer will review all headers, signatures, and circulator information to determine a final count of sufficient signatures. In their review, the filing officer will examine addresses and municipalities to ensure that they are in district. Filing officers also confirm that all dates written by signers are both within the circulation period and prior to or on the date which the circulator signed the certification. Signatures that are deemed insufficient are struck and deducted from the total number of signatures submitted. Any insufficiencies, such as incorrectly dated signatures or inaccurate circulator information can be corrected with a correcting affidavit for up to 3 days after the filing deadline. Wis. Admin. Code § EL 2.05(4)

Some reasons signatures may be deemed insufficient by a filing officer include:

- Missing or incomplete dates of signers
- Illegible information required by statute
- Signers live out of district
- Incomplete address information of signer
- Missing circulator information
- Pages or signatures dated after the Certification of Circulator
- Missing or incorrect information in the header

Challenges to Nomination Papers

Wis. Admin Code § EL 2.07

Within three days of the deadline for filing nomination papers, those papers may be challenged with the filing officer. Challenges often come from other candidates but may come from interested individuals or groups outside the district of a specific election. The goal of a nomination paper challenge, generally speaking, is to deduct signatures from a competing candidate's total count. Challenges must be in the form of a notarized document with pertinent information attached reflecting the reason for the challenge. If applicable, individual signature lines and the specific information being challenged should be itemized and included as part of the challenge documentation.

When a challenge is received by the filing officer, the challenged candidate is notified of the challenge within 24 hours. Challenged candidates then have 3 calendar days from the date the challenge was filed to respond to any challenge. Once all documentation is received from both the challenging party and challenged candidate, the filing officer has sole discretion to determine the merits of the challenge(s). The filing officer will make determinations to individual signature lines being challenged so it is possible for challenges to be partially successful but not result in disqualifying enough signatures to remove the challenged candidate from the ballot.

If the challenge is accepted, the filing officer deducts any signatures or pages related to the challenge from the challenged candidate's final count. If the challenge is not accepted, no further action is taken by the filing officer. Challenges may be appealed to the Wisconsin Elections Commission in the form of a verified complaint related to the initial filing officer's decision. Elections Commission decisions can be appealed to a Circuit Court within thirty days. More information on challenges can be found in the WEC Common Challenges Manual (<https://elections.wi.gov/resources/manuals/common-nomination-paper-challenges-manual>).

Some common reasons for challenges include:

- Election date
- Title of office
- Candidate address
- Circulator date and signature
- Multiple signatures from a single person
- Signer address out of district
- Date of signature

Please note that the periods for filing correcting affidavits and challenges run at the same time. Candidates and challengers cannot assume that the initial number of signatures accepted as valid will remain the same until all correcting affidavits and challenges are processed. In order for candidates to avoid challenges and for challengers to determine which challenges are likely to be upheld or rejected, the WEC encourages both candidates and potential challengers to review the

Common Nomination Paper Challenges Manual located at this web address:
<https://elections.wi.gov/resources/manuals/common-nomination-paper-challenges-manual>.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a filing officer?

The filing officer is the person to whom ballot access documents are submitted.

What documents are required to be filed to get on the ballot?

Ballot access documents, in most cases, are: Nomination papers, declaration of candidacy, and campaign registration statement. Some Judicial, State and Local offices also require the submission of a statement of economic interests.

What is the filing deadline?

The filing deadline is the first Tuesday in January for offices to be elected in April. Wis. Stat. § 8.10(2)(a). For offices to be elected in November, the filing deadline is June 1. Wis. Stat. § 8.15(1)

Is there a way to track the process after my documents have been submitted?

Please see the Candidate Tracking by Office Report on the WEC website.

How does a candidate remove their name from the ballot after submitting all of their paperwork?

Any person who files nomination papers and qualifies to appear on the ballot cannot withdraw their name from the ballot after filing. The name of that person shall appear upon the ballot except in case of death of the person. Wis. Stat. § 8.35(1).

What is a correcting affidavit?

A correcting affidavit is a verified document that allows for the correction of errors on nomination papers that were committed by either a signer or circulator. Wis. Admin. Code §EL 2.05(4)

What happens if a circulator signs and dates the certification before collecting signatures?

If this occurs, any signatures obtained after the date the form was signed by the circulator will be invalid. A timely correcting affidavit can be submitted to amend the errors.

How many nomination papers is someone allowed to circulate?

For a single office in an election, circulators may collect signatures for only one candidate. Wis. Stat. § 8.04.

How many nomination papers may a voter sign?

Voters may sign nomination papers totaling the number of candidates they are allowed to vote for. In a “vote for 1” office, voters may only sign on candidate’s nomination papers. In a “vote for 2” office, voters may sign nomination papers of 2 candidates.

What happens if a voter signs more nomination papers than allowable?

If any person signs nomination papers for 2 candidates for the same election at different times, the earlier signature is valid and the later signature is invalid. Wis. Stat. §8.04.

Ballot Access in Wisconsin

Wisconsin Elections Commission



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Ballot Access Checklists

- ◆ ELIS-05 Ballot Access Checklist for School District Candidates
- ◆ ELIS-09: Ballot Access Checklist for Statewide and Legislative Candidates
- ◆ ELIS-07 Ballot Access Checklist for Municipal Candidates where Nomination Papers are used
- ◆ ELIS-01: Ballot Access Checklist for State Level Non-partisan Candidates

2025 Ballot Access Checklist:

Municipalities Where Nomination Papers are Used

Each of the following forms must be completed and filed on time by a candidate for municipal office in order for the candidate's name to be placed on the ballot at the February 18, 2025 Spring Primary and the April 1, 2025 Spring Election.

In the City of Milwaukee, the filing officer is the Milwaukee City Election Commission. In all other municipalities, the filing officer is the municipal clerk (town, village or city). Candidates should contact their filing officer for further information or to obtain any of the necessary forms.

- ❑ **Complete and Submit a Registration Statement (Form CF-1)** to the filing officer prior to raising or spending any funds, and no later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 7, 2025 or the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot. If the form is faxed or emailed, the original document must follow postmarked no later than January 7, 2025. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10(5), 8.30(2), Wis. Admin. Code EL § 8.04.

➤ New Candidates

File a campaign registration statement before campaign funds are collected or spent or before submitting nomination papers. Wis. Stat. §§ 11.0202(1)(a), 11.0101(1).

➤ Continuing Candidates

Amend your current registration, indicating the office sought and the new primary and election dates. Wis. Stat. §§ 11.0202(1)(a), 11.0101(1).

- ❑ **Complete and Submit a Declaration of Candidacy (Form EL-163)** to the filing officer no later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 7, 2025 or the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot. If the form is faxed or emailed, the original document must follow, postmarked no later than January 7, 2025. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10(5), 8.21, 8.30(4), Wis. Admin. Code EL § 8.04.

- ❑ **Circulate and Submit Nomination Papers for Nonpartisan Office (Form EL-169)** to the filing officer no later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 7, 2025 or the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot. Only original nomination papers (no photocopies, faxes, or emailed documents) will be accepted. Nomination papers may not be circulated before December 1, 2024. Wis. Stat. § 8.10(2), Wis. Admin. Code EL § 8.04(2).

The number of signatures required is as follows:

All village and town offices:	20 - 100
1 st Class Cities:	Citywide offices 1,500 - 3,000
	Aldersperson elected to district 200 - 400
2 nd and 3 rd Class Cities:	Citywide offices 200 - 400
	Aldersperson elected at large 100 - 200
	Aldersperson elected to district 20 - 40
4 th Class Cities:	Citywide offices 50 - 100
	Aldersperson elected to district 20 - 40

- ❑ **Municipal Judge Candidates:**

Complete and submit a **Statement of Economic Interests (SEI)** to the Ethics Commission using the website <https://seis.wisconsin.gov>. Incumbent candidates will receive a filing notice around December 1, 2024, and new candidates will receive an email notice within one or two days of registering their committee. The SEI must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, January 10, 2025, or the candidate's name will not appear on the ballot. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10(5), 8.30(3), 19.43(4). Candidates may also print the SEI form and instructions from the Ethics Commission website (<https://ethics.wisconsin.gov>), and return those forms by email or fax. For more information, please contact the Ethics Commission at 608-265-8123 or ethics@doj.wisconsin.gov.

Important Note Regarding Statements of Economic Interests

A municipality may enact an ordinance establishing a code of ethics for public officials that may require a candidate for municipal office, in addition to the office of Municipal Judge, to file a **Statement of Economic Interests (SEI)**. The ordinance may also provide that failure to timely file an SEI will prevent the candidate's name from being placed on the ballot. Wis. Stat. § 19.59(1m), (3)(b). Please contact the filing officer to learn if this requirement applies to you.

2

Who is your filing officer?

- ◆ Your filing officer depends on the level of government for which you are seeking office.
-
- ◆ For example:
 - ◆ If you are running for a state level office such as Representative to the Assembly and State Senator, The WEC is your filing officer.
 - ◆ If you running for local office such as City Council, Village Board or Town Board, the municipal clerk or Milwaukee Elections Commission is your filing officer.
 - ◆ If you are running for school board, the school district clerk is your filing officer.

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Required Filings

1. CF-1 Campaign Registration Statement: Filed online with Ethics Commission
2. EL-162 Declaration of Candidacy: Filed with the appropriate filing officer
3. Nomination Papers (EL-168, EL-169, etc.): Filed with the appropriate filing officer
4. Statement of Economic Interests (SEI): Filed online with Ethics Commission or with the appropriate filing officer (if applicable)

4

Nomination Papers: The Header

NOMINATION PAPER FOR PARTISAN OFFICE					
Candidate's name (required), no titles may be used.	Candidate's residential address (required) <i>No P.O. box addresses</i> Street, line, or rural route number, box number (if rural route), and name of street or road		Candidate's municipality for voting purposes (required) ☐ Town of _____ ☐ Village of _____ ☐ City of _____ (name of municipality)		
Candidate's mailing address, including municipality for mailing purposes (required if different than residential address or voting municipality)	State (required) WI	Zip code	Type of election (required) ☐ general ☐ special	General Election date (required) <u>Mo/Day/Year</u>	(Required) Name of Party or Statement of Principle (5 words or less)
Title of office (required)	District or Jurisdiction (required if applicable) ☐ District number _____ ☐ Jurisdiction (county) _____		Name of jurisdiction or district in which candidate seeks office (required)		

I, the undersigned, request that the candidate, whose name and residential address are listed above, be placed on the ballot at the election described above as a candidate representing the party or statement of principle indicated above, so that voters will have the opportunity to vote for ☐ him or ☐ her for the office listed above. I am eligible to vote in the jurisdiction or district in which the candidate named above seeks office. I have not signed the nomination paper of any other candidate for the same office at this election.

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Nomination Papers: The Signature Lines

The municipality used for mailing purposes, when different than municipality of residence, is not sufficient. The name of the municipality of residence must always be listed.				
Signatures of Electors	Printed Name of Electors	Residential Address (No P.O. Box Addresses) Street and Number or Rural Route (Rural address must also include box or fire no)	Municipality of Residence Check the type and write the name of your municipality for voting purposes	Date of Signing <u>Mo/Day/Year</u>
1.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
2.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
3.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
4.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
5.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
6.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
7.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
8.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
9.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	
10.			☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City	

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Nomination Papers: The Certification of Circulator

CERTIFICATION OF CIRCULATOR		
I, _____ (Name of circulator)	certify: I reside at _____ (Circulator's residential address - Include number, street, and municipality)	
I further certify I am either a qualified elector of Wisconsin, or a U.S. citizen, age 18 or older who, if I were a resident of this state, would not be disqualified from voting under Wis. Stat. § 6.03. I personally circulated this nomination paper and personally obtained each of the signatures on this paper. I know that the signers are electors of the jurisdiction or district the candidate seeks to represent. I know that each person signed the paper with full knowledge of its content on the date indicated opposite his or her name. I know their respective residences given. I intend to support this candidate. I am aware that falsifying this certification is punishable under Wis. Stat. § 12.13(3)(a).		
_____ (Date)	_____ (Signature of circulator)	Page No. _____
EL-168 Rev. 2016-03 Wisconsin Elections Commission, P.O. Box 7884, Madison, WI 53707-7984 608-266-8005 web: elections.wi.gov email: elections@stat.gov		

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Tips for Successful Circulation

- ❖ Nomination papers should be personally circulated by the circulator and should not just be left in public spaces for people to sign (i.e. on the table in the breakroom, posted on a bulletin board or on the bar!).
- ❖ Use a template and have that template reviewed before printing to ensure all required information is correct and present.
- ❖ Ensure that every page has all required information complete before submitting, especially circulator certification and header information.
- ❖ Use the appropriate nomination paper template: partisan or non-partisan.

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Circulation Tips, continued



Instructions are listed on the back of the form and are a great resource for candidates and circulators.



Some information can be pre-filled in the body of the petition, such as date or year of signing.



Collect more than the minimum number of signatures. Candidates usually lose signatures during the review process.

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Common Mistakes to Avoid

- ◆ If you have sections of your papers used to collect contact information for signers, be sure that if/when you cut that information off you do not remove required information.
- ◆ Don't use heavy markers to redact information!
- ◆ File your nomination papers well before the deadline so that you have time to remedy any issues.

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Organizational Tips

Organize

Organize your petition before filing. Place the sheets with the highest number of 'good' signatures on top and partial pages at the back.

Number

Number all of your pages before arrival at the office of the filing officer.

Count

Have a good estimate as to how many signatures you are filing.
Signatures over the maximum will be treated as supplemental and not reviewed unless necessary.

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Common Reasons Signatures are Struck



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Thanks and Good Luck

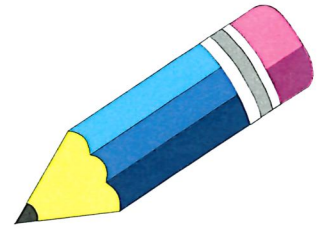
Please contact us with any questions you
may have!

Wisconsin Elections Commission

elections@wi.gov

(608) 261-2028

CAMPAIGN FINANCE CHECKLIST FOR 2026 MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT CANDIDATES



Candidates should determine if they are required to make financial disclosure reports.

Candidates should contact their filing officer for further information or to obtain any of the necessary forms.

For municipal offices, the filing officer is the municipal clerk. For school district offices, the filing officer is the school district clerk. For City of Milwaukee offices, the filing officer is the City of Milwaukee Election Commission.

If NOT claiming the exemption from reporting requirements:

- ☐ Obtain a copy of the ***Campaign Finance Overview – Local Candidates Manual*** (Revised 2023) from your filing officer and carefully review it with your treasurer.
- ☐ Complete and submit a ***January Continuing Campaign Finance Report (Form CF-2L)*** to the filing officer no later than **January 15, 2026**, if registered before January 1, 2026. This report covers activity from July 1, 2025, or the date of registration (whichever is later), through December 31, 2025.
- ☐ Complete and submit a ***Pre-Primary Campaign Finance Report (Form CF-2L)*** to the filing officer no later than **February 9, 2026**, if a primary is held. This report covers activity from January 1, 2026, through February 2, 2026.
- ☐ Complete and submit a ***Pre-Election Campaign Finance Report (Form CF-2L)*** to the filing officer, no later than **March 30, 2026**. This report covers activity from February 3, 2026, through March 23, 2026, if a primary is held, or January 1, 2026, through March 23, 2026, if no primary is held.
- ☐ Complete and submit a ***July Continuing Campaign Finance Report (Form CF-2L)*** to the filing officer no later than **July 15, 2026**. This report covers activity from March 24, 2026, through June 30, 2026.

Committees must file “Continuing Reports” until a termination report (CF-2L) is filed.

For further information or to obtain any of the necessary forms, please contact:

Wisconsin Ethics Commission



SO YOU WANT TO BE AN ELECTED OFFICIAL...

**PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE RUNNING FOR
OFFICE IN WISCONSIN'S CITIES AND VILLAGES**



INTRODUCTION

Why are you running for election to a local office'?

This is a question that every candidate will be asked - and a question that every candidate must carefully consider.

Most often, people run for office because they are deeply committed to their city or village and want to influence the community's direction. At times, people run because they are passionate about a single issue or problem. A single controversy - such as a land use or zoning decision - could dominate an entire election campaign.

But once the election is over, things change. Candidates who have won an election based on their position on a single issue soon discover that they are responsible for a much broader array of challenges. The platform they ran on may not even be on the governing body's agenda. Getting it placed there will only be possible if they are willing and able to work cooperatively with other members of the governing body, many of whom will have their own issues to champion.

In order to be effective, elected officials must work as part of a team to establish a shared vision for the future, develop goals and plans that make that future possible, and work with their colleagues and constituents to enact the local policies and laws that will ultimately lead to accomplishment.

Holding a public office is an act of service to the public - that is, service to all the residents of a city or village, not just those who share your views or those who voted for you. It is a challenge that will require you to rise above the fray, to reach beyond your comfort zones, and to work with others with whom you may have significant differences.

Rising to that challenge is what makes democracy work. It's what makes shaping our shared future possible. It's what others have done before us. And it's what has made our cities and villages places we can be proud of.

WORKING AS PART OF A TEAM

Getting elected as a council member, village trustee, village president or mayor brings a special status. It also comes with an obligation to look beyond yourself and cultivate the qualities of collaboration, teamwork, and civility.

Elected officials set the tone for the civic life in their community. When elected

officials demonstrate how to differ with one another respectfully, find principled compromises, and focus on the common good, community members often will too. When elected officials get mired in blame, recrimination, or division, civic progress can grind to a halt, and the community's sense of common purpose can fracture.

To govern well, elected leaders must help each other and the public stay focused on the future and on the common good. That can be an uphill struggle when the passions of the moment lead to demands for instant solutions, or when there is a deep division over a single issue that threatens to push longer-term problems aside. There will always be occasions when elected officials differ among themselves. But the mark of leadership is the ability to handle those differences in ways that move the agenda forward, build trust, and create a civic culture of mutual respect that makes progress possible.

***When elected officials get mired in blame,
recrimination, or division, civic progress can grind to
a halt.***

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Villages and cities provide services that are vital to community health, safety, and economic prosperity. While specific municipally-provided services may vary, most cities and villages include public safety, land use and planning, parks, and public works such as street maintenance and construction, water, sewer, and/or stormwater management. Understanding your role as an elected official is critical to ensure proper planning, oversight, and delivery of these essential public services.

Legislative vs. Executive Authority

Governing bodies are legislative bodies - their members are elected to make policy decisions and pass budgets. The basic job of these elected officials is to find balance among themselves and represent municipal residents' best (and sometimes competing) interests, while also taking non-resident taxpayer and visitor interests into account.

While governing body members make policies via legislative authority, executive authority contemplates the implementation and administration of those policies. Learning the difference between these two key functions and respecting the boundaries between them is critical to a well-run government.

In cities, executive authority (e.g., day-to-day oversight over departments and employees) is granted to the chief executive officer - the mayor, unless the city has a manager form of government. In villages, executive authority is shared among the village board collectively, unless the village has a manager form of government - there, the manager is the chief executive officer and holds executive authority.

The separation of legislative and executive authority serves not only as a check on the exercise of authority between the two branches of local government, but also promotes efficient day-to-day operation and staff direction.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MUNICIPALITY'S FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND CLASSIFICATION

In Wisconsin, cities and villages have different forms of government, but their respective powers are largely the same. Cities and villages in Wisconsin differ from other local governmental units such as towns, counties, and school boards because they possess more power to govern themselves in local matters without specific state authorization (i.e., cities and villages have more local autonomy than other local governments). This grant of considerable power given to municipalities to act autonomously is referred to as "home rule" authority. Home rule authority is both constitutionally and statutorily derived.

The most common form of city government is the mayor-council form. This form consists of a mayor elected at-large and a council (typically elected by district, but sometimes elected at-large, or a combination of the two). The most common form of village government is the president-board of trustees form.

Under this form, a board consisting of a village president and village trustees governs a village. The trustees and the president are typically elected at large. The president-board of trustees form of government does not clearly distinguish between legislative and executive authority. Rather, the village

board as a whole exercises executive and legislative authority. The president is a village trustee who presides at village board meetings and votes on all matters before the board. The village president is not designated "chief executive officer" but is assigned certain administrative responsibilities.

An alternate form of government currently used in Wisconsin is the city council-manager or village board-manager plan, which may be adopted by charter ordinance or through a petition and referendum election organized by municipal residents.

In some municipalities, a professional administrator assists with day-to-day operations. This is not a statutory "form" of government, and the powers and duties of the elected officials remain the same.

Organization of City and Village Government

There are 190 cities and 412 villages in Wisconsin. Most of these 602 municipalities use the mayor-council or president-village board form of government. Ten cities use the council-manager form of government and nine villages use the village board-manager form of government. The statutes also provide for the commission form of government, but this form has not been used in Wisconsin since 1957.

In Wisconsin, cities are divided into four classes based on their population when incorporated. The four classes of cities are set forth in Wis. Stat. sec. 62.05(1) as follows:

- Cities of 150,000 population and over constitute cities of the first class.
- Cities of 39,000 and less than 150,000 population constitute cities of the second class.
- Cities of 10,000 and less than 39,000 population constitute cities of the third class.
- Cities of less than 10,000 population constitute cities of the fourth class.

Milwaukee is Wisconsin's only first-class city. Villages are not divided into classes. The biggest effect a city's class has is on the extent of its extra-territorial jurisdiction, which is a municipality's authority outside of its municipal boundaries. Extra-territorial jurisdiction only applies to a

municipality's zoning and subdivision authority. First, second, and third class cities have extraterritorial jurisdiction extending three miles from their municipal boundaries. Fourth class cities and villages have extraterritorial jurisdiction extending 1.5 miles from their municipal boundaries.

The Third Branch

A municipal court exists in each municipality but it is not activated unless, and until, a municipality chooses to do so. Cities and villages can choose to run their own municipal courts or join with another city or village to provide court services. As of February 2014, there were 237 municipal courts and 240 municipal judges in Wisconsin. Sixty-seven of these courts are joint courts that serve from two to 17 municipalities. Municipal judges are elected.

Municipal courts are a co-equal branch of municipal government. Although the governing body may determine the court's budget, the judge is responsible for running the court, including supervising court staff.

Working With Other Jurisdictions

Elected officials' responsibilities don't stop at the city or village limits. Your streets must connect with county roads, town roads, and state highways. In many similar ways, cities and villages often work with neighboring jurisdictions as well as county, state, and federal agencies to serve a citizenry that doesn't know and often doesn't care where the village or city ends and the town begins. In some cases, this can involve complex, technical inter-jurisdictional agreements for services such as zoning, public safety, sewage treatment, or other utilities.

Cities and villages must abide by state and federal laws and regulations and can benefit from state and federal funding programs. Your city or village may also be part of a special purpose district for fire protection, ports, transit, sewer and water, cemeteries, libraries, and a host of other specific functions. In Wisconsin, public safety departments from different jurisdictions routinely provide "mutual aid" to one another. The underlying agreements that facilitate these shared services can be difficult to negotiate and require an extraordinary level of collaboration by elected officials. Your residents expect these relationships to be well-managed, efficient, and collaborative - and it's up to you and your fellow elected officials to make this happen.

Celebrating Community Achievements and Promoting Civic Pride

City and village elected officials also serve as champions for civic achievement. By appearing at ribbon-cutting ceremonies, participating in charity events, and attending celebrations, elected officials bring recognition and attention to the values of civic engagement and individual accomplishment. This might not be in your official job description, but it is an important part of how elected leaders bring out the best in their communities and strengthen the traditions that build civic pride.

KNOWING THE LAW

Ethics

You may think of yourself as an ethical and law-abiding person, but that may not be enough to keep you on the right side of the law once you are elected. Wisconsin takes pride in its public official ethics laws and high ethical standards of conduct for elected officials. One of the first and most important tasks for you as a new elected official is to become thoroughly informed about them. All city and village officials must abide by these laws, which aim to prevent favoritism in government decision-making and ensure that elected officials are serving the public rather than reaping personal benefits from their positions.

State laws that municipal elected officials must abide by include:

No special privileges - Elected officials must pay the same fees for permits or services as any other resident. They cannot *receive* or *give* any special privileges, discounts, or exemptions or use city resources for private purposes. For example, a city official cannot borrow a city pickup truck for the weekend or arrange for a friend or relative to use it.

No gifts or rewards from private sources - Elected officials may not receive gifts or substantial benefits that are in any way connected to their public service. For instance, if a councilmember *votes* for a specific project and a constituent or local business sends a thank you gift of tickets to a concert or game, the tickets must be returned.

No disclosure of confidential information - Elected officials should not disclose confidential information and may not use it for personal gain. This means that you may not accept a job or engage in a business that might require you to disclose confidential information you gained from your city position.

No conflicts of interest - With limited exceptions, elected officials may not have any financial interest in any public contracts. This includes contracts for employment, sales, leases, and purchases.

In addition, elected officials may not *vote* on any matter that would have a personal direct financial impact on them or members of their immediate family. This prohibition does not include matters that have a general impact, such as taxes or utility rates.

Conflicts of interest can also include "remote" interests - interests that would not personally benefit you but might benefit people or organizations with whom you have a special relationship. For instance, if you are on the governing board of a nonprofit organization seeking a contract with the city, you should disclose your interest and you may not *vote* on that contract or attempt to influence the *votes* of others.

Open Public Meetings

The Open Meetings Law requires that all council and board meetings (and meetings of planning commissions, and committees, and library boards, and all other governmental bodies) be noticed and open to the public, except under special circumstances, such as discussing a lawsuit with legal counsel, considering promotion of a public employee, or deliberating or negotiating the purchase of real estate.

Elected officials should always be cognizant of the open meetings law requirements. Whenever a quorum of the governing body is present, municipal business cannot be the topic of discussion unless the public has been notified and the meeting is open to them. Even if a quorum is not present, if the number of elected officials present is enough to defeat a governing body vote, no municipal business may be discussed without adhering to the open meetings law. If this act is violated, there may be personal penalties for the elected officials involved. In addition, a court can void any final action that is taken in a meeting that did not comply with the law.

Public Access to Records

The Public Records Law gives any person full access to a wide range of information about how government does business. All information relating to the conduct of government that is prepared, owned, used, or retained by a municipality is presumed to be a public record that must be made available to the public for inspection and copying. This includes papers, photos, maps, videos, and

electronic records (such as email, text messages, and social networking sites). It also includes reports that are prepared for government by hired contractors.

While you may use social media and websites for your campaign, be cautious about continued use when elected. All of your public communications, whether written or electronic, are subject to the public records law when you are an elected official. If it is used for official municipal business, elected officials may find that records on their own personal phone and computer must be produced in response to a public records request.

Cities and villages must make municipal records available for everyone. There are a limited number of exemptions from disclosure for some personnel records and other confidential matters. Every elected official is an authority with responsibilities under the public records law and is the custodian of their own records.

Given the importance of these laws to the proper operation of representative government, and the penalties for violation, it is vital that new elected officials quickly bring themselves up to speed on both the open meetings and public records laws. This is also no place for armchair attorneys; elected officials should rely on the advice of the city's or village's attorney in these matters.

IMPLEMENTING POLICY

Adopting a Budget

One of the most challenging tasks for local elected officials is developing and adopting annual budgets. They can be complex and technical documents, and they are important expressions of your governing body's vision, values, priorities, and strategic goals. Budgets are also a tool for oversight and for evaluating past performance. Elected leaders and staff make note of what was accomplished in the past year and how actual costs compared to estimated projections.

Mastering the budget process can be a steep learning curve for newly elected leaders. There are guiding state laws about the timing and content of city and village budgets. Once in office, elected officials soon find that the budget is such an important policy document that they can't be effective unless they fully understand it (and can explain it to their constituents).

Budgets are important expressions of a city's or village's vision, values, priorities, and strategic goals.

Comprehensive Planning, Growth Management, and Environmental Protection

Every city and village needs to plan its future in order to provide a healthy and vibrant community for its residents. Municipalities adopt comprehensive plans that spell out a specific vision for how the city or village will develop.

Comprehensive plans provide for vital public services and foster economic growth while protecting critical natural resources and open space. Engaging the community in developing a comprehensive plan is necessary to ensure that the plan represents a shared vision for the future, and that everyone takes part in the work of achieving it.

Planning also needs to recognize the broader community in which your city or village exists. Adjacent municipalities should work together to avoid conflicts within their individual plans.

All Wisconsin cities and villages regulating land use (e.g., subdivision, zoning) are required to adopt a comprehensive plan, and to make sure that any land use decisions are consistent with it. Once adopted, a comprehensive plan is used to guide decisions about zoning, subdivision, extending municipal services, and other regulatory matters. Local zoning codes can create incentives for the kind of growth a city or village wants by providing such things as density bonuses for projects that provide affordable housing or preserve natural areas.

State and federal environmental laws and regulations also affect local comprehensive planning, because they require protection of certain natural resources such as drinking water supplies, surface waters, wetlands, and critical wildlife habitat. Learning about these laws and how they affect your municipality is an important part of an elected leader's job.

Keeping the comprehensive plan in mind - and keeping it in the public eye - ensures that the municipality stays focused on creating the future residents want for the next generation and beyond.

PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES

Publications

You can find many materials, publications, and other resources online. Below are two key websites that will be of value to you even before and definitely after becoming an elected leader.

League of Wisconsin Municipalities (lwm-info.org)

- The League has many publications available, such as Mayor, Council member, Village Board, Village President, and Municipal officials handbooks. There are also several frequently asked questions (FAQ) resources available on the website.

Local Government Center, University of Wisconsin Madison, Division of Extension (<https://lgc.uwex.edu>)

- The Local Government Center coordinates UW Extension educational programs supporting local government and expands the research and knowledge base for local government education.
- The Center and its website host a variety of useful information for local officials.

After getting elected, the League offers "Local Government 101" regional workshops tailored to meet the needs of newly-elected leaders. Many cities and villages will pay registration costs for these one-day events. In addition, the League hosts a Chief Elected Officials workshop for Village Presidents, Managers, Administrators, and Mayors every August. For over 120 years, the League has also organized an Annual Conference for all local officials. More than three-dozen workshops on a variety of municipal topics are explored at this Conference. The Annual Conference takes place in October.

