



2026 RUNNING FOR OFFICE GUIDE

WEST VIRGINIA SECRETARY
OF STATE'S OFFICE
ELECTIONS DIVISION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTACT	0
INTRODUCTION	2
THE DECISION TO BE A CANDIDATE	2
TYPES OF ELECTIONS AND OFFICE LISTING	4
SECTION I: HOW TO RUN FOR OFFICE	6
FILING AS A PRE-CANDIDATE	6
REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	6
DESIGNATING A TREASURER	6
CANDIDATE AND TREASURER DUTIES	7
RECORD KEEPING	7
CREATING A COMMITTEE NAME	8
COMMITTEE BANK ACCOUNT	8
RUNNING AS A RECOGNIZED POLITICAL PARTY	8
RUNNING AS A NO PARTY ORGANIZATION CANDIDATE	9
RUNNING AS A WRITE-IN CANDIDATE	10
DECLARING YOUR CANDIDACY	10
ETHICS COMMISSION PERSONAL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE	12
SECTION II: OFFICES ON THE BALLOT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	14
FEDERAL OFFICES	14
STATE OFFICES	16
COUNTY OFFICES	21
PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES	23
UNEXPIRED TERMS	24
MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS	25
SECTION III: MANAGING CAMPAIGN FINANCES	27
FILING CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS	27
2026 CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING CALENDAR	29
PENALTIES FOR LATE AND UNFILED REPORTS	29
CANDIDATE COMMITTEE ELECTION CYCLES	30
HOW TO FILE CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS	30
CONTRIBUTIONS	32
EXPENDITURES	37
FUND-RAISING EVENTS	39
UNPAID BILLS	40
POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT DISCLAIMER	40
CODE OF FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICES	41
HOW TO TERMINATE A CANDIDATE COMMITTEE	41
INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES	42
COORDINATED EXPENDITURES	43
ELECTIONEERING COMMUNICATIONS	43
RESOURCES	44
ELECTION CYBERSECURITY INCIDENT RESPONSE PLANS FOR CAMPAIGNS	47

INTRODUCTION

This *Running for Office Guide* was prepared by the Elections Division at the Secretary of State and summarizes the state election laws applicable to candidates and candidate committees. This guide should only be used as a starting point and not a complete compilation of rules and regulations for West Virginia elections. If any guidance or interpretations provided in this guide conflict with any law or precedent, including the West Virginia Constitution, West Virginia Code, and the West Virginia Code of State Rules, the guidance or interpretation shall be disregarded, and the law shall apply.

Citations

Throughout this guide there are a variety of cited sources. Here are a few examples of the types of citations in this guide and what they refer to.

Source: West Virginia Constitution (article and section)	Example: W. Va. Const., Art. 4, § 1
The West Virginia Code (chapter, article, and section)	W. Va. Code § 3-1-1
Code of State Rules (title, series, and section)	W. Va. C.S.R. § 146-3-8

Forms

Forms referenced in this guide may be accessed at www.GoVoteWV.com by clicking the "Election Forms" button.

The Decision to Be a Candidate

Use the checklist below to help you decide whether running for office is right for you.

- ☐ Determine if you can make the time commitment required for becoming a candidate and holding public office.
- ☐ Determine whether running for or holding public office interferes with your current or future employment.
- ☐ Determine whether the office you choose is on the ballot and if you are eligible to run.
- ☐ Determine how you wish to run for office and learn the requirements for the method you choose. Eligible individuals may run under the banner of a recognized political party, with no party affiliation, or as a write-in candidate.

- Review campaign finance laws and plan for filing campaign finance reports by the deadlines set by law. Candidates are responsible for filing campaign finance reports from the time of filing pre-candidacy until a final report is filed and the campaign is closed.

Can You Run for Office and Continue Your Present Job?

You should check with the human resources or personnel director of your existing employer to make sure you can run for office and continue your present job. There are specific restrictions in law for board of education members, judicial offices, and government employees:

- Board of education members and judicial officers must resign upon filing for any partisan office, and members of other boards and commissions may also be restricted from political activity.
- The **Hatch Act** covers the political activity of federal employees and some state and local employees in programs financed by federal loans or grants. The Hatch Act was amended in 2012. The most current specifics of the Hatch Act can be reviewed on this website: osc.gov.
- The **West Virginia Division of Personnel** covers the political activity of state classified employees. For information regarding permitted and prohibited political activities, visit personnel.wv.gov or call the Division of Personnel at (304) 558-3950.

Are You Eligible to Run?

On your Certificate of Announcement, you are required to swear and affirm that you are eligible and qualified to hold the office you are seeking. Carefully review the requirements for the office in Section II of this guide, the United States Constitution, West Virginia Constitution, West Virginia State Election laws, and Ethics Regulations to make sure you meet the prerequisites set out for minimum age, residency, and any other requirements.

Most legal disputes regarding eligibility are resolved in court. In limited circumstances, the Secretary of State, county, and municipal officials determine disputes regarding a candidate's eligibility.

Residence

"Residence" has been defined by the West Virginia Supreme Court as the place where you physically live and intend to remain indefinitely. A business location where you do not live cannot be established as a residence. Property which you rent to someone else is not your residence. A post office box does not establish residence. Some offices require you to be a resident for a length of time before election, by the time of filing for office, or by the

time of taking office. Below are extracts from court cases with more details about the definition of “residence.”

“In West Virginia, the term ‘residence’ is synonymous with the term ‘domicile’ for election law purposes.” Syl. pt. 7, *White v. Manchin*, 173 W.Va. 526 (1984). “The important facts in determining the domicile of a person who has more than one residence are the physical character of each, the time spent and the things done in each place, and whether or not there is an intention to return to the original domicile.” Syl. pt. 4, *Shaw v. Shaw*, 155 W. Va. 712, 712–13, 187 S.E.2d 124, 125 (1972). “A man may live in several different places but he can have only one domicile. Domicile is a place a person intends to retain as a permanent residence and go back to ultimately after moving away.” Syl. Pt. 2, *Shaw v. Shaw*, 155 W. Va. 712, 712, 187 S.E.2d 124, 125 (1972).

“Domicile is a combination of residence (or presence) and an intention of remaining. If domicile has once existed, mere temporary absence will not destroy it, however long continued.” Syl. Pt. 2, *Lotz v. Atamaniuk*, 172 W.Va. 116, 304 S.E.2d 20 (1983).

Candidates Who Lose in the Primary or Convention

Candidates who lose a race in nomination in the primary or in a party convention are not permitted to gain access to the general election ballot for that office through the petition process set forth for no party, also known as minor party, candidates. (W. Va. Code § 3-5-23)

Types of Elections and Office Listing

Primary Election: A primary election is a preliminary step in the electoral process that allows political parties to nominate their candidates for various partisan offices that will appear on the general election ballot. Additionally, during the primary, parties will elect members to their executive committees, and all voters will have the chance to vote for non-partisan office candidates.

The following offices will be elected in the 2026 Primary Election:

- WV Supreme Court of Appeals (Unexpired Term)
- Intermediate Court of Appeals
- Board of Education
- Conservation District Supervisor
- Greater Huntington Park and Recreation District
- Political Party Executive Committees (State, Congressional, Senatorial, Delegate and County)

Any vacancy in a non-partisan office that requires a special election for the election of a candidate.

Candidates for the following offices will be nominated in the 2026 Primary Election:

- U.S. Senate
- U.S. House of Representatives
- State Senator
- House of Delegates
- County Commission/Council
- Any vacancy that requires the nomination of a candidate for special election to be held in the General Election.

General Election: An election to choose from individuals that have been officially certified as candidates on the ballot or certified as write-in candidates.

SECTION I: HOW TO RUN FOR OFFICE

Filing as a Pre-Candidate

You must file the [Pre-Candidacy Registration Form](#) with the appropriate filing officer before you start raising and spending money for candidacy. On the form you must declare a treasurer for your committee who will be responsible for your committee's financial transactions, which includes receiving, keeping, and disbursing all sums of money. The treasurer is also responsible for filing campaign finance reports according to the schedule set by law. Failing to file campaign finance reports will result in a \$10/day fine, which must be paid from the treasurer's personal funds. Candidates, except candidates for judicial office, may act as the treasurer of their committee. Judicial candidates should review and follow the Code of Judicial Conduct found at www.courtswv.gov when appointing a treasurer. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-5e)

When To File as a Pre-Candidate:

Offices with terms of four years or less: You may file as a pre-candidate beginning the day after the General Election that precedes the term of office you are seeking.

Offices with terms of more than four years: You may file no more than four years preceding the term of office you are seeking. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-5e)

Reporting Requirements

Pre-candidates and candidates with open campaign committees must report every sum of money, item or service of value received, all expenditures made, and liabilities incurred. Pre-candidates must file quarterly reports and election reports in accordance with the campaign finances reporting schedule. The report must identify all contributions and expenditures occurring after the previous report was filed, if applicable. Since all funds for the committee are the treasurer's responsibility, it is highly recommended that you choose a treasurer for your committee early in the campaign. Information about filing campaign finance reports may be found in Section III of this guide.

Designating a Treasurer

A candidate committee must have a treasurer before it accepts contributions and makes expenditures.

Pre-candidates must designate a treasurer on the Pre-Candidate Registration form. The treasurer is responsible for all financial transactions of the candidate committee. Candidates, except those for judicial office, may act as their own campaign committee treasurer. Judicial candidates must follow additional campaign finance restrictions under the Code of Judicial Conduct found at www.courtswv.gov. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-5e)

A treasurer may resign, but a new treasurer must be designated before the resignation is official. The old treasurer is responsible for the committee's finances until the new treasurer is appointed.

A change of treasurer or financial agent may be made at any time by filing the Notice of Change of Treasurer with the agency where the candidate filed pre-candidacy or candidacy.

Candidate and Treasurer Duties

Every candidate or treasurer of every political committee shall keep detailed accounts of every sum of money or other thing of value received by him or her, including all loans of money or things of value and of all expenditures and disbursements made, or liabilities incurred, by the candidate or political committee." (W. Va. Code § 3-8-5(2))

The treasurer is responsible for all funds, reporting requirements, and financial transactions of the candidate committee. The treasurer may reimburse lawful campaign expenses for the committee by agents of the committee. The treasurer may also authorize agents to accept contributions for the committee; however, the contribution must be submitted to the treasurer to determine whether it meets the requirements of law.

Record Keeping

"Except for candidates or party committeeman and committeewoman, all candidates for nomination or election to state or local offices and all persons supporting, aiding, or opposing the nomination, election, or defeat of any such candidate shall keep, for a period of two years, records of receipts and expenditures which are made for political purposes." (W. Va. Code § 3-8-5(a)(1)) Furthermore, the Secretary of State or County Clerk may conduct an audit of any sworn financial statement, and this may require the committee to present receipts. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-7(b)(5)) If any violation of West Virginia Code Article 8 is found, the committee may be held accountable for transactions for up to five years. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-5d) For this reason, the Secretary of State's Office recommends that candidates

keep receipts and records for five years. Candidates must retain records for the following transactions based on the periods above:

- Contributions of money;
- Contributions of items of value as an in-kind contribution;
- Loans received by the committee and the loan agreements;
- Amount of loans repaid by the committee;
- Expenditures;
- Bills that have yet to be paid, including payments for staff;
- Transactions related to fundraising events;
- Use of excess funds and receipts of excess funds;
- Any other financial transaction by the committee.

Creating a Committee Name

The name of your committee can be anything that is relevant to your candidacy.

Some common committee names include:

Committee to Elect _____
_____for Delegate 2026
Friends of _____

Your committee's name must be printed on campaign materials and advertisements, indicating that it was paid for by the committee.

Committee Bank Account

This office strongly recommends that your committee's bank account be separate and distinct from your personal bank account. It is against the law to use campaign money for personal benefit. Mixing personal and campaign funds may lead to criminal charges.

Running as a Recognized Political Party

There are five recognized political parties that have automatic ballot access in West Virginia:

- Constitution Party
- Democratic Party
- Libertarian Party
- Mountain Party
- Republican Party

These parties will nominate candidates for offices on the General Election ballot in the Primary Election, by convention, or by other means of selection as determined by party rules. (W. Va. Code § 3-1-8.) If you are a member of one of these parties and wish to run for office, please contact your party chairperson for information on their nomination process.

Running as a No Party Organization Candidate

(W. Va. Code § 3-5-23 and 3-5-24)

An individual may run for public office without belonging to a political party recognized in West Virginia (Constitution, Democrat, Libertarian, Mountain, and Republican). To run as a candidate with no party organization and have one's name placed on the ballot for the **General Election**, an individual must gather signatures on a nominating certificate. A candidate running with no party organization will not appear on the Primary election ballot.

Note: "No party" affiliation candidates may commonly be referred to as minor party, unaffiliated, or independent candidates.

Credentials and Nominating Certificates

The process for individuals seeking to run as no party organization candidates in the General election must follow the procedures outlined below:

1. Gain authorization to collect signatures by obtaining the Official Credentials Form from the County Clerk in each county one wishes to gather signatures; this form must be displayed to each voter canvassed or solicited;
2. Obtain the nominating certificates for gathering signatures, Candidate Nomination Petition; this form may be acquired at the time an individual obtains his or her credentials; and
3. Obtain the required number of signatures: **not less than one percent of the entire vote cast at the last preceding General election for the office being sought, but never less than twenty-five.**

Additional Requirements

- Individuals seeking an office on the ballot in more than one county must use a separate nominating petition form for each county.
- Any signature gathered must be signed by the voter in his or her own handwriting or by his or her marks duly witnessed.

- For a voter's signature to count, he or she must be a duly registered voter within the county, district, or other political division represented by the office sought.

Deadline

A candidate with no party organization must file his or her Certificate of Announcement, nominating certificates and filing fee with the appropriate office no later than **August 3, 2026**.

Running as a Write-In Candidate

(W. Va. Code § 3-6-4a)

An individual may file as an official write-in candidate for offices to be elected in the Primary (executive committee and nonpartisan offices), General, or special election by filing the [Write-In Candidate's Certificate of Announcement](#) with the appropriate filing office. A person wanting to file as an official write-in candidate must meet the eligibility requirements for that specific office.

- Write-in candidates are not listed on the ballot; rather, a list of official write-in candidates is posted at each polling place during early voting and on Election Day.
- Only votes for official write-in candidates are counted.
- Write-in candidates are not required to pay a filing fee or collect signatures.

A candidate must file his or her Write-In Candidate's Certificate of Announcement by the deadlines listed below:

- **Primary Election** write-in candidate deadline for non-partisan candidates: **March 24, 2026**.
- Eligible citizens may file as an official write-in candidate in the Primary Election for the following non-partisan offices: Judicial races, Greater Huntington Parks and Recreation, Board of Education, Conservation District Supervisor, and Executive Committee (State, County and District).
- **General Election** write-in candidate deadline: **September 15, 2026**.

Declaring Your Candidacy

You must use the [Certificate of Announcement](#) form to declare your candidacy. The form must be signed and notarized. **Any missing information may cause the form to be rejected.**

At the time of filing your Certificate of Announcement, you must also pay the filing fee or submit equivalent documentation to meet the fee requirements. Many of the filing fees are based on the salary of the position you are seeking. If the salary of the position you seek changes, the filing fee will change accordingly.

For the 2026 election cycle, candidates must file a Certificate of Announcement during the following period: **Monday, January 12, 2026, to midnight on Saturday, January 31, 2026.**

The Certificate of Announcement cannot be accepted prior to January 12, 2026. If the form is received or postmarked before January 12, 2026, it will be returned. Filings that are mailed must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service before midnight on January 31, 2026. If you use an express shipping service (UPS, FedEx, DHL, etc.) your filing must be **received** by midnight on January 31, 2026 in the correct filing office. The dates provided by these services are not equivalent to postmarks. Check with the appropriate filing office for hours of operation on the last day of filing.

Where to File

- **Secretary of State:** candidates for Federal office, Statewide office, State Senate, House of Delegates, judicial office (excluding Magistrate), and those running for an office spanning more than one county.
- **County Clerk:** candidates for an office which is entirely within one county that are not listed as filing with the Secretary of State above, including Magistrate.
- **Municipal Recorder:** candidates for a municipal office.

If you are filing with the Secretary of State, you may pay by check, credit card, cash, or money order. If payment is by check and it is returned for insufficient funds, you will not be certified as a candidate until the filing is resubmitted with sufficient payment. Checks should be made payable to the Secretary of State's Office.

Please contact your county clerk for specific fees for county offices and the type of payment they can accept.

Important: Filing the Certificate of Announcement with the correct office is crucial. If the document is not received in the correct filing office or mailed by the deadline you will not be certified as a candidate. **Late filings cannot be accepted.**

Allowable Nicknames on the Ballot

A nickname may be used on the ballot by using quotation marks, parenthesis, or in lieu of the candidate's first name. A candidate may not use a title or position such as Dr., Rev., Sen., or Sheriff, or a common meaning of status, such as Sarge, Coach, or Doc. The length of the name on the ballot cannot be more than 25 characters. (W. Va. C.S.R. § 153-14-et. seq.)

Ballot Positioning

Candidates on the General Election ballot will be placed in order of their party's performance in the previous Presidential Election. Ballot positions shall be randomly selected for non-partisan elections or within a race that includes partial randomization of those elections that include more than one partisan nomination for any office or division. The drawing for the Primary Election will be held at 9:00 a.m. on February 24, 2026 (fourth Tuesday following the close of candidate filing) and for the General Election, at 9:00 a.m. on August 25, 2026 (seventieth day preceding the election). (W. Va. Code § § 3-5-13a and 3-6-2)

Last Day to Withdraw

(W. Va. Code § 3-5-11)

The last day to withdraw your name from the ballot and decline to run as a candidate for the office is February 17, 2026 (third Tuesday following close of candidate filing). You must file the Certificate of Withdrawal in the same filing office where you filed the Certificate of Announcement. This filing must be received in the correct filing office by the deadline. A postmark date does not apply.

Ethics Commission Personal Financial Disclosure

(W. Va. Code § 6B-2-6 and 6B-2-7)

Within **ten days** of filing the Certificate of Announcement, state candidates (not federal) must file a Candidate Financial Disclosure Statement with the West Virginia Ethics Commission. The Ethics Financial Disclosure Statement is required in addition to campaign finance filings. If this statement is not returned to the Ethics Commission, the candidate's name may not be placed on the ballot, or the candidate may not be allowed to take the oath of office. You may file or download the Candidate Financial Disclosure Statement at www.ethics.wv.gov. Political party executive committee candidates are not required to file this form.

All questions on the Candidate Financial Disclosure Statement must be answered prior to submitting the form to the Ethics Commission. These financial statements are a matter of public record and can be inspected at

the Ethics Commission Office. If there are any questions on how to complete this form, please call the Ethics Commission at (304) 558-0664 or (toll free) 1-866-558-0664. These forms are to be returned to the following address:

**WV Ethics Commission
210 Brooks St., Suite 300
Charleston, WV 25301**

SECTION II: Offices on the Ballot Eligibility Requirements

Federal Offices

Candidates for federal office must file a Certificate of Announcement with the Secretary of State's Office to be on the ballot in West Virginia. These candidates must also follow the statement of organization and campaign finance reporting regulations of the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

Information on federal candidate filing and reporting requirements can be at www.fec.gov or call the FEC at 800-424-9530 or 202-694-1100.

Salaries and filing fees are based on figures available at the time this guide was published.

U.S. SENATE

Term: 6 years

Minimum Age: 30 years

Salary: \$174,000

Residence: 9-year citizen of the U.S. and WV inhabitant when elected

Filing Fee: \$1,740

One person will be elected to the United States Senate in 2026. The term begins in January 2027.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Term: 2 years

Minimum Age: 25 years

Salary: \$174,000

Residence: 7-year citizen of the U.S. and WV inhabitant when elected

Filing Fee: \$1,740

One person will be elected from each of the Congressional Districts. The term begins in January 2027.

Congressional Districts**First**

Boone
Braxton
Cabell
Calhoun
Clay
Fayette
Gilmer
Greenbrier
Jackson
Kanawha
Lincoln
Logan
Mason
McDowell
Mercer
Mingo
Monroe
Nicholas
Pendleton
Pocahontas
Putnam
Raleigh
Roane
Summers
Wayne
Webster
Wirt
Wyoming

Second

Barbour
Berkeley
Brooke
Doddridge
Grant
Hampshire
Hancock
Hardy
Harrison
Jefferson
Lewis
Marion
Marshall
Mineral
Monongalia
Morgan
Ohio
Pleasants
Preston
Randolph
Ritchie
Taylor
Tucker
Tyler
Upshur
Wetzel
Wood

State Offices

Candidates for state office must file a Certificate of Announcement with the Secretary of State's Office to be on the ballot in West Virginia. No person, except citizens entitled to vote, shall be elected or appointed to any state office.

*Salaries and filing fees are based on figures available at the time this guide was published.

JUSTICE OF SUPREME COURT OF APPEALS (UNEXPIRED TERM)

Term: 2 years

Minimum Age: 30 years

Salary: \$149,600

Residence: Citizen of West Virginia for 5 years prior to election.

Filing Fee: \$1,496

Qualifications: Be a member in good standing with the West Virginia State Bar; admitted to practice law at least 10 years prior to election (W. Va. Const., Art. 4, § 4 and Art. 8 § 7)

JUDGE OF THE INTERMEDIATE COURT OF APPEALS

Term: 10 years

Minimum Age: 30 years

Salary: \$142,500

Residence: Citizen of West Virginia for 5 years.

Filing Fee: \$1,425

Qualifications: Be a member in good standing with the West Virginia State Bar; admitted to practice law at least 10 years prior to election.

One position to be elected for Intermediate Court of Appeals.

STATE SENATE

Term: 4 years

Minimum Age: 25 years

Salary: \$20,000

Residence: Citizen of West Virginia for 5 years prior to election. Resident of district or county 1 year prior to election.

Filing Fee: \$200

17 of the 34 seats in the state senate will be up for election to full terms in 2026. **No candidate is eligible to file residing in a county and within the same district already represented by a seated senator.**

Senatorial Districts

Bold indicates counties that are entirely within the senate district.

<u>District</u>	<u>Counties in District</u>
1	Brooke, Hancock, Marshall, Ohio
2	Doddridge, Marion, Marshall, Monongalia, Tyler, Wetzel
3	Pleasants, Ritchie, Wirt, Wood
4	Cabell, Jackson, Mason , Putnam
5	Cabell, Wayne
6	McDowell, Mercer, Mingo , Wayne
7	Boone , Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan
8	Clay , Jackson, Kanawha, Putnam, Roane
9	Fayette, Raleigh, Wyoming
10	Fayette, Greenbrier, Monroe, Nicholas, Summers
11	Barbour, Braxton, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Randolph, Upshur, Webster
12	Calhoun, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis , Taylor
13	Marion, Monongalia
14	Grant, Hardy, Mineral, Preston , Taylor, Tucker
15	Berkeley, Hampshire, Morgan
16	Berkeley, Jefferson
17	Kanawha

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Term: 2 years

Salary: \$20,000

Filing Fee: \$100

Minimum Age: 18 years

Residence: Resident of district or county 1 year prior to election.

All 100 seats in the House of Delegates will be on the ballot in 2026. The candidate must know their correct district number before filing.

House of Delegates Districts

Bold indicates a county entirely within one district.

<u>DISTRICT #</u>	<u># ELECTED</u>	<u>COUNTIES IN DISTRICT</u>
1	1	Brooke, Hancock
2	1	Brooke, Hancock
3	1	Brooke, Ohio
4	1	Ohio
5	1	Ohio
6	1	Marshall
7	1	Marshall, Wetzel
8	1	Tyler, Wetzel, Doddridge
9	1	Pleasants, Ritchie, Tyler
10	1	Wood
11	1	Wood
12	1	Wood
13	1	Wood
14	1	Wirt, Wood
15	1	Roane, Wirt
16	1	Jackson
17	1	Jackson Mason
18	1	Mason, Putnam
19	1	Putnam
20	1	Putnam
21	1	Putnam
22	1	Cabell
23	1	Cabell
24	1	Cabell
25	1	Cabell
26	1	Cabell
27	1	Cabell, Wayne
28	1	Wayne
29	1	Mingo, Wayne
30	1	Lincoln

31	1	Boone, Lincoln, Logan
32	1	Boone
33	1	Logan
34	1	Mingo, McDowell
35	1	Wyoming
36	1	McDowell
37	1	Mercer
38	1	Mercer
39	1	Mercer
40	1	Monroe, Summers
41	1	Summers, Raleigh, Mercer
42	1	Raleigh
43	1	Raleigh, Wyoming
44	1	Raleigh
45	1	Raleigh, Fayette
46	1	Greenbrier, Pocahontas
47	1	Greenbrier, Monroe
48	1	Nicholas, Greenbrier, Webster
49	1	Nicholas
50	1	Fayette
51	1	Fayette
52	1	Fayette, Kanawha
53	1	Kanawha
54	1	Kanawha
55	1	Kanawha
56	1	Kanawha
57	1	Kanawha
58	1	Kanawha
59	1	Kanawha
60	1	Kanawha
61	1	Kanawha
62	1	Calhoun, Clay, Gilmer
63	1	Braxton, Gilmer
64	1	Lewis, Upshur
65	1	Upshur
66	1	Pocahontas, Randolph
67	1	Pendleton, Randolph
68	1	Barbour, Upshur
69	1	Harrison, Lewis
70	1	Harrison
71	1	Harrison
72	1	Harrison, Wetzel
73	1	Marion, Taylor

74	1	Marion
75	1	Marion
76	1	Marion
77	1	Monongalia, Wetzel
78	1	Monongalia
79	1	Monongalia
80	1	Monongalia
81	1	Monongalia
82	1	Monongalia
83	1	Preston
84	1	Preston
85	1	Grant, Tucker
86	1	Hardy , Pendleton
87	1	Mineral
88	1	Hampshire, Mineral
89	1	Hampshire, Morgan
90	1	Berkeley, Morgan
91	1	Berkeley
92	1	Berkeley
93	1	Berkeley
94	1	Berkeley
95	1	Berkeley
96	1	Berkeley
97	1	Berkeley, Jefferson
98	1	Jefferson
99	1	Jefferson
100	1	Jefferson

GREATER HUNTINGTON PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT SUPERVISORS

Term: 6 years

Minimum Age: 18 years

Salary: No Salary

Residence: Must reside in the district in which they are elected.

Filing Fee: \$10

District 1 – 1 seat: 1 Full Term (6 years)

District 2 – 1 seat: 1 Full Term (6 years)

District 3 – 1 seat: 1 Full Term (6 years)

County Offices

All candidates for county office must file with their respective county clerk. The filing fee for county offices is one percent of the annual salary, except for the Greater Huntington Park and Recreation District. Because county classification is used to determine salary, please contact your county clerk for the filing fee.

All candidates for county office must be qualified voters and some offices have additional qualifications. For more information, you may contact the West Virginia Association of Counties at (304) 346-0591.

COUNTY COMMISSION

Term: 6 years

Minimum Age: 18 years

Salary: Based on County Classification (W. Va. Code § 7-7-4)

Residence: Resident of open magisterial district.

Filing Fee: One percent of the annual salary. Contact the County Clerk for filing fee.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Term: 4 years

Minimum Age: 18 years

Compensation: See W. Va. Code § 18-5-4

Residence: Resident of open magisterial district.

Filing Fee: \$25

Qualification: High School diploma or GED; Training required prior to taking office.

Each of the 55 county school systems is governed by a five-member nonpartisan board of education. No more than two members may be elected or serve from the same magisterial district. The residence of board members continuing in office after July 1, 2024 will determine which magisterial districts have openings in the 2026 Primary Election. New terms begin July 1, 2026.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

Term: 4 years

Minimum Age: N/A

Salary: No Salary

Filing Fee: \$10

Qualifications: Landowner in district; education or experience in conservation.

All registered voters in each county in a district shall elect at least one nonpartisan supervisor in the Primary Election who shall hold office for a term of four years and until his or her successor is elected and qualified: Provided, That any county with a population of 100,000 based on the most recent decennial census shall elect one additional supervisor and any county with a population over 100,000 based on the most recent decennial census shall elect one additional supervisor for each 50,000 residents over 100,000. Candidates for supervisor only run for the office in the county in which they reside. For any questions regarding this position, contact the West Virginia Conservation Agency at (304) 558-2204 or www.wvca.us.

COUNTY CLERK PHONE NUMBERS

BARBOUR	304-457-2232	KANAWHA	304-357-0130	PRESTON	304-329-0070
BERKELEY	304-264-1989	LEWIS	304-269-8215	PUTNAM	304-586-0202
BOONE	304-369-7330	LINCOLN	304-824-3336	RALEIGH	304-252-8681
BRAXTON	304-765-2833	LOGAN	304-792-8600	RANDOLPH	304-636-0543
BROOKE	304-737-3661	MARION	304-367-5445	RITCHIE	304-643-2164
CABELL	304-526-8625	MARSHALL	304-845-1220	ROANE	304-927-2860
CALHOUN	304-354-6725	MASON	304-675-1997	SUMMERS	304-466-7104
CLAY	304-587-4259	MCDOWELL	304-436-8544	TAYLOR	304-265-1401
DODDRIDGE	304-873-2631	MERCER	304-487-8338	TUCKER	304-478-2414
FAYETTE	304-574-4225	MINERAL	304-788-3924	TYLER	304-758-2102
GILMER	304-462-7641	MINGO	304-235-0330	UPSHUR	304-472-1068
GRANT	304-257-4550	MONONGALIA	304-291-7230	WAYNE	304-272-6362
GREENBRIER	304-647-6602	MONROE	304-772-3096	WEBSTER	304-847-2508
HAMPSHIRE	304-822-5112	MORGAN	304-258-8547	WETZEL	304-455-8224
HANCOCK	304-564-3311	NICHOLAS	304-872-7820	WIRT	304-275-4271
HARDY	304-530-0250	OHIO	304-234-3750	WOOD	304-424-1860
HARRISON	304-624-8613	PENDLETON	304-358-2505	WYOMING	304-732-8000
JACKSON	304-373-2250	PLEASANTS	304-684-3542		
JEFFERSON	304-728-3386	POCAHONTAS	304-799-4549		

PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

Executive Committee members are selected in the Primary election to four-year terms. Candidates for State Executive Committees will file with the Secretary of State, except for candidates in Senate District 17. Candidates for District and County Executive Committee positions will file with the County Clerk.

When electing executive committee members, the two candidates with the highest votes shall be elected first and the other candidates shall be qualified based on vote tallies, gender and county of residence.

A current listing of all executive committee members shall be filed with the Secretary of State by the end of July each year. Any appointments to fill vacancies on an executive committee do not take effect if the updated list of committee members has not been submitted to the Secretary of State within 10 days of the appointment.

STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Term: 4 years

Minimum Age: N/A

Salary: No Salary

Filing Fee: \$20

- **Districts:** Members will be elected from Senate Districts.
- **District Members:** Two (2) men and two (2) women are selected from each Senate District.
- **No more than two committee members can be elected from the same county.**

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES (Congressional, Senate and Delegate)

Term: 4 years

Minimum Age: N/A

Salary: No Salary

Filing Fee: \$5

- **Districts:** Members will be elected from each county in a multi-county district.
- **District Members:** One (1) man and one (1) woman from each county in the district.
- **Does not apply to single-county senate or delegate districts.**

COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Term: 4 years

Minimum Age: N/A

Salary: No Salary

Filing Fee: \$10

- **Districts:** Members will be elected from Magisterial or Executive Committee Districts.
- **District Members:** If there are three (3) districts in the county, then two (2) men and (2) women will be elected from each district. If there are more than three (3) districts, then one (1) man and (1) woman will be elected from each district.

Unexpired Terms

If a vacancy occurs due to retirement, resignation, disqualification or removal, an election may be required to complete the term. The candidate

wishing to run for an unexpired term must file a Certificate of Announcement and specify it is for the unexpired term with the correct filing office. The Certificate of Announcement must be filed during the filing period for full terms and the candidate must pay the required fee for that office unless a special filing period has been proclaimed. Please check with the appropriate filing office for possible unexpired terms that may be on the ballot in 2026.

Municipal Elections

(W. Va. Code - Chapter 8)

Any part of a county or counties may be incorporated as a city, depending upon the population, either as a Class I, Class II or Class III city, or a Class IV town or village. Municipalities generally elect a mayor, municipal recorder or clerk, and councilmen. Together they form the governing body of the municipality. The municipality normally frames and adopts a city charter; providing a method and time for filing of certificates of candidacy, nominating candidates, conducting Primary and regular municipal elections, and determining and certifying the results of elections. If a charter does not provide procedures for the administration of elections, municipalities must follow the West Virginia State Code.

Since each municipality may have different filing dates and procedures for candidacy and campaign finance reporting than those contained in this guide for county and statewide offices, you should contact your municipal clerk/recorder for information regarding specific requirements in your city.

Filing as a Pre-Candidate in Municipality

Any candidate who wishes to raise money for his/her campaign before the official candidate filing period must first file a Pre-Candidacy Registration Form with the municipal clerk/recorder.

Filing The Municipal Certificate of Announcement

The Municipal Candidate's Certificate of Announcement and Municipal Write-In Candidate's Certificate of Announcement must be filed with the municipal recorder/clerk within the appropriate filing periods.

Candidate Requirements

Unless otherwise provided by charter provision or ordinance, the mayor, recorder, and councilmen must be residents of the municipality and must be qualified voters entitled to vote for members of its governing body. (W. Va. Code § 8-5-7)

Campaign Finance

Anyone who files a Pre-Candidacy Registration Form and/or a Candidate's Certificate of Announcement is required to file Campaign Finance Reports. All

funds received must be reported by the name of the contributor and the amount received, no matter how small. Contact your municipal clerk/recorder for specific reporting dates and deadlines.

SECTION III: MANAGING CAMPAIGN FINANCES

The information in this section is from the West Virginia Secretary of State's Campaign Finance Guide found at sos.wv.gov/elections.

Filing Campaign Finance Reports

All candidates and pre-candidates with open campaign committees, except candidates for executive committee, must file detailed, itemized sworn financial statements during the reporting periods set by W. Va. Code § 3-8-5. Such statements are popularly referred to as campaign finance reports.

Who must file campaign finance reports?

- Pre-candidates for future offices;
- All existing candidate committees;
- Candidate committees from previous election cycles with excess funds;
- Political action committees;
- Political party executive committees;
- Caucus campaign committees; and
- Inaugural committees.

What must be reported?

- Monetary contributions (money);
- In-kind contributions (non-cash contributions of value);
- Loans received;
- Expenditures;
- Unpaid bills;
- Transactions due to a fund-raising event;
- All other income (returned checks or contributions, interest on bank accounts, etc.); and
- Uses of excess funds.

Reporting Periods

- The reporting period during the election cycle to which the financial report applies must be indicated: 1st Quarter, 2nd Quarter, 3rd Quarter, 4th Quarter, Primary, or General.
- Each election cycle reporting period covers a certain time span during the election cycle for which candidates and committees must report financial transactions.
- These reports are to be filed in succession of one another.

Additional Report Types

- **Primary Report:** Filed between the 15th day and the 11th day prior to the Primary Election, (if applicable).
- **General Report:** Filed between the 15th day and 11th day prior to the General Election.
- **Amended Report:** Filed to replace a previously submitted report to correct or update information. Both the amended report box and the reporting period that will be amended must be clearly marked.
- **Final Report:** Filed to close your account. The final report box must be marked. If the report is submitted during a required reporting period, the reporting period must also be marked. The committee's ending balance must be zero if filing a final report. A Statement of Dissolution must also be filed with the filing officer.
- Paper filers: if the report is submitted during a required reporting period, the box for the reporting period must also be checked.

2026 Campaign Finance Reporting Calendar

The calendar below shows upcoming campaign finance reports, the period each report covers, and the period in which the candidate or treasurer must file each report.

<u>REPORT</u>	<u>TRANSACTION DATES</u>	<u>FILING DATES</u>
2025 2nd Quarter Report	April 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025	July 1, 2025 – July 7, 2025
2025 3rd Quarter Report	July 1, 2025 – September 30, 2025	October 1, 2025 – October 7, 2025
2025 4th Quarter Report	October 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025	January 1, 2026 – January 7, 2026
2026 1st Quarter Report	January 1, 2026 – March 31, 2026	April 1, 2026 – April 7, 2026
2026 Primary Report	April 1, 2026 – April 26, 2026	April 27, 2026 – May 1, 2026
2026 2nd Quarter Report	April 27, 2026 – June 30, 2026	July 1, 2026 – July 7, 2026
2026 3rd Quarter Report	July 1, 2026 – September 30, 2026	October 1, 2026 – October 7, 2026
2026 General Report	October 1, 2026 – October 18, 2026	October 19, 2026 – October 23, 2026
2026 4th Quarter Report	October 19, 2026 – December 31, 2026	January 1, 2027 – January 7, 2027

Filing deadlines falling on Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays are to be extended to the following day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday. (W. Va. Code § 2-2-1(15)(e)).

Penalties for Late and Unfiled Reports

- Failure to file a financial statement is a misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail, a fine of \$500, or both, at the discretion of the court. This penalty also applies to “grossly incomplete or inaccurate” financial statements.
- Committees that fail to file their financial statements on time “shall be assessed a civil penalty by the Secretary of State of \$10 a day for each day after the due date the statement is delinquent, grossly incomplete, or grossly inaccurate.” If a committee files late or grossly inaccurate campaign finance reports, the committee will be contacted by a

member of the Elections Division with instructions for proper resolution.

- The Secretary of State shall publish an online list of all persons who file financial statements after the deadline.
- Candidates who have not filed the required campaign finance reports for the Primary Election will not be placed on the General ballot.
- Candidates that have not filed the required financial reports for the General Election cannot assume the duties of their office until all required reports are properly filed.
- West Virginia law allows the Secretary of State, county clerk, or the municipal recorder to review or audit financial reports to ensure compliance with campaign finance laws. They submit the names of individuals who have failed to file financial statements, or have filed incomplete or inaccurate financial statements, to the county prosecuting attorney for action. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-7)

Candidate Committee Election Cycles

There are two contribution periods for a candidate committee within the election year. A contribution to a candidate committee is considered in connection with the Primary election if it is received on or before Primary Election Day. A contribution given after the Primary election period can be considered in connection with the Primary Election if, with the consent of the contributor, it is clearly marked on the financial statement as a contribution for the previous contribution period. In this case, the funds may only be used to repay unpaid bills, loans, or debts incurred during that contribution period.

A contribution is considered in connection with the General election if it is received after the day of the Primary Election and until the committee has paid all its financial obligations after the General election. A candidate may accept a General Election contribution prior to the Primary Election if the contribution is clearly identified to be for the General by the contributor. Such contribution cannot be expended until after being nominated at the Primary Election.

How to File Campaign Finance Reports

State Candidates and Committees

Financial Reports for the following committees must be filed electronically thorough the **Campaign Finance Reporting System (CFRS)**:

- Governor
- Secretary of State

- Attorney General
- State Auditor
- State Treasurer
- Commissioner of Agriculture
- Supreme Court Judge of Appeals
- Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals
- Circuit Court Judge
- Family Court Judge
- Greater Huntington Parks and Recreation
- Political Action Committees (PACs)
- State Political Party/Caucus Campaign Committees
- Independent Expenditure/Electioneering Communication Committees

If by no fault of their own a candidate or committee is unable to file the campaign financial statement, they shall file said statement in person, via facsimile, or other electronic means of transmission.

Committees required to file electronically may apply to the State Election Commission for an exemption of electronic filing in the case of hardship. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-5b)

County and Municipal Candidates

Candidates for county and municipal elections must file their reports by paper using the **Short or Long Campaign Financial Statement**.

The **Short Form Campaign Financial Statement** is designed to accommodate committees that do not have transactions beyond simple contributions and expenditures; it does not cover any other reporting requirements, such as loans and in-kind contributions, which are required by W. Va. Code § 3-8-5a.

The **Long Form Campaign Financial Statement** includes sections with all types of financial activities that must be reported under W. Va. Code § 3-8-5a. If a committee answers, "Yes," to any of the following questions, a **Long Form** must be used:

- Has your committee received any loans?
- Has your committee held any fundraisers?
- Has your committee received any miscellaneous receipts, such as refunds or checking account interest?
- Does your committee have any unpaid bills or loans?
- Have you or anyone else made an in-kind contribution to your campaign?
- Has your committee given or received a transfer of excess campaign funds?

- Has your PAC made any Independent Expenditures within this reporting period?

Both the short and long finance forms require both the candidate or committee name and the treasurer's contact information. The candidate, agent, or treasurer must also sign the oath or affirmation at the end of the form.

Late, Incomplete, or Inaccurate Statements

Incomplete or inaccurate reports may be returned to the committee. If your report is returned to you, you may be at risk of missing the deadline.

Common Mistakes

- Committee name and election year are not accurate.
- Wrong reporting period box marked.
- Contributions and expenditures not for the indicated reporting period.
- Final Report indicated with an ending balance, unpaid bills, or loans.
- Oath or Affirmation not signed or not signed by appropriate person.

Amending Reports

If a mistake is discovered, a report already submitted by the committee may be altered to reflect the accurate financial activity. An amended report may be submitted at any time and with no penalty. If an amended report is submitted, it must include the same information as the previously submitted report with the errors corrected. All financial transactions for the reporting period must be included in the amended report, not just the portion that has been changed by the amendment.

Contributions

"Contribution means a gift, subscription, loan, assessment, payment for services, dues, advance, donation, pledge, contract, agreement, forbearance, promise of money, or other tangible thing of value, whether conditional or legally enforceable, or a transfer of money or other tangible thing of value to a person, made for the purpose of influencing the nomination, election, or defeat of a candidate." (W. Va. Code § 3-8-1a(9)). Remember to get all the information required for your campaign finance report from your contributors at the time they make their donation.

Candidate Contribution Limits

A candidate committee may accept up to **\$2,800 per Primary Election** and **\$2,800 per General Election** from an individual. They may also accept up to **\$2,800 per Primary Election** and **\$2,800 per General Election** from a political party committee. A candidate committee may accept up to **\$2,800**

per Primary Election and \$2,800 per General Election from a candidate committee from a past election that has excess funds. All items of value (cash and in-kind contributions) given to a committee are counted toward this limitation of \$2,800. Contributions for the General Election may be accepted during the Primary Election Cycle if the contributor clearly indicates the contribution is to be accepted for the General Election and that the funds may not be spent until after the nomination of the candidate. If the candidate does not win nomination in the Primary Election, the committee must return the General Election contribution to the donor. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-5c.).

There is no limit on the amount a candidate may contribute to his or her own campaign committee. If the candidate seeks reimbursement, he or she must first file a loan agreement with the appropriate filing officer. A candidate committee may also receive loans from financial institutions and from the candidate's spouse. Candidate reimbursement for appropriate expenses related to the campaign from the campaign is allowed; However, "personal use" of campaign funds is prohibited.

Prohibited Contributions to Candidate Committees

It is unlawful for the committee to accept any contributed funds which exceed the contribution limit. Excess contributions must be returned to the contributor.

- Candidate committees may not receive money from an Independent Expenditure PAC.
- Candidate committees may not solicit, accept, or receive money from a foreign national (W. Va. Code § 3-8-5g(b)).
- A candidate committee may not accept contributions from an active candidate committee that is campaigning for an upcoming election.

Persons Entering into State Contract

...[N]o person entering into any contract with the state or its subdivisions, or any department or agency of the state, either for rendition of personal services or furnishing any material, supplies or equipment or selling any land or building to the state, or its subdivisions, or any department or agency of the state, if payment for the performance of the contract or payment for the material, supplies, equipment, land or building is to be made, in whole or in part, from public funds may not, during the period of negotiation for or performance under the contract or furnishing of materials, supplies, equipment, land or buildings, directly or indirectly, make any contribution to any political party, committee or candidate for public office or to any person

for political purposes or use; nor may any person or firm solicit any contributions for any purpose during any period. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-12(d)).

Solicitation of Funds or Support from State, County or Municipal Employees

Soliciting funds from a state employee or an employee of a political subdivision of the state is not allowed. However, if a mass solicitation is done, it should include a disclaimer such as "Please disregard if you are a public employee" to prevent you from violating this provision. (W. Va. C.S.R. § 146-3-10.7)

Asking for money, support, or votes is not permitted, nor is the delivery of written communications to the workplace of state, county, or municipal employees. The disclaimer mentioned above does not legally excuse the act of knowingly delivering communications to a workplace or government email account. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-12(c))

Political Action Committee Contribution Limits

The contribution amounts that an individual may give to a political action committee are limited to \$5,000, allowing **\$5,000 per Primary** and **\$5,000 per General election**.

Political Party Committee Contribution Limits

A person, except candidate committees and caucus campaign committees, may make contributions up to **\$10,000** in any calendar year to a state party executive committee, or any subsidiary, branch, or local unit thereof, or a caucus campaign committee.

A state candidate or caucus campaign committees may make contributions up to **\$75,000** to their affiliated state party executive committees, or any subsidiary, branch, or local unit thereof or caucus campaign committee. These contributions may not be earmarked or designated to be used in support or opposition of a particular candidate, per W. Va. Code § 3-8-5c(b).

Loans

A candidate, spouse of a candidate or a lending institution may give a loan to the candidate's committee. There is no limit as to how much a candidate can loan to their campaign. When a candidate committee takes a loan, even if it is from the candidate, a loan agreement must be included with the next report due. The loan agreement must state the date, amount, interest amount (if any), description of collateral, and full names and addresses of all persons involved in the loan.

A loan by the candidate to his or her committee may be forgiven. Loans from a spouse or lending institution may not be forgiven. If a loan is to be

forgiven by a candidate to the committee, the loan should then be considered as a contribution from the candidate to the candidate's committee. To report the forgiving of a loan, the amount of the loan will be reported as a contribution to the committee from the candidate and the loan will be paid for, indicating that the committee no longer carries the liability.

Paper filers: If a loan is taken for a candidate's committee, the information required on the loans page of the Long Form Campaign Financial Statement must be completed, and a copy of the loan agreement must be included with the same financial statement. The following information must be reported on outstanding loans:

- The name and address of the bank, candidate, or candidate's spouse making the loan;
- The balance of the loan carried from the previous report;
- The amount of all new loans received during this period;
- Repayments made during the reporting period;
- The outstanding balance at the end of the reporting period for each loan listed.

Reporting For Advertising Agencies

When lump sum payments are made to an advertising firm or campaign management firm that will disburse the money on behalf of a committee, the advertising agency must also file a campaign finance report under the same expenditure guidelines as your own committee. All disbursements of funds must be disclosed and tracked to its final recipient and are subject to West Virginia campaign finance law outlined in W. Va. C.S.R. § 146-3.

Anonymous Contributions

Anonymous contributions are illegal to accept. Activities such as passing the hat to bring in contributions are not permissible. All contributions must be identified with the full name of the person or group of people that made the contribution. If the identification of the donor of a contribution cannot be determined, the contribution must be given to the General Revenue Fund of the State. The only exception is for executive committees that are holding an event; please review this exemption in W. Va. Code § 3-8-5a. If an anonymous contribution is in the possession of a committee, you must send an amount equal to the anonymous contribution to the following address:

**WV Secretary of State's Office
Elections Division
State Capitol Building 1, Suite 157-K
Charleston, WV 25305**

Reporting Contributions of \$250 or Less

For each contribution of \$250 or less, the committee must include (1) the full name of the individual, association, or committee donating; (2) the amount of the contribution; and (3) the date the contribution was made.

Reporting Contributions of Over \$250

Once contributions from an individual, association, or committee reach an accumulated total of more than \$250 during an election cycle, the committee must collect and record the following information:

The full name of the individual, association, or committee donating;

- Residential and mailing addresses;
- Amount of contribution; and
- The date the contribution was made.

Individual contributors only:

- Occupation (e.g., attorney, doctor, homemaker, retired);
- Employer (this is the contributor's primary employer; if self-employed it should be noted; if homemaker or retired, "not applicable" may be used)

Political committees only:

- Political affiliation of the committee (or if the donation comes from a business-affiliated PAC, the business that the PAC is sponsored by)

In-Kind Contributions

An **In-kind** contribution is a donation of goods or services used toward the campaign. The amount of an in-kind contribution should be reported at the fair market value of the goods received or services rendered and are subject to the contribution limits of the individual giving the contribution. The committee should include the full name of the contributor, date of the transaction, description of the contribution, and the value. If the value of the contribution is over \$250, additional contributor information is required: address, occupation and employer if it is an individual, and affiliation if it is a PAC.

Cash Contributions

The maximum cash contribution a committee may receive from a contributor is \$50. The name of the contributor and date of contribution must be recorded. All contributions over \$50 must be by means other than cash. Cash contributions over the amount of \$50 must be returned to the contributor.

Other Income

Income that does not fit the definition of a contribution, such as interest on a bank account, refunds, or the sale of equipment. Information required for the other income category includes the date of the receipt, source of the

income, the type of receipt (brief description), and the amount of the transaction.

Raffles

Although raffles are a common way for a charitable organization to raise money, candidate committees and political action committees are prohibited from holding a raffle by West Virginia Code § 47-21-2. Political Party Executive Committees are the only political organizations that can hold a raffle after obtaining a license. To organize a raffle the group must have a license from the West Virginia Tax Department.

Anonymous Contributions

“Passing the hat” at a meet-the-candidate dinner or other type of fundraiser is used to bring in contributions anonymously. All contributions must be identified with the full name of the person or group who gave the donation. If the identification of the donor of a contribution cannot be determined, the donation must be turned over to the State of West Virginia General Fund. Send an amount equal to the anonymous contribution to the West Virginia Secretary of State’s Office. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-5a(j))

Expenditures

Itemized, detailed accounts of all expenditures, disbursements made, and liabilities incurred must be reported.

Money spent out-of-pocket on an election must be reported as a contribution and expenditure. If money is spent on behalf of a candidate, and is not reimbursed by the committee, it must be reported as an in-kind contribution.

All expenditures must be made at a rate and an amount which is “proper and reasonable” to the services purchased.

An expenditure made is to be reported on the date on which the check is written or the date when the transfer of funds takes place.

Spending Money

No money may be spent from committee funds unless it is allowed by W. Va. Code § 3-8-9 or W. Va. C.S.R. § 146-3-6. If the expense is not on the list, then it is not allowed. This is to ensure that the funds are spent on electioneering purposes only.

Required information for all expenditures:

- The name of the person or business to which the expenditure was given;

- The address of the person or business to which the expenditure was given;
- The date of the transaction;
- The purpose of the transaction; and
- The amount of the expenditure.

Allowable Expenditures

A candidate or political committee may make expenditures only for the following purposes:

- Office expenses, overhead costs for headquarters, and for costs related to postage.
- Candidates who do not have headquarters may purchase or rent filing cabinets, other office equipment and furnishings, computers, computer hardware and software, scanners, typewriters, calculators, audio visual equipment.
- Paid legitimate advertisements for the promotion of the candidate on the ballot.
- Costs related to public meetings and political conventions such as food, drink, and entertainment.
- Travel and hotel for campaign-related purposes.
- Costs incurred with petitions for nomination of candidates.
- Lists of registered voters, investigating an individual's right to vote and conducting proceedings to prevent unlawful registration or voting.
- Taking voters to the polls.
- Securing publication in newspapers, radio, and television broadcasting of information that is relevant to an election.
- Conducting a public opinion poll or polls.
- Legitimate advertising agency services.
- The purchase of memorials, flowers or citations by political party executive committees or political action committees representing a political party.
- The purchase of nominal, noncash expressions of appreciation following the close of the polls of an election or within thirty days thereafter.
- The payment of dues or subscriptions to any national, state, local, or legislative caucus committee of any political party.
- To employ persons to perform functions enumerated in W. Va. Code § 3-8-9, either on a full-time, part-time, or temporary basis.
- Transfers to any national, state, or local committee of any political party when that committee is acting as a vendor.
- Legal and accounting services.
- Food and drink for campaign-related purposes.
- Required filing fees associated with the campaign.

- Contributions to a county party executive committee, state party executive committee, or caucus campaign committee.
- Payment for any required filing fees.
- For expenses related to caregiving services.

Prohibited Expenditures by Candidate Committees

The payment of any fees or fines assessed against the candidate or the candidate's committee is prohibited. When campaign finance reports are filed late, it is the responsibility of the treasurer to pay the fee with their personal funds.

Active candidate committees may not give money to other candidates, political action committees, or federal committees. Before the election, active candidate committees cannot give donations to other candidate committees. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-9)

Fund-Raising Events

As defined by the Election Code, a fund-raising event is "an event such as a dinner, reception, testimonial, cocktail party, auction or similar affair through which contributions are solicited or received. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-1a(20).)

A committee may pay for food, drink and entertainment costs that are incurred in holding a fund-raising event. The committee must be careful in determining the methodology of the fund-raising event to be certain that personal gifts are not given to attendees from committee funds. Fund-raising transactions are reported separately from other transactions. The total amount raised, after expenses, is reported as the net receipt of funds for each event. (W. Va. Code § 3-8-5a.)

Committees may engage in joint fundraising agreements with other political committees, including those committees registered with the FEC, when organized in advance. W. Va. Code § 3-8-9c requires joint fundraising agreements that identify the political committees involved and define terms of fund allocation. All joint fundraising agreements must be in writing and filed with the Secretary of State.

Fund-Raising Event: All contributions received at a fundraising event must only be reported on the fund-raising events page of the campaign financial statement. Committees must report contributor information under the same requirements for reporting contributions as outlined above.

Joint Fund-Raising: Committees may host joint fund-raising events pursuant to a written agreement stating the terms of allocation of funds and the committees involved.

Total Monetary Contributions: Total money received (cash or check) in connection with this fund-raising event.

Total Expenditures: All committee funds spent in relation to the fund-raising event. These expenditures are to be listed on the itemized expenditures page of the campaign financial statement.

Net Receipts: The total amount of funds accumulated in relation to the fund-raising minus all committee expenses.

In-Kind Contribution: A donation of goods or services used toward the fund-raising event that can be assigned a monetary value. In-kind contributions must be itemized in the in-kind contributions section of the campaign financial statement.

Unpaid Bills

All liabilities incurred by a committee must be reported. This includes all bills or promises of payment that have been left unpaid at the end of the reporting period. A listing of unpaid bills will ensure that the committee never has a negative ending cash balance. The transaction date of an unpaid bill will be the date that the vendor provides a bill for payment.

After a candidate withdraws from an election, loses in a Primary, loses in a General election or wins the election, the funds in possession of the committee that amount to more than the liabilities incurred for the election are considered **Excess Campaign Funds**. No person may receive or utilize excess campaign assets for personal economic gain. (W. Va. C.S.R. § 146-3-7)

Political Advertisement Disclaimer

All political advertisements and materials must have a disclaimer on them identifying who the advertisement was paid for by or on behalf of. When putting a disclaimer on the advertisement you must state the name of the person or committee authorizing its publication.

Code of Fair Campaign Practices

(W. Va. Code § 3-1B-5)

At the time of filing for office, you will have an opportunity to subscribe to the Code of Fair Campaign Practices. The code is a voluntary pledge to adhere to a few guidelines which will create an atmosphere of campaigning that is constructive, ethical, and good-natured. The code has been in existence since 1995.

Highlights of the Code Include:

- A pledge to adhere to campaign spending limitations
- To conduct your campaign openly and publicly
- To condemn false advertising or communications which are not fact
- To not coerce individuals under your authority to give contributions or election help
- To defend and uphold the right of every qualified voter to full and equal participation in the electoral process

Voluntary Contribution Limitations

	<u>PRIMARY</u>	<u>GENERAL</u>
Constitutional Officer	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000
Supreme Court	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000
State Senate	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
House of Delegates	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000

Contributions which do not exceed the limits designated for the Primary election may not be added to the limits for the General election.

Voluntary Subscription to the Code

To subscribe to and to adhere to the Code of Fair Campaign Practices is voluntary. In no event may any person be required to adhere to or endorse the code.

In the event that an opponent to a subscribing candidate of the Code of Fair Campaign Practices exceeds the campaign spending limitations, the candidate who has subscribed to the code who has not exceeded the spending limitations shall be automatically released from the portion of the code establishing the campaign spending limitations.

How to Terminate a Candidate Committee

A committee may file a **Final Report** and terminate any time, provided that the committee has no outstanding loans, no unpaid bills, and an ending balance of zero.

A Final Report must include all activity up to the date of the report being filed.

Once a Final Report is filed the committee may not raise or spend any funds. A new candidate committee must be created for every election cycle in which a candidate is running for office.

The committee's reporting obligation ends only when the final report and termination has been accepted.

Independent Expenditures

Any paid advertisement that is done without the "consultation or coordination" of a candidate or a candidate's committee is considered an independent expenditure. A disclaimer must be present on all independent expenditures stating, "Paid for by (committee or individual's name)" and that the advertisement "is not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee."

There is no limit on the amount of funds that can be spent on Independent Expenditures. However, there is an additional reporting requirement for these expenditures. Any individual or organization making independent expenditures must follow the reporting dates set by West Virginia Code § 3-8-5.

Any individual, PAC, corporation, or executive committee may make an "independent expenditure" in attempt to influence the election or defeat of a candidate for office. This expenditure must be made without the consultation or coordination of the candidate or candidate's committee to be considered independent. If the expenditure is made in consultation or coordination with the candidate or candidate's committee, the expenditure will be considered an in-kind contribution to the candidate's committee and will be limited to the \$2,800 contribution limits.

In addition to reports due during regular reporting periods, any individual or organization must file additional reports when making a:

- \$1,000 single time/aggregate expenditure made within a calendar year,
- \$500 or more expenditure for any county office or single county judicial candidate within 15 days and before 12 hours of an election,
- \$5,000 or more expenditure for any statewide, legislative, or multi-county judicial candidate within 15 days and before 12 hours of an election, or
- \$10,000 or more anytime expenditure.

All independent expenditures must have a “clear and conspicuous public notice” identifying the person who paid for the expenditure and that it had not been authorized by any candidate or candidate’s committee.

Coordinated Expenditures

Any communication that results from a political expenditure and is made in coordination with a state committee of a political party and caucus campaign committee must contain a disclaimer that clearly identifies that the expenditure is coordinated with the candidate or candidate’s committee with whom it was coordinated.

Electioneering Communications

Any communication defined as electioneering communications must have a disclaimer clearly stating, “Paid for by (committee name)”. If the Electioneering Communication is an Independent Expenditure, the communication must also include that “it is not authorized by any candidate or candidate’s committee.” If the communication is made for television, it must be spoken clearly and appear on the screen at the end of the advertisement.

All independent expenditures and electioneering communications reports may be viewed on the Secretary of State’s campaign finance page at cfrs.wvsos.gov.

Resources

Government Agencies

Elections Division WV Secretary of State State Capitol Building 157-K Charleston, WV 25305 (304) 558-6000 (866) 767-8683 elections@wvsos.gov www.wvsos.gov	Information on state election laws/regulations, candidate filing, campaign finance reporting requirements, forms, official election returns for statewide elections, and voter registration information.
West Virginia Ethics Commission 210 Brooks Street, Suite 300 Charleston, WV 25301 (304) 558-0664 (866) 558-0664 ethics@wv.gov www.ethics.wv.gov	Forms and information on filing personal financial disclosures and questions regarding conflicts of interest between outside employment and public office.
Federal Election Commission (FEC) 1050 First Street, NE Washington, DC 20463 (800) 424-9530, menu option 6 info@fec.gov www.fec.gov	Administers and enforces federal campaign finance law. The FEC has jurisdiction over the financing of campaigns for the U.S. House, Senate, Presidency, and the Vice Presidency.
State Election Commission (SEC) C/o WV Secretary of State State Capitol Building 157-K Charleston, WV 25305 elections@wvsos.gov www.wvsos.gov	Voter system certification, filling vacancy on General election ballot when candidate withdraws for extenuating circumstances, and campaign finance issues.
U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) 633 3rd Street NW, Suite 200 Washington, DC 20001 (866) 747-1471 www.eac.gov	Serves as a national clearinghouse for information and reviews procedures for federal elections.

WV State Law Library Building 1, Room E-404 1900 Kanawha Blvd Charleston, WV 25305 (304) 558-2607 www.courtswv.gov	Provides research and reference services to the public, including how to access resources related to a particular legal issue. Librarians are not allowed to answer legal questions.
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Recognized Political Parties

West Virginia Constitution Party PO Box 321 Weston, WV 26452 (304) 591-7076 chairman@cpwva.org www.cpwva.org	Information on Constitution Party political activities, functions of executive committees, process for delegates to national contention, and party rules.
West Virginia Democratic Party P.O. Box 11926 Charleston, WV 25339 (304) 342-8121 wvparty@wvdemocrats.com www.wvdemocrats.com	Information on Democratic Party political activities, functions of executive committees, process for delegates to national contention, and party rules.
West Virginia Libertarian Party P.O. Box 2506 Parkersburg, WV 26102 (304) 228-5918 www.lpwv.org	Information on Libertarian Party political activities, functions of executive committees, process for delegates to national contention, and party rules.
West Virginia Mountain Party P.O. Box 805 New Martinsville, WV 26155 (304) 771-4931 contact@mountainpartywv.net www.mountainpartywv.net	Information on Mountain Party political activities, functions of executive committees, process for delegates to national contention, and party rules.
West Virginia Republican Party P.O. Box 2711 Charleston, WV 25330 (304) 768-0493 www.wvgop.org	Information on Republican Party political activities, functions of executive committees, process for delegates to national contention, and party rules.

Division of Highways Rules for the Placement of Political Signs

Signs or posters cannot be placed on or above a Division of Highways right of way, which normally stretches 20 feet from the center line of a public road. Distances do vary, however, so please contact the West Virginia Division of Highways if you are uncertain.

Signs or posters near rights of way must comply with the outdoor advertising statute in Chapter 17, Article 19, Section 1 of the West Virginia Code, and must also conform to any municipal ordinances regulating outdoor advertising.

Signs or posters cannot be placed on Division of Highways traffic control signs nor block such signs and cannot obscure the view of any connecting road or intersection.

Signs or posters cannot be placed on elements in nature, such as rocks or trees.

Avoid placing materials on fence posts, utility poles, or other stationary objects on private property without consent of the property owners.

Political overhead banners cannot be erected over any county, state, or federal highway.

DOH Communications Main Line: 304-558-0103
www.transportation.wv.gov

Election Cybersecurity Incident Response Plans for Campaigns

Protection against a cyber-attack should be thought out well in advance of the necessity for cybersecurity protections. The West Virginia Secretary of State's Office has partnered with Harvard's Belfer Center to create guidance for cyber security training. One set of guidance is specifically tailored for campaigns. Please review the Cybersecurity Campaign Playbook at the Belfer Center's website at www.belfercenter.org/publication/cybersecurity-campaign-playbook. It is just as important to plan for responding to an attack as it is to develop a security strategy to prevent one. How you respond often has more to do with the ultimate outcome of an incident than what was compromised.

Be prepared for an incident to occur: Establish cybersecurity rules, training, and an incident response plan for your campaign staff.

If a breach occurs...

1. Unplug the physical device from power and the internet – “kill it”;
2. Change the password using a different device with different web services;
3. Notify the platform of the possible compromise; and
4. Contact the appropriate officials. At a minimum, contact the Secretary of State, and they will advise on contacting others.

Candidate Cyber Incident Communication Contacts

1. Campaign IT specialist for an internal system review
2. Your state political party headquarters:
 - Constitution (304) 591-7076
 - Democratic (304) 342-8121
 - Libertarian (304) 228-5918
 - Mountain (304) 771-4931
 - Republican (304) 768-0493
3. WV State Police
 - If ransomware is involved call the state authorities at (304) 746-2100
4. WV Secretary of State
 - Evan Pauley, Cybersecurity Specialist, epauley@wvsos.gov, (304) 558-6000
 - Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
5. Dave Parsons, Cybersecurity State Coordinator for West Virginia
 - earl.parsons@cisa.dhs.gov, (771) 215-7524
6. Your legal and communications teams or key staff who oversee your campaign operations