

Running For Local Office During A Municipal Election (Odd Year) In Pennsylvania

1. What office are you going to run for?
 - a. School Board
 - b. Township Supervisor
 - c. Borough Council
 - d. Mayor
 - e. County Commissioner
 - f. Countywide “row offices”
2. What offices are up for election where you live?
 - a. School board example:
 - i. Central York School Board
 1. 9 seats
 2. Every four years, four are elected (2021, 2025, 2029)
 3. Every four years, five are elected (2019, 2023, 2027)
 - ii. Are the seats “at large” or in specific precincts?
 1. Central York: all “at large”
 2. Red Lion: some are by precinct
 3. Some districts may have at large and precinct systems
 4. CHECK WITH THE WEBSITE OF THE GOVERNING BODY
3. Ballot access:
 - a. This will vary tremendously by county and by the office sought.
CHECK THE RULES WITH YOUR COUNTY ELECTIONS OFFICE.
 - b. Example:

- i. Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for York County: 250 signatures are needed but in larger counties you may need 1,000 signatures for a countywide office.
 - ii. School board in York County: 10 signatures are needed, but again, confirm with your jurisdiction.
- c. Gathering signatures:
 - i. To obtain ballot access, you need to circulate petitions. This requires:
 - 1. Trained, experienced petition circulators who know basic rules.
 - a. Do not assist people to fill in their information on the form unless it is medically necessary.
 - b. No “ditto” marks.
 - c. Trained to ask (and hopefully know) if the signer actually lives in the right jurisdiction (they can’t sign your petition for school board if they live in another school district).
 - d. Trained to confirm that the signers are actually Republicans if they sign a Republican petition or Democrats if they are signing a Democrat petition. Often people will sign anything you put in front of them, even if they are not the correct party for the petition.
 - e. If you get a signature that isn’t valid, don’t scratch it out. Just ignore it and move on. You won’t get in trouble for it. You just can’t count it.
 - 2. The petitions must all be notarized properly.
 - 3. Leave yourself enough time to gather enough signatures. When people blow it, it is usually because they started to gather signatures late in the game and didn’t know what they were doing.
 - 4. Get at least twice as many signatures as you need in case someone like me is hired to challenge your petition.
 - 5. Petition signature self audit: Before filing your petitions, look at them as though you are planning to challenge

your own petitions for inadequate signatures. Confirm party registrations, residency, and that signers are registered voters.

6. Every person who signs your petition is a potential voter who may vote for you.
7. Plan petition gathering drives for **dense locations** that can be **walked easily** during hours when people are likely home – weekend afternoons, for instance.
8. Head out in groups and wear campaign gear like shirts or buttons so people know what you are doing.
9. Do not gather petitions somewhere that you will be annoying, such as at a convenience store (a Sheetz) where you didn't get permission.
10. Keep copies of everything you file.
11. File a statement of financial interests with your petitions at the elections office. If you are running for a state office, this is filed in Harrisburg.
12. If you run for an office where you can “cross-file” like school board, you are required to file a statement of financial interests with each party's set of petitions: one for the GOP ballot and one for the DEM ballot – you are actually TWO candidates and you must file TWO statements of financial interest.
- 13. File your statement of financial interest with the governing body AND the elections office.**
 - a. For instance, if you run for school board and you cross-file, file four statements of financial interest:
 - i. One with your Republican petition at the county elections office
 - ii. One for your “Republican candidacy” at the local school district's administrative office
 - iii. One with your Democratic petition at the county elections office
 - iv. One for your “Democratic candidacy” at the local school district's administrative office

- b. People forget to file with the “governing body” of the office they are seeking all the time. It is easy pickings to challenge ballot access for rookies that mess this up.
- d. Why are you running and how will you run?
 - i. A fellow in York used to meet with candidates and he would ask, “What are you going to do with the power you get if you win?”
 - ii. A positive agenda is important. Anger only takes you so far, and it always burns out in the end.
 - iii. Do not, except under extremely limited circumstances, do anything to talk down your opponent.
 - iv. Focus on :
 - 1. Your resume/qualifications
 - 2. Your proposed agenda (a few ideas – nobody really wants to listen to you for more than 30 seconds. You are really motivated and interested, and they mostly want you to stop talking and leave them alone, or at least this is what my wife keeps telling me when I try to talk to her).
 - v. What wins?
 - 1. Networks
 - 2. Q: “How do you know what you know?” A: “Someone you trust tells you.”
 - 3. Find the local sources of authority that others look to for information.
 - a. The connected mom at school
 - b. Barbers
 - c. The old guys who always eat at the diner
 - vi. Social media is poison.
 - 1. Social media squabbles just make everyone mad and they make both sides look bad.
 - 2. “Grandma wants to look at cats, not read your bickering.”

3. Use your “block” feature to aggressively block trolls and loud critics. Before you block them, see who likes their poisonous comments and block them, too.
4. Social media:
 - a. Will never win an election.
 - b. Can easily lose an election.
 - c. Can effectively rally troops.
 - d. Is never, ever secret. That’s the whole point of it.
 - e. Will never sway a voter like a personal call can or like door knocking can.